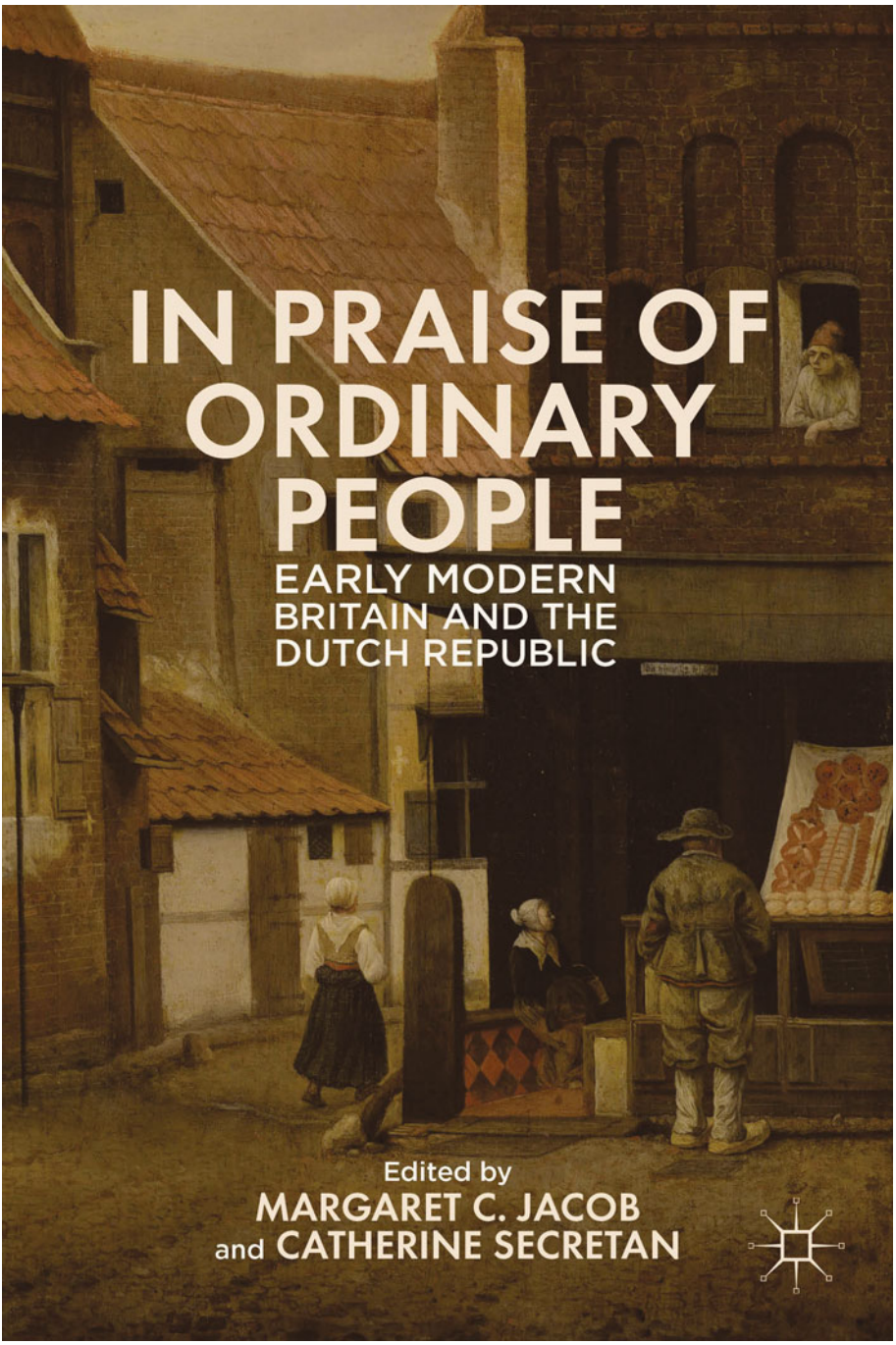
IN PRAISE OF ORDINARY PEOPLE
EARLY MODERN BRITAIN AND THE DUTCH REPUBLIC
Edited by
MARGARET C. JACOB
and CATHERINE SECRETAN

# In Praise of Ordinary People

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## Early Modern Britain and the Dutch Republic

Edited by Margaret C. Jacob and
Catherine Secretan

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# Introduction

*Margaret Jacob and Catherine Secretan*

In early modern Britain and the Dutch Republic the rise to prominence of rather ordinary folk took some contemporaries by surprise. Did such vulgar people not know their place? Or, said others, their skills and expertise were needed and they should be praised accordingly. Beginning in the sixteenth century, the historical role of commoners, both in practice and in theory, began to change. Rather than simply being there, to be ignored or feared or denigrated, they came to be seen as contributing, as having value through their skills, or crafts, or through their ability to reason or even to anchor the stability of the state or, in the Dutch case, of one of its colonies. These chapters explore the changing attitudes toward ordinary people as well as the social reality of self-made men and women whose appearance on the historical stage in significant numbers was unprecedented. Our focus is on England (after 1707 Britain) and the Dutch Republic because their economies and representative forms of government stood as among the most advanced in early modern Europe.

Before focusing on the historical evidence about the rise of ordinary people, we should point to the difficulty of finding a general and encompassing definition of them. Already we have used "commoners" and "folk," and we could have spoken, as did English contemporaries, about the vulgar (from the Latin *vulgus* for common people) or the "lower sort." The language of "sorts" classified the meaner folk, but significantly by the mid-seventeenth century the phrase "middling sorts" emerges to describe townsmen with skills or trades.[1] In Dutch the term would be *de gewone man* or simply a member of *de gemeente* some of whom might become *burgers*, citizens of a town or city. In either language the term is slippery, one that has various meanings according to the context. Thus, in a sociological approach, ordinary people can refer to the people from below or the nonelites. Artisans, members of the guilds, or the middling sort in a given community may fill the category (although stratifications between the guild members with respect to status, economic prerogatives,

and responsibilities for social control could be strongly marked).[2] From the perspective of cultural history, the same term can generally refer to the unlearned, even the illiterate, in contrast to the "clever" and the "trained." Such people were said to require vernacular texts, and translations from the Latin were intended for them.[3] Yet, even without Latin, in both countries quite ordinary men of trades or guilds could become citizens, but if lowly they were expected to play little part in governance.

In the context of political history, ordinary people were to be ruled over, but may also strive for political agency. Almost synonymous with this identity comes the concept of "excluded," and it may extend to the unruly and dangerous "rabble"—although without meaning the poor or unemployed population.[4] For our purposes the ordinary will be said to be literate and in possession of skills useful to the state and commercial life. Their activities also offered new imaginary possibilities. Their practical engagement as craftsmen, preachers (male and female), accountants, merchants, laboratory assistants, propagandists, even as anonymous voices against the high and mighty, gave philosophers new resources for defining human nature, for seeing passions and interests from a new perspective.

In all these cases, we still have to remember that a negative prevails. Ordinary people are above all conceived as the "non- . . . "—as involving something of a lack, or a weakness, compared to the elite's gifts and power. This meaning remained in use throughout the seventeenth century, although an important shift is to be seen in early modern political theory. As Machiavellian theory promoted a realistic politics founded on human passions, so too seventeenth-century political authors, like Hobbes and Spinoza, claimed, at least in passing, to write about the practices of what people and ordinary life ("*communis vita*") really are.

A crucial philosophical tool came from the new approach to passions, most forcefully expressed in Descartes' *Passions of the Soul* (1649). Instead of deriving principles from an idealistic vision of human nature, the new theory turned itself toward men as driven by their passions and interests. Thus, at the beginning of his *Political Treatise* (1670), Spinoza announces: "Therefore, on applying my mind to politics, I have resolved to demonstrate by a certain and undoubted course of argument, or to deduce from the very condition of human nature, not what is new and unheard of, but only such things as agree best with practice."[5]

Both Descartes and Hobbes may be read as responding to a new social reality visible most clearly in mid-seventeenth-century England and Holland. Thus the aim of these chapters is to throw light on what contemporaries had in mind when speaking of "ordinary people," and, just as important, to trace how a positive judgment gradually challenged the dominant pejorative significance of "ordinary people"—at a time when

the Tacitean distrust of the crowd was still widespread. Indeed, from the perspective of riots and rebellion, be they by peasants or by urban workers and artisans, popular protest was always attributed to ordinary people.[6] In opposition to the pejorative view, some Dutch and English sources from the end of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries bear witness to a new awareness and a positive assessment of what was called or conceived as "ordinary men."

The praise of ordinary people's capability and competencies went along with the Reformation, with the attendant political and religious upheavals, and also with scientific or technological achievements. These are among the main themes followed by the chapters ahead. The early modern period displays the most obvious and crucial transitions in the status and definitions awarded to ordinary people. The Dutch and English present themselves because, in the context of their political upheavals, ordinary people inserted themselves as never before, thanks in part to local circumstances, religious convictions, and urban concentrations.

In the Dutch setting, as in the English one, common people constituted a distinctive socioeconomic reality, although by no means a fixed category. This is all the more true in the Dutch case as the boundaries were rather fluid between and among social groups, and up to a certain point, social mobility was possible. Generally speaking, workers, craftsmen, and members of guilds were often considered as embodying ordinary people. These were the men and women who greatly contributed to the prosperity of the Dutch Golden Age, not only because of their skill and craftsmanship, but also because of their impact on domestic consumption. Their buying is particularly striking in the art market and it appears to have been one of the first mass markets for decorative, household consumption.[7] Not least, the overwhelmingly urban character of the region from Mons and Bruges to Amsterdam, Edam, and Hoorn gave ordinary people a visibility not available to the rural peasantry.[8] Matching Dutch cities in literacy rates, London of the 1620s was among the very first European cities to pioneer newspapers or sheets comparable to what could be found, even earlier, in these Dutch cities. All thrived on the news brought by the overseas trade of merchants as well as by the tensions provoked by the numerous wars of the early modern period.

## Speaking for Themselves

The heightened role for both Dutch and English commoners emerged initially because of the growing need for new skills and competencies, for individuals trained in specific practical and intellectual matters.[9]

State-building, with its expanding administration, and war-making, with its emphasis on engineering skills, were among the first areas that called for new capabilities among ordinary men. In both the Dutch and English cases, state formation became a major preoccupation of the period from 1550 to 1700, even though the states that emerged were fundamentally different. In the Low Countries, already before the Abjuration of Philip II in 1581, nobles saw themselves displaced by men trained in commerce and law and, as a consequence, they "resented the professionalization of government, which had favored the advance of jurists—the 'red gang' as they called them on account of their scarlet academic gowns—at their expense."[10] In fact, starting in the first half of sixteenth century, nobles gradually lost their position as officeholders and withdrew from political life. Whether they resigned voluntarily or not, they were by their own account displaced as their former positions became less honorary and much more professional.[11] Not surprisingly, this tendency became stronger after the separation of the Dutch provinces from Spain (1581); new people had to be recruited in order to replace the Spanish government. Increasingly the old oligarchies were seen as incapable of dealing with technical matters of governance, and a new class of councilors and administrators rose to take their places. Although the Utrecht chronicler Arnoldus Buchelius (1565–1641) certainly exaggerated when he talked scornfully about these vulgar individuals who swept into the political administration ("Hans Shitpepper, Hans Peddler, Hans Brewer, Hans Cheese-buyer, Hans Miller"), the truth is that newcomers were widely introduced into city councils.[12]

Simon Stevin (1548–1620), the counselor of Prince Maurice of Nassau, was one of the first to praise this newly discovered capability.[13] Changes in military science (improvement in fortifications, army administration, and laying out of army camps) made urgent the need for an appropriate training and gave rise to the founding in 1600 of a training school for military engineers in Leiden. Initiated by Stevin at the request of Maurice (at this time the general of the armies of the States General), the school was called "Duytsche mathematique" (because the course was given in Dutch), lasted until 1681, and gradually included training for civil engineers.[14]

The new needs called for new explanations. The humanist Justus Lipsius (1547–1606) gave a theoretical answer to the needs felt in political matters and provided some rules in his treatise on *Politica* (1589). A gift to Maurice of Nassau, the text sought the rules by which peace and stability in the state might be secured. Both Lipsius and Stevin asserted that a prince could not govern without assistance, and they tried to define with precision the specific assistance that counselors and ministers could provide.[15] They wrote with urgency from within the context of the upheaval that was the Dutch Revolt.

Other fields of human activity relevant to the state were also in need of new competencies. Commerce and accounting relied on new knowledge, extending from mathematics to geography and politics, and therefore required well-trained people. As Chapter 5 by Jacob Soll amply demonstrates, the capabilities of numerate merchants and accountants versed in double-entry bookkeeping gave Dutch cities and provinces a crucial fiscal advantage in their struggle against Spain. In Chapter 3, Jesse Sadler also reminds us that merchants, however lowly, could find rewarded places as news-gatherers and conveyors of vital information in times of war and upheaval, precisely because of their mercantile networks. Accounting and trade offered unprecedented opportunities to rise socially as well as economically, and to give service to a state or prince.

In both the Dutch and English cases, religious dissent immensely unsettled established social patterns. The Protestant Reformation made the issue of competency particularly acute. Ministers of the new faith were supposed to be expert in explaining the Bible and to have a gift for oral eloquence. With the need to strengthen the appeal of the Reformation in the Northern Netherlands, an ideology of merit, not birth, gained acceptance together with the requirement that the clergy receive more formal training.[16] A similar process went on in England after 1550, but by 1650 the gap was visible between the formally educated clergy of whatever denomination and the street preachers often associated with radical social and political reform. In the chapters ahead, the effects of a Protestant religious ethos will be examined in figures as diverse and relatively unknown as Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert, Adriaan Koerbagh, Joseph Ryder, Mary Shackleton, and Abiah Darby.

## Innovative Thinking

The turn toward Protestantism offered opportunities for leadership to ordinary men and, as we shall shortly see, to women. That turn also fostered inquiry into nature, which after the condemnation of Galileo became an increasingly Protestant preoccupation. In England, at laboratories and learned gatherings devoted to natural philosophy, handworkers skilled in Newtonian principles, as Larry Stewart shows (Chapter 4), created a vast network of innovative sites wherein the industrial revolution was nurtured.

Through their skills and capacities, ordinary people held a central position between science and industry in the early modern world. Experimental science would never have developed so robustly without the everyday experience of the artisanal practitioner. Early modern elites looked

downward for techniques and know-how, a form of learning not supplied by their normal, generally humanistic, upbringings, and late in the sixteenth century Simon Stevin argued that practice and theory should go hand in hand. Faced with such practical achievements as canals and dikes, double-entry accounting, or harbor and port construction, he laid stress on the importance of "ordinary people" and their empirical knowledge. Over 60 years later, the Royal Society of London began a project to collect the history and knowledge of the trades, one that it never finished. Increasingly contemporary scholarly attention has focused on the artisan as a major player in technological innovation.

In the case of corporate bodies, be they guilds or chambers of rhetoric, new studies have led to a reappraisal of their places and roles within the social order. In his chapter, Maarten Prak devotes very detailed analyses to the guild system and militias and their contribution to innovation and the preindustrial economy.[17] With these new interpretations in mind, can we not find the late Eric Hobsbawm fully justified in promoting "common" men to the dignity of "uncommon" people, because, as he says, "collectively, if not as individuals, such men and women are major historical actors," or, as Michel de Certeau would say, they are "common heroes"?[18]

All that practical and increasingly valued energy put contemporaries to thinking about reforming public access to knowledge and education, as well as about ordinary people and their participation in politics. Spurred by religious education and the Reformation ideal that every individual should be able to read the Bible, the literacy level in Netherlands reached a higher level than anywhere else in Continental Europe at that time. All of this new intellectual energy and ability produced one of the first theorists to address its implications. At the end of the sixteenth century, the writings of Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert (b. 1522) spoke uncompromisingly in favor of "ordinary people."[19] His remarkable and egalitarian thinking is here made accessible for one of the first times in English. In Chapter 1, Dorothee Sturkenboom brings to the Anglophone reader a rare account of the late-sixteenth-century writings of Coornhert, and how he—along with the testimonies drawn from the political propaganda of the Dutch Revolt here discussed—gave voice to the commonality, endowing it with new freedoms and a new self-consciousness. Although a member of no church, Coornhert's ideas on the perfectibility of human nature, and on the necessity of religious freedom and toleration foreshadowed views more commonly recognized in English history and associated with the Levelers, Diggers, and Quakers of the 1640s.

Coornhert was not a voice crying in the wilderness. In the Dutch Republic, among those laying claim to a "new democratic order," Franciscus van

den Enden, known as the teacher of Spinoza, was one of the most radical—as recalled in Chapter 8 by Inger Leemans. In the period after 1650, the literary authors, she also discusses, show a remarkable, and often bawdy, interest in common people and develop a rich "popular" literature (novels, dramas) intended for this new readership. Although this production was typical of a "top-down" popular culture, it illustrates the crucial emergence of a new figure, that is, the ordinary man.

In politics, despite the fear of the crowd and the opinion that it was a "many-headed monster" composed of the ordinary turned rebellious, other voices rose in favor of the common folk and strongly contested the habit of privileging wealth and entrenched elites. The pretensions of the noble and clerical orders were questioned by anonymous propaganda in favor of popular sovereignty. Both English and Dutch contexts nurtured the early stage of what came to be called the Enlightenment. Pamphlet literature emerged as powerful in disseminating such propaganda. Among many others, a "Fraternal warning" published in Netherlands in 1581 urged democratic choice and the liberty to elect men coming from the whole population, not restricting the choice "to nobles or notables, but extending it to people exercising a particular craft or trade, to *burgers* of the town or men born in the country."[20] Newcomers should be appointed on the basis of their capability to "tell good from bad or just from unjust" and to "understand the old books, registers, charters and forms." Besides morality, the stress was obviously put on knowledge and training.

This Dutch pamphlet literature combined radical democratic protest with hostility toward the privileges and power awarded to the elite "who sit buried under their furs or stand chattering, draped in silk clothes, all things forbidden to poor people."[21] In this literature coming out of the revolt against Spain, and continuing in the fierce polemics between Orangists and republicans in 1650 and again in 1672 (during the campaign to appoint the Prince of Orange to the office of stadtholder), 'ordinary man' referred to a political individual, the citizen whose voice fueled public life on the streets, in canal boats, and in the houses of city militia.[22]

The debate about the role of ordinary men and women only intensified in England by the 1640s. In that decade the English civil wars produced a body of theoretical literature on the capacities of ordinary men and even women that became central to Western democratic thinking. While no democrat, in 1651 Hobbes contributed to such thinking by ascribing the power of the state to the contract of all, its stability validated by common men. They could be relied upon more than their clerical or noble, but meddlesome, betters. In Chapter 2, the magisterial writings of Thomas Hobbes are examined by Luc Foisneau and shown to be remarkably positive about the political role available to common men.

In both the Dutch and English upheavals, theorists proclaimed new and striking evaluations of what ordinary people could be or become. Adding the social identity of participants, real or imagined, ordinary but literate, to political, intellectual, or religious settings and texts imparts texture and enables us to see developments in early modernity with greater clarity.[23] With antecedents in sixteenth-century rebellions, the radicals during the English civil wars embraced and elaborated upon the power and rights of the people and focused upon voting rights, the necessity for juries, and, finally, justifying regicide.[24]

Both Dutch and English political systems evolved by 1700 in open directions that precluded the possibility of absolute monarchy or the hegemony of a single religion. To be sure, many unreformed elements remained, which in the Dutch case would spark revolutions in 1747–1748 and again in 1787. Both Britain and the Dutch Republic displayed features of oligarchy well into the nineteenth century, yet in each case a vibrant civil society and the real possibility of social mobility became visible by 1600. Democratic tendencies were significantly more visible by 1700, on either side of the North Sea, than was the case in France, the Austrian Netherlands, or the German principalities. Both Dutch and English theorists responded to this new social reality.

Again in the last decades before 1700 we see another example of the position that ordinary people have come to occupy. Frans Blom and Henk Looijesteijn examine the temptation and fantasies offered to lure them to the New World, more precisely to New H Amstel (Chapter 9). The level of material comfort and economic freedom promised provides a way into the imagined passions and interests of Dutch commoners who might become colonists. Such men and women would present a challenge to any governmental authority, and their presumed independence—even without a Bill of Rights—renders them citizens, not subjects. Generally speaking, by the late seventeenth century, all over Western Europe, the time had come to attack the very foundations of elite authority, the belief systems that made kings and churches imagine they had absolute power.

Often published anonymously, the assault against monarchical authority and the Catholic Church fueled a growing fascination with the secular. It leads one of the editors, Margaret Jacob, to argue for the populist roots of the early Enlightenment (Chapter 7). The clandestine or anonymous voice, posed deliberately as appealing to the ordinary, attacked the power of clerical and kingly power and, to the mix, added deistic or materialist heresies. She draws evidence from literature published on both sides of the Channel with pride of place awarded to the Dutch clandestine presses often publishing in French.

## The Practical Achievements of "Ordinary Man"

Up to this point, by 1700, ordinary man largely occupies the ordinary world of skill and trade. He left traces especially when literate, but by the eighteenth century the evidence for his (and then her) activities and contributions expands significantly. Chapters 11, 10, and 4 by Matt Kadane, Phyllis Mack, and Larry Stewart—centered on the period after the 1720s—bear witness to the overwhelming importance of significant literacy in allowing historical access to ordinary people.[25] Their range of sources highlights how extraordinarily difficult work on the earlier period can be.

Such a daunting challenge worked as an incentive for the pioneering studies on ordinary people undertaken in the 1960s, and the extensive treatment nonelites have received, mainly from the point of view of rebellion and popular riots. One of the many challenges faced by that previous generation of historians concerned the origins of the industrial working class. Steeped in left-wing British politics, E. P. Thompson traced its emergence in a book that immediately became a classic. Eric Hobsbawm famously added studies on nonindustrial workers as well as marginal people often living beyond the law. Works by George Rudé, Natalie Zemon Davis, and Christopher Hill disclosed the "crowd in history," its political vision and how common men could be stirred to action.[26] The common people never cease to be revisited by the publication of new sources and approaches. Recently, a study of Steve Hindle has shown how ordinary people could make the most of litigation to express their needs and demands.[27]

With Maarten Prak's chapter, a wider meaning can now be assigned to the category of "ordinary man." Based on a comparative analysis of various European institutions, but particularly the municipalities in England (later Britain) and the Dutch Republic, from fifteenth to eighteenth century, his research evaluates nonelite participation in politics. The results provide ample proof that the involvement of ordinary people in everyday politics was not only real but also obviously encouraged both by theoretical justifications and specifically "popular" institutions such as militias, guilds, and neighborhood associations.[28] These channels gave common folk agency in local affairs. Remarkably, what Prak's comparative analysis also reveals is that this "politics from below" was mostly made by individuals from the middle class (artisans and shopkeepers), all being formal citizens of their community. Thus, as he argues, citizenship was the common feature that lent a form of cohesion to the "wide range of social variation" that the term of "ordinary man" actually covers. Moreover, by means of citizenship and political participation, people generally considered as being "without distinction" were given an authentic social identity and a real political

status that complemented their role in a corporate organization. In both countries a system of governance emerged late in the eighteenth century that augured a future to which citizens of other states, beginning with the French, came to aspire.

Clearly the social reality provided by corporations and citizenship engendered a theoretical response. As demonstrated by Luc Foisneau's chapter on Hobbes, the notion of "ordinary man" involved a normative dimension. Thus, while used as a descriptive tool giving specificity to the activities of people from below, ordinariness can also function as a normative category when applied to people themselves. The two competing uses of the term "common people" in *Leviathan* (1651) illustrate the two meanings equally at work in seventeenth-century philosophical and political thought. For Hobbes, ordinary people are both superstitious persons (*Leviathan*, chap. XXXVII) and those possessing the capacity to judge according to the law (chap. XXVI). On the path to modernity, the first would have to give way to the second, a process initiated by the Enlightenment and brought to fruition by the democratic revolutions late in the eighteenth century.

## New Directions in the Modern Research Agenda on Ordinariness

Before their demise, the unruly and superstitious could serve many imaginative purposes. Inger Leemans underlines the fact that anxiety about the mob became linked in the seventeenth century with the body and the influence of passions, and that such a stereotype would be used in literature to great dramatic effect. What better place to imagine such effects than the brothels of Amsterdam, where fat prostitutes solicited by clients led by the devil could be found in abundance? Rightly she lays emphasis upon the subversive aspects of an anonymous erotic literature that she ties to the early Enlightenment in the Republic. Accessing the content of such literature in a variety of languages, and relating it to larger social and intellectual transformations, should breathe new life into the study of works normally classified as belonging to popular literature. Similarly with the moral turn of seventeenth-century thought, ordinary became associated with authentic, natural, and usual. The countless Dutch genre paintings, for example, focusing on aspects of everyday life, appear as one of the first glorifications of the ordinary, just as modernist literature will later choose ordinary experience as its main issue.[29]

Yet, as we have seen, the notion of ordinary people was also appropriated by the new philosophical vocabulary. It aimed to promote a rationalistic conception of human nature, one deduced from an

anthropological analysis of passions and desire. Thus the idea of "ordinary people" could be interpreted as embodying the universal dimension of humanity, in line with the meaning to be found, a century earlier, in the opening of Montaigne's *Essays* when he announced that he desired to be viewed in his "simple, natural, and everyday dress."[30] Yet we must not forget that the vulgar remained a category to describe actual people (not simply mores) well into the eighteenth century. Snobbery died a very slow death—but die it did. The innovations in practices and ideas of the early modern period made prejudice against the ordinary seem less and less useful.

Early modern people in England and the Dutch Republic, by 1700, begin to appear as comparable, even if their seventeenth-century histories share but a few points of comparability. Eighteenth-century developments only deepen the sense of freedom and independence visible on both sides of the North Sea. Yet by the 1730s the Republic had entered a period of economic decline, and with it came growing political unrest. In prosperous eighteenth-century England, by contrast, the results of the seventeenth-century revolutions manifested themselves in new social identities, in lives both ordinary and extraordinary.

As Phyllis Mack shows, Quaker women of the eighteenth century still brazenly preached in public while trying to find the meaning of enlightened values in their daily lives. Their introspection reveals a new self-consciousness found in letters and in the growing habit of self-reporting in diaries and commonplace books. Gradually, social activism begins to replace the ecstatic and the visionary. One such spiritual diary, in this case by a Presbyterian, is examined by Matt Kadane, and its author, the cloth merchant Joseph Ryder, was about as ordinary as he could be, and still be prosperous. In his lifetime he compiled over 2 million words examining the state of his conscience and his prospects for salvation. His introspection can be matched by dozens of early modern Dutch diarists, not as prolific to be sure, but no less self-absorbed.[31] Having capabilities and success in a variety of worldly trades did not necessarily bring peace of mind or guarantee eternal salvation. It did encourage self-reflection, and the rise of autobiographical writing, often anchored by religious sentiments or anxieties, commenced in the sixteenth century and, in both Dutch and English, increased decade by decade. We still lack any sort of comparative study of these Dutch and English diaries, despite our knowing that their quantity and quality were unprecedented.[32]

These chapters show how new thinking about the people began to form through the various meanings assigned to the notion of "ordinary people." We also wish to make a link with the present. We think that no study devoted to the meaning of ordinary people in the past may be complete without having in mind the importance given to the idea of

"ordinary" in the twentieth century. Such a notion has been on the research agenda since the middle of the twentieth century, not only from the point of view of the history of the people from below, but also from a cultural and anthropological perspective. But this evolution does not offer a straightforward connection between the sense given in the past and the contemporary one.

The change in meaning is perhaps best illustrated with the case of the modern interest in ordinariness in language. John L. Austin's well-known *How to Do Things with Words* (delivered as lectures, 1955; published, 1962) was the first of a wide range of studies devoted to ordinary language in philosophy. In this case, ordinary language consists of the language that we actually use when communicating with each other. Its epistemological value is not as a distortion of reality, or as a screen between reality and ourselves, but on the contrary as a tool (and the best one) for saying something about the world in that the words we use (however "ordinary" they are) are immanent to reality.[33] What matters here is the evolution that this concept of ordinariness has undergone in the case of language usage. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to begin with Descartes' "ordinary language," ordinary meant a language crippled by prejudice and superstition. Such a conception mirrors the intense discussions involving language during the early modern polemics about interpretations of the Bible.

The people and texts explored in this collection show how the appearance of specific capabilities and technical competencies cast light on a new kind of individual, in effect creating value and assigning it to the ordinary or common. What began as a sociological category, designating nonelites, became in early modern philosophy and political theory a norm, that of ordinariness, and paved the way for aspects of our contemporary fascination and comfort with the ordinary. We end with the assertion that self-designation as an ordinary man or woman, as well as praise of so being, has to do with the emergence of democracy.

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10. Quoted from Alastair Duke, "From Beggars to Patriots: The Construction of Rebel Identities in the Revolt of the Netherlands c.1566–1579," unpublished paper presented at the William Andrew Clark Conference of October 7–8, 2005, on *The Political Culture of the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1566–1648*.
11. H. K. F. van Nierop, *The Nobility of Holland. From Knights to Regents, 1500–1650* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993, first published: 1984), pp. 222–225.
12. P. Chr. Bor, *Oorsprongk, begin en vervolgh der Nederlandsche oorlogen*, 4 vols., Utrecht 1670–1675, vol. III, p. 204 (quoted by Van Deursen, *Plain Lives*, p. 15).
13. First in his *Vita politica*; see Catherine Secretan, "Simon Stevin's *Vita politica. Het Burgherlick leven* (1590): A Practical Guide for Civil Life in the Netherlands at the End of the XVIth Century," *De Zeventiende Eeuw*, vol. 28, 2012, pp. 2–21; then, more developed in his *Materiae Politicae. Burgherlicke Stoffen* ("Civic Matters") (Leiden, the Netherlands: Iustus Livius, 1649). On this edition made by the son of Simon Stevin, Hendrick Stevin, and first published in 1649, see E. J. Dijksterhuis, *Simon Stevin* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1943), pp. 333–336.
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Part I

# A New Self-Perception

1

# The "Simple Burgher" of D. V. Coornhert (1522–1590): A Dutch Freethinker Opens the Door to a New Age

*Dorothee Sturkenboom*

## Introducing the Man—Setting the Scene

Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert (1522–1590) was a Dutch philosopher, poet, playwright, and polemicist who has held the fascination of many historians. Although he lived in the sixteenth century, he expressed extraordinarily modern ideas, while making his living as an etcher and engraver and later in life as a town secretary and notary.[1] With his arguments for religious toleration and individual human rights and his perception of human nature as essentially good and rational, not to forget his early call for a reform of criminal justice, Coornhert seemed decades, if not centuries, ahead of his time.[2] Outspoken and almost permanently at odds with the authorities of his time,[3] one could even be tempted to say Coornhert would have fitted well in the circles of the more radical Enlightenment thinkers who would later begin to shape the modern world.[4] Such outspoken admiration for a historical person usually spawns a counter reaction, and, indeed, a more recent study suggests that the modernity and originality credited to Coornhert stands "in direct proportion to the ignorance of his [modern] interpreters."[5] An informed reader would have to recognize that Coornhert was very much a man of the sixteenth century: a humanist whose ideas were deeply influenced by classical learning, mystical thinkers, and the social issues and religious upheavals of his time. As often happens in this kind of historical debate, both sides have valid arguments but tend

to overemphasize their point. In this chapter we will get to know Dirck Coornhert as both a stubbornly unconventional thinker and a man who had learned a lot from others—characteristics, indeed, that do not exclude each other.

Despite his many admirers in the Netherlands, Coornhert is not well known outside his homeland. Undoubtedly, the fact that he preferred to publish in Dutch rather than in Latin, another distinctly modern trait of his, did not help to spread his fame outside the Dutch-speaking world—even though some of his publications were translated into Latin during his life, most notably by his Reformed Protestant adversaries who thought his work so dangerous that their leader Calvin and Calvin's successor Beza should be informed of its content.[6]

Born in a well-to-do Amsterdam Catholic merchant family, Coornhert had enjoyed a broad private education—including a vocational journey to Spain and Portugal at the age of 16—but he learned Latin only when he was in his thirties.[7] Still, this was not the reason he did not write in Latin, which he later mastered well enough to publish Dutch translations of Cicero, Seneca, and other classical authors.[8] Coornhert actually preferred the simplicity of vernacular words, the direct appeal of Dutch songs, and the power of images printed in large numbers because they enabled him to reach a broader public.[9] Thus he wrote not only learned treatises but also pamphlets, poetry, dialogues, and morality plays in Dutch, engraved numerous moral scenes, and took the initiative for a printer's shop in Haarlem, his adopted city near Amsterdam where he lived most of his life after his early marriage at the age of 17.[10] Choosing this marriage against his parents' wish, with a woman from a lesser social background and 12 years his senior—fully aware that he would be disinherited as a consequence—was one of the earliest recorded expressions of Coornhert's inclination toward nonconformity.[11] As one of his fellow humanists Arnoldus Buchelius would later write in his diary, Coornhert was "a brilliant man, but with an unruly and restless mind, born to contradict."[12]

It is into this background—a turbulent age calling for reform and an acute mind leaning toward independency, and yes, even rebellion—that we must place Coornhert's ideas about what he called the "unlearned people," the "humble simple burgher," and the "lesser common sorts." Coornhert was one of the few philosophers of the time to address the issue of the common, or ordinary, people, which makes him such a significant figure for this book. This chapter approaches the topic from two different angles: first, the manner in which Coornhert used his work to speak directly to common men and women, and, second, the way he gave voice to those men (if less so to women) in his work. What concerns me in this context is not so much the moot point of the modernity of his ideas, but rather the

arguments he advances to force his contemporaries to take the potential of the common people seriously. How (and why) did Coornhert articulate the rights and dignity of common men and women at a time when this was far from usual?

## Addressing the Unlearned—Teaching the Value of the Truth and Individual Judgment

There is little doubt that a significant part of Coornhert's work was aimed at the common people—"not the astute scholars but the unlearned people eager to learn," as he himself described his intended public in his ethical handbook *Zedekunst is wellevenskunste, vermids waarheyds kennisse van den mensche, van de zonden, ende van de dueghden* (*Ethics Is the Art of Living Well, Given Truth's Knowledge of the People, of the Vices and of the Virtues*) (1586).[13] Coornhert's *Ethics* has been heralded as the first book of ethics written in a modern vernacular language in Europe.[14]

Though his more educated peers also might have felt the need for mentoring—sometimes repeatedly asking for his moral advice in letters[15]—Coornhert's foremost goal was to bring classical and biblical learning, and more generally ethical learning, to the less educated men and women (not necessarily illiterates) who normally had no direct access to these kinds of sources.[16] This is how we have to understand the publication of his *Ethics*, his edifying songs and morality plays in Dutch, his translations from Latin, and his engravings of moral scenes that were often accompanied by captions in Dutch rather than (or in addition to) Latin. In contrast to woodcuts that were aimed at a yet broader public, captions in Dutch were still an unusual feature for engravings at the time.[17] A line in one of Coornhert's morality plays reveals that he considered engraving as one of the fine arts that owed their existence to commissions by the well-to-do.[18] Be that as it may, engravings could be printed in large numbers and were therefore much cheaper than other, more individual, works of art, allowing for a wider distribution among people such as merchants, schoolteachers, (low-ranking) civil servants, tradesmen, artists, and artisans, who, in the Dutch context of the time, would have been literate but not highly learned. These are the contours of the group we assume that Coornhert addressed, looking for a broad audience to maximize the influence of his work.[19] It is highly likely that women were part of Coornhert's intended public. Quite a few of them would have been able to read his work by themselves as the literacy rate among women in sixteenth-century Netherlands was relatively high.[20] Coming from a successful merchant family himself, Coornhert would have been used to taking

women seriously since they often played an important role in business, as did his mother Truy and sister Katryn in the drapery business of the family.[21]

In the early 1570s, when Coornhert lived as a fugitive in the German town Xanten, he engraved a series of eight prints dedicated to "the power of the truth."[22] The engravings followed a draft made by the young Netherlandish artist, Adriaan de Weert (also spelled as Weerdt), but the *auctor intellectualis* was Coornhert himself, as can be seen from the many thematic similarities between these prints and his texts. In fact, nearly all engravings made by Coornhert in his life, following sketches by artists such as Heemskerck, Goltzius, and de Weert, mirrored his ethical system, as art historian Ilja Veldman has convincingly argued.[23] If others invented the compositions, it was because they were impressed by Coornhert's personality and enthused by his ideas. More than once the relationship between philosopher and artist developed into a lifelong friendship, as happened with de Weert.[24] Later, Hendrick Goltzius, who had learned the art of engraving from Coornhert in Germany, would picture his amiable master and friend in his commemorative portrait as a gifted teacher (see Illustration 1.1), adding the caduceus of the Greek god Hermes to symbolize Coornhert's role as a wise guide and praising his eloquence in the Latin verses underneath:

> The Batavian Coornhert,
> who because of his study of the truth, and his love of freedom,
> could not bear, Calvin, your priests,
> could bring the words so lively,
> but in his writings the words sound even more lively.[25]

In the series on truth, drafted by de Weert and engraved by Coornhert, every print illustrated a psalm or other passage from the Bible that underlined the absolute moral value of the truth. The prints carried captions with Bible verses in Latin and a Dutch interpretation, most likely written by Coornhert himself, clarifying the biblical message and the scene depicted for those who did not have a Bible at home. That would have applied to most Catholics at the time. This specific series of engravings was probably brought into circulation by Coornhert himself and may not have known the wide distribution of his other engravings published by more established printers.[26] Nevertheless, they are an important series for us because they illustrate one of Coornhert's philosophical premises, that is, that the truth was the one force in life that really counted. The subtitle of his *Ethics* (*Given Truth's Knowledge of the People, of the Vices and of the Virtues*) would later emphasize the same point.

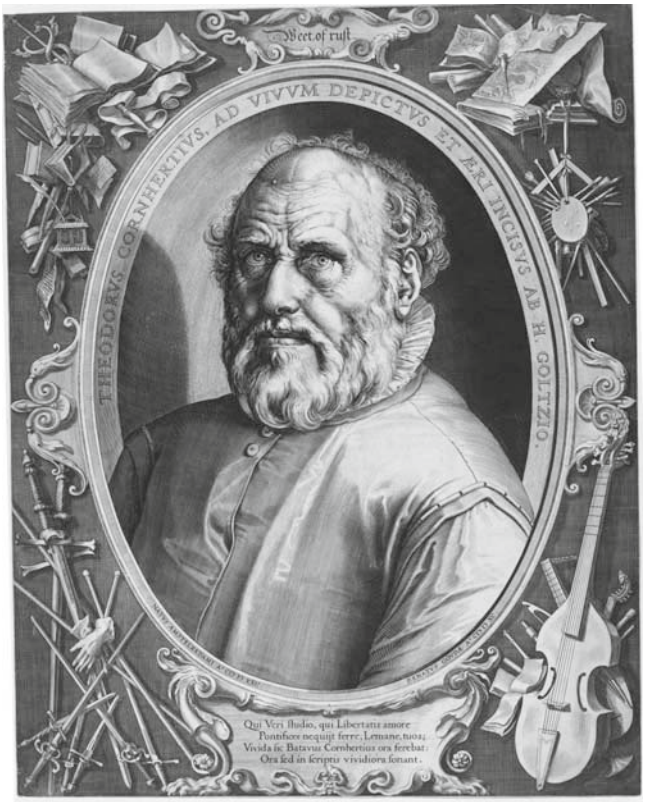


**Illustration 1.1** Dirck Coornhert, portrayed by Hendrick Goltzius, 1591–1592, Rijksprentenkabinet Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

In his moral philosophy, Coornhert developed a strongly rationalistic approach. Thus he may indeed have paved the way for the more radical thinkers of later centuries, as was recently suggested by Ruben Buys—even though tracing the reception of Coornhert's ideas has proven difficult so far.[27] Indeed, the populist voice of the early Enlightennment that is discussed in the chapter by Margaret Jacob shows many similarities with the rationalist voice of this sixteenth-century philosopher, except that the materialist turn would have been inconceivable for his deeply spiritual mind. Coornhert believed in the transformative powers of instructional images and simple sayings because together with reason—that powerful "spark of Divine Light" as he called it—they would give people access to true divine knowledge.[28] He was convinced that knowing the truth would help the faithful to make the right choices in life and "live well."

If people chose the wrong path, Coornhert contended, following Socrates, it was not because human nature was essentially weak or evil, but because they were ignorant and harbored misconceptions of what was true. Given their "inner light" of reason, however, and helped by personal experiences and learning of a nonauthoritarian nature, all men and women would be able to improve their understanding, perfect themselves, and thus eventually become one with God. In this respect Coornhert is closer to Mack's Quakers than to Jacob's freethinkers. According to Coornhert, this human "perfection" was already achievable during life on earth and not just in the hereafter.[29]

His perfectist views brought Coornhert in dispute with Catholic and Reformed leaders, who believed in original sin and predestination.[30] Openly criticizing both Calvinist intolerance and Roman ceremonial excesses, Coornhert belonged to that legion of believers, particularly strong in the sixteenth-century Netherlands, who did not commit themselves to either the Roman Catholic or the Reformed Protestant Church, instead cherishing their own brand of spirituality in loose communities of kindred spirits.[31] Raised as a Catholic, Coornhert was later influenced by spiritualist and mystical thinkers such as Sebastian Franck, Kaspar Schwenckfeld, and David Joris. He also had connections with Hendrick Niclaes and other members of the Family of Love, without, however, becoming a disciple himself. As a stoically inclined humanist, Coornhert was wary of visionary prophets and religious enthusiasts. He eventually developed his own spiritualist and rationalist interpretation of the Christian faith, later positioning himself as what he called a "Universal Catholic" or an "Impartial Catholic" rather than a Roman Catholic.[32]

## Doubting and Defending the People

We can witness Coornhert's estrangement from Mother Church in a series of copper plates engraved by him that drew upon the misbehavior of the Catholic clergy and its unhealthy influence on secular authorities.[33] The 12 prints, again after a draft made by de Weert in the early 1570s at Coornhert's request, carried captions in Latin, French, and Dutch and pointed to the corrupt character of the Catholic Church as the indirect cause of the iconoclastic outbreaks and revolt that was soon to plunge the Netherlands into a civil war.[34] Particularly revealing for his concern with the common people is the ninth print of the series, where Luther is using the Testimony of the Holy Script, pictured as a burning torch, to expose the monstrous nature of the Pope to an utterly surprised and barefooted Vulgus, that is, the People, depicted with three heads to represent


**Illustration 1.2** "Luther reveals the deception by the Catholic clergy," engraving by Dirck Coornhert after Adriaan de Weert, Rijksprentenkabinet Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

its internal discord (see Illustration 1.2). In the background, homage is paid to Luther's forerunner Erasmus of Rotterdam, whom we see revealing the wolf-like nature of a clergyman to a similar multiheaded figure representing the People.

In this religiously and politically charged configuration, Coornhert employs a well-known elite political notion of the people, that is, of a changeable crowd, vulnerable to manipulation. It is no coincidence that Vulgus is depicted as a young man, still lacking in experience and judgment. However, in the same print the commoner also appears in a more mature and dignified role: standing in the shadow of a tree at the right side of the picture, taking a break from his manual labor, a laborer or farmer is reading directly from the Bible without the intervention of a cleric. The figure is reminiscent of the ideal of a bible-reading plowboy, expressed some 50 years earlier by William Tyndale, the English Reformer who became famous for his translation of the Bible into English and promoted the vernacular as a route to a purer Christianity. We can only speculate if Coornhert knew about the Tyndale Bible, part of which was printed in Antwerp in 1530. Coornhert's farmer or laborer, however, perhaps carried a more philosophical meaning than Tyndale's proverbial plowboy.[35] Looking at his focused expression and calm body language in the picture, we are to understand that this man embodied human nature as God meant it to be: an individual, endowed with reason, open to learning, and with the

ability to make his own judgment—a philosopher's conception of common man.[36]

Having made himself impossible with the Roman Catholics, Coornhert proceeded to make himself unpopular with the Protestants, who were gradually taking control of his country in the 1570s. Not satisfied with the policy of freedom of conscience that gradually replaced the previous and more radical ideal of freedom of religion, he denounced the Calvinist hardliners who increasingly tried to suppress public worship by Catholics and other dissenters in the Dutch provinces of Holland and Zeeland after the Pacification of Ghent in 1576. Taking the same position as the French theologian and humanist Sebastian Castellio, Coornhert rejected the idea that any secular or religious authority could decide for other people what God's truth was, comparing his Protestant opponents in this respect with the Inquisition. For Coornhert, even common men and women without much education should be allowed to discover for themselves the essence of their faith, this gift of God, and practice it according to their own understanding without the interference of others. Obviously, these ideas brought Coornhert in conflict with the authorities, who more than once tried to put an end to his freedom of speech, not only because of his unwelcome opinions but also because they grew tired of his wayward behavior.[37]

This is not to say that Coornhert gave much credit to common opinion as such, as we could already sense in the representation of Vulgus in the previous illustration.[38] When we look at Coornhert's morality plays, we can see that there too the characters representing common opinion or "the people" were lacking good judgment and unstable in their opinions. In his *Comedie vande Egypsche vroeyvrouwen* (*Comedy of the Egyptian Midwives*), he even introduces the people (Populus) to the audience by the allegorical equation "desire to err."[39] Clearly distrusting the sentiments of the common majority, Coornhert nevertheless believed that "unlearned folk practiced in virtue have through the Holy Spirit much understanding of divine things."[40] Individual persons should therefore be allowed to make their own spiritual choices. In relation to government policy on religious issues, this even meant, according to Coornhert, that the people had the right to "judge in this matter, because it is of importance to each and every Compatriot, no less than to the Government itself."[41] Therefore, it was better if texts discussing the relation between state and religion were written in the vernacular, he suggested to the Leiden humanist Lipsius (1547–1606) in a polemic against Lipsius's *Politica* (1589), a political manual that was inspired by Machiavelli and defended the absolutist principles of the age to come. Lipsius, however, felt no need to have his ideas discussed by commoners in the street, as he said. Priding himself in his (to be sure, meager) noble origins, he refused to take Coornhert's idea seriously and retorted in

Latin, his preferred language: "So in your opinion we should subject everything to [the will of] the people?"[42] Lipsius might have seen the role that commoners could play in service to the state but he had no intention of putting them in the seats of political power.

Such would, indeed, have been a fairly remarkable position. To give the plebs (Lipsius's choice of words) a decisive voice in the political debate was hardly an option at the time. Even Coornhert did not defend a freedom of expression on all political matters.[43] It was not political agency that he was after, but religious agency. His plea for a complete freedom of expression on religious matters was the logical consequence of his stance on freedom of conscience, which could not exist without freedom of worship and freedom of expression.[44] These rights were a radical enough pursuit as it were.[45] Contrary to a commonplace assumption—based on the relative ease with which it was possible to get controversial texts printed in the Dutch Republic—freedom of expression or press was not an ideal embraced by the Dutch elite at the time.[46] When the municipality of Leiden became embroiled in the dispute with Lipsius, it condemned Coornhert's idea of an open debate in Dutch, warning against the "unrestrained audacity of unlearned people," who should not be allowed to damage reputations and interfere in the open exchange of ideas among scholars and clergymen.[47]

In his defense, however, Coornhert refused to give in and smartly remarked that Jesus and his apostles had also been common, uneducated folk. True wisdom was not dependent on book learning.[48] For Coornhert this was practically a rerun of an earlier debate that he had waged a decade before when he had fought for his personal right as an "unlearned idiot" (that is, an amateur) to engage learned ministers and theologians in a public argument on issues he thought they were mistaken about.[49] Referring to similar discussions undertaken by Jesus, Coornhert even defended this right as his Christian duty. Ultimately, according to Coornhert, the spiritual fate of individuals was more important than the common peace or the common wealth of their country: "For states exist for the sake of the people, not the people for the sake of the state," he would write in a letter to Lipsius in 1590.[50]

One begins to understand why the provincial states of Holland and West Friesland condemned Coornhert as a troublemaker ("disturber of the public peace") in 1579.[51] This was only seven years after Coornhert had been appointed by the same provincial states as their secretary upon his return to the Netherlands from Germany in 1572. But his ensuing participation in, and even initiation of, disputations on religion was seen as utterly disruptive and proved a turning point in the relations.[52] Later, in 1591, the provincial states of Holland and West Friesland would even

forbid the publication of his polemic against Lipsius.[53] Several municipalities in Holland shared their concerns about Coornhert, and at the end of his life, when his high-placed protectors had died and he had outlived his welcome in Haarlem, he had great difficulties finding another Dutch town that would grant him residence.[54] Diplomacy or compromising were simply not options for Coornhert—both because of his character and because of his absolute belief in "the primacy of individual conscience," as Gerrit Voogt phrased it so accurately in his analysis of the debate between Coornhert and Lipsius.[55] Individual conscience above anything else was the crux of Coornhert's motivation and argument in defending the participation of the people in public debates concerning religious issues. Conscience also speaks in some of his other works where he gives a voice to the common man, and quite literally so in his morality plays.

## Voicing the Conscience of the Impoverished Man and the Simple Burgher

Between 1550 and 1582 Coornhert wrote ten theatre plays, half of them published during his life and others after his death. Although we do not know how many of these plays were performed in public, we do know that they were written with that intention—thanks to the inserted stage directions. As with his engravings and songs, plays made it possible to reach a broader public than would have been possible with his treatises and scholarly disputations, which perhaps raised the value of the ludic genre for him.[56] Coornhert wrote his pieces as morality plays, the dominant style of his time, with the use of allegories that personified abstract principles as their main characteristic. Argumentation rather than action and the aim of moral instruction rather than recreation were other characteristics of these plays.[57]

Coornhert's dramatic work had much in common with that of the Dutch "*Rederijkers*" (rhetoricians)—contemporaries who engaged in the collective writing and improving of Dutch poetry in the organized setting of a local chamber of rhetoric where they also debated social and political issues.[58] They frequently performed their morality plays in public at town markets and streets, so urban dwellers would have been familiar with the allegorical language used by the rhetoricians and Coornhert. To be sure, to understand some of Coornhert's more complex allegories, one would have needed a certain level of knowledge and training.[59] This training, however, did not necessarily have to be of a formal kind. Moreover, Coornhert's early plays were not very complex. If these plays were performed in public, he might have reached the illiterate as well.[60]

Much has been made of a critical observation about Dutch rhetoricians that Coornhert wrote down in one of his plays. He believed that some of them were too focused on embellishing their verses whereas they should concentrate on purifying their mother tongue to make it into an effective language. Still, Coornhert was on friendly terms with Haarlem rhetoricians and would later become an honorary member of one of the Amsterdam chambers of rhetoric, "De Eglentier."[61] Despite his criticism, he and the rhetoricians shared many ideals: furthering Dutch as a vernacular language, opening up the discussion on social issues, and giving moral instruction to the benefit of humankind. They even experienced similar problems with the authorities because of their overly liberal expression of opinions on matters of religion and state.[62]

Incidentally, women also participated in the social activities organized by the chambers of rhetoric, but usually did not become members. They formed a considerable part of the rhetoricians' audience and social networks, but it seems that—a few exceptions aside—they did not openly act as rhetoricians themselves.[63] As we shall see with Coornhert's plays, women were present in the role of female allegories. Since they embodied abstract principles, however, we should not mistake theirs for representing true women's voices (as we should not, either, misinterpret the male allegories in that way).[64]

Of Coornhert's morality plays, I want to single out the first two for discussion. In them he highlighted the dignity and moral capacity of humble people, contrasting it to the behavior of the well-to-do. Indeed, an oversimplified opposition between the weak conscience of a rich man and the strong conscience of a poor man is the leading theme of both plays. While this opposition could hardly be called sophisticated, it obviously made the message understandable to everyone, which presumably was the whole idea. Studying these early works will take us further back in time to the days when Coornhert first started to appear in the public domain and was still looking to find his form and audience.

In *De comedie vande ryckeman* (*The Comedy of the Rich Man*), written around 1550 and published in 1582, the story line is quite straightforward: the public witnesses the Rich Man struggle with his Conscience (personified by his wife) and listens to different advisers (such as Abundance and Delusion versus Brotherly Love and Biblical Proof) on how to spend his money. Arguments roll back and forth but it soon becomes clear that the more upright advisers are going to lose their fight against Country's Habits. When in the last scenes the biblical story of Lazarus is evoked, a beggar makes his entrance and the Rich Man has to decide whether to answer the poor man's plea for help or not.

In the play Lazarus's voice is the voice of a common man whose misfortunes have led him to a point where he feels forced to beg for food though he is reluctant to do so. Once he had lived a decent life, loved by his wife, honored by his children, respected by his servants, and willing to help the unfortunate poor with the money he had. But the wheel of fortune has turned, and now Lazarus—impoverished, weakened, and exhausted—feels torn between his life and his honor:

> Shall I, naked with shame, seek bread in order to live?
> Shall I, who once used to give in secret, beg in public?
> Shall I sourly sell my honor for a piece of bread? . . .
> For what do I live? To have death with me would be lighter for me
> than to follow crawling where the vagrants go.[65]

This Lazarus is not an idler who is too lazy to work, but a man who is no longer able to. Whereas in former times a man like him naturally would have been helped by his more fortunate fellow men, as Lazarus tells us in the play, in the present day wealth has made people unfeeling. They are unwilling to part with their money. And the little they are willing to give "is badly spent, the villains mostly get/the richest stocks, thus the honest poor have to fast."[66] And indeed, when Lazarus finally decides to knock on the door of the feasting Rich Man, he is rejected and left to die of hunger, just as in the Gospel of Luke (16:19–31). Even in his death Lazarus functions as an example: he dies willingly and without agony, more than ready to face God's judgment over his shortcomings.

Coornhert was so much taken with this edifying parable that he looked for extra means to bring it to the public, well aware as a Catholic that not all people had a Bible at home or were allowed to read it by themselves.[67] In 1551 he contacted the painter Maarten van Heemskerck, with whom he had worked before, to coproduce a series of four prints illustrating this parable. Coornhert the philosopher came up with the idea, Heemskerck the artist made a sketch, and Coornhert the engraver executed the work—steps we know he would later repeat with other artists.[68] No captions were needed this time; the scenes such as "The Dying of Lazarus" or "The Rich Man in Hell" were self-evident.

In the morality play too, no one could fail to notice that the impoverished Lazarus was the man with a conscience. Not only had he helped the needy when he still had money, but he also knew that he was wrong when he fleetingly thought of choosing the numbness of death over the pain of living. Lazarus realized in time this was not his decision to make:

> What do I say? Die? Lord, look after me, you are my hope
> this change is difficult, look after your chosen heart
> it is true begging that is born out of giving.[69]

In more than one respect this is a crucial part of the play. First of all, Coornhert identifies himself literally with the beggar Lazarus, punning on his own name—whatever its origin and possible other meanings—with the phrase "*vercooren hert*" ("chosen heart"). Second, he tells the audience that begging is allowed for those who had been willing to give themselves. And finally, this is the moment in the play when Lazarus accepts his fate and realizes it is even his duty to beg because he owes to God a willingness to live.

*The Comedy of the Rich Man* was not a comedy in the modern sense of the word. It was a morality play based on a parable that included a critique on an existing social problem. In the expanding sixteenth-century cities, poverty and the increase of vagrants and beggars were issues of great concern.[70] Chambers of rhetoric discussed poor relief and related topics at length and, like Coornhert, produced morality plays inspired by the increasingly popular story of Lazarus.[71] The growing concern with urban poverty would later lead Coornhert to write his famous *Boeventucht ofte Middelen tot mindering der schadelijke ledighghangers* (*Discipline of Villains, or Means to Reduce the Harmful Idlers*). This pamphlet was published in 1587 but a first version was written in 1567 when Coornhert spent a couple of months in jail after the Iconoclastic Fury of 1566 had led to increasing Spanish repression. His frequent meetings with Prince William of Orange, the leader of the Dutch Revolt, part of Coornhert's work as secretary for the burgomasters of Haarlem, had brought him under suspicion.[72]

In his *Discipline of Villains*, Coornhert advocated the reform of criminal justice and the introduction of houses of correction to resocialize the poor and jobless. In the sixteenth century this was a relatively new (though not entirely original) concept because up till then physical punishments or banning orders were the usual way to deal with vagrants and beggars causing trouble. Coornhert was one of the first to look at the social and economic causes of the phenomenon and to argue that familiarizing the poor with work would prevent them from becoming criminals. In addition, he reasoned that hard labor was a more efficient punishment for those who had already turned into criminals than traditional sentences, and even more of a deterrent than the death sentence.[73]

Saying that Coornhert sympathized with the lowest ranks of society would be too simple. As a humanist scholar he did not identify himself with "the rabble" nor did he consider poverty an ideal or a condition that

in itself would improve one's soul.[74] The poor men who had his sympathy were the "honest ones" who had, and were still willing, to work hard when offered the opportunity. They had fallen in poverty through no fault of their own, and even in that condition their conscience did not allow them to do anything that was morally wrong. This is what Lazarus had in common with Zeltsaam (Seldom), one of the protagonists in Coornhert's second morality play, titled *T' Roerspel van de kettersche wereldt die metten lippen den God des Hemels maar metten herten 't gheldt, des wereldts God, dient en eert* (*The Turbulent Play of the Heretical World Which Serves and Honors the God of Heaven with the Lips but Money, the God of the World, with the Heart*).[75] The play remained undated but was most likely written sometime between 1550 and 1567 and first published in 1590 by friends after Coornhert had died.[76]

A thematically related series of six combined engravings and etchings, composed by Heemskerck and known as "Divitum misera sors" ("The wretchedness of wealth"), was published in 1563, although this time no longer engraved by Coornhert himself but by a pupil of his, Philips Galle. By that time Coornhert was probably too busy with his work as a notary and town secretary of Haarlem. In 1560 when Heemskerck made the preliminary sketches and Coornhert was not yet sworn in as a notary, he may still have had the time to confer with his artist friend. Though the prints do not relate quite the same story as Coornhert's *Turbulent Play*, the overall message is the same and the allegories performing in the prints and performing in the play overlap. For instance, from the fourth print in the series, both Regina Pecunia (Money) and her female follower Pandemia (the Entire World) also make their appearance in Coornhert´s play, albeit as male characters there.[77] The print series misses out, however, on the role played in Coornhert's text by "Seldom—a humble simple burgher"—vis-à-vis his antagonist "Entire World—a man richly dressed as a merchant"—as Coornhert introduced them in his list of characters.[78] Again, as in *The Comedy of the Rich Man*, the human protagonists have to pick their side in a moral dilemma, this time between the world ruled by Lie and Money with their accomplices Deceit, High Status, and Great Need versus a life devoted to God's word, personified by Truth and both Testaments.

Starting with an amusing eulogy of Lie to himself, the play has deeper layers and more comic lines than Coornhert's first one but it has a similar basic plot, playing out the contrasts without much dynamics between the main characters as the literary historian Anneke Fleurkens observes in her in-depth study of Coornhert's dramatic work.[79] Thus, whereas Entire World is easily impressed by the sermons and lessons of Money and Lie, his neighbor Seldom does not believe a word of their claim that the only true

God is Gold and that the lovers of virtue form a dangerous sect: "one has to fear a ruse/there is something wrong when money is praised above virtue," he observes early in the play.[80] Whereas in the next act Entire World falls willingly for the promises and cynical reasoning of Great Need and Deceit, Seldom prefers to listen to God's words instead: "thus you taught us not to hinder our brother/but to help him lovingly as you did with us."[81] And whereas Entire World pities Seldom when the last one has lost his house, his children, and his hand in a sudden fire, Seldom accepts his misfortune as a beneficial act of God: "whom the Lord loves the most, he corrects the most/suffering too can make wise through practice."[82]

In case the audience had not yet caught the drift, it was then treated to an edifying dialogue between Old Testament and New Testament, sent to the world to instruct the people each with their own words in the next act. Seldom feels fortified by their rejection of material egoism but they fail to impress Entire World, even though he pretends to take their lessons to the heart since he had learned from Lie and Deceit the value of deception. In the final act of the play, both Seldom and Entire World are summoned for the court of Truth who has to judge the heretics of the world—a great last opportunity for Coornhert to spell out their differences: Seldom testifies humbly of his belief, well aware of the possibility that he is in error, and his sincerity subsequently leads Truth to discharge him rapidly. Entire World, however, first tries to hide himself, then sends Money to bribe Truth, and finally lies about his sentiments. Thus he is easily recognized by Truth as a heretic who has chosen Money as his God and forsworn the true Lord's words. Like the Rich Man in Coornhert's other play, Entire World had made the wrong choice. It is no surprise that following the court's conviction, he too was to end up in hell.

Even if Coornhert did not identify himself literally with Seldom as he had done with Lazarus in *The Comedy of the Rich Man*, it is obvious from the similarities with his other work that Seldom's voice was hís voice: deeply religious and upright, distrusting the ways of the world governed by money, and rejecting a life lived in luxury. And indeed, when Coornhert wrote this early play and had not yet made a name for himself, he may sometimes have felt that his voice was a voice crying in the wilderness, hence perhaps the name he chose for his alter ego: Seldom. The name is as telling as the fact that Coornhert introduced Seldom as "a humble simple burgher" ("simple" here also carrying the meaning of honesty) and his antagonist Entire World as a merchant. For Coornhert the two characters did not fall in the same category—they were worlds apart. In the play, Deceit, described as a "merchant's mate or servant," was even granted a monologue of a hundred lines to list the many tricks available to merchants to accumulate riches in dishonest ways (l. 770–870). What should

we make of this apparent distrust of the skills of the merchant, one of the other representatives of the common people found in this volume?

## Offering the Merchant the Choice for a Conscience

Perhaps we should start by recalling that Coornhert's distrust was not exclusively directed toward merchants. Despite his deep religious conviction that people were essentially good and able to perfect themselves, his critical eye could not fail to notice the errors of his fellow men and women—whether they were poor or rich, vagrants or judges, clergymen or scholars, servants or merchants. In the same way as Coornhert had made a distinction between the honest and dishonest poor, he also distinguished between honest and dishonest merchants. He considered "commerce to be an intermediate human work," that is, neither good nor bad in itself but dependent on the way a person dealt with it.[83] It was all outlined in the ethical trade manual that Coornhert wrote under the title *De coopman, aenwysende d'oprechte conste om Christelyck ende met eenen gelycken moede in 't winnen ende verliesen coophandel te dryven* (*The Merchant, Showing the True Art to Conduct Trade in a Christian Way and with Equanimity in Winning and Losing*).

The handbook, published in 1580 and reprinted in 1620, argued in 68 brief chapters the choices—right and wrong—that a merchant faced in business and daily life. According to Coornhert, a Christian merchant was allowed to make a reasonable profit but he was to avoid all questionable practices while doing so. He was not to lower himself to the use of monopolies, speculation, spreading rumors, the buying up of scarce stocks, usury, deceit, or any other crooked means to increase his profit—in search for wealth or status among other people. Coornhert furthermore advised the merchant to keep enough money in reserve to deal with financial setbacks and use the rest to help the poor that he personally was acquainted with—trusting God would take care of himself and his family if disaster would strike. A Christian merchant, moreover, should take his losses and profits philosophically, accepting God's will in these matters with an even and placid mind. And yes, Coornhert answered Mercator's query in the text: this kind of merchant was rare but he did exist. If a merchant made himself truly knowledgeable about God's love, he would become one with God's goodness and thus turn himself into the perfect Christian merchant.[84]

*The Merchant*, written in the form of a Socratic dialogue between a Geerhart Mercator and Dirck Coornhert himself, was dedicated to Dirck Jacobsz. van Montfoort (1508–1602), a cloth merchant and former burgomaster of the Dutch city Leiden. Van Montfoort was a close and old

friend of Coornhert. The writer considered him as an exemplary representative of the merchants' class because van Montfoort had always carried on his trade sincerely and with an open mind for the ethical issues of his profession. His person was portrayed in the querying Geerhart Mercator, Coornhert's discussion partner in *The Merchant*. Geerhart Mercator testified to the potential of the merchant to become a "simple burgher," that is, a rational man endowed with a conscience and the ability to make his own judgments when given the chance. Like his other work then, Coornhert's ethical trade manual addressed the common man, in this case the figure of the merchant, as a representative of humanity—working hard to improve his understanding of God's commandments and entitled to his own voice and choice.

Van Montfoort was not the only businessman that Coornhert counted among his friends.[85] The well-off Amsterdam merchant, and humanist philosopher, Hendrik Laurensz. Spiegel (1549–1612), a leading poet of the local chamber of rhetoric "De Eglentier," was another.[86] His loyal friend Nicolaes Gerritz van der Laen (c.1510–1584), a man who always stood up for Coornhert when he got into trouble even when the two of them disagreed, was a Haarlem regent and large-scale brewer in daily life.[87] Coornhert also had a good relationship with his four siblings, the eldest one being one of the five richest merchants in Amsterdam around 1543.[88] Contact with his widowed mother who had continued his father's cloth trade was reestablished as well, not long after their falling out due to his contrarian but, as it turned out, happy marriage with Cornelia Symons (c.1510–1584) in 1539.[89]

In spite of those relatives and friends making a good living in commerce, Coornhert did object to the accumulation of riches in the hands of a few, certainly when that happened through dubious practices, and that was what he observed around him in the booming economy of the sixteenth-century Netherlands: "Friend, I saw the majority of the merchants covet gain excessively, hunt unjustly, trust idolatrously, and keep cold-heartedly, to the detriment of their souls, the lands, and the lesser common sorts."[90] Working as a notary Coornhert may, indeed, have witnessed more than his share of shady business deals and people arranging their finances in questionable ways. Add to this a devout mind, a strong social engagement, and an inner need to edify his fellow citizens, and we may begin to understand why he criticized people's love of money so severely.

With this critical attitude toward merchant practices, Coornhert must have struck a chord with those contemporaries who shared his discomfort with the emergent climate of commercial capitalism in the Netherlands.[91] In the sixteenth century, many people still considered riches as suspicious,

believing that one could only become rich by making other people poor.[92] Coornhert was certainly not the only playwright at the time to critically write about merchants' behavior.[93] Commercial activities did not meld well with classical and Christian teachings that condemned the pursuit of profit in principle.[94] But the sixteenth century was an era of transition, and attitudes were beginning to change.[95] As we have seen, Coornhert himself did not believe that merchants acted dishonestly by definition. Commerce had an "intermediate" status for Coornhert, similar to money, possessions, and poverty. Those matters could be either abused or used correctly, that is, equanimously and with a Christian goal in mind.[96]

Later in his life Coornhert indeed may have lived according to these rules himself. When he died in 1590 he left not much of an estate, despite the fact that as a notary he would have earned a decent income.[97] Moreover, though he was disinherited by his father's will, he still received his statutory portion and he also inherited money when his mother died in 1557.[98] Houses bought in Haarlem furthermore suggest that Coornhert had considerable sums of money at his disposal at certain moments in his life. Bonger, his biographer, believes that Coornhert later gave away what he did not immediately need for himself[99]—a decision perhaps made easier by the fact that he and his wife did not have any children. Thus he would have put in practice what he had recommended in his *Ethics* and morality plays: keep only what you need for the necessities of life (that is, to avoid dying from hunger, thirst, or cold yourself) and give charitably though moderately to the Christian brothers and sisters that are truly in need.[100] In the end, that was the only way to live in peace with God. As Seldom had said in *The Turbulent Play*: a rich man's conscience will never let him have a moment's peace, but living in poverty makes it much more difficult to sin.[101]

## Unschooled But Endowed with Reason and a Conscience—Coornhert's Identification with the Common Man

In daily life Coornhert may have strived to live as an "ordinary" man, but in matters of the mind he was far from "ordinary." Concerned about the yawning gap between the rich and poor, Catholics and Protestants, the academically trained and the uneducated in his time, Coornhert took to promoting the rights and dignity of common men and women with his burin and quill.

Coornhert was, indeed, taking a radical position in championing humble folk as essentially rational individuals who did not need dogma or officials to decide for them what it meant to live according to God's rules. With their God-given intelligence and individual conscience, even the

unschooled would eventually be able to recognize the divine truth and live accordingly. The common people should therefore be taken seriously and allowed to testify to their personal convictions in public, in press, or in public worship. No authority—religious or secular—was to intervene in those human rights. To follow one's individual conscience should not be only a prerogative for the learned, rich, and powerful. It was the sine qua non for living well and perfecting oneself to God's image during life on earth—so the public could learn from characters such as Lazarus, Seldom, and other alter egos making their appearance in Coornhert's work. That conscience, however, should first be trained in recognizing God's truth, hence Coornhert's dedicated efforts to edify his compatriots, including his merchant friends personified in semi-fictitious discussion partners such as Geerhart Mercator. Though not solely directed toward the common people, much of his work was made public in such a form and language that it was accessible to an audience of both men and women who could read and write but had not enjoyed higher levels of education. If performed in public, the content of some of his songs and morality plays may even have trickled down to the illiterates.

What makes Coornhert's work so fascinating is his personal identification with ordinary men (perhaps in lesser degree with ordinary women), positioning himself as an unlearned and humble simple burgher while at the same time standing out as a gifted individual and man of wide reading with high-placed friends whose strong ego and sharp pen were feared by his learned opponents. Referring to himself as an unlearned man was not an expression of modesty but a tactical move, aimed at staking out a rhetorical position for himself. Having distanced himself from his own social milieu and not in the position to present himself as a scholar since he lacked an academic training, he was in need of a new point of identification. Claiming a voice and a choice for the unschooled, he was simultaneously claiming a voice and a choice for himself as a nonacademic. Likewise, the projection of a broad audience and claiming to speak for it could have been a strategy that looked promising to him. What's more, because the common man embodied the universal dimensions of humanity to Coornhert, the philosopher could not be anything else than a common man himself: endowed with a conscience and the inner light of reason he represented mankind, thus deserving the right to be taken seriously in his work and its godly inspiration.

However radical in his claim for individual religious rights and agency in the public space, Coornhert was not a radical who advocated collective political rights and agency for ordinary people. He was no Leveler or Digger *avant la lettre*. Coornhert did not trust the workings of common opinion and considered the vulgar sorts (the multiheaded "*vulgus*" or "*populus*") a too easy target for manipulation. Collectively, the people

should not be given an active part in matters of the state. As individuals, however, they were entitled to have a public voice where it concerned religious issues and policy. Thus Coornhert may not have stepped over the threshold of modern democracy, but with his religiously inspired and rationalistic arguments for individual human rights he did open the door to the new age to come.

## Notes

1. For the biographical details of his life, see Bonger, *Life and Work*, and Bonger, *Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert*.
2. See for this modernist interpretation, for example, Bergsma, "Coornhert," 43; Buys, "Sparks," 29–30; and Bonger, *Life and Work*, 253, 261–263. Roobol, *Disputation*, chapter 2, puts Coornhert's modernity into a more critical perspective.
3. Gruppelaar, "Ter inleiding."
4. This was, for instance, the view of Wilhelm Dilthey; see Bonger, *Life and Work*, 297.
5. Roobol, *Disputation*, 49, borrowing a phrase of Paul Oskar Kristeller about visionary thinkers in general (brackets by Roobol). Similar critical statements in Van Veen, "gants wederschriftelijck," 125–126; and Van Nierop, "Coornherts huwelijk," 33.
6. Bonger, *Life and Work*, 22, 29–30. For a complete list of Coornhert's publications and translations: *Life and Work*, 319–326.
7. Bonger, *Life and Work*, 15–16, 20–21; Van Nierop, "Coornherts huwelijk," 33.
8. Fresco, "Coornhert," 60, 68–71.
9. See Gelderblom, "Nieuwe stof," for Coornhert's belief in the vernacular; Gelderblom, "Rust na lust," for his songs; and Veldman, "Coornhert," for his work as woodcutter, etcher, and engraver.
10. On the printing house: Bonger, *Life and Work*, 23–24.
11. Bonger, *Life and Work*, 17; Van Nierop, "Coornherts huwelijk."
12. "*vir ingeniosus, sed turbidi animi ac inquieti, ad contradicendum natus*": Buchelius, *Diarium*, quoted in Bergsma, "I Shall," 19.
13. "*niet voor den scherpzinnighen gheleerden, maar voor den leerghierighen ongheleerden*": Coornhert, *Zedekunst*, 122.
14. J. P. N. Land, *De wijsbegeerte in de Nederlanden* (1899) 89, quoted in Verwey, "Was de *ratio*?," 170.
15. Koppenol, "Brieven," 72–74.
16. Fresco, "Coornhert," 61; Fleurkens, *Stichtelijke lust*, 25–35; Buys, "Sparks," 22; Voogt, "Primacy," 1240; Veldman, "Coornhert," 115–116, 120–125, 135; and Gelderblom "Rust na lust," 17, 39–40.
17. On the Dutch captions see Veldman, "Coornhert," 120–124.
18. *T' Roerspel*, l. 594.
19. Veldman, *Wereld*, 9.
20. Spufford, "Literacy," 248–263, 269–271.

21. Bonger, *Life and Work*, 15.
22. Veldman, *Wereld*, 91–103.
23. Veldman, "Coornhert"; Veldman, *Wereld*; Veldman, *Maarten van Heemskerck*, 53–93.
24. Veldman, *Wereld*, 18–22.
25. "*Qui Veri studio, qui Libertatis amore/Pontifices nequijt ferre, Lemane, tuos;/Vivida sic Batavus Coornhertius ora ferebat:/Ora sed in scriptis vividiora sonant*," translation by Leo Nellissen.
26. Veldman, *Wereld*, 27–29.
27. Buys, "Sparks," 29–31. See for the reception of Coornhert's ideas Bonger, *Life and Work*, 289–311, and for the exact nature of Coornhert's rationalism furthermore Verwey, "Was de *ratio*?"
28. "*voncxken des Godlijcken Lichts*": Buys, "Sparks," 26.
29. Buys, "Sparks"; Van Veen, "No One"; Gelderblom, "Rust na lust"; on the classical inspiration for this point of view, see Fresco, "Coornhert," 71–74.
30. Van Veen, "No One"; Buys, "Inleiding."
31. Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 84–105.
32. Bonger, *Life and Work*, 216–245; Bonger, with Gelderblom, "Coornhert en Franck." See for Coornhert's renaming of Catholicism: Coornhert, *Weet of rust*, 21, 130; and Voogt, *Constraint*, 82.
33. Veldman, *Wereld*, 20, 69–85; Tanis and Horst, *Images*, 69–73.
34. Not all of this was invented by Coornhert himself: Veldman, *Wereld*, 84–85, points at other texts and prints that might have inspired Coornhert and de Weert.
35. For the symbolic meanings associated with the figure of the farmer at the time, see Vandommele, *Als in een Spiegel*, 347–359.
36. For a helpful overview of the many different meanings of the category of common people, see the Introduction to this volume by Margaret Jacob and Catherine Secretan. Compare also Hobbes's notions of the commoner as described by Luc Foisneau in Chapter 2.
37. This is most elaborately discussed in Bonger, *Life and Work*, 69–175; Voogt, *Constraint*; and Robool, *Disputation*, the latter being more skeptic about the modernity and radical nature of Coornhert's ideas. More succinct are Voogt, "Primacy"; Van Gelderen, "Debates"; and Gruppelaar, "Principieel en problematisch."
38. See on this issue also Tracy, "Erasmus, Coornhert," 57.
39. "*begeerten der dolinghen*"; see the list of characters at the beginning of the play. See furthermore the roles played by Ghemeen Gevoelen (Common Opinion) in his *Comedie van lief en leed* (1582), Communis Opinio in *Abrahams uytgangh* (1575), and Israel (the Dutch people) in the *Comedie van Israel* (1590).
40. *Synodus of vander Conscientien Vryheit* (1582) 152–153, quoted and translated by Tracy, "Erasmus, Coornhert," 58, also 62.
41. *Proces van 't Ketter-dooden ende Dwangh der Conscientien* (1590) liii-b: "*omme dat rechter te maecken van dese saecke, also de selve voornaemlijck is betreffende allen ghemeynen Landtzaten, niet min dan d' Overheydt selve*," quoted and translated by Voogt, "Primacy," 1240.

42. "*ex tua sententia subiicimus omnia plebi?*," quoted and translated by Voogt, "Primacy," 1244.
43. Van Eijnatten, "Between Practice and Principle," 88–89.
44. Van Gelderen, "Debates," 243.
45. Van Nierop, "Censorship," 35.
46. Van Eijnatten, "Between Practice and Principle," 85–88; Groenveld, "Mecca," 67–70, 79.
47. "*ongebonden stoutmoedicheyt van ongeleerde menschen*": Becker, *Bronnen*, 101.
48. Voogt, "Primacy," 1246.
49. "*ongheleerde idiot*" in *Vander aengheheven dwang inder conscientien binnen Holland* (1579), quoted in Bonger, *Life and Work*, 76. The self-characterization as an "unlearned idiot" returned several times in his work; see Becker, "Inleiding," xvi.
50. "*Alzo de landen zijn om de menschen, niet deze om der landen wille*," quoted and translated by Voogt, "Primacy," 1239.
51. "*perturbateur vande gemeyn ruste*," see Bonger, *Life and Work*, 76, 314.
52. Bonger, *Life and Work*, 313–314.
53. Voogt, "Primacy," 1246.
54. He eventually found it in Gouda, where he would die in October 1590. Bonger, *Life and Work*, 314–315.
55. Voogt, "Primacy," 1248–1249. See also Gruppelaar, "Principieel en problematisch," 46–52.
56. Fleurkens, *Stichtelijke lust*, 21–23, 30–35.
57. Ibid., 35–55.
58. Van Dixhoorn, *Lustige geesten*; Spaans, "Public Opinion"; Boel, *Leden*, 31–33.
59. Veldman, *Maarten van Heemskerck*, 93.
60. Boele, *Leden*, 137, mentions at least one recorded event that probably involved a public performance of an early play written by Coornhert. The philosopher himself also hinted at an existing practice of public performances of his plays; see Fleurkens, "Leren met lust," 80.
61. Boele, *Leden*, 205–207; Bonger, *Life and Work*, 125.
62. Fleurkens, *Stichtelijke lust*, 35–43; Spaans, "Public Opinion," 189–192; Van Deursen, *Kopergeld*, Part II: "Volkscultuur," 106–110.
63. De Jeu, *Spoor*, 23–24.
64. Fleurkens, "Leren met lust," 86.
65. "*Sal ic dan naect met schaemt broot soecken om te leeven?/Sal ick by daech bidden, die heymelic plach te geeven?/Sal ick mijn eer suyrlijc om een stuc broots vercopen?/ . . . /Waer toe leef ic? Die doot waer my lichter taencleven/Dan cruypende te volgen daer potboeven loopen.*": l. 1068–1073.
66. "*Qualijck besteet, die potboeven gaen meest strijcken/Met die vetste soppen, dies vasten rechte armen.*": l. 1101–1103.
67. Veldman, "Coornhert," 125.
68. Veldman, "Coornhert," 116, 125; idem, *Maarten van Heemskerck*, 53–93, for an extensive discussion of the relationship between Coornhert and Heemskerck.

69. "*Wat seg ick? Sterven? Hoedt my heer, ghy zijt mijn hoopen/Dees verandering valt zwaer, hoedt u vercooren hert/Och, tes waer bidden, dat wt geven gebooren wert.*": l. 1076–1078.
70. Boele, *Leden*, 254–258.
71. Ibid., 31–34, 136–163.
72. He was released on parole pending his process, but when it looked like he would be convicted he broke his word of honor and fled to Cologne in Germany: Bonger, *Life and Work*, 40–50.
73. Gelderblom and Meijer Drees, "Boeventucht"; Bonger, *Life and Work*, 256–261.
74. Bonger, *Life and Work*, 253, 255; Boele, *Leden*, 259–262, 265.
75. "*Roerspel*" was not a common Dutch word. My translation is therefore tentative and based on the meaning of the Dutch adjective "*roerig*" (turbulent) rather than the adjective "*roerend*" (moving). With the deviant abbreviation of the Dutch article "*het*" at the start of the title, it is likely that "*t' roerspel*" also includes a pun, referring to "*troerspel*" or "*treurspel*," that is, tragedy. See Bonger, *Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert*, 129.
76. Fleurkens, *Stichtelijke lust*, 139–141.
77. The series is elaborately discussed (and reproduced) in Veldman, *Leerrijke reeksen*, 26–35; and Veldman, *Maarten van Heemskerck*, 85–90. Cf. Fleurkens, *Stichtelijke lust*, 139–141, for a more skeptical take on the similarities.
78. "*Zeltsaam—een slecht simpel burgher*" and "*Al de Werelt—een man rijckelijck als Koopman ghekleet.*" Note that the words "*slecht*" and "*simpel*" often occurred in tandem at the time.
79. Fleurkens, *Stichtelijke lust*, 142–161.
80. "*Voor list is te vreezen/'T gaat qualijck daar 't ghelt boven dueght werdt geprezen.*": l. 346–347.
81. "*Dus leerdy ons broeder niet te hinderen/Maar lieflijck, zo ghy ons doet, te staan in staden*": l. 1148–1149.
82. "*God castijdt aldermeest die hy meest bemint/Oock kan lyden door oeffening verstandigh maken.*": l. 1238–1240.
83. "*Dat coophandel een middelbaer menschelyck werck sy*": Coornhert, *Coopman*, chapter II.
84. Coornhert, *Coopman*; for a summary, see Bonger, *Life and Work*, 253–255.
85. Bonger, *Life and Work*, 27.
86. Ibid., 15, 123–128.
87. Ibid., *Life and Work*, 41–42, 49, 75–78; Dólleman and Schutte, "Haarlems geslacht," 318–321.
88. Bonger, *Life and Work*, 15.
89. Ibid., *Life and Work*, 17; Van Nierop, "Coornherts huwelijk," 33–34, 41–42.
90. "*Ick sach, vrundt, het meerdeel der coopluyden het gewinne onmatelyck begeren, onrechtvaerdelyck bejaghen, afgodelyck betrouwen, ende liefdeloselyck bewaren, tot bederf haerder zielen, der landen, ende der schamelen ghemeynten.*": Coornhert, *Coopman*, "Opdracht," fol. CCCLXXVII.
91. The discomfort is masterfully described by Schama in the key chapter of *Embarrassment of Riches* (chapter 5.2).

92. Roper, "Stealing Manhood," 132; Veldman, *Maarten van Heemskerck*, 89.
93. Sturkenboom, "Staging the Merchant," 213–214; Vandommele, *Als in een spiegel*, 297–298, 328–338.
94. Spies, "Koopman"; Jacob and Secretan, "Introduction." Cf. for a different take Todeschini, "Theological Roots."
95. Skrine, "Images"; Stevenson, *Praise and Paradox*; see also the various contributions to Jacob and Secretan (eds.), *Self-Perception*.
96. Bonger, *Life and Work*, 253–256.
97. Becker, *Bronnen*, 103.
98. Van Nierop, "Coornherts huwelijk," 36–37.
99. Bonger, *Life and Work*, 256.
100. Ibid., 253–256; Boele, *Leden*, 151–156.
101. *T' Roerspel*, l. 1386–1400.

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2

# Common People as Individuals: Hobbes's Normative Approach to the Ordinary Mind

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Although they may be good at writing history,[1] modern philosophers are often not in the best position to address the questions posed by the historical reality of ordinary people. One reason for their uneasiness may come from their philosophical penchant for orderly thinking, which deprives them of a direct grasp of the messy side of life; another reason, upon which we shall focus, is their tendency to approach ordinary lives along normative lines. A narrative approach, by contrast, may be more revealing. But by and large that is not the approach taken by philosophers such as Hobbes. Instead of describing what is given by historical evidence—*mores*, practices, languages, diaries, etc.—the philosopher would rather consider what it should be like to be an ordinary man, that is, for example, what rights should define everybody's capacity for action. It is particularly the case when Hobbes develops a normative conception of his own. He addresses the question of the "common people" not from the historical perspective of what it was to be a *commoner* in seventeenth-century England, but from the normative issue of what it should be like to be an *individual* endowed with rights.[2]

One often-neglected aspect of being an "individual" in possession of rights was the requirement of a certain conception of what may be called the good use of our passions. The new definition of the good life as based on the pursuit of the *bonum sibi* or "self-interest"—so central to modern moral philosophy—rests on a new understanding of moral life as well as a new description of what is going on in our minds when

we are motivated to act by our passions. Absent a description of what people actually do in their ordinary lives, Hobbes must rely on a new anthropology to give a theoretical foundation for a new individualistic morality. Common people may be thought, indeed, to have been far more generous and devoted to the common good—or, at least, to the good of their neighbors and family—than the individualistic canon of modern philosophy would like them to have been. But the aim of Hobbes is to show a scientific basis for defending an individualistic morality. And if he wants to persuade us of the truth of his description, he needs to show that common people act morally according to the functioning of their mind. That is why it is of great interest to see how Hobbes deals with notions such as "common people," "ordinary man," or "everyman."

The hypothesis here is that Hobbes introduces a normative rendering of what "common people" means: what he says to be the ordinary behavior of common men and women is not a description but, rather, a prescription of what their lives should be like—if they acted according to the new mechanistic description of their mind. His rendering entails not only a moral turn, later to be called "individualism," but a complete transformation of the basis of morality. This transformation had huge consequences on the "commerce" between men, that is, on all kinds of exchanges between people in modern societies.

There is, of course, the simple idea that the notion of "common people" has always been encumbered by normative ideas: when "common" meant that certain people did not belong to the nobility, or, to speak like the French, were not "*gens de qualité*," it was already a normative idea. But the contention here is that the idea of what is "common," "ordinary," later to be called "normal," is indeed imposed on us by a new morality that wants to have us behave like individuals. But how have we come to the prescription that individualism should be the right way to go for common people?[3] That question is precisely what a study of Hobbes is meant to help us understand.

In order to proceed, let us see first how Hobbes uses the notion of "common people" in a somewhat puzzling manner, within two competing argumentative settings, one to criticize ordinary superstition, the other to show that common people can be good citizens, when they have a capacity to judge according to sovereign laws. Next we will try to show how Hobbes defines the normal functioning of the common mind as the basis for a new individualistic morality; and eventually we'll see how the ordinary self-caring person ends up defining himself (or herself) no longer in relation to the nobility, but by a right to define for himself (or herself) what the good life is.

## What Are "Common People" Good for in *Leviathan*?

There are two different, and to a certain extent competing, uses of the expression "common people" in *Leviathan*: the first one refers to uneducated people, who are said to be given to believing in absurdities; the second concerns the trust a sovereign should have in the political and juridical judgment of his subjects. Before considering how such apparently opposed views can be reconciled, we need to scrutinize those two uses, first by the lack of judgment typical of common minds as far as miracles are concerned:

> Furthermore, seeing Admiration and Wonder, is consequent to the knowledge and experience, wherewith men are endued, some more, some lesse; it followeth, that the same thing, may be a Miracle to one, and not to another. And thence it is, that ignorant, and superstitious men make great Wonders of those works, which other men, knowing to proceed from Nature, (which is not the immediate, but the ordinary work of God,) admire not at all: As when Ecclipses of the Sun and Moon have been taken for supernaturall works, by the common people; when neverthelesse, there were others, could from their naturall causes, have foretold the very hour they should arrive: Or, as when a man, by confederacy, and secret intelligence, getting knowledge of the private actions of an ignorant, unwary man, thereby tells him, what he has done in former time; it seems to him a Miraculous thing; but amongst wise, and cautelous men, such Miracles as those, cannot easily be done.[4]

Hobbes describes common people here as superstitious persons, prone to believe in miracles when they fail to grasp the natural causes of phenomena. Opposed to such ignorant folk stands the learned man, capable of knowing things from their natural causes, that is, according to Aristotle, capable of "science." Such a critique of common superstitious minds can be seen as characteristic of an early, later disputed, phase of the Enlightenment, one that ignores how ordinary men may not be as ignorant as Hobbes wants them to be. Although common people may esteem arts and crafts as competences worth cultivating, they do it for the wrong reason, giving more weight to the "artificer" than to the scientist.[5] Such a judgment is still very far from that of the *encyclopédistes* with their careful and praiseworthy descriptions of arts and crafts.

When snatching quotes from the Bible that may seem to corroborate the possibility of miracles, Hobbes says simply that the "Impostors" who want to have others believe in their capacity to achieve miracles "need not the study so much as of naturall causes, but the *ordinary ignorance, stupidity, and superstition* of mankind."[6] To study the minds of common people is equivalent here to studying their capacity to believe in absurdities—"the

ordinary ignorance"[7]—and all kinds of logical fallacies. Such ignorance is, indeed, characteristic of the many, an "aptitude to error generally of all men, but especially of them that have not much knowledge of naturall causes, and of the nature, and interests of men."[8] Interestingly enough, common ignorance is not only ignorance of natural causes, but also ignorance of human nature, and history, since history rests on the knowledge of interests.

However, this denigration of the common man's ability to know scientifically seems to be forgotten when Hobbes comes to discussing political and juridical competences of ordinary people. Strikingly, Hobbes gives an extremely positive assessment of the political capacities of ordinary people. The force of Hobbes's appreciation of ordinary men's political capacities arises as a riposte to an objection against the vulgar made by the higher classes. According to aristocrats, or learned men, "though the Principles [i.e., of politics, as dealt with by Hobbes] be right, yet Common people are not of capacity enough to be made to understand them."[9] Trusting here the political judgment of common men–clever enough to understand the necessity of their obedience to the sovereign for the peace of all—Hobbes turns himself against two groups of people: the "rich and potent subjects of a kingdom," who hardly accept that their interests could be bridled by sovereign power, and the learned, who are considered no longer as superior because they would possess a higher knowledge, but as proud subjects prone to disobey if their authority were to be contested. The superiority of "Common-people's minds" is to be found in their capacity to receive as a "clean paper" would do "whatsoever by Publique Authority shall be imprinted in them."[10] (see Illustration 2.1) The good political functioning of common minds is sometimes prevented by their dependence on "Potent men"[11] or "Learned men,"[12] but there is no necessity that things go that way. However, the limits of Hobbes's praise of common political capacities are quite obvious: what he expects from commoners is in the first place their ability to obey—a negative capacity, so to speak, not to be prevented from obedience by the prejudices of the rich, potent, and learned subjects of a kingdom. Is that all there is in Hobbes concerning the political capacity of ordinary minds?

Not exactly, since common people are also praised by him for having a capacity to be good judges. After making a distinction between an advocate, who needs to read for the bar, and a judge who does not—the latter needs mainly to be a "good Interpreter of the Law"[13]—Hobbes brings together, rather unexpectedly, Lords and Commoners (see Illustration 2.2.): both are capable, on the one side, of judging from the testimony of witnesses whether the law has been trespassed, and, on the other side, of saying what the infraction is, whether a crime, a felony, a homicide, or an

**Illustration 2.1** *Leviathan*'s frontispiece by Abraham Bosse, head edition, 1651, detail

assault on the law.[14] Those two capacities—that is, to obey the sovereign and to judge and punish according to the law—are, indeed, intimately connected. What brings them together is a common relationship to the sovereign authority, which is at the basis (or, rather, at the summit) of the state. No wonder therefore that Hobbes can justify not following the truth, when a command has been ordered by the sovereign authority:

> For disobedience may lawfully be punished in them, that against the Laws teach even true Philosophy. Is it because they tend to disorder in Government, as countenancing Rebellion, or Sedition? then let them be silenced, and the Teachers punished by vertue of his Power to whom the care of the Publique quiet is committed; which is the Authority civill. For whatsoever Power Ecclesiastiques take upon themselves (in any place where they are subject to the State) in their own Right, though they call it Gods Right, is but Usurpation.[15]

Therefore, churches and doctors cannot pretend to have people obey the truth independently of what the sovereign says should be obeyed: as Hobbes famously pointed out, it is authority, not truth, that makes the law.[16] Common minds, therefore, need not so much to understand whatever truth there is but be able to have a good judgment in matters of law. Judgment, indeed, plays a cardinal role in defining the capacity of human minds: the new and decisive notion of power analyzed by Hobbes in chapter 10 of *Leviathan* can be understood as an attempt to figure out

**Illustration 2.2** *Leviathan*'s frontispiece by Abraham Bosse, head edition, 1651, detail

how common minds should judge about what is common to all passions of the mind.[17] What has now to be shown is that Hobbes's invention of the notion of "power" has to do with a new understanding of what "common man" means—a man that thinks in terms of power—and that such an understanding has a "normative" dimension attached to it, since the common man has to think of his various passions as diverse expressions of a desire for power.

## Power, Intellectual Virtues, and the (Re)invention of the Common Man

When Hobbes comes to describing intellectual virtues in chapter 8 of *Leviathan*, his concern is not so much with the learned, well-educated people, who graduated as he did from Oxford,[18] but with the common man who can be endowed with a "*Good Wit*"[19] without "Method, Culture, or Instruction."[20] The opposition, therefore, is not only between the well-educated and the uneducated, the learned and the vulgar, but between two

kinds of intellectual virtues, the "*Naturall*"[21] and the "*Acquired*."[22] It is clear that intellectual virtues corresponding to mathematics, Greek and Latin, or philosophy, are not only the result of natural talent, but are capacities acquired thanks to method and training. Most of the time in seventeenth-century Europe, the ordinary man was excluded from such knowledge: although Gassendi was the son of a farmer, there were not many philosophers of the age who were coming from the lower classes. Occasionally chance intervened, so that the Church, or a rich uncle, or an excellent teacher saw a young man's potential, as was the case for Hobbes. However, the common man, according to Hobbes, is liable to some excellence in the field of intellectual achievement: since "by *Vertues* INTELLECTUAL, are alwayes understood such abilityes of the mind, as men praise, value, and desire should be in themselves."[23] In short there are also capacities that are to be found in the ordinary man. That "natural" cleverness has nothing to do with genetics: we are not born with it—although a natural scientist, Hobbes is not interested here in the structure of the brain—but it entirely develops from sense, that is, from our capacity to feel, see, and hear. What is more common to humanity than the fact of sensation? It is so common that it is not only proper to humanity, but encompasses also the animal world.

Specific to humankind, individuals look for their place or their precedence over others, and that is true of intelligence as of any other qualities: since a virtue is nothing other than "what is valued for eminence."[24] There is no eminence when no comparison is possible. Comparison is at the basis of evaluation, that is to say, prizing: "For if all things were equally in all men, nothing would be prized."[25] That concern for comparison, evaluation, and precedence are constitutive elements of an individualistic approach to the good life. Characteristically, Hobbes gives the individual mind an interest in the comparison between separate persons, thus introducing an individualistic perspective. It is important to understand how the urge for precedence affects the mind of the common man. That affect can be best described in the terms that Hobbes borrowed from Aristotle through a new combination between imagination and judgment.

What will later be called individualism has not so much to do in Hobbes's philosophy with possessive individualism[26] as with a certain characterization of the relationship, in the mind of the ordinary man, between imagination and judgment. The "natural mind," as Hobbes puts it, requires not simply—from the philosopher—a naturalistic description of the mind: it calls for a normative description of what the right functioning of the mind should be like. Indeed, what is here described as a virtue of the natural mind—its "intellectual virtue" to put it in Aristotelian terms—corresponds to some rules to be followed. There is, indeed, a correct way of having imagination and judgment to work together.

That correct use of the mind rests on a correct use of the passions, and the name Hobbes invented for that use is "power." What makes Hobbes's theory of power such an important step in modern moral philosophy lies in the link he establishes between a normal, so to speak, functioning of the mind and power, or utility, considered as the objet to which passions apply. Chapter 8 of *Leviathan* has a very Aristotelian title: "Of the VERTUES *commonly called* INTELLECTUAL; *and their contrary* DEFECTS." While there may be nothing new in the title, the content of the chapter contains innovations of great importance. What is common to Hobbes and Aristotle is their understanding of virtue as some kind of excellence.[27] But the difference between them is that, whereas Aristotle defines intellectual virtue as a medium between two extremes, Hobbes defines it in terms of power to be pursued. The Aristotelian *orthos logos*—that is, a principle of determination of what virtue is[28]—is being replaced by a theory of power, that is, a principle allowing a comparison between minds. Such a difference in understanding of the practical aptitudes of the mind allows Hobbes to value intellectual virtues of a different sort, that is, those that will allow the affirmation *by comparison* of the individuality of the mind.

Thus, whereas Aristotle considers prudence as the virtue that makes a real difference between men, there is nothing special for Hobbes in the prudent man. This is because prudence depends on the quantity of experience, which varies only according to age. What matters is the capacity various people have to imagine and to judge, and to combine both capacities.[29] What is new in Hobbes's definition of intellectual virtues is, therefore, the fact that prudence is left behind, and imagination and judgment put to the fore, no longer being what they were in Aristotle, that is, minor virtues.[30] The common mind now exists armed with new capabilities that, it may be argued, equip it for greater participation in worldly affairs.

A few more words about the functioning of the common mind according to Hobbes: it implies a form of mind in which the capacity to judge wins over imagination, to differentiate capacities, strengths, and failings. Contrary to the Aristotelian mind, the Hobbesian mind constantly judges what the imagination conveys. This subordination does not mean that the mind of the common man would be rational throughout: on the contrary, it implies that the passions common to all men are at the basis of the functioning of their mind. To put it otherwise, the quality of our mind is related to the intensity of our passions:

> And this difference of quicknesse, is caused by the difference of mens passions; that love and dislike, some one thing, some another: and therefore some mens thoughts run one way, some another; and are held to, and observe differently the things that passe through their imagination.[31]

Imagination is the faculty that perceives what is common between thoughts; judgment is the faculty that sees the differences, that is, the faculty that makes distinctions. The quality of a mind is therefore to be able to apply one's thoughts to a steady end: nothing more worrying for Hobbes than the mind that jumps from one thought to another; such a disquieting disposition has something to do with madness.[32] The general rule concerning the good functioning of the mind is, therefore, that imagination is always to be submitted to judgment: "So that where Wit is wanting, it is not Fancy that is wanting, but Discretion. Judgement therefore without Fancy is Wit, but Fancy without Judgement not."[33] Why is it now that such activity of the natural mind is so important for an enquiry on the common man? Because that activity produces the "abstract" passion of power, and that passion is for Hobbes the basis of the new individual.

Contrary to virtues that people acquire through method and instruction, the virtues of the natural mind fundamentally rest on ordinary passions, or, to put it like Hobbes does, the "cause of this difference of Witts, are in the Passions."[34] Why do minds differ one from the other? Not because of any difference between the brains of those two individuals, but because they have different passions.[35] As a matter of fact, differences in habits and education are enough to explain differences in the passions, which in their turn can explain differences in wit. What matters, though, is not so much the qualitative differences between the passions as the possibility to compare them thanks to a common denominator. The hypothesis put forward in this chapter is that this common denominator is a new conception of power no longer equated with *libido dominandi*—that is, a desire to dominate—as such, but considered by Hobbes as a universal dimension present in all passions.

Reducing all our passions to power is done by Hobbes in two stages: first, by isolating among the passions a more limited group, that are "the more or lesse Desire of Power, of Riches, of Knowledge, and of Honour";[36] then, by reducing those main passions to power, for "riches, Knowledge and Honour are but severall sorts of Power."[37] In chapter XI of *De Homine*,[38] the term "utility" replaces the term "power," that is defined in chapter 10 of *Leviathan* as a man's "present means, to obtain some future apparent Good."[39] Such a replacement makes explicit the instrumental dimension of power, and helps characterize the passions of the new common man in terms of his bigger or smaller ability to increase his power. Therefore, the Hobbesian individual is not looking after passions that would confer on him some kind of singularity, but after power, a common passion that allows for interpersonal comparisons. In *The Elements of Law*, power was already defined as a difference in power, that is a comparison between two powers: "power simply is no more, but the excess of the

power of one above that of another."[40] But *Leviathan* gives a more abstract definition of the notion in terms of "means," that is, in terms of goods allowing one to obtain any other "apparent good."[41] Such a definition is useful because it allows a calculation of the difference in power between individuals; it becomes the sum of the means available to obtain any future goods that one can wish.

The centrality of power as a common denominator to all passions is essential to our argument, since it makes the difference between "common minds" and "distinguished minds" to be a difference of degree on the common scale of power, not a difference in nature. If individualism implies a form of mind in which the capacity to judge wins over imagination, it is interesting to note that it also proceeds from a desire for power that is attributed to all men and women, and not only to a social and political elite. Thus, Hobbesian individualism appears to be quite common, since it is meant to be the relative superiority of someone who compares himself to others on a common scale, and not the affirmation of the uniqueness of the aristocratic self. Without the notion of power as a common denominator between the passions of the different minds, no comparative judgment could be made. Thus, behind Hobbes's individualistic vision of the common mind, there is a normative dimension: the various Aristotelian ways of life *must* now be assessed by us according to a unique criterion, power, that is supposed to be relatively indeterminate. But, of course, very quickly, among the various manifestations of power in the world (having friends, etc.), there are two features that emerge, those of wealth and glory.

Two examples of what consequences such a reduction of the variety of our passions to power can have are particularly striking: the learned man, who used to be the hero of *vita contemplativa*, is henceforth condemned to a ridiculously small amount of power, since his work can only be recognized, and prized, thanks to its technical applications:

> The Sciences, are small Power; because not eminent; and therefore, not acknowledged in any man; nor are at all, but in a few; and in them, but of a few things. For Science is of nature, as none can understand it to be, but such as in a good measure have attayned it.[42]

On the other side, the moral hero of practical life in Christianity, the saint or, more generally, the good man, is more or less condemned by this new definition of power to stupidity:

> And therefore, a man who has no great Passion for any of these things [i.e., wealth and glory]; but is as men terme it indifferent; though he may be so

> farre a good man, as to be free from giving offence; yet he cannot possibly have either a great Fancy, or much Judgement.[43]

If goodness is not the main virtue of an astute mind, it is because it betrays an absence of passion, an indifference to power confining to dullness, which is not compatible with the vividness of imagination and the acuteness of judgment that characterize the common man's mind at his best according to Hobbes. That second example shows well enough that wealth and glory have become the central elements of a passionate life, contrary to all classical models of wisdom and decency. The stage has been set philosophically for the justification of commoners pursuing their worldly interests and making their mark on the world (see Illustration 2.3.).

What has still to be shown is how, armed with the new theory of the common mind, the ordinary self-regarding person ends up defining himself not in the first instance in opposition to the supposedly inherent virtue of nobility or, in the French context, in contrast to "*honnête homme*,"[44] but defines himself by his right, natural so to speak, conceived as a universality, to judge among his passions those that will be good to him.

**Illustration 2.3** *Leviathan*'s frontispiece by Abraham Bosse, head edition, 1651, detail

## The Natural Rights of the Common People

There are obviously many readings of the invention of natural rights theories:[45] I would like to suggest that Hobbes's philosophy can also help us construe that invention as ascribing rights to the ordinary man. Why so? Because Hobbes gives us a philosophical justification of power, which we must understand as a benchmark thanks to which the various passions of common people can be compared. The difficulty of such a justification is that it seems to be thoroughly opposed to the generally received idea that a desire for power is contrary to reason, and therefore to the notion of a "right."

As a matter of fact, Hobbes's demonstration aims at showing that, if there is no accord between the right of the common man to get power and at the same time to reason, there is at least no contradiction between them:

> it is not against reason that a man doth all he can to preserve his own body and limbs, both from death and pain. And that which is not against reason, men call RIGHT, or jus, or blameless liberty of using our own natural power and ability. It is therefore a right of nature: that *every man* may preserve his own life and limbs, with all the power he hath.[46]

Hobbes's logic is as follows: it is not contrary to reason to do what one is forced to do; but one is forced by nature to will what is good, and to avoid what is bad, and above all the worst of evils, death[47]; therefore, it is not contrary to reason to have the liberty to do what one can to preserve life and limbs. No need to go into deductive detail to realize that it puts "everyman" at the forefront of moral philosophy: no difference here between commoners, learned men, and noblemen, since the only thing that matters is that "everyman" can have a right to use power in order to preserve his life.

Two further characteristics of this justification of natural rights show that Hobbes's theory deeply matters for our topic: first, his justification of natural rights implies a justification of the passion for power; second, it also entails a justification of the centrality of judgment.

The first element rests on the axiom, "who wants the ends also wants the means":

> And because where a man hath right to the end, and the end cannot be attained without the means, that is, without such things as are necessary to the end, it is consequent that it is not against reason, and therefore right for a man, to use all means and do whatsoever action is necessary for the preservation of his body.[48]

The use of power—that is, "such things as are necessary to the end"[49]—is legitimate, since there would be no life without the means of its preservation, but at the same time that power must be limited, because the finality of its use is the preservation of life. This self-limitation of power is very much in tune with what common people are likely to do in an individualistic moral philosophy: contrary to noblemen, they are not in search of conquest to satisfy their desire to dominate, nor of aristocratic honor, but are willing to keep the use of power within the limits of a quiet and harmless life.

The second element of justification stresses the importance of judgment in Hobbes's natural rights theory. Conferring on the common man a natural right means that nobody is better placed than he is to judge what is relevant to his preservation:

> Also every man by right of nature is judge himself of the necessity of the means, and of the greatness of the danger. For if it be against reason, that I be judge of mine own danger myself, then it is reason, that another man be judge thereof. But the same reason that maketh another man judge of those things that concern me, maketh me also judge of that that concerneth him. And therefore I have reason to judge of his sentence, whether it be for my benefit, or not.[50]

The first supposition—that it is against reason that I judge for myself what is in my best interest—destroys itself, if I want to avoid the absurd situation where anybody else can impose his judgment on me about what is supposed to be best for me. The result is that nobody else but the common man, whatever his political position or knowledge is, can say how he must conduce his life. Both elements of justification—concerning the right to use power and the legitimacy of judging for oneself—give a firm basis to the idea that Hobbes's moral philosophy is a normative philosophy for ordinary men and women.

As a conclusion, we can say that Hobbes's deduction of natural rights gives a normative twist to the notion of a common people's morality, and that this twist is decisively characterized by individualism. Sociological and historical dimensions of the notion of "common people" are obviously very important, but it is also essential to be aware that the notion of ordinary men and women receives in Hobbes's philosophy a normative dimension. What are the values that we attach to those notions? What is the justification of our preference for common people? Is it because the notion has become synonymous with being a modern individual? It is not enough to believe in the superiority of the individual; it is also necessary to be able to see what kind of philosophical justifications were given in support of

such a belief in the period in which it began to spread. In the Hobbesian justification, the moral turn—critics would say the moral trick—becomes obvious, since what is "common" to all has become what is proper to common people *as* individuals. Such a twist is definitely something worth considering with the utmost scrutiny, if we wish to avoid the supposition that the only decency people are capable of is the limited decency of those who care only for themselves without caring much for the people around. By this logic a society forged by commoners could elevate the individual without destroying those of lesser ability.

## Notes

1. See Hobbes, *Behemoth, or the Long Parliament*, F. Tönnies (ed.), London, Frank Cass, 1969 (hereafter, *Behemoth*). Hobbes has had a lasting interest in history from his early translation of Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War* until his *Behemoth*, a history of the English Civil War. See L. Borot, "History in Hobbes's Thought," in T. Sorell (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 305–328.
2. On common people and politics in England in the early seventeenth century, see David Rollison, *A Commonwealth of the People. Popular Politics and England's Long Social Revolution, 1066–1649*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010.
3. A further question—which we will not be able to answer here—would be: How can that new way of thinking about our life be contrasted with other forms of living? For an anthropological answer to that question, see Ph. Descola, *Beyond Nature and Culture*, trans. J. Lloyd, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2013.
4. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, *3. The English and Latin Texts (ii)*, chap. 37, N. Malcolm (ed.), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 684 (hereafter *Leviathan*).
5. Ibid., 10, p. 134:

   > Arts of publique use, as Fortification, making of Engines, and other Instruments of War; because they conferre to Defence, and Victory, are Power: And though the true Mother of them, be Science, namely the Mathematics; yet, because they are brought into the Light, by the hand of the Artificer, they be esteemed (the Midwife passing with the vulgar for the Mother), as his issue.

6. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 37, p. 690, emphasis added.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p. 692.
9. Ibid., 30, p. 524.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.

12. Ibid. The common people's minds are said to be "scribbled over with the opinions of their Doctors."
13. Ibid., p. 438.
14. Ibid.:

> In like manner, in the ordinary trialls of Right, Twelve men of the common People, are the Judges, and give Sentence, not onely of the Fact, but of the Right; and pronounce simply for the Complaynant, or for the Defendant; that is to say, are Judges, not onely of the Fact, but also of the Right: and in a question of crime, not onely determine whether done, or not done; but also whether it be *Murder*, *Homicide*, *Felony*, *Assault*, and the like, which are determinations of Law.

15. Ibid., 46, p. 1102.
16. Ibid., 26, p. 431: "*In Civitate constituta, Legum Naturae Interpratatio non à Doctoribus & Scriptoribus Moralis Philosophiae dependet, sed ab Authoritate Civitatis. Doctrinae quidem verae esse possunt; sed Authoritas non Veritas facit Legem.*"
17. See L. Foisneau, *Hobbes et la toute-puissance de Dieu*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2000, pp. 207–213. For further reflections, see J. Dunn, "The Significance of Hobbes's Conception of Power," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 2010, 13:2–3, pp. 417–433.
18. Although Hobbes was educated at Magdalen Hall in Oxford, he was of a lower-middle-class family. John Aubrey writes about Hobbes's uncle, Francis, who was a glover in Malmesbury and paid for Hobbes's studies in Oxford: "Shall I express or conceale this *glover*? The philosopher would acknowledge it" (*Aubrey's Brief lives*, Oliver Lawson Dick (ed.), London, Mandarin, 1992, p. 148). About Thomas Hobbes's brother, Edmund, near two years his elder, Aubrey also writes that "he was a good plain understanding countrey-man" (Ibid.).
19. *Leviathan*, 8, p. 104.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. In *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: From Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1962), C. B. Macpherson stresses the fact that modern individualism is based on the idea of self-ownership, that is, that a person cannot be free if she is not the owner of her person and capacities.
27. Even here the resemblance is apparent: "VIRTUE generally, in all sorts of subjects, is somewhat that is valued for eminence, and consisteth in comparison." (*Leviathan,* 8, p. 104).

28. Hobbes's critique of the Aristotelian definition of virtues as a "mediocrity of passions" is not related to intellectual virtues, but moral virtues in general:

> But the Writers of Morall Philosophie, though they acknowledge the same Vertues and Vices; Yet not seeing wherein consisted their Goodnesse; nor that they come to be praised, as the meanes of peaceable, sociable, and comfortable living; place them in a mediocrity of passions: as if not the Cause, but the Quantity of a gift, made Liberality.
>
> (*Leviathan*, 15, p. 242)

29. *Leviathan*, 8, p. 108:

> This wit of his is called PRUDENCE; and dependeth on much Experience, and Memory of the like things, and their consequences heretofore. In which there is not so much difference of Men, as there is in their Fancies and Judgements; Because the Experience of men equall in age, is not much unequall, as to the quantity; but lyes in different occasions; every one having his private designes.

30. Minor intellectual virtues are in Aristotle good deliberation (*Nicomachean Ethics*, VI, 10), intelligence and judgment (*Nicomachean Ethics*, VI, 11).
31. *Leviathan*, 8, p. 104.
32. See L. Foisneau, "L'esprit individualiste et la passion de la puissance selon Hobbes," in G. M. Cazzaniga and Y. Ch. Zarka (eds.), *L'individuo nel pensiero moderno. Secoli XVI–XVIII*, Pisa, Edizioni ETS, 1995, pp. 541–557.
33. *Leviathan*, 8, p. 104.
34. Ibid., p. 110.
35. Ibid.:

> For if the difference proceeded from the temper of the brain, and the organs of Sense, either exterior or interior, there would be no lesse difference of men in their Sight, Hearing, or other Senses, than in their Fancies, and Discretions.

36. *Leviathan*, 8, p. 110.
37. Ibid.
38. *Elementorum philosophiae sectio secunda, de homine* (hereafter *De Homine*, followed by chapter and article) was published in 1658 as the second part of the systematic project of the *Elements of Philosophy*, which also included *Elementorum philosophiae sectio prima secunda, de corpore* (hereafter *De Corpore*) as its first part—published in 1655—and *Elementorum philosophiae sectio tertia, de cive* (hereafter *De Cive*, followed by chapter and article) as its last part—initially published in 1642, and with additional remarks in 1647.
39. *Leviathan*, 10, p. 132.
40. Hobbes, *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic* (hereafter *Elements of Law*, followed by part, chapter and article), Part I, chapter viii, paragraph 4, F. Tönnies (ed.), London, Simpkin, Marshall, and Co, 1889, reprint, Frank Cass, 1969, p. 34.
41. *Leviathan*, 10, p. 132.

42. Ibid., p. 134.
43. Ibid, 8, p. 110.
44. See M. Pécharman, "Faret, Nicolas (1600–46)," in L. Foisneau (ed.), *The Dictionary of Seventeenth-Century French Philosophers*, New York and London, Thoemmes Continuum, 2008, Vol. 1, pp. 460–462.
45. See R. Tuck, *Natural Rights Theories: Their Origin and Development*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979; L. Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History*, New York and London, W. W. Norton, 2007.
46. Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, I, xiv, 6, p. 71, emphasis added.
47. There is conflicting evidence on this issue: *Elements of Law*, I, xiv, 6; *De Cive*, I, 7; *Leviathan*, 13, p. 194; *De Homine*, XI, 6, are evidence for the claim that human beings are most concerned with their self-preservation and thus that they consider death the greatest of evils. But *Elements of Law*, I, ix, 4; I, ix, 6; II, viii, 2; *De Cive*, VI, 11; VI, 13; *Leviathan*, 38, p. 698; 43, p. 928-930, are evidence for the idea that there are things worse than death (I thank you, Luciano Venezia, for those references).
48. Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, I, xiv, 7, p. 72.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid., 8, p. 72.

3

# News as a Path to Independence: Merchant Correspondence and the Exchange of News during the Dutch Revolt

*Jesse Sadler*

In the sixteenth century, merchants used their skills and increased capital to gain greater political power than they previously experienced. The greatest of merchants became bankers for the princes of Europe, and some even rose to the ranks of the nobility. Direct access to political power was reserved for elite merchants participating in long-distance trade or banking activities, but interest in political news also spread to lower, more ordinary rungs of mercantile circles.

Through pressure from both the structures of trade and the political and religious troubles at the end of the sixteenth century, merchants fashioned themselves into acute consumers of information. They accessed news through all available mediums. Handwritten newsletters, pamphlets, and printed books spread information widely in an era before the printed newspaper. However, correspondence and word of mouth remained the primary vehicles for the spread of information.[1] Merchants were on the technological forefront of the acquisition and processing of information.[2] They constructed wide networks of factors and correspondents optimized to move goods, credit, and information of both economic and political nature across increasing distances. As a consequence, participation in mercantile networks, from young apprentices to servants to the merchant

elite, demanded the acquisition and development of skills for gathering, processing, and disseminating information. This decentralized circulation of news cultivated individuals possessing the capacity to think and act politically. They may have started out as ordinary merchants, but they gradually became uncommon purveyors of vital information.

This chapter examines the relationship between Daniel van der Meulen and his young relative Hans Schot. By the time Hans completed his mercantile apprenticeship, Daniel was one of the richest merchants living in the university town of Leiden.[3] From 1593 until his death in 1597, Hans wrote 177 letters to his kinsman that have been preserved in the Daniel van der Meulen Archive at the Regionaal Archief Leiden.[4] His letters demonstrate the use of news as a service that could be exchanged in return for patronage. Distributing news to social superiors provided young merchants with an opportunity to demonstrate their proficiencies and willingness to serve, opening a path toward greater involvement in the networks of established merchants.

## Daniel van der Meulen

Born in 1554 in Antwerp, Daniel belonged to a generation that lived through the religious wars plaguing Europe in the second half of the sixteenth century.[5] Daniel's family converted to Calvinism sometime in the 1560s.[6] The family's religious persuasion placed the Van der Meulens in the middle of the religious upheaval between the Catholic policies of Philip II and the growth of Calvinism in the Low Countries. The growing ambitions of Calvinists in the 1560s combined with the political discontent of the nobility to coalesce into the Dutch Revolt, ultimately resulting in a split between the southern and northern provinces of the Low Countries.[7]

After many failed attempts by the rebels to gain control of Antwerp, the Pacification of Ghent in 1576 united the provinces of the Low Counties against Philip II. Antwerp again became an important center of the struggle against his policies.[8] It was within this context that the Van der Meulen family became directly involved in political affairs. In 1580, Daniel's elder brother, Andries, joined the magistracy of Antwerp. Andries continued to serve in this capacity until the fall of Antwerp to Spanish forces in 1585. As a magistrate, Andries played an active role in organizing the forces of Antwerp and Brabant against the advance of the Spanish.[9] When the city came under threat from the army of Alexander Farnese, the future Duke of Parma, in the summer of 1584, the States of Brabant called upon Daniel to travel to Holland and Zeeland and procure assistance from the rebellious States-General.[10]

After the fall of Antwerp to Spanish forces on August 15, 1585, Protestants unwilling to convert and live under Spanish rule were given three years to emigrate.[11] The Van der Meulens, like thousands of others, chose exile.[12] In order to preserve any property left behind, the treaty signed by Antwerp and Farnese demanded that exiles reside in neutral territory. Daniel and Andries chose the northern German city of Bremen as their first place of residence.[13] Neither obtained a permanent political position during their exile, but their lives, and the lives of those around them, continued to be tied to the political affairs of the Low Countries and Europe as a whole.[14]

From the time the fall of Antwerp became immanent, the Van der Meulen siblings utilized a rhetoric of exile in their correspondence, identifying themselves with a wider community of exiles.[15] For the rest of their lives, the Van der Meulens continued to hope for the eventual defeat of the Spanish and the ability to return to Antwerp.[16] Their letters contained the latest information about battles and current events. They thanked God after victories of the rebels and their allies, hoping an end to their exile was near. Defeats could only be met with calls for patience and trust that God would see His will done. Conversely, the Revolt, and the political and religious choices it brought, also divided friends and families. Despite Daniel's dedication to the Revolt, his brother-in-law Marten della Faille remained a loyal Catholic subject of Philip II, who actively participated in the restoration of Spanish authority in Antwerp.[17] For Daniel and his contemporaries, battles between armies and decisions of princes had effects on an intimate level, structuring the relations of even the closest of kin.

More generally, the mercantile activities of Daniel and Andries necessitated an interest in political knowledge. The various wars had obvious and immediate consequences for commerce, disrupting trade routes, endangering goods, and causing fluctuations in prices. Trading techniques developed in the late sixteenth century that enabled an increasing number of Netherlandish merchants to participate in long-distance trade, a process facilitated by the diaspora of merchants who left Antwerp in the 1580s for all corners of Europe.[18] The trade of Daniel and Andries provides an example of the breadth of activities of Netherlandish merchants at the end of the sixteenth century.[19] Participating in trade from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, from England to Spain, and beyond, merchants like Andries and Daniel had to be sensitive to political events, as confiscation was an ever-present possibility.[20]

The archive left by Daniel van der Meulen gives ample evidence of the interest an elite merchant took in political news. Daniel preserved many of the documents related to his almost year-long service as representative of the States of Brabant to the States-General from late August 1584

until the fall of Antwerp.[21] The archive also contains a number of pamphlets, though Daniel's consumption of this ephemeral literature must have been much greater than the small number preserved. A more regular source of news came in the form of handwritten newsletters. Daniel subscribed to newsletters produced in Venice, Rome, Cologne, and elsewhere. Active in intellectual circles, by the time of his death, he had amassed a collection of over 1,200 books, including many dedicated to the political events of his own lifetime. Despite this impressive array of media, Daniel's main source of daily information derived from the letters that reached him daily.[22]

The more than 6,000 letters from over 400 correspondents preserved in the Daniel van der Meulen Archive illustrate the extent of the networks early modern merchants constructed.[23] Each of his correspondents also possessed their own networks and areas of expertise, exponentially increasing the potential sources of information.[24] The continual improvement of transportation infrastructure over both land and sea linked cities throughout the Continent and beyond. From the beginning of the sixteenth century, an increasingly robust postal service began to develop in parts of the Holy Roman Empire. Municipal postal services and the travel of servants, acquaintances, and friends augmented the Imperial post.[25]

Daniel received letters from at least 77 locations across the Continent. Cities in the Low Countries, both northern and southern, were well represented. He also possessed correspondents throughout Germany, in various cities in Italy and France, and even a few in Spain and Portugal. The number of letters Daniel received from his different correspondents ranged from the many who sent only one to the hundreds sent by his brother-in-law Jacques della Faille, his brother, Andries, and other merchants and kin with whom he worked closely, to the over one thousand letters sent between 1591 and 1600 by Baptista Oyens, his primary agent in Amsterdam.

## *Merchant Letters*

The letters that crisscrossed Europe carried an incredible array of information across distances great and small.[26] The shortest letters Daniel received could be only sentences, while letters taking up four folio pages were not uncommon from individuals with whom he shared multiple links. Though rare, correspondents sometimes wrote letters of even greater length. It must be emphasized that these letters did not follow the humanist tradition of carefully crafted compositions.[27] Written at the moment, they could quickly jump from one topic to another, and even back again, with little

explanation or reasoning.[28] The writer was often interrupted in the middle of his or her task, inserting new information whenever it was received. The lack of punctuation and minimal use of the notion of paragraphs blends topics together. The results can be quite jarring, at least to the modern reader. The variety of topics found in individual letters, even from the same writer, should also not be underestimated. Despite their informality, letters and their language mediated relations. Including correct subject matter and use of appropriate rhetoric was of utmost importance.[29] The contents of individual letters depended upon the social relationship between the writer and recipient, their relation in the sometimes various networks that connected them, the intention of the specific letter, and the amount of time available to the writer. Even with this diversity, the letters found in the Daniel van der Meulen Archive conformed to a general structure.

In the ideal, these letters can be broken down into eight separate parts, divided into an introduction, body, and conclusion.[30] After the obligatory salutation, whose formality largely depended upon the social distance between the writer and recipient, writers began by listing past letters. Correspondents specified the letter to which they were responding and often included notice that its contents had been well understood or pointed to spots of confusion. Next followed a description of the health of the writer along with hope that the recipient and his or her family were in good health. Here again, the contents differed according to the relationship between the writer and reader. Correspondence between close kin often contained detailed description of ailments. On the other hand, hopes for the health of the recipient were more conspicuous in letters sent by individuals who had greater social dependence upon the recipient.[31]

The main body of the letter contained information about family concerns and mercantile activities. Family business and economic business cannot be easily separated in this period, and so while certain correspondents focused more on one than the other, almost all of the correspondence contained some mixture of the two. A third possible, and often expected, topic included in the body of the letter was "*nieuws*," information about events of a political nature that the writer had recently heard. Once the main content of the letter was finished, writers included greetings, again of varying lengths and formality, to the recipient and possibly extended to kin and "friends" in the area. A signature concluded the letter. No letter need contain all of the aforementioned sections, but the inclusion or absence of a topic, along with the relative weight of the parts, provides useful evidence with which to evaluate the various social relations spun by Daniel and his correspondents.

*News*

It is the section on "*nieuws*" that mainly concerns us here. It is therefore necessary to consider exactly what Daniel's correspondents understood to be news. Writers often switched to speak about news abruptly, tersely introducing the change with statements such as "concerning news." Any sort of line break was optional. The term could be used more broadly to refer to "*tijding*," encompassing economic activities such as the arrival of ships at a port and any information carried with the ships. Information reaching Middelburg, and then passed along by Hans Schot to Daniel, about the arrest of ships from the rebellious provinces in Spain is typical of news that was both political and mercantile in nature.[32] News could also be more narrowly defined as "*lantsaecken*," placing greater emphasis on the degree to which the news was political.[33] Under this term, correspondents generally wrote of events of a military nature and the actions of princes and high nobility.

Reporting, in the sense of giving an account of affairs, constituted the primary purpose of providing news.[34] The opinion of the writer was either completely absent or secondary. The inclusion of opinion also differed according to social rank. Social equals like Jacques della Faille and Andries were much more likely to include statements of opinion in their letters to Daniel. More ordinary merchants further down the social ranks tended to merely report the news with little or no comment. When included, writers usually expressed opinions through exclamations invoking the Almighty. These statements might reveal the partisan allegiance of the writer, but such declarations rarely functioned in a dialogical fashion.[35] Discussion of public opinion was also rare. News spread through the medium of correspondence had little to do with opinion, focusing instead on providing an accurate account of events.[36]

Concentration on events rather than opinion within correspondence was congruent with the contents of handwritten newsletters and the first printed newspapers.[37] Handwritten newsletters, or *avvisi*, worked in a symbiotic relationship with correspondence.[38] At the end of the fifteenth century, extracts of letters, often from diplomats, sent to important information centers in Italy began to be copied and placed alongside each other. Taking advantage of the already-present correspondence and postal networks, this handwritten amalgamation of news was either sold or subscribed to by people interested in political information. The first newspapers from the beginning of the seventeenth century followed the format set by the *avvisi*, printing the same information that previously circulated in manuscript.[39] Information was organized by place from where it had been received and not by topic. Access to information, rather than

editorial voice, constituted the main skill necessary for production of this media.

The proliferation of handwritten newsletters by the end of the sixteenth century and the move to print at the beginning of the seventeenth century undoubtedly led to a quantitative increase in the circulation of information. However, this should not distract from the continued importance of correspondence. Literature on the dissemination of information in the early modern period tends to stress the importance of print, an insistence that derives at least in part from the work of Jürgen Habermas.[40] This chapter argues for a different conception of the flow of information.[41] Editors of newsletters were not unique in developing skills to collect and parse information. In every city possessing even the smallest of markets, merchants, from the richest of merchant bankers to their lowliest servants, circulated information through webs of correspondence and travel.[42] Developing the skills and knowledge to provide valuable news to correspondents became a critical part of participation within mercantile networks.

## Hans Schot

After finishing his apprenticeship in 1593, Hans Schot travelled to Holland, prepared to pursue a mercantile career. Hans was the eldest son of Magdalena de Hoest and Jacques Schot. Jacques Schot, a merchant originally from Antwerp, worked closely with Andries and Daniel van der Meulen, cousins of his wife.[43] Unfortunately for Hans and his younger brother Jacques, their father died a year before Hans set foot in Holland, increasing their dependence upon a wider kin network for opportunities for advancement.[44] After his arrival, Hans lived in Haarlem, the city in which his mother resided following her husband's death. In order to integrate himself into the expanding mercantile networks of Holland, Hans called upon the assistance of relatives and well-placed merchants such as Daniel and Andries, as well as Antonio Ancelmo, a brother-in-law of Hans's paternal uncle and also a refugee from Antwerp.

The letters Hans wrote to Daniel demonstrate the difficulties a young merchant faced in integrating into networks of established merchants. Antonio, Daniel, and Andries all acted as benefactors to Hans and his family. Their assistance came in many forms, including advice, introduction into networks, and eventually the creation of a mercantile company between Hans and Antonio's son, Gilles.[45] These established merchants had a moral duty to help young family members, especially those who had lost a father.[46] However, assistance was not provided freely, even to kin. Any patronage dispensed by Antonio and Daniel called upon Hans to earn and

reciprocate the help he received. Hans needed to both begin to pay back the debt he accumulated in his youth and prove himself useful so that the assistance of his benefactors would be extended into the future. Whether this assistance is viewed through the lens of gift, patronage, or credit—and Hans used language in his letters suitable to any of these modes of analysis—exchange and reciprocity played a crucial role in the continuance of his relations.[47] Young, inexperienced, and socially inferior, he had little to offer in return aside from declarations of his willingness to provide service.

A young merchant amassed considerable social debt in obtaining an apprenticeship under an established merchant.[48] Just as Hans completed his own apprenticeship, his mother began the task of finding a master for his younger brother Jacques. Andries and Daniel took an active role in finding a suitable situation.[49] Magdalena had her younger son write to Daniel to assure him of his good intentions and give proof that Daniel's time would not be wasted by an ungrateful youth. Jacques affirmed his wish "to follow in my honored father's footsteps."[50] Using language not dissimilar from that employed by young students writing to their parents for money, Jacques promised to be dedicated to his duties.[51] "With the help of God, I hope that there will be no complaints about my behavior. I pray that God will give me the opportunity to provide good service, and that this service will grow stronger, so that I will not place any shame upon our family."[52] Though the language was formulaic, Jacques displayed appropriate emphasis upon service and the importance of family honor. In order to gain the assistance of his superiors in the present, Jacques had to profess a future of service.[53]

At first, the hopes of Jacques's family rested upon Everart Becker, a merchant in Middelburg and a relative of Andries's wife. But Everart was not in need of an apprentice at the time, and so their attention switched to Jan Calandrini, a merchant in Stade, the Hanseatic city downstream the Elbe from Hamburg. By July 1594, Jacques was ready to begin his apprenticeship with Calandrini. He wrote Daniel a letter to thank him "for all of the trouble in soliciting for my affair."[54] He hoped the future would provide a chance to repay Daniel with his "modest service," though he knew that he would never be able to fully obviate himself of the debt. "I will always hold myself as obligated."[55] Even between kin, patron–client relationships centered upon reciprocity. Being a well-placed relative, Daniel had a moral obligation to take care of a young man who had lost a father. However, Daniel's duty did not preclude the need for Jacques to eventually reciprocate the help Daniel and others gave to him.[56] As an apprentice, Jacques was evaluated by his service to his master and the progress he made in learning the skills of a merchant.[57] But at some point, Jacques, like all young

merchants, would need to prove his worth to his social superiors in order to become an independent merchant.

It was in this position of demonstrating his worth after the conclusion of his apprenticeship that Hans found himself when he reached Haarlem. The first letters Hans wrote Daniel demonstrate his willingness to serve his relative, but Hans had difficulty in finding a means to prove himself. Noting the social distance between himself and Daniel, Hans opened his letters by referring to Daniel as "Most learned, wise, and discerning."[58] He signed his letters by variously describing himself as "your obedient servant and affectionate nephew," "your reverend's obligated and obedient servant nephew," or more simply "your obedient servant and nephew."[59] Such rhetoric of service was common in letters, even between equals. However, at this point, Hans's appropriation of the title of servant was more hope than actual. Hans was equally obsequious in the body of his early letters. Receiving a letter from Daniel was an honor in and of itself, while any "friendly" content and assistance provided by Daniel furthered the debt Hans felt. Hans even wrote with a more precise hand in his first letters than he later adopted.

During this time, Daniel continued to provide assistance to Hans's mother and the rest of the family. In addition to helping Jacques find an apprenticeship, Daniel aided in the creation of an inventory of the estate of Jacques the elder, provided Magdalena with economic advice, and was a crucial player in family decisions.[60] Hans responded by "hoping that the merciful God will present us with the opportunity to show our thankfulness, and with our modest service, seek to compensate all of the good deeds" Daniel had performed.[61] Noting that his own service could only be considered modest, Hans recognized that he and the rest of his family might always be in debt to Daniel. This had its advantages. Professing a lifetime of debt, and therefore also service to pay it back, meant that the reciprocal relationship between himself and Daniel would continue well into the future.[62] Magdalena and her sons, being the minor party, were liable to gain greater advantages from the relationship. In order to continue to receive the benefits of a close relationship to a merchant like Daniel, Hans needed to begin to provide meaningful service.[63]

### *News as Service*

Sending news to patrons proved one of the few opportunities open to a young merchant.[64] With the war between the rebels and Spanish forces still raging, the circle of refugees around the Van der Meulens maintained hope that a return home might be possible.[65] The next piece of news could report a military victory that would ultimately turn the course of the war. But even this form of service presented difficulties. In December of 1593,

Hans received a letter from Antonio Ancelmo, then resident in Bremen, asking Hans for news from Holland. Hans was eager to repay Antonio for the assistance he had given to him, but he had yet to obtain a position within information networks that would enable him to provide this service. He had only recently arrived, and he lacked contacts in his new home city. Hans wrote to Daniel concerned that "because I only know a few people, I have little ability to know" news that Antonio would appreciate.[66] He asked for Daniel to write to Jacques della Faille, Daniel's brother-in-law who also lived in Haarlem, that his servant might introduce Hans at the bourse, a hub of information of various sorts hardly limited to economic matters. The ability to report the most recent news "will give great contentment" to Antonio, and so Hans hoped Daniel would do him this favor.[67]

Hans was not to be disappointed. His next letter to Daniel thanked his better placed relative "from my heart" for the "*tydingen*" Daniel included in his letter.[68] Hans knew that the inclusion of the news from Holland "would be pleasing" to Antonio.[69] Daniel also introduced Hans to Jacques della Faille, one of the wealthiest merchants in the city. This would begin to give Hans greater access to the information networks in Haarlem, enabling him to continue to include such information in his correspondence with Antonio. Hans noted that without Daniel's help he could hardly have expected, considering his meager connections in the city, to have gained access to the wide network of Jacques.[70]

This interaction between Hans and Antonio, as played out in the letters from Hans to Daniel, provides access to various features of the way merchants conceived of news and of the nature of the networks within which it was exchanged. First, the significance Hans gave to the task of including news in his response to Antonio shows the value the latter gave to news. Interested in information from Holland, Antonio conceived of it as an object of value, which could be traded or exchanged in repayment for favors of completely different natures. In turn, the interest Antonio had in consuming such news created an equivalent value for someone like Hans to gather it. The valuable nature of news also derived, in part, from its exclusive nature. The best information that Antonio would find most useful was found inside information networks that were not freely available to all. Hans's presence in Haarlem was not sufficient for him to be privy to information that would provide the best service. Hans needed assistance to gain access to the economic and political information concentrated in the locality of the bourse. In other words, a young merchant like Hans could only gain access to this commodity and the networks through which it flowed by entering into and developing information networks of his own.

In order to pay one creditor, Hans increased his debt with another. That Daniel provided Hans with both news worthy of exchange and introduced him into the networks of Haarlem further obligated him to Daniel. Hans was well aware of this. He utilized the economic term of compensation to describe his obligation. "It is my wish to have the means to write something to you in compensation."[71] Given his circumstances, it made the most sense for Hans to repay Daniel like for like, news for news. However, his present situation prevented Hans from doing this. "Of news, I cannot write anything that you would not know with more particulars."[72] Daniel was well informed of news that passed through Haarlem from the many letters he received from Jacques della Faille, supplemented by correspondence from Joos de Vogele, another relative of Daniel's wife.[73] Redundant information held little value. Hans could not simply write Daniel all information that he came across. He needed to filter news and take into account what others to whom Daniel was connected would write.

The process of gathering and filtering news before passing it along was a skill that Hans developed in his mercantile training. His reluctance to send Daniel information of little use demonstrated his powers of discernment. It showed a general understanding of how information passed through networks, as well as an awareness of the particular workings of Daniel's networks. With little opportunity to provide meaningful service, Hans could only have a tenuous place in the information networks of his superiors. He wished to do more, but now "it is not possible, because I cannot learn anything you have not already heard with greater detail."[74] He therefore asked Daniel "to please wait for an occasion when I will have the means to show my goodwill."[75]

Even when Hans could include news in a letter to Daniel, he took into account the value it held in relation to the other streams of information to which Daniel had access. So long as Hans remained on the margins of Daniel's networks, the information that he passed along could only provide meager and irregular repayment. An example is the report Hans gave of the misfortune of a fleet off the island of Texel.[76] Word in Haarlem spread that 30 ships in the fleet had been damaged. Hans reported first-hand testimony from a *stuerman* from the village of Huisduinen, confirming that at least seven ships were damaged. In addition, he provided Daniel with the names of the shipowners involved.

In spite of the detailed account he gave, Hans was quick to point out the limitations of the information he provided. He began his report by noting that "before you receive this letter you will already have heard" of the misfortune of the fleet.[77] Not only was Hans's report unlikely to be the first Daniel heard, Hans believed that the information coming from elsewhere would be of better quality. "You will learn more details from others,

because it is difficult to get pertinent information here."[78] Haarlem was simply not the best place to gain news about an incident in Texel. While Hans felt there was value in passing on the news that he came across, and to provide details like the names of the owners of the affected ships when he could, he was aware both of Daniel's networks and of the flow of such information within Holland. In this instance, he knew his own contributions could only be minor. Hans obviously felt he had little to gain by promoting the news he provided as possessing greater value than he believed it to have.

The same evaluation of the value of information can be observed in the news that Hans passed on from the letters he received from Antonio in the first few months after he arrived in Holland.[79] In the same letter that Hans asked Daniel to provide him with news to write to Antonio from Holland, Hans informed Daniel of the events Antonio related in his letter. This included information about the travels of dignitaries, such as the Emperor's trip to Vienna. A month and a half later, Hans passed along news from another letter from Antonio that he believed to be of greater value. From Vienna, it had been heard that the Christian armies had taken two cities from the Turks. Three hundred men, women, and children had been captured and baptized. But again, the value of this news, the value of the service Hans provided by passing it along, was situational and decided within the networks. It depended upon whether Daniel had already heard of this military victory. Hans expressed uncertainty as to the usefulness of the news he relayed. "I wanted to let you know this in case you had not heard it before."[80]

The news Hans gave to Daniel while he resided in Haarlem undoubtedly possessed value. Though the content was not of the highest quality, Hans's letters to Daniel attempted to both display his willingness to be of use and demonstrate his skills where possible. However, the chances to prove his devotion and acumen while in Haarlem were limited.[81] Hans did not write a letter to Daniel between January 28 and March 18, 1594, "because of lack of material."[82] His next nine letters dealt mostly with family issues and lacked any mention of news. This silence was abruptly broken with a letter Hans sent on December 14, 1594, while Daniel was in Bremen. Hans only wrote the one letter during Daniel's stay in Bremen, but it seems that he was either charged with keeping Daniel informed of the news coming from Holland, or he took up this position on his own. Aside from short greetings at the beginning and end of the letter, Hans filled the entire page with the news he was able to gather. As he put it, the letter served "to advise your reverend of the little that has occurred here."[83] Hans informed Daniel about mutinying Spanish soldiers who were paid to

leave the territory, the taking of a fort held by the Spanish, the arrival of 12 ships from Sanlúcar, the port city of Seville, and even the price of goods and exchange rates.[84]

This outpouring of news, both political and mercantile, highlights the importance of locality. With Daniel outside of Holland, news from Haarlem gained a new level of importance. But when Daniel returned to Leiden, Hans's opportunities to serve Daniel through news became restricted. In order for Hans to be able to consistently "write something in compensation," he needed to either find a new role in Haarlem or leave the city.[85] Even from the beginning of his stay in Haarlem, Hans understood that in order to pay Daniel back, enabling him to ask Daniel for further assistance, he might have to leave. "When I come to a place in which I will have the ability to inform you of something special, I will do my duty to compensate you."[86] In the end, a change in location proved necessary. Hans only gained a position in Daniel's network by trading his residence in Haarlem for one in Middelburg.

### *Middelburg*

Since at least October 1594, there had been discussion of Hans moving to Middelburg to form a company with Antonio Ancelmo's son Gilles. His comportment in his correspondence along with non-textual demonstrations of his skills and trustworthiness had convinced his patrons that he was capable of being a partner in a company. After the closure of the Scheldt, Middelburg developed into a bustling city of trade, second only to Amsterdam in importance among cities in the northern provinces.[87] Ships from the Iberian Peninsula, France, England, and northern Africa brought wares to Middelburg, making it a promising location for a young merchant.[88]

The timing of Hans's relocation to Middelburg proved propitious to the construction of a firmer relationship between Hans and Daniel. Prior to Hans's arrival in Middelburg, Daniel received information about ships arriving in Zeeland mainly from Pierre Maillet and his cousin Peeter Janssen.[89] However, in May of 1594, Peeter Janssen left Middelburg and moved to Amsterdam. Meanwhile, Daniel began to dispute the accounts kept by Pierre Maillet, and the correspondence between the two dwindled in 1595.[90] Indeed, disentangling Pierre's accounts was one of the first tasks Hans undertook for Daniel upon his arrival in Middelburg. This left only Everart Becker, the originally hoped-for master of Jacques Schot, as an alternative source of information among Daniel's regular correspondents.[91]

Immediately upon arrival in Middelburg, Hans played a very different role in Daniel's network than he had while in Haarlem. Over the 17-month period that he lived in Holland, Hans sent 19 letters to Daniel that remain in the archive.[92] In contrast, from the time of his first letter from Middelburg on April 12, 1595, until the end of the year, Hans doubled that output, sending Daniel 38 letters. The regularity of Hans's correspondence continued in this fashion until his death.[93] In the two and a half years that Hans lived in Middelburg, he wrote a total of 155 letters to his kinsman, averaging almost a letter every six days.[94] By providing a regular service in sending Daniel reports from Middelburg, as well as helping Daniel with various other tasks, Hans integrated himself into Daniel's network.

The first letter Hans wrote to Daniel after his arrival in Middelburg shows the rapidity with which Hans integrated himself in the mercantile circles of Middelburg. Having arrived on March 30, 1595, he was already able to report a great deal of information from various sources by April 12. Hans informed Daniel that the Duke of Pastrano had entered Brussels. Joris Gys, a textile merchant in Antwerp, had failed to repay a loan of £160. In Vlissingen, a Portuguese merchant was arrested for a debt of £50. Since his arrival, two ships landed in Middelburg from Spain. Hans wished to give information from England, but the contrary winds prevented any English ships from landing in Middelburg for the last month, "so that no one knows what has happened there."[95] The contrast between this and his letters from Haarlem could not be greater. Whereas Hans had to ask for Daniel's help to get access to information at the bourse more than a month after he arrived in Haarlem, his integration into the information networks in Middelburg was almost immediate. The same was true for his economic activities. Hans could already report in this first letter to Daniel that Gilles Ancelmo worked diligently and that the two were already quite busy. Hans narrated all of this with a confidence of an individual acting according to expectations. All of the caution in assigning value to the news he provided while in Haarlem disappeared.

From this point until his untimely death in October 1597, the letters Hans wrote continued to mix in news of a political nature with economic information and discussions concerning his family. A letter Hans sent on July 19, 1595, provides a good example of the mixture of news and the various ways Hans could come across it. Hans wrote this specific letter because he wanted to send Daniel a copy of a letter from Jaspar van Nispen, which he received from Paris.[96] He took this opportunity to fill the page with information he had gathered in the last couple of days. Always conscious of the movement of the upper nobility, Hans told that two days ago the Princess of Orange came to Vlissingen. Within the last two days, two ships arrived in Middelburg from Bordeaux. These ships brought news that one

of the principal citizens of Bayonne made an attempt to hand the city to the Spanish. Upon discovery of the plot, the magistrates arrested 19 or 20 people, among whom was a Netherlander. Aside from this, "no one knew the particulars, which we will learn in due time."[97] There were also rumors circulating about the Count of Fuentes, but Hans was not sure of their veracity. "I do not know if it is true. The news came from the mouth of someone who arrived from Antwerp."[98]

The ships from Bordeaux came not to bring news, but to sell their goods. Hans reported that the ships arrived loaded with wine. The wine could be had at quite low prices, for the cellars of Middelburg were already full. A ship from La Rochelle was also in port with a cargo of salt. Such information filled the letters Hans wrote to Daniel whenever he possessed something of interest to pass along. Hans dutifully reported the origin and cargoes of all ships that came through Middelburg, becoming Daniel's primary source for information about the market in the city.[99] Whether the news concerned the movements of the members of the Orange family or reporting the prices of goods, Hans had his hand on the pulse of information in Middelburg. He used his skills of gathering and processing information to repay and to continue the patronage he received from Daniel and the Van der Meulen family as a whole. In signing the letter he sent on July 19, Hans made this explicit by referring to himself as "Your Excellency's completely indebted servant and nephew."[100]

In all of the Daniel van der Meulen Archive, only one letter survives of the many that Daniel wrote to Hans.[101] This letter attests to Daniel's confidence in Hans's capabilities, while making clear the continued asymmetry in their relationship. On August 23, 1596, Hans sent Daniel a letter reporting the exciting news of the English capture of Cadiz.[102] With this news, both England, from where the news originated, and Middelburg were awash with rumors and discussion about Elizabeth's next move. In addition, Hans had received a letter from Andries informing him to purchase wine in Middelburg for the Van der Meulens. A letter from the next day added that there was currently a shortage of Spanish wine in the city, so it may be better to wait before making a large purchase.[103]

Daniel's response made no mention of the political news Hans delivered, though he certainly would have made mental note that Hans continued to fulfill his duties as a correspondent through such service. He began the letter graciously, addressing Hans as "Especially favorable cousin," making explicit his familial connection to Hans.[104] Daniel dedicated the first part of the letter to the issue of purchasing wine. He treated Hans as a capable merchant possessing the experience necessary to purchase Spanish wine under the most favorable of conditions. Daniel provided suggestions, but in the end, "I put this in your discretion."[105] The second part

of the letter possessed a very different nature. Here, Daniel cautioned his young relative of the dangers of extravagance in dress and warned about falling prey to emphasizing appearances. This warning leaves no doubt that Daniel remained a patron, willing to give guidance to his protégé where he deemed it fitting. Hans remained a young and relatively inexperienced merchant, liable to be led astray by the allure of luxury. Nevertheless, Daniel ended the letter by giving Hans his "heartfelt greetings to you" and signed "your willing cousin, Daniel van der Meulen."[106] A little less than three years after the completion of his apprenticeship, Hans had developed into an integral node in the trade and information networks of a member of the mercantile elite of the Low Countries.

## Conclusion

Hans's ability to provide Daniel with political news was an integral part in his rise to a secure position in Daniel's vast network. Merchants such as Andries and Daniel van der Meulen and Antonio Ancelmo treated political news as an essential part of mercantile knowledge. They fully accepted the transfer of political information by their correspondents as an exchange, as a service endowed with value that could repay the social debts a young merchant naturally accumulated. This desire created an equal value for the collection of political news by merchants of lower standing, such as Hans Schot. In sending news, Hans not only paid the debt from the assistance he received as a youth, but he demonstrated his willingness and ability to serve his superiors, calling for the reciprocal relationship between them to continue.

By listening in at the bourse, going to the port when ships arrived, or merely by walking through the city with ears open, Hans could profit from learning about the news of political and military events. Hans did not share the collected information indiscriminately. As his letters testify, to provide information of value necessitated a robust understanding of political events. A young merchant looking to provide service through the distribution of news needed an understanding both of the wider information networks and of the specific network of the individual to whom he sent the news. A correspondent had to be aware of the source of the information, and whether it would or could reach the recipient in other ways. In addition, in the middle of religious and political upheavals throughout Europe, and especially among a population in exile, news was never indifferent. Even seemingly small events could have great consequences. The turn of the tide might be one victory away. Evaluating the newsworthiness of information and whether it constituted good or bad news for the recipient, all involved a deep immersion in politics.

Paying attention to the importance of correspondence in the movement of news shows that political awareness was not limited to elite merchants. The collection and dissemination of news by young and socially humble merchants could provide a means to integrate themselves into the networks of their social and economic superiors. Once a part of the networks, reporting news continued to be a vital aspect of a correspondent's activities. The letters Hans sent to Daniel provide an example of how this could occur. More important than the specifics of the relationship of Hans and Daniel is the logic by which it functioned. Merchants like Daniel, Andries, Antonio Ancelmo, and Jacques della Faille possessed dozens of correspondents such as Hans, who, though socially subordinate, provided the grease that moved goods and information throughout Europe and beyond. In the sixteenth century, merchants expected their vast networks of correspondents to possess the skills to communicate political information. Even the most ordinary merchant had ample incentive to participate in the discussion of politics.

## Notes

1. Francesca Trivellato, "Merchant Letters across Geographical and Social Boundaries," in *Correspondence and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400–1700*, eds. Francisco Bethencourt and Florike Egmond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
2. Recent literature on the collection of information and news in the early modern period includes Brendan Dooley, ed. *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010); Brendan Dooley and Sabrina Baron, eds. *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2001); Leos Müller and Ojala Jari, eds. *Information Flows: New Approaches in the Historical Study of Business Information* (Helsinki: SKS Finnish Literature Society, 2007). The implication of the development of skills for processing information cultivated by merchants has been shown for science by Harold Cook and for the early modern state by Jacob Soll. Harold J. Cook, *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007); Jacob Soll, "Accounting for Government: Holland and the Rise of Political Economy in Seventeenth-Century Europe," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 40, no. 2 (2008): 215–38; Jacob Soll, *The Information Master: Jean-Baptiste Colbert's Secret State Intelligence System* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009). However, these skills were not unique to merchants. Philip II constructed a robust information network in order to rule his vast empire. Cristina Borreguero Beltrán, "Philip of Spain: The Spider's Web of News and Information," in *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Brendan Dooley (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010); Geoffrey Parker,

*The Grand Strategy of Philip II* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

3. At the time of Daniel's death, he was the seventh wealthiest inhabitant of Leiden. R. C. J. van Maanen, "De vermogensopbouw van de Leidse bevolking in het laatste kwart van de zestiende eeuw," *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 93, (1978): 1–42.
4. The letters can be found in Bescheiden betreffende Daniël van der Meulen en zijn vrouw Hester de la Faille, 1550–1600 (1648), Regionaal Archief Leiden (hereafter DvdM). Hans Schot's younger brother, Jacques, also wrote Daniel 64 letters. The vast majority of Jacques's letters were written between Hans's death and Daniel's death from the plague in 1600. The letters of Hans and Jacques are contained in DvdM inventories 622 and 622b, respectively. Only one letter from Daniel to Hans is extant (DvdM 594–55).
5. In 1585, Daniel was the youngest surviving child of Jan van der Meulen and Elizabeth Zeghers. His three elder siblings were Anna, Andries, and Sara. For information on Daniel van der Meulen and the Van der Meulen family, see Gisela Jongbloet-van Houtte, ed. "Inleiding," in *Brieven en andere bescheiden betreffende Daniel van der Meulen, 1584–1600* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1986); Luuc Kooijmans, *Vriendschap: En de kunst van het overleven in de zeventiende en achtiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: B. Bakker, 1997).
6. Jongbloet-van Houtte, "Inleiding," CLXI–CLXIII.
7. On the Dutch Revolt, see Peter Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots: The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477–1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Geoffrey Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, Revised ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1985).
8. Floris Prims, *De Groote Cultuurstrijd*, 2 vols. (Antwerp, Belgium: N. V. Standaard, 1942).
9. See the letters from Andries to Daniel contained in Jongbloet-van Houtte, *Daniel van der Meulen*.
10. Gisela Jongbloet-van Houtte, "De belegering en de val van Antwerpen belicht vanuit een koopmans archief: Daniel van der Meulen, gedeputeerde van de Staten van Brabant ter Staten Generaal (1584–1585)," *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 91 (1976): 23–43.
11. Violet Soen, "Reconquista and Reconciliation in the Dutch Revolt: The Campaign of Governor-General Alexander Farnese (1578–1592)," *Journal of Early Modern History* 16, no. 1 (2012): 1–22.
12. The scale and importance of emigration from the southern provinces has been well studied. Gustaaf Asaert, *1585: De val van Antwerpen en de uittocht van Vlamingen en Brabanders* (Tielt, Belgium: Lannoo, 2004); J. G. C. A. Briels, *Zuid-Nederlandse Immigratie 1572–1630* (Haarlem, The Netherlands: Fibula-Van Dishoeck, 1978); Wilfrid Brulez, "De diaspora der Antwerpse kooplui op het einde van de 16de eeuw," *Bijdragen voor de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 15 (1960): 279–306; Oscar Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden en de opkomst van de Amsterdamse stapelmarkt*

*(1578–1630)* (Hilversum, The Netherlands: Verloren, 2000); R. van Roosbroeck, *Emigranten: Nederlandse vluchtelingen in Duitsland (1550–1600)* (Leuven, Belgium: Davidsfonds, 1968); Gustaaf Janssens, " 'Verjaagd uit Nederland': Zuidnederlandse emigratie in de zestiende eeuw een historiografisch overzicht (ca. 1868–1994)," *Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis* 75, no. 1 (1995): 102–19. The recent work of Geert Janssen has concentrated on the cultural aspect of exile. Geert H. Janssen, "Exiles and the Politics of Reintegration in the Dutch Revolt," *History* 94, no. 313 (2009): 36–52; Geert H. Janssen, "Quo Vadis? Catholic Perceptions of Flight and the Revolt of the Low Countries, 1566–1609," *Renaissance Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (2011): 472–99; Geert H. Janssen, "The Counter-Reformation of the Refugee: Exile and the Shaping of Catholic Militancy in the Dutch Revolt," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 63, no. 4 (2012): 671–92.

13. Both Daniel and Andries eventually moved to the northern Low Countries. In 1591, Daniel traded his residence in Bremen for one in the university city of Leiden. Andries left Bremen only in 1607 to live in Utrecht. R. van Roosbroeck, "De Antwerpse van der Meulens in Bremen: Het begin van de ballingschap (1585–1586)," *Wetenschappelijke Tijdingen* 31 (1972): 194–216.
14. Daniel was close to becoming ambassador to France for the United Provinces, but he ultimately did not receive the position. Jongbloet-van Houtte, "Inleiding."
15. Letters between the Van der Meulen siblings at this time can also be found in Bibliotheca Thysiana Archief, Universiteit Leiden, Collectie Anthoine Lempereur (hereafter CL).
16. There are many examples in the correspondence of the Van der Meulens of their hopes to return to Antwerp. The language used by François Pierens, husband of Daniel's sister Anna, is typical. François Pierens to Daniel, Bremen, March 27, 1592, DvdM 297-1: "*Mar nu het niet anders en is moeten zoe te vreden sin tot dat Godt geeft dat wy in ons vaderlant by den anderen moeghen wesen.*" ("But now it cannot be otherwise, and so we must be satisfied until God grants that we can be together in our fatherland.")
17. Marten della Faille was the brother of Daniel's wife Hester della Faille. Daniel and Marten carried on a frequent and amicable correspondence despite Marten's close ties with Spanish authorities (DvdM 274). Both Marten and Robert van Eeckeren, another of Daniel's brothers-in-law, became almoners upon the return to power of the Spanish in 1585. Marten gained a position on the admiralty board of Archduke Albert in 1596. In 1614, he rose to the nobility, officially becoming Baron de Nevele. Yves Schmitz, *Les della Faille: Les branches des barons de Nevele et d'Estienpuis*, vol. 3 (Brussels: Impr. F. Van Buggenhoudt, 1967).
18. Brulez, "De diaspora der Antwerpse kooplui"; Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden*; Clé Lesger, *The Rise of the Amsterdam Market and Information Exchange: Merchants, Commercial Expansion and Change in the Spatial Economy of the Low Countries, c.1550–1630* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006); Herman van der Wee, *The Growth of the Antwerp Market and the*

*European Economy (Fourteenth–Sixteenth Centuries)*, 3 vols. (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1963); Jeroen Puttevils, "Klein gewin brengt rijkdom in: De Zuid-Nederlandse handelaars in de export naar Italie in de jaren 1540," *Tijdschrift voor sociale en economische geschiedenis* 6, no. 1 (2009): 26–52.

19. An introduction to the trade of the Van der Meulens is provided in Jongbloet-van Houtte, "Inleiding." The related trade of Marten della Faille is meticulously studied in Wilfrid Brulez, *De Firma Della Faille en de internationale handel van Vlaamse firma's in de 16e eeuw* (Brussels: Paleis der Academièen, 1959).
20. Shipping was especially vulnerable to confiscation. Merchants from the rebellious provinces used various means of deception to get their goods to Spain and beyond. They hired ships or shippers from neutral territory such as Emden or Hamburg. Even if neither ship nor captain hailed from neutral territory, merchants attempted to procure documents stating that they were. Lacking this, such documents were forged. Ships also carried passes of free conduct, often from both sides. J. H. Kernkamp, *De handel op den vijand 1572–1609*, 2 vols. (Utrecht, The Netherlands: Kemink en zoon n.v., 1931). For specifics on the trade of the Van der Meulens, see the articles in J. H. Kernkamp, ed. *De handel van Daniel van der Meulen c.s., in het bijzonder rond de jaren 1588–1592: werkcollege economische geschiedenis* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Universiteit Leiden, 1969).
21. Overviews of the archive are provided in Jongbloet-van Houtte, "Inleiding"; J. H. Kernkamp, "Het Van der Meulen-archief ca," *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 85 (1970): 49–62.
22. Pamphlets can be found in DvdM inventories 222, 223, 224–8, and 248–51. The handwritten newsletters are preserved in DvdM inventories 244 and 245. A catalogue of Daniel's library auctioned off after his death is contained in the inventory of his estate, DvdM 68. The breadth of Daniel's political and intellectual activities are charted in Jongbloet-van Houtte, "Inleiding," LXII–LXXXIV.
23. A not insignificant amount of the letters Daniel received are missing from the archive. However, the archive appears to contain the vast majority of letters sent to Daniel. Using each piece as it is designated in the archive, it is possible to get an estimate for the number of letters each correspondent sent.
24. Mark Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (1973): 1360–80.
25. Wolfgang Behringer has emphasized the importance of advances in the postal system in the creation of a communications revolution. Wolfgang Behringer, *Im Zeichen des Merkur: Reichspost und Kommunikationsrevolution in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003); Wolfgang Behringer, "Communications Revolutions: A Historiographical Concept," *German History* 24, no. 3 (2006): 333–74. Meanwhile, Brendan Dooley has concentrated on the notion of contemporaneity in the spread of information in the early modern period. Dooley and Baron, *Politics of Information*; Dooley, *Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity*. See also P. O. Beale, Adrian Almond, and Mike Scott

Archer, eds. *The Corsini Letters* (Stroud, UK: Amberley, 2011); Seija-Riitta Laakso, "In Search of Information Flows: Postal Historical Methods in Historical Research," in *Information Flows: New Approaches in the Historical Study of Business Information*, eds. Leos Müller and Ojala Jari (Helsinki: SKS Finnish Literature Society, 2007). The classical study of the early modern postal system in the Netherlands is Jacobus Overvoorde, *Geschiedenis van het Postwezen in Nederland voor 1795* (Leiden, The Netherlands: 1902). For recent work on the postal system in Brabant, see Paul Arblaster, "Posts, Newsletters, Newspapers: England in a European System of Communications," *Media History* 11, no. 1–2 (2005): 21–36; Paul Arblaster, "Antwerp and Brussels as Inter-European Spaces in News Exchange," in *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Brendan Dooley (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010).

26. On letters in the early modern period, see Francisco Bethencourt and Florike Egmond, eds. *Correspondence and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400–1700*, vol. 3, *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Paul D. McLean, *The Art of the Network: Strategic Interaction and Patronage in Renaissance Florence* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007). On merchant letters specifically, see Sebouh Aslanian, " 'The Salt in a Merchant's Letter': The Culture of Julfan Correspondence in the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean," *Journal of World History* 19, no. 2 (2008): 127–88; Trivellato, "Merchant Letters"; Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009); Beale, Almond, and Archer, *The Corsini Letters*.
27. The letters of Carolus Clusius, a contemporary of Daniel who also lived in Leiden, were equally informal. Florike Egmond, "Correspondence and Natural History in the Sixteenth Century: Cultures of Exchange in the Circle of Carolus Clusius," in *Correspondence and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400–1700*, eds. Francisco Bethencourt and Florike Egmond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
28. An exception to this was letters written by younger family members. Nieces and nephews would often write carefully crafted letters to their aunts and uncles to show their progress in their schooling.
29. Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline van Gent, "Corresponding Affections: Emotional Exchange among Siblings in the Nassau Family," *Journal of Family History* 34, no. 2 (2009): 143; Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline van Gent, "In the Name of the Father: Conceptualizing *Pater Familias* in the Letters of William the Silent's Children," *Renaissance Quarterly* 62, no. 4 (2009): 1130–66; McLean, *Art of the Network*.
30. This structure largely conforms to what Sebouh Aslanian and Francesca Trivellato have observed in their studies of merchant letters. Aslanian, "Salt in a Merchant's Letter"; Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, 177–93.
31. Daniel's elder sister Anna constantly complained of various physical ailments in her letters to family members. See the letters between Anna and her sister Sara (CL 273). On the other hand, Daniel's cousin Magdalena de Hoest and

her sons, Hans and Jacques Schot, said little about their own health, while invariably asking after that of Daniel and his family.

32. See the letters from Hans to Daniel in DvdM 622 and R. Andriessen and H. F. Cohen, "Op zoek naar een stapelmarkt: Onderzoekingen in het archief-Daniël van der Meulen," in *De handel van Daniel van der Meulen c.s., in het bijzonder rond de jaren 1588–1592: werkcollege economische geschiedenis*, ed. J. H. Kernkamp (Leiden, The Netherlands: Universiteit Leiden, 1969).
33. Many examples of this term can be found in the letters Andries wrote to his younger brother (DvdM 593).
34. A good example supplied by Brendan Dooley of the extent that writers were willing to go to provide correspondents with the best and most reliable news is that of the attempts of Don Giovanni de' Medici to give account of the Spanish Armada and the siege of Ostende to the Florentine court. Brendan Dooley, "Making It Present," in *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Brendan Dooley (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010).
35. The letters may have added to further discussion of political events and the news that they carried. But at least within the letters themselves, a critical dialogue is absent.
36. Henk van Nierop sees the same phenomenon in rumor, or the spread of information by word of mouth. Henk van Nierop, " 'And Ye Shall Hear of Wars and Rumours of Wars': Rumour and the Revolt of the Netherlands," in *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands: Essays in Honour of Alastair Duke*, eds. Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2007).
37. Behringer, "Communications Revolutions"; Mario Infelise, "From Merchants' Letters to Handwritten *Avvisi*: Notes on the Origins of Public Information," in *Correspondence and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400–1700*, eds. Francisco Bethencourt and Florike Egmond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Johannes Weber, "Strassburg, 1605: The Origins of the Newspaper in Europe," *German History* 24, no. 3 (2006): 387–412; Arblaster, "Posts, Newsletters, Newspapers," 29–33.
38. Dooley, "Making It Present"; Infelise, "From Merchants' Letters to Handwritten *Avvisi*."
39. Weber, "Origins of the Newspaper in Europe"; Johannes Weber, "The Early German Newspaper: A Medium of Contemporaneity," in *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Brendan Dooley (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010).
40. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989). A bias toward printed information can be seen to differing degrees in works such as John J. McCusker, "The Demise of Distance: The Business Press and the Origins of the Information Revolution in the Early Modern Atlantic World," *American Historical Review* 110, no. 2 (2005): 295–321; Donald J. Harreld, "An Education in Commerce: Transmitting

Business Information in Early Modern Europe," in *Information Flows: New Approaches in the Historical Study of Business Information*, eds. Leos Müller and Ojala Jari (Helsinki: SKS Finnish Literature Society, 2007); Weber, "Origins of the Newspaper in Europe"; Dooley and Baron, *Politics of Information*. Literature focusing on the development of communication network, such as the articles in *German History* 24 (2006), introduced by Wolfgang Behringer, vacillates between narratives that stress the importance of transportation structures able to facilitate more rapid movement of information and people and those that place a greater emphasis on the ability of transportation networks to carry printed works such as newspapers. The latter often obscures the extent to which information in the form of correspondence, not to mention word of mouth, continued to proliferate. An interesting discussion of the relationship between the concepts of the public sphere and the communications revolution is found in Andreas Gestrich, "The Public Sphere and the Habermas Debate," *German History* 24, no. 3 (2006): 413–30.

41. Francesca Trivellato has convincingly argued against the tendency of the Habermasian narrative to give precedence to printed information over correspondence. Correspondence remained an essential tool to gain economic information as well as information about agents well into the eighteenth century. Trivellato, "Merchant Letters."
42. Lesger, *Rise of the Amsterdam Market*.
43. When Daniel stayed in Delft while attending the meetings of the States-General, he resided in Jacques's house. On the activities of Jacques Schot while Daniel was a representative for the States of Brabant, see the letters in Jongbloet-van Houtte, *Daniel van der Meulen*. Only a few of the accounts from his trading activities have survived (DvdM 57–85).
44. Sharon Kettering, "Patronage and Kinship in Early Modern France," *French Historical Studies* 16, no. 2 (1988): 408–35.
45. The contract between Gillis Ancelmo and Hans Schot can be found in DvdM 112.
46. After the death of her husband, Magdalena de Hoest noted multiple times in her correspondence to Daniel that her children were orphans, and, therefore, that God would be their protector. Magdalena de Hoest to Daniel, Haarlem, May 30, 1593, DvdM 621-34:

    > *Ic bidde den Heer daeghelickx dat hy voor myn kinderen wilt sorchgen, ende ic betrouwet Hem oeck van hartten toe. Hy hevet beloft dat Hy een vaeder der weesen syn sal ende eenen beschermer der wedewen, ende daer op wil ick stuenen.* ("I pray to the Lord daily that He will care for my children, and I trust with my heart that He will do so. He has promised that He will be a father to orphans and a protector of widows, upon which thought I am supported.")

47. The literature on all three of these modes of exchange is voluminous. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*

(Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000); Martha C. Howell, *Commerce before Capitalism in Europe, 1300–1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Kettering, "Patronage and Kinship"; Sharon Kettering, "Friendship and Clientage in Early Modern France," *French History* 6, no. 2 (1992): 139–58; McLean, *Art of the Network*; Gustav Peebles, "The Anthropology of Credit and Debt," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39, no. 1 (2010): 225–40.

48. Richard Grassby, *Kinship and Capitalism: Marriage, Family, and Business in the English Speaking World, 1580–1740* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 277–82.
49. Magdalena de Hoest to Daniel, Haarlem, April 9, 1593, DvdM 621–32. Antonio Ancelmo was also consulted. Hans wrote multiple letters to Daniel about the subject and gave his opinion on the matter.
50. Jacques Schot to Daniel, Delft, April 10, 1593, DvdM 622b-1: "dat ich myns E. vaders Sr voetstappen mach nu volgen."
51. Charles H. Haskins, "The Life of Medieval Students as Illustrated by Their Letters," *American Historical Review* 3, no. 2 (1898): 203–29.
52. Jacques Schot to Daniel, Delft, April 10, 1593, DvdM 622b-1:

    > *Met de hulpe Godts hoepe ick datter van myn geen clachten zullen comen, biddende Godt dat hy myn de sinnen wilt laten houden ende de geneghentheyt die ick hebbe tot allen goeden dinst, ende myn noch meer ende meer daer in wilt stercken, op dat ick ons geslachte geen schanden end mach doen.*

53. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 10–15; McLean, *Art of the Network*, 17–20.
54. Jacques Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, July 26, 1594, DvdM 622b-2: "zeer bedanckende van *de moeyte genomen int solliciteren van myne saecken.*"
55. Jacques Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, July 26, 1594, DvdM 622b-2: "*dat ick met ter tyt bequaemheyt sal vercrygen uwer E. allen met mynen geringen dienst . . . ick myn altyt verobligeert sal houden.*"
56. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*; Kettering, "Patronage and Kinship."
57. Jacques's progress in his apprenticeship was one of the more common subjects in the letters Hans sent to Daniel.
58. Hans opened all but a few of his letters with the phrase "*Lerenteste, wyse, ende voorsinnige heere.*"
59. Hans Schot to Daniel, Amsterdam, October 18, 1593, DvdM 622-4: "*U.L. dienstwilligen ende geaffectioneerden neven.*" Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, November 28, 1593, DvdM 622-5: "*verobligeerden ende dienstwilligen neve.*" Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, December 12, 1593, DvdM 622-7: "*U.L. dienstwilligen dienaer ende neve.*" Many of Daniel's correspondents signed their letters with some form that signaled their readiness to serve, demonstrating the importance of reciprocity in structuring and continuing the relationship between merchants.
60. The help Daniel provided to his kin can be followed in the letters of Magdalena de Hoest (DvdM 621), Hans Schot, especially the letters between

November 28, 1593, and December 14, 1594, when Hans lived in Haarlem (DvdM 622), and Andries van der Meulen (Dvdm 593a and 593b).

61. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, December 1, 1593, DvdM 622-6: "*verhopende dat ons de Heere genade zal geven dat wy allen de weldaden met rechte danckbarheyt ende met onsen geringen dienst zullen soecken te recompenseren in t'gene dat ons de occasie tot allen tyden sal mogen presenteren.*"
62. Peebles, "Anthropology of Credit and Debt."
63. This does not mean that Hans would have been cut off by his relatives if he failed to reciprocate the help that he received in his youth. Rather, it is meant to point out that even the bonds of kinship, links of the strongest nature, only created a potential relationship. An actual relationship could only develop through exchange. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*; Kettering, "Patronage and Kinship."
64. News also constituted service, and could thereby lead to patronage, among European nobility. Through his reports of the Spanish Armada and the siege of Ostende, Don Giovanni de' Medici, bastard son of Cosimo I, attempted to obtain financial support and promotion from the Florentine court. Dooley, "Making It Present."
65. The defeat of the Spanish Armada, followed by the successes of Maurice of Nassau on the battlefield raised the hopes of the rebels. Robert Fruin, *Tien jaren uit den Tachtigjarigen Oorlog, 1588–1598* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1899). Individuals across Europe appear to have developed a deep interest in news about military affairs. Gestrich, "Public Sphere and the Habermas Debate"; Mario Infelise, "The War, the News, and the Curious: Italian Military Gazettes in Italy," in *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Brendan Dooley and Sabrina Baron (London: Routledge, 2001); Arblaster, "Posts, Newsletters, Newspapers."
66. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, December 12, 1593, DvdM 622-7: "*daer ick door die cleyne kennisse die ick hier hebbe weynich middels toe wete.*"
67. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, December 12, 1593, DvdM 622-7: "*Want ick myn meester daer door groot contentement zoude geven.*"
68. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, December 24, 1593, DvdM 622-8: "*Ick dancke U.L. mede van herten vande tydingen die U.L. my heeft believen te participeeren.*"
69. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, December 24, 1593, DvdM 622-8: "*wetende dat hem dat soudelinge aengenaem soude wesen.*"
70. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, December 24, 1593, DvdM 622-8:

    > *Ick dancke U.L. vande recommandatie die U.L. presenteert myns persoons te doen, waer toe ick my veel te geringe kenne ende door de cleyne correspondentie ende notitie des handels ende van anders die my alhier ontmoet, soude ick luttel stoffe vinden om de kennisse van Sr. U.L. zwager eenich vermaeck in my te geven ende de selve officienselyck te onderhouden.*

71. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, December 24, 1593, DvdM 622-8: "*nu soude myn wenschen wel wesen middel te hebben om U.L. mede wederomme wat in recompentie te scryven.*"

72. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, December 12, 1593, DvdM 622-7: "*Nieuws wete ick van hier niet te scryven of U.L. zal t'zelve van andere met meerder perticulariteyt vernommen hebben.*"
73. Between 1584 and 1600, Jacques della Faille sent approximately 650 letters to Daniel. In the nine years between 1591 and 1600, Joos de Vogele sent 247 letters.
74. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, December 24, 1593, DvdM 622-8: "*maer dat is my onmogelyck wandt ick alhier niet en can vernemmen ofte U.L. heeft het selve te voren met meerder fundament van andere verstaen.*"
75. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, December 24, 1593, DvdM 622-8: "*soo dat U.L. zal believen de occasie te verwachten die my middel zal geven om mynen goedewille te bewysen.*"
76. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, December 1593, DvdM 622-9.
77. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, December 1593, DvdM 622-9: "*U.L. zal voor desen wel verstaen hebben de malfortune die in Tessel over de vlote is gecommen.*"
78. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, December 1593, DvdM 622-9: "*U.L. zal breeder het selve van andere verstaen hebben want hier quade gelegentheyt is om van sulckx pertinente informatie te mogen nemmen.*"
79. That Hans received news from Antonio shows that news also funneled down the hierarchy of networks and not only from the bottom up.
80. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, January 1594, DvdM 622-11: "*dit hebbe ick U.L. willen laeten weten of U.L. per avonture daer geen advys van hadt ende niet anders hebbende.*"
81. It was not enough to possess the rhetorical skills to write correctly. One also had to exhibit commitment through actions in order to gain patronage. McLean, *Art of the Network*.
82. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, March 18, 1594, DvdM 622-12: "*door gebreck van materie hebbe nu in langen aen uwer E. niet gescreven.*"
83. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, December 14, 1594, DvdM 622-23: "*om uwer E. het weynige dat hier occurreert te adviseeren.*"
84. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, December 14, 1594, DvdM 622-23.
85. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, December 24, 1593, DvdM 622-8.
86. Hans Schot to Daniel, Haarlem, December 12, 1593, DvdM 622-7: "*zoo waneer ick wederomme ter plaetse come daer ick middel zal vinden U.L yet bysonders te adviseeren, zal altoos myn debvoir doen om U.L. tselve te recompenseren.*"
87. Victor Enthoven, *Zeeland en de opkomst van de Republiek: Handel en strijd in de Scheldedelta, c. 1550–1621* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Luctor et Victor, 1996).
88. Andriessen and Cohen, "Op zoek naar een stapelmarkt."
89. The accounts of Pierre Maillet's trade with the Van der Meulens are located in DvdM 144. His correspondence to Daniel is in DvdM 586. Peeter Janssen was Daniel's father's sister's son, and thus a first cousin. His letters from Middelburg can be found in DvdM 558. Andriessen and Cohen created a

list of ships and the goods they carried that entered Middelburg from information found in Daniel's correspondence. This shows the different sources of Daniel's information from Middelburg over time. Andriessen and Cohen, "Op zoek naar een stapelmarkt."

90. Pierre only wrote Daniel six letters through all of 1595. Hans's letters kept Daniel up to date on the accounts of Pierre.
91. After Hans moved to Zeeland, his correspondence with Daniel greatly outpaced that with Everart Becker. In 1595, Everart wrote 16 letters to Daniel, less than half the number that Hans did. It should be emphasized that all statistics about the number of letters written to Daniel are necessarily approximate. It is always possible that some letters may be missing. However, it is very unlikely that lost material would change any of the general trends cited here.
92. The 19 letters Hans wrote to Daniel from October 18, 1593, to March 21, 1595, while he lived in Holland, averages a letter every 27 days, or a little more than one letter per month over the 17-month period.
93. The largest gap between letters was the 44 days it took Hans to write his second letter to Daniel on May 26, 1595. This delay was likely due to the time it took Hans to settle into his new environs. However, it cannot be ruled out that there are letters missing from the archive, as Hans's letter from May 26 does not state when his last letter was written.
94. From the data available in the letters, it is possible to come to a number of conclusions about the letters Hans wrote to Daniel after April 12, 1595. The mode for the span between letters Hans wrote was four days with 18 occurrences. A span of two and three days occurred 17 times each. Nine times, Hans wrote two letters on the same day, and 13 times he wrote on two consecutive days. From the 150 letters from which these data exist, we can see that Hans wrote 68 percent of the letters within a week of his previous one. Data from the dates that Hans wrote also show that his letters were sent on every day of the week, with no day having an appreciable advantage. Because Daniel's secretary, Abreham Berrewijns, almost always noted the date that Daniel received letters, it can be seen that of the 141 letters Hans sent from Middelburg for which data are available, 51 percent of the letters took two to three days. Daniel received almost 88 percent of the letters from Middelburg within five days. The longest a letter took was ten days with five occurrences.
95. Hans Schot to Daniel, Middelburg, April 12, 1595, DvdM 622-25: "*soo dattmen niet weet wat daerwaerts over gepasseert is.*"
96. The letter from Jaspar van Nispen is not in the Daniel van der Meulen Archive.
97. Hans Schot to Daniel, Middelburg, July 19, 1595, DvdM 622-35: "*men hoort geene voorder particulariteyt die ons den tydt sal openbaeren.*"
98. Hans Schot to Daniel, Middelburg, July 19, 1595, DvdM 622-35: "*Wete niet oft waerachtich is. De tydinge was mondelinge door eenige van Antwerpen gecommen.*"
99. The ships and cargoes that Hans reported can be followed in the list made by Andriessen and Cohen of the ships that entered the port of Middelburg.

This shows that while Hans lived in Middelburg, he was Daniel's main source for news of the arrival of ships. Andriessen and Cohen, "Op zoek naar een stapelmarkt."

100. Hans Schot to Daniel, Middelburg, July 19, 1595, DvdM 622-35: "*Uwer E. geheel dienstschuldigen dienaer ende neve Jean Schott.*"
101. Daniel's secretary recorded the date on which Daniel responded to each letter on the top of the address page. This evidence shows that Daniel wrote at least 59 letters to Hans, while the latter was in Middelburg. In comparison, only six responses are recorded on the 19 letters Hans wrote while in Haarlem.
102. Hans Schot to Daniel, Middelburg, August 23, 1596, DvdM 622-121.
103. Hans Schot to Daniel, Middelburg, August 23, 1596, DvdM 622-121; Hans Schot to Daniel, Middelburg, August 24, 1596, DvdM 622-122.
104. Daniel to Hans, Leiden, August 28, 1596, DvdM 594-55: "*Besunder gunstige cousyn.*"
105. The existent letter is a copy of the original made by Abreham Berrewijns. Daniel to Hans, Leiden, August 28, 1596, DvdM 594-55: "*doch ick stelle dit in uwe discretie.*"
106. Daniel to Hans, Leiden, August 28, 1596, DvdM 594-55: "*desen eyndigende met myne hertgrondige groetenisse uwaets*" and "*uwe dienstwillige cousyn, Daniel van der Meulen.*"

Part II

# The Capabilities of Ordinary People and the Birth of the Commercial and Industrial World

4

# "Ordinary" People and Philosophers in the Laboratories and Workshops of the Early Industrial Revolution

*Larry Stewart*

## Introduction

In the summer of 1812, the one-time "confectioner" and pastry cook James Sadler crashed his hot air balloon into the cold Irish Sea. Driven by heavy winds far offshore from his launch near Dublin, Sadler was luckily rescued by a passing fishing trawler. He was fortunate even to survive, this for the second time, having had previously an uncontrolled ditching in the Bristol Channel with the chemist William Clayfield in 1810.[1] Sadler was only one of those, in the late eighteenth century, variously dismissed or even occasionally admired as they translated their new technical skills into employment. Sadler's career, however, began rather less dramatically before the 1780s as apprentice to his father, at a "refreshment house" on Oxford's High Street. But it was his exposure to Oxford's chemical laboratory that lifted him from obscurity.

By 1789, he was apparently giving public lectures on "philosophical fireworks." Similarly, Allen Keegan, an umbrella maker on London's Strand, had constructed a huge hot air balloon in 1784, at the cost of £600, but which met misadventure when it burned in Lord Foley's garden in Portland Place, London. Both Keegan and Sadler had connections to the Soho chemist and anatomist John Sheldon and, ultimately, through him to the radical Dr. Thomas Beddoes. Keegan sued Sheldon for the loss, but his action nonetheless failed.[2]

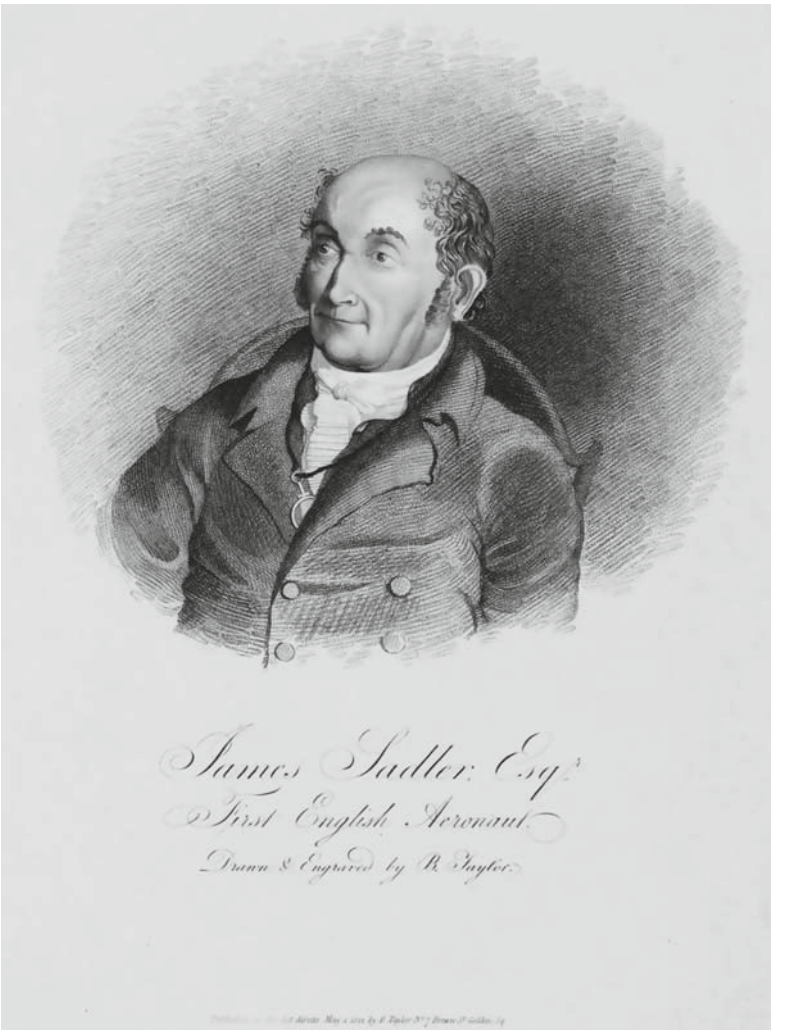


**Illustration 4.1** James Sadler, English aeronaut, c.1812. By permission of the Science Museum Picture Library, London

Likewise, the apothecary James Tytler in 1784 joined the ranks of adventurers whose globes and hopes collapsed. But all of these were men of skill, like the many artisans and craftsmen tied to ballooning and the rage for ascending above the crowds of ordinary men.[3] Indeed, as the early French balloonists also reveal, their reputations were made from those everyday skills translated from workplace to public display. There were, moreover,

**Illustration 4.2** "All on Fire," 1784, in Lord Foley's garden. By permission of the Science Museum Picture Library, London

many such associations fabricated in the workshops and laboratories of the eighteenth century. While we have largely lost sight of them, ordinary people often did extraordinary things.

This chapter focuses primarily on the world of the craftsmen, mechanics, and artisans rooted in the scientific practice of the first industrial revolution. This is an investigation obviously made difficult by the everyday, mundane anonymity of those defined as "ordinary." But the ordinary were not entirely to be scorned as the *canaille* or the *menu peuple*. In E. P. Thompson's magisterial *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), even the skilled might be dismissed as "dumb Dogs." These were the "vulgar," or "common," the range was wide—including those tradesmen and artisans, the glaziers, the plumbers, the potters, miners, and weavers who might rise in rage and riot against their better-educated, and better-connected, superiors.[4]

I seek here the "trading zone" between the manual worker and the theorist, between the mundane and the ideal world. The historian of science Peter Galison has drawn attention to the complexities of encounter and interpretation—ultimately in the experimental, instrumental world, in those "trading zones" in which exchange of ideas took place.[5] In such zones operated often distinct social groups and, consequently, those whose

different degrees of skill were not always readily translated. But it is in their everyday connection and exchange, in the zones of interchange dispersed throughout the various sites of early manufactures, in workshops and laboratories where we may discover the importance of the "ordinary."

Arguably, the rising expectations of the first Industrial Revolution made matters worse. Despite all the Rousseaus and Diderots, or the Priestleys and the Paines, how was it that Enlightenment forgot those upon whose skill reform and industry depended? What have we now but merely a short sigh of centuries ago, of those whose pride and promise were erased in the rush to industry? The view of the ordinary as unruly, unreliable, uncooperative, and undeserving ran consistently through a gentlemanly philosophic culture. That was even the case when philosophers openly acknowledged the need of craftsmen to fashion their experiments. Indeed, one of the reasons why it has proved so difficult to sort out the link between science and industry in the early modern world is the difficulty of describing the space of ordinary people and their everyday experience.[6] From the Left, the fate of the ordinary emerged as one of exploitation, of proles put upon by the inventive and the nouveau riche. For the monarchist, the character of the ordinary was a powder keg of potential riot and mayhem, niter that endlessly alarmed the adherents of political, religious, and economic stability.

Fears of the rabble have long poisoned the portrait of the ordinary. We will find that even among innovative industrialists in the eighteenth century, the tavern and the pub represented crucibles of unreason. Moreover, even those whom we might expect to have been sympathetic to the capacities of laborers and mechanics proved unnerved by anxiety, uncertainty, even by outright dread. Close quarters manufactured contempt. As the philosopher Ian Hacking once argued, this disjuncture was reflected in a "status difference" between theory and experiment that seems "modelled on social rank."[7] Thus, practical science has long had a tense relationship with the theoretician—even if the laboratory and the industrial workshops were oft times identical spaces. These were sites of encounter for many a "laborant," where experimental investigation demanded practical methods and useful instruments.[8] Neither the early modern lecture hall nor the laboratory could function without the practical operator or assistant. While it may appear that the Enlightenment was cultivated in libraries and lecture halls, this remains more an article of faith than not. At least, in my view, it clearly ought not to be argued that universities, academies, or salons were the primary repositories of philosophical knowledge.

## Philosophers in Trade

The status of the gentlemanly philosopher has gathered a great deal of attention even while much depended on their servants.[9] Out of the magnificent philosophical achievements of seventeenth-century experimentation, the Royal Society of London, then sold to the monarchy as a paragon of social stability, ultimately promoted contradictory images. In its own early *History* (1667), Bishop Thomas Sprat proposed both a scholarly society of informed and personally uninterested gentlemen—precisely those virtues which gave its Fellows philosophical credibility—*and* simultaneously one open to men of *all* ranks.[10] Reality failed to match rhetoric. Little has been said of the craftsman upon whom philosophers frequently depended. Indeed, following the inimitable Francis Bacon, it is surely the case that philosophical gentlemen were well aware of the need to include men of trade in their search for knowledge and its improvement. The Restoration Royal Society was Janus-faced. It looked inward for its intellectual heft, represented best by the aristocratic Robert Boyle and later by that ingenious heir of Grantham gentry, Isaac Newton. But the Society's gaze also hoped for more than a glimpse of the elusive secrets jealously policed by the very tradesmen at whom some of the Society often sneered. Throughout the Stuart Restoration an improving spirit survived in the remarkable Robert Hooke, of modest origins, whose great technical skills made Boyle's air pumps perform and Wren's steeples soar. In misguided optimism, the Society also induced an institutional attempt to establish a History of Trades, a kind of Baconian "Office of Address," whereby the secrets of artisans would be gathered, and hopefully improved, with the aid of gentlemen philosophers.[11] The scheme proved a dismal failure. Where then was the space for inventive craftsmen after all that rhetoric? The social force of industrialism, in the eighteenth century, made a different world for both philosophers and craftsmen.

The early Royal Society was unable to bridge the zone between trade and philosophy. Yet the hope did not fade. Artisans knew too much to be ignored. In Britain, by 1754, a Society of Arts explicitly sought to encourage inventions. This new society was composed of a substantial proportion of the gentlemen of the Royal Society inclined to a Baconian utility. Here too, its reach exceeded its grasp. There were obvious hurdles, partly from lack of funds, resulting in a significant decline in membership and in the premiums intended for the inventive.[12] Premiums for invention were to supplant expensive patents and expand public knowledge. The Society of Arts depended largely on expertise in experiment, which seemed,

in turn, the key to unlocking the secrets of trade. These explorations of new innovations revealed much about the unlettered and inventive. The debate over the inventions of common men and uncommon skill was inescapable.

Take the notable examples of Robert Dossie and William Lewis, who served as agents of the Society of Arts. Both worked on various committees that included celebrated experimentalists like the former printer Benjamin Franklin and the pneumatic chemist Rev. Stephen Hales. Both Dossie and Lewis took up the promotion of the laboratory in the assessment of claims to invention. In a moment of some note, the press attested to the significance of access to a laboratory. Thus, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, a long review described how Lewis hoped

> to enable others to pursue chemical experiments still further [and] has given instructions how to procure, at a small expence [*sic*], a set of furnaces very commodious, and easily manageable, which may be all worked under a common chimney, and some in the middle of a room, without offence, and with which most experiments that require fire may be performed with great ease, expedition, and safety. He has also given an entire essay on the improvement of the machines for blowing air into larger furnaces, by a fall of water without moveable bellows, by virtue of air carried down by the water as it falls through pipes.[13]

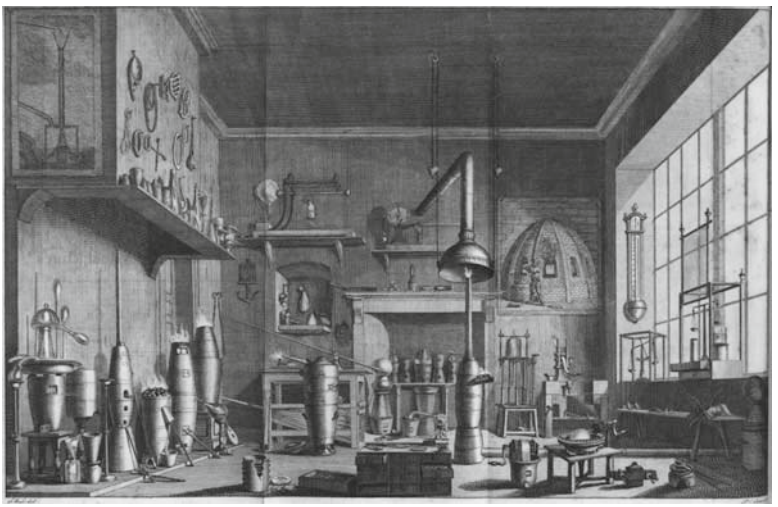

**Illustration 4.3** William Lewis, laboratory, 1765. By permission of the Royal Society, London

But availability of apparatus was not the only issue. More important, Dossie argued, was the need for the skills of

> careful and able men . . . employed in the fabrication of furnaces; although such are rarely to be found among common workmen: . . . When the best qualified, however, are set to work, they should be continually superintended by the operator, or some person capable of judging, both their adherence to the plan given, and the general performance of the work.[14]

The intersection of men and instruments made experiment possible. Thus, from the experience of practical chemistry, workers needed to appropriate an armory of sublimers, filters, funnels, cupelling instruments, burning glasses, thermometers, microscopes, Papin's digesters, glass alembics, and an array of now uncommon devices such as aludels and pelicans used in distillation.[15] Skill and craft built new instruments and expanded enquiry.

Even to build the apparatus was problematic. Reliance on the skill of workers was essential yet not easily secured. Thus, for example, Dossie's contemporary in France, Abbé Jean-Antoine Nollet, created many a cabinet of devices for his popular lectures. While Nollet could provide many a demonstration piece, to reveal basic mechanical or even electrical principles, he needed to rely on several highly specialized craftsmen to construct parts of the apparatus whether in brass or in wood, or even in applying the enamel and lacquer for elaborate decoration. Following, in part, the lead taken by experimental demonstrators in England, like J. T. Desaguliers or Stephen Demainbray, by mid-century both Phillippe Vayringe and Nollet in France effectively had to rely on "*des bon 'artisans de cru', fondeurs, chaudronniers, et graveurs*" to make their instruments.[16] In the case of Nollet, such employment secured a lucrative international trade in experimental devices.

## Dissemination and Experimental Spaces

It was often the ordinary that made the extraordinary possible. But there were profound implications more than mastering the furnace or the bench first implied. In eighteenth-century public culture, there was a divide, not well recognized now, between the wide diffusion of scientific and technical knowledge, on the one hand, and a deep-seated concern, on the other, of the consequence of new knowledge in public discourse.[17] Yet, this epistemic divergence beyond the laboratory and workshop did not simply follow rank or sophistication. It was also fueled by a fear that popular sympathies and actions—especially when driven by reforming

sentiments—could neither be easily predicted nor controlled. Where public knowledge would lead, to improvement or to disturbance, was not a question readily answered with any confidence. Toward the end of the century, there was obviously a great gulf between the optimism eagerly projected by the likes of the chemical philosopher and Unitarian minister Joseph Priestley and, on the other hand, the eloquent cynicism of Edmund Burke.[18] For Burke, alarmed by the Revolution in France, reform would ultimately come as the "end of all the deceitful dreams and visions of equality and rights of men. In 'the Serbonian bog' of this base oligarchy they are all absorbed, sunk, and lost for ever."[19]

Diffusion clearly provoked significant concerns about public knowledge. But diffusion among whom? And how deep into the Burke's social bog? What indeed did the "rabble" read, or understand, if anything? Could improvement, as it was otherwise argued, ward off social upheaval? And what proper political foundations might then be unhinged? Dossie's contemporary Priestley, in his proto-democratic *History and Present State of Electricity*, had proposed to "bring more labourers into the common field." He meant, of course, numerous investigators—unconstrained by privilege. His wish was that "progress might be quickened, if studious and modest persons, instead of confining themselves to the discoveries of others, could be brought to entertain the idea, that it was possible to make discoveries themselves."[20] But, Priestley also warned that immediate success in experiments was not to be expected: "... like all the other arts in which the hands and fingers are made use of, it is only *much practise* that can enable a person to go through complex experiments, of this or any other kind, with ease and readiness."[21] Most importantly, Priestley's vision was one of the circulation of scientific knowledge, of skill and capacities not limited by rank or connection. This was a refrain with obvious political resonance. As the chemical physician, the rotund radical democrat Thomas Beddoes later proposed, "by multiplying the number of minds in activity, we multiply the chances of fortunate combinations." Thus, "*the more widely any species of knowledge is disseminated, the more rapidly we may expect that it will make advances.*"[22] At the end of the century, combinations of chemical kinds were not the only ones of importance. Combinations of men could also induce unforeseen political and economic consequences. It was the ultimate aim of Priestley to engage the ordinary person in the pursuit of science and improvement. This, in the view of Burke, was exactly the explosive niter to be feared.

By contrast, organized philosophical societies beyond the broader public gaze were virtually exclusive grounds. They thus fail us as sources for those whose mundane lives rarely make a public appearance. Indeed, to discover the everyday and the commonplace in the laboratory, we are often now dependent on traces left by the lettered and the literate, of those few

admitted into exclusive scientific clubs. Despite the polite cultivation of natural philosophy as the mark of enlightened sophistication, experiment was not confined to cognac-scented afternoons in a country library. There were many whose private ventures concealed a great dependence on the knowledge and capacities of ordinary artisans and mechanics.

The same may also be said of scholarly institutions where natural philosophical principles were taught. It may, briefly, be worth mentioning that we can at least see something of the everyday in the university world—in the duties of those charged with providing demonstrations of natural phenomena or aiding in experiments. Hence, whatever he learned in the kitchens of his father served James Sadler well in the Oxford chemical laboratory of Thomas Beddoes. Beddoes described Sadler as "a perfect prodigy in mechanics."[23] Such skill could unlock many doors. Likewise, the lectures of John Anderson in Glasgow, from the 1760s, required substantial preparation, each of which demanded properly working devices from pendulums to projectiles, from magnets to electrical machines.[24] Each demonstration required readying, probably by his assistant of nine years, John Parsell, who could link the proper devices to the desired natural propositions.

Here too, in Glasgow, the importance of the ordinary was revealed. Anderson was a useful example of the many experimentalists who were among early sympathizers of the French Revolution. Anderson was also determined that workers and tradesmen be given access to natural and experimental philosophy.[25] Indeed, his early connections to the Watts as instrument makers has often been thought to be significant in the evolution of the steam engine. We know, of course, that it was James Watt who was called, upon his return to Scotland in the 1750s, to repair a model of a Newcomen engine Anderson used in his lectures. His father was by then supplying many of the tools necessary for the building of Anderson's instruments.[26] By 1760, Glasgow College had a large amount of apparatus to demonstrate hydraulic principles, including chain pumps, undershot and overshot water wheels, as well as barometers and air pumps. The collection also including a model steam engine, possibly on which Watt had worked, but which was by then in the hands of the instrument maker Jonathan Sisson, in London.[27] Here were a few of the intersections of instrument makers, public lecturers, and projectors of industrial and manufacturing practice, mostly now unknown in the ordinary world of trade and skill.

## Enlightenment Rising

The vulgar of the manufacturing workshops and laboratories of the first industrial revolution provided no ordinary enlightenment.[28] For Burke,

these were assistants to the "calculators" who needed to be watched. Eighteenth-century philosophers had cause to reflect on the status of workmen—an issue especially revealed in the burgeoning chemical industries where the science was debated by philosophers but practiced by artisans.[29] It was hardly in Britain alone that chemical methods were under debate. Among the papers of the potter Josiah Wedgwood is a significant account, derived from an *Encyclopédie* article of 1753, written by the physician-chemist Gabriel-François Venel, and most likely copied and translated by Wedgwood's gifted assistant Alexander Chisholm. Venel's views had a particular resonance in early industrial England: "Among these people of the more ignorant kind, to have a laboratory to prepare therein perfumes, colours, enamels, phosphori, to know in gross the chemical practices, and the more curious and less common processes, in one word *to be a workman in operations and a professor of arcana, is to be a chemist*" (emphasis mine).[30] In the translation prepared for Wedgwood, there was laid bare the meditation of Venel on workers and theorists. Practice defined the commonplace and the everyday:

> The chemist in one word must be an artist, an experienced artist; if it was only to be able to execute or direct the operations with that facility, that abundance of resources, and that promptitude, which render them pleasing and amusing, and not laborious, irksome or disgustful by obstacles happening at every step. All the insulated phenomena, the pretended bisarreries [*sic*] of operations, the varieties of products, the singularities in the results of experiments, which the demi-chemists place to the account of art or of unknown properties of the materials made use of, may be attributed pretty generally to the inexperience of the artist, and seldom occur to the experienced chemist ... For the rest, 'tis only to those who have never yet put their hand to work, that it is needful to recommend experience; for whoever has lived six months among furnaces, or who knows so much of chemistry as to understand a discourse between the deepest specialist and an experimental workman, cannot be mistaken in the absolute superiority of the latter.[31]

## Zones of Encounter

An excellent example of the way in which laboratory practice contributed to enlightened industry may be seen in the remarkable Alexander Chisholm. As he did not publish, Chisholm is now little known. Once an assistant to William Lewis in London, upon Lewis's death in 1781 Chisholm's accidental encounter with Josiah Wedgwood led to employment as laboratory technician at Etruria in Staffordshire and, ultimately, as

tutor to Wedgwood's sons. Chisholm seems to have been the likely conduit for the virtually 200 volumes of chemical trials and assessments of manufactures, some originally possessed by Lewis, that came into the hands of Wedgwood. Among the *Mémoires* of the Académie des Sciences in 1763, Chisholm noted a "Histoire des arts" under the authority of the academician René Antoine Ferchault de Réaumur—the very kind of venture the Royal Society had never been able to produce.

From Paris came further musings on the world of workmen and the advance of any theory:

> To reduce Arts to simple tradition, is perhaps putting the greatest obstacle, that can be done, to their progress. Workmen are in general little accustomed to reflexions, and hardly ever in a capacity of going back to the first principles of their arts. Accordingly we see that when circumstances do not admit the application of the rules they have learnt, they are almost always without resource, and can succeed only by chance. If some one among them, born with an inventive genius, ventures to take a higher flight, the want of theory soon stops him and makes his efforts useless: even his trials often serve only to mislead him . . . finally the description of arts is the most effectual means of reaching a great number of proprietaries, that they have in their possession treasures which are unknown to them, and which they might bring to account by the establishment of divers manufactures, of which they had no knowledge and of which the reading of this work may give them an idea.[32]

Obstacles to improvement thus rested on precisely the unresolved social hurdles and suspicions like those that hobbled in the Royal Society in the late seventeenth century. But the transition from craft to theory relied on the ordinary practitioner as much as on the philosopher.

Take the sentiments of the chemical manufacturer James Keir of West Bromwich in the Midlands. Keir explicitly understood it was possible to learn from those trades that suggested further trials. In 1792, Keir wrote to the young chemist Tom Wedgwood on the properties of phosphorescence in the manufacture of acids and alkali at Keir's factory at Tipton near the Birmingham Canal. He reflected on the chemical production of light known in glass and pottery manufactures. Not an uncommon phenomenon, it had yet to be explained in chemical terms:

> It did not come within your subject which is confined to the phosphoric light produced by heat & attrition to take notice of a very singular phosphorescence which vitriolated tartar yields in a most state, without either heat or attrition. It has been lately mentioned in some of the Journals, but it has been well known to the workmen at my manufactory for many years

> past . . . When the workmen have occasion in the night to take the liquor out of these vessels, . . . they see this salt give phosphoric light, and those who have been at sea compare it to the luminous appearance of the Sea in the wake of the Ship.[33]

In his pursuit of the chemistry of light, Keir referred directly to comments made by the chemist-physician Pierre Joseph Macquer whose *Dictionnaire de chymie* Keir was determined to revise.[34] Macquer was a master of the techniques and instruments of the eighteenth-century laboratory. He remarked on the many "inconveniences" that laboratory practices entailed, in the numerous pieces of apparatus, and their constant repair and cleaning. It was thus ideal that

> Those persons whose fortune enables them to have an assistant operator, on whose exactness and intelligence they can depend, to avoid disagreeable circumstances; but they ought nevertheless to attend to the execution of these things. We cannot depend too much on ourselves in these matters, however minute, on account of their consequences. This becomes even more indispensable when the experiments are to be kept secret, at least for a time; which is often necessary in chemistry.[35]

This had even more significant implications beyond the factory floor. In the introduction to his expanded translation of Macquer, in 1789, Keir famously propounded the need for a "diffusion of a general knowledge, and of a taste for science, over all classes of men . . . "[36] This was precisely the doctrine that Joseph Priestley would consistently promote. Ironically, the "bustling, booby, Birmingham mob"—of Church and King—would obstruct the future if they could.[37]

## Conflicting Visions

The enlightened doctrine of diffusion was deeply conflicted. On the one hand, it rested on the notion that the education and social improvement of the ordinary were mutually reinforcing. Rousseau and Paine, at the very least, were the spokesmen for those who would lessen "the catalogue of impossibilities."[38] Yet, on the other hand, it was readily apparent to many early manufacturers that their workmen, whether artisans, skilled craftsmen, or common laborers, did not always see the same light. Democratic sentiments sometimes sat uneasily with economic transformation. One of the most remarkable examples of the disquiet lay both in the personal anguish over democratic principles and the defense of stability in the mind of the troubled, but innovative, tradesman James Watt. It is well known that James Watt, junior, had a serious and ill-timed flirtation with

republicanism, even serving as a delegate of the Manchester Constitutional Society to the Convention in Paris.[39] This surely alarmed his wealthy father. Watt senior blamed the Manchester bleacher and dyer Thomas Cooper, to whom the younger Watt had been apprenticed.[40] As he wrote to Joseph Black,

> My Son James's conduct has given me much uneasiness, though I have nothing to accuse him of except being a violent Jacobin, that is bad enough in my eyes, who abhor democracy, as much as I do Tyranny, being in fact another sort of it.[41]

To understand Watt's attitude to his own workers at the Soho manufactory, we might go back to the earliest days of the Seven Years War when the young Scotsman from Greenock sought training as an instrument maker in London. As an unknown instrument maker sent by his father to London in 1756, Watt found the city was riddled with rumors of war with France. Watt desperately feared the press gangs who might gather him up without the effective defense of being an apprentice to a London guild. The gangs made such an impression that he wrote of being alarmed by the greatest mobs he ever saw.[42] In this regard, the effects were very similar to those Edmund Burke would experience during the Gordon Riots in 1780. Watt and Burke ultimately had common reactions to the rampage of artisans and mechanics.

The fury of mechanical mobs reduced ideology to irrelevancy. Watt's friend Joseph Priestley, who vigorously promoted democratic ideals, would be a victim of one of the most violent episodes in Britain in the late eighteenth century. The so-called Priestley Riots in Birmingham in 1791 were provoked by Priestley's role in the Revolution Society, even before a relatively innocuous dinner to celebrate Britain's Glorious Revolution and Settlement of a century earlier. However, in the aftermath of the Bastille and of the republican attacks on the aristocracy, just as Edmund Burke raised the alarm, the Birmingham dinner and its toasts were seemingly too much for the Tory magistrates. A hostile reaction was almost inevitable. And the local magistrates may well have abetted the days of violence that followed.[43]The result was a rampaging High Church mob and an assault on dissenting meeting houses throughout Birmingham, the burning of Priestley's house, the destruction of his library, and a bonfire of a large and unique collection of scientific instruments—followed by more threats and attacks on the houses of others, including that of James Keir. Democratic sympathies were clearly no defense against Tory rage.

The relations between industrialists and workmen were uncertain at best. The vulgar and industrial visionaries did not always view the world the same way. In the case of Boulton and Watt, who had themselves built

a great manufactory at Soho employing close to 1,000, there was indeed much to fear. How reliable would their workers be? Would they be drawn by the cinders left of Priestley's home and laboratory? Would laborers destroy their own workplace? Boulton and Watt took no chances as the troubles continued. Watt wrote, to the Swiss chemist J. A. De Luc, that they had convinced their workers of "the criminality of such an imprudence of joining the mob" and secured a "promise of defending us & themselves against all invaders."[44] Watt was not sanguine about the chances. He did think that his and Boulton's "principles which are well known as friends to the established government & enemies to republican principles . . . should then have been our protection from a mob whose watch word was Church & King yet our safety was principaly [*sic*] owing to most of the dissenters living in the south of the town, for after the first moments, they did not seem over nice in their discriminations of religion or principles, I among others was pointed out as a presbyterian, though I never was in a meeting house in Birmingham & Mr B is well known as a Church man."[45] A week later he wrote to his nephew, the Glasgow potter Robert Hamilton, that they had "prepared with fire arms at the manufactory [as] our men promised to stand by us."[46] Watt made ready. He loathed the mob. He claimed he and Boulton "are enemies to all raisers of popular tumults or to those who wish to put any power into the hands of the lower class of the people, whose intellectual powers extend little farther than to know who sells or gives the best ale." He was particularly heartened that Keir "had collected a little army & would have peppered them if they had paid him a visit." Along with his own son's rebellious sentiments, Watt had had enough: "Lest we be again taken unprepared by mobs or thieves I have bespoke a little arsenal of blunderbusses muskets bayonnets [*sic*] & pistols, to defend my house, and at Soho we mean to train all our fencible men about 150 to the use of firearms so that we shall not fear an unarmed mob on any future occasion. Enough of politics."[47] Watt may have wished it so but his mind was uneasy. The reason for this is very straightforward—James Watt, junior, had been drawn from Manchester politics into the maelstrom of Paris. He witnessed the gyre of Parisian clubs swing wildly out of control. And in England Burke raised the younger Watt's name in a tirade in the House of Commons against republicans.

## Interiors

Politics would let neither philosophers nor manufacturers rest easy. Once we find ourselves in the zones of exchange in the early modern laboratory and workshop, where common workmen stood alongside investors

and entrepreneurs, men of industry smelled impending dangers. Like Wedgwood, James Watt allows us a particular insight into the dynamics of production among his own workers and servants—driven by the ideology of improvement as much as by the force of machines and the exchange of goods.[48]

For all in the early modern laboratory, the ordinary or the scholar, there was danger and exposure to the unknown. Hands got dirty and noxious fumes overwhelmed healthy airs. Chemicals wafted round James Watt's workshop, risking repeated nausea, loss of consciousness, and, potentially, the lives of the participants.[49] This was not out of ignorance, but the consequence of an adventure where there was too little knowledge and where the properties of new gases could not be identified with any certainty. Indeed, the more expectations arose from innovation, the more dangers emerged in the exploration. Already an obsessive hypochondriac, Watt compounded his own troubles, and those of his assistants, by the experiments he conducted on "the giddy making principles in Hydro Carbonate." Working with charcoal he "made HC [hydrocarbonate] which smelt like phosphorous or red hot steel—A quart mixt with 20 of C.Ar [carbonic acid gas?] was inhaled by a healthy young man, without any sensible affect whatever, another quart was taken by another person with as little effect." Neither experimental assistant was identified. But on one trial of producing airs from iron and charcoal, he reported to Joseph Black in Edinburgh that " . . . in smelling it I got a little of it, a very little, had slight & any transitory vertigo, which returned again rather more sensibly, on rising in the night, & was felt slightly the next day."[50] The taste and odor of some gases, in the absence of any clear chemical tests, were the only means of distinguishing one gas from another and that was hardly reliable.

Chemistry, in laboratory, factory, or workshop, made new dangers—for philosophers and workers alike. In 1794, Watt reported to Thomas Beddoes on a series of experiments that could have produced disastrous results. Watt and Beddoes were then desperate in their search for cures to consumption and it appeared that the newly produced gases, then called factitious airs, offered some promise. But, Watt revealed that

> In the beginning of July, I made some of this air by the application of water to red hot charcoal in a closed vessel. The smell was somewhat hepatick [uremic], from the new cast iron vessell [*sic*] it was made in, and was also contaminated, by a bad linseed oil varnish in the refrigeratory, its taste was that of fixed air, though more feeble. I inhaled a little of it cautiously, but had scarce withdrawn the pipe from my mouth before I became so giddy, that I could not stand without a support. I had also considerable nausea. A healthy young man, who stood about 6 feet from the hydraulic bellows

> when I discharged about a cubic foot of this air, was effected in the same manner, as it passed by him towards an open door. Another young person, merely from smelling to it as it issued from the bellows, fell upon the floor insensible, and wondered where he was when he awaked. None of us experienced any disagreeable effects in consequence of the vertigo, &c. only in going to bed six hours afterwards, I felt some small remains of the vertigo.[51]

Watt nevertheless persisted. But within a couple of months, things had not gone terribly well in the workshop. Anticipating medical benefit, Watt's own workers had made possible trials of new airs. In his private accounts, ordinary persons now appear. We know few of the subjects by name, but Rebecca Stanley, a 35-year-old consumptive servant in Watt's household, was one who was treated with the new pneumatic medicine. Likewise, the frequently inebriated 46-year-old Richard Newbury, a laborer to Watt, was given inhalations of hydrocarbonate with temporary relief but without any lasting benefit. He died in April 1797, probably of consumption, victim Watt lamented, to "my want of knowledge" although no medicines had been given except the new air and blisters.[52] In other words, those employed by Watt were experimental subjects treated both by Watt and by the Birmingham surgeon John Barr. On the other hand, Watt did take great care with the preparation of airs, including oxygen and nitrous oxide. Of special interest were carbonic acid gases, which had already been used, prior to the Revolution, to contain contagious disease in the wards of Paris and Dijon hospitals, by the chemists Guyton de Morveau, Antoine François, comte de Fourcroy, and Antoine-Laurent de Lavoisier.[53]

Surprisingly perhaps, while as much industrial as medical, Watt's workshop experience was not entirely unique. Indeed, well-known figures tied to the priorities of the French crown circulated throughout the trading zones in which philosophers and practitioners met. Such was the source of the chemical revolution of Lavoisier at the Petit Arsenal, near the Bastille, after he was appointed to the Gunpowder and Saltpeter Administration.[54] It was here, in Lavoisier's private apartments and laboratory, that there gathered such a range of assistants, colleagues, technicians, students, and collaborators that it is difficult to differentiate their roles, which, in any case, were frequently changing.[55]

Here, for example, was to be found Jean-Henri Hassenfratz, son of tavern owners but a prodigy who became a chemist in Lavoisier's laboratory. He worked with Lavoisier on the decomposition of water into gases, wrote reports for the *Annales de chimie*, and sought ways to manufacture soda. After the Revolution broke out, with Hassenfratz and Armand

Séguin, Lavoisier turned to the physiology of respiration which he justified in expressly practical terms:

> The scientist can hope to diminish the mass of evils that afflict the human species, to increase its enjoyment and well being and even if the new routes he is opening up could prolong the average life of men by a few years, or even a few days, he, too, could aspire to the glorious title of 'benefactor of humanity'.[56]

It is obvious that Lavoisier saw his practical endeavors, of which there were many, as providing a useful cachet amid the turmoil erupting in France. As we know, this would not save him from the most extreme elements. He may also have expected that many of those with whom he had worked might also protect him. Of all his allies and assistants, they either could not or would not take the risk.[57]

One of the more disappointing was perhaps Armand Séguin, who worked with Lavoisier from at least 1786. Séguin was immortalized in the sketches of Mme Lavoisier, who was herself a significant participant in the laboratory. Among some of the more famous of her drawings are those of the Arsenal, where Séguin was a subject during often lengthy experiments on respiration.[58] During 1790, when Séguin wrote much of the report on the respiration experiments, he notably took the opportunity to emphasize the significance of science for the ordinary person:

> By what fatality is that the poor man, who lives from the work of his hands, who is obliged to use all the strength that nature has given him in order to survive, consumes more energy than the idle man, whereas the latter has less need to regenerate his forces? Why, by shocking contrast, should the rich man enjoy an abundance that he does not physically need and that would seem to be intended for the working man? Let us beware, however, of maligning nature and accusing it of faults that undoubtedly stem from our social institutions . . .[59]

For experimental philosophers, the politics of the everyday were inescapable.

## Political Airs

From the industrial workshop to the laboratory, there was recognition of many risks—including, in some minds, those lurking in the promises of reform and revolution. Even radicals worried. Thomas Beddoes wrote privately of the experiments, at James Keir's home in West Bromwich in


**Illustration 4.4** Antoine Lavoisier in his laboratory, and Sequin on the left with breathing apparatus. By permission of the Science Museum Picture Library, London

1792, he had performed with the innovative Richard Edgeworth, "who is not only a good mechanic [but] in every respect a superior man." They also discussed the unraveling of France in the "sanguinary fury . . . of a populace, whose appetite for blood seems to have grown by feeding upon it." Brought together by politics and by philosophy, the triumvirate in Bromwich escaped into experiment, repeating electrical trials following the much-discussed work of Alessandro Volta.[60] To experiment was then to dare a gamble with ill-defined powers. Beddoes derived many lessons beyond reform of medical orthodoxy. Despite the obvious "servitude of perpetual prejudice" imposed by social and political structures, he nonetheless had his eye to the recent Priestley Riots and the brutally elegant pen of Burke. Beddoes wrote, "I am abundantly sensible of the evils that arise from the fanaticism and brutality of the common people; and that I am equally persuaded that these horrible qualities themselves originate in the wretched condition of governments . . . [and those who] would purify the earth at a few strokes from that mischievous vermin, the French and the Philosophers."[61]

James Watt was no less alarmed. He took some solace that "The workmen at Birmingham, are mostly Church & King men, at present, but their

adherence to their principles or their moderation are not to be depended upon, they gave us a dreadful specimen of the latter in 1791."[62] Obviously, the Birmingham worm could suddenly turn. Watt was no democratic sympathizer—and he derided the followers of Thomas Paine who surfaced among Birmingham's industrial workers. In a remarkable correspondence, Boulton and Watt informed the Crown on the growth of the radical movement, especially as "petitions for reform of parliament are handed out and every means employed to prevail upon the lower class of people to sign them." According to Boulton and Watt, there were over 1,000 signatures, "... among whom we are persuaded there is no person of respectability." Boulton and Watt collectively saw themselves as agents of stability where

> Any appeal to the labouring part of the people is always to be dreaded, but is particularly so at present, under the great stagnation of credit, and want of trade which must deprive many of them of the means of supporting themselves, and consequently in fear that they may be instigated to a renewal of the riots of 1791 which we wish to avert ... As we would not wish to in a circumstance of that sort to be any ways obnoxious to them we must beg the favour of ... *to make no mention of our names as informers*, and also hope, that our desire of maintaining internal peace will plead our excuse for the liberty we now take.[63]

Watt mixed mobs and democracy in the same damnation. Democrats were demonic, their energies uncontrolled and unleashed in riots that could achieve nothing but harm—especially to the new industrial part of the nation. It was not just kings at risk. As he warned the Birmingham physician William Withering,

> It is vain for any man to attempt to combat the opinions of a nation in the hour of their prejudices, & at the time when we have been seriously alarmed by the machinations of the Jacobins to disorganize England as they have done France. The dreadful disasters which mob government has brought upon that country, make all unprejudiced men here, trouble at the mention of reform, lest by pulling out an seemingly useless peg, the bands which unite us should be ... unloosed & the System fall to pieces ...[64]

Whatever use Watt had for his assistants and mechanics, he was not prepared to offer them trust. His fears were a virtual amalgam of metaphors that flew between Priestley and Burke. Watt saw all common mechanics, tradesmen, and laborers as potential rebels. Thus, he wrote, "The Rabble of this country are the mine of Gunpowder that will one day blow it up & violent will be the explosion."[65] Thomas Beddoes was likewise worried, as

"there has been too much already to regret" in France. The Revolution had lost its way, as "[the French] are wild beasts broke loose."[66]

## The Importance of Subjects

Politics lurked in the airs of the Enlightenment laboratory. While Watt was circumspect about his public politics, his collaborator Thomas Beddoes was quite the opposite. By the end of the Terror, Watt was not alone in his alarm. Beddoes was convinced that there was a growing "danger from a general fermentation among the labouring class."[67] Much misery arose from the political economy that priests and princes maintained and Burke championed. Beddoes asked, in the midst of early Napoleonic conflict,

> Could not science and rural oeconomy absorb the labour of those, whom the poet terms the cankers of a quiet world and a long peace, and upon whom the political oeconomist looks, as upon a race of two-legged cattle stalled in our manufactories, in order that in due season, they may be driven to glut the dogs of war?[68]

The apparent spread of consumption was alarming, and pulmonary illness was endemic. Beddoes took especial note of the laborers in industry in Britain and in France, so that "An immense list of artisans of different name, whose labours are carried on amid the floating particles of earth and metals, might be subjoined to the needle-grinders." From France he noted difficulties of the needle manufacturers, flax-dressers, plaster and marble workmen, carpet makers, and the young girls in the silk industries of the Cevennes. Many became victims to pulmonary complaints no matter how much they were warned.[69]

For chemists in laboratories the risks were self-evident, but industrial diseases also suggested opportunities. While manufacturers stirred an elixir of utility and reform, they also transformed the epistemology of the laboratory. Some believed experimental practice promised a preservative against social turmoil. In laboratories workers and assistants could advance the cause as much as any others. In Watt's workshop, they could become subjects as much as patients, and thus philosophers would not alone provide evidence of the virtues of airs. It was on the "ordinary" that chemical effects were to be revealed.

The result was an attempt to establish a chemical, pneumatic network that would cause a revolution in medical practice. Even this made Watt nervous.[70] But there were to be two hurdles: to get chemistry out of laboratories and to encourage surgeons, physicians, and apothecaries, among

others, to establish enough trials to make pneumatic remedies convincing. This was surely the basis of Beddoes's proposal to establish a Pneumatic Institution at Clifton, a Bristol suburb. And it was here that Beddoes employed, in another prodigy Humphry Davy, one of the most remarkable assistants a chemist could have had.[71] This was surely fortuitous, for both. But Davy was, to some extent, simply following in the footsteps of Beddoes's employment of the pastry chef, mechanic, and laboratory assistant James Sadler, who later made quite a name as a balloonist.[72]

## Conclusion: The Ordinary in Experimental Spaces

The interiors of the laboratories and workshops of the eighteenth century were mainly private spaces about which little has been revealed. Yet to reach into the practices of the laboratory uncovers a range of experimental participants who were ordinary only in the sense that they are now little known. No longer was experiment confined to a few assistants, collaborators, technicians, and laborers. Hence laboratory workers might be patients as much as assistants, and physicians might induce trials even when subjects were also nervous of the risk. At Beddoes's Pneumatic Institution in Bristol, poor patients with chronic diseases were given the chance to ease their symptoms. Yet, Beddoes admitted, they were also "afraid of being experimented upon."[73] In Watt's workshop, his own son experienced the vertigo brought on by new airs. James Watt himself could barely cope. In the early modern laboratory, or in the closely associated industrial workshop, there was a sometimes dramatic convergence of roles. As ordinary workers assisted manufacturers, unknown technicians made possible experiments, and common craftsmen brought to the bench their daily experience to illuminate the confusions of philosophers. From philosopher to mechanic, all breathed the same uncertain airs. In such a world of chemical, and political, turmoil, Watt the craftsman could readily share Burke's views of the vulgar.

## Notes

1. James Sadler, *Balloon. An Authentic Narrative of the Ærial Voyage, of Mr. Sadler, across the Irish channel, from Belvedere-House, Drumcondra; in the Neighborhood of Dublin, on Thursday, October 1st, 1812. With Some Observations on the Important Objects Connected with Ærostation. To Which Is Annexed, a Chart of the Channel, Shewing His Course and Place of Descent* (Dublin, W. H. Tyrrell, 1812). On Sadler's remarkably inventive career, see Hugh Torrens, "Sadler, James (*bap*. 1753, *d*. 1828)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), online edn.,

May 2010, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37928, accessed February 19, 2013; http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/streets/inscriptions/central/sadler.html; http://www.georgianindex.net/balloonists/sadler.html.

2. On Sheldon and Sadler, see, inter alia, Larry Stewart, "Putting On Airs," in T. H. Levere and G. L.'E. Turner, eds., *Discussing Chemistry and Steam. The Minutes of the Chapter Coffee House Philosophical Society 1780–1787* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 207–255, esp. 225–227; Norman Capenter, "John Sheldon, F. R. S., and the Exeter Medical School," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, **52** (1958), 7–14; British Library, Add. MS. 22897, f. 23. Tiberus Cavallo to James Lind, October 10, 1784; f. 31. Cavallo to Lind, March 5, 1785; Cameron Alick, "Sheldon, John (1752–1808)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25305, accessed February 19, 2013; and British Library, Burney Collection. *Morning Herald and Daily Advertiser* (London, Saturday, January 3, 1784; Saturday, September 25, 1784); *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* (Friday, October 1, 1784); *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (Tuesday, December 7, 1784); *General Evening Post* (December 7, 1784–December 9, 1784). The cloth merchant who supplied the material for the balloon was evidently more successful in securing payment. *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* (Friday, December 17, 1784).
3. Richard Gillespie, "Ballooning in France and Britain, 1783–1786," *Isis* **75** (June 1984), 249–268, esp. 266; and Marie Thébaud-Sorger, *L'Aérostation au temps des Lumières* (Rennes, France: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009).
4. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Press, 1963), p. 69. See, recently, Owen Jones, *Chavs. The Demonization of the Working Class* (London and New York: Verso, 2011).
5. Peter Galison, *Image and Logic. A Material Culture of Microphysics* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 798; Citing Lynn Hunt, *Revolution and Urban Politics in Provincial France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978).
6. See, especially, A. E. Musson and Eric Robinson, *Science and Technology in the Industrial Revolution*. Cf. Margaret C. Jacob, *Scientific Culture and the Making of the Industrial West* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Joel Mokyr, *The Enlightened Economy. An Economic History of Britain 1700–1850* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2009); Joyce Appleby, *The Relentless Revolution. A History of Capitalism* (New York and London: Norton, 2010).
7. Ian Hacking, *Representing and Intervening. Introductory Topics in the Philosophy of Natural Science* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 150–151.
8. See Maurice Crosland, "Early Laboratories c.1600–c.1800 and the Location of Experimental Science," *Annals of Science*, **62** (April 2005), 233–253, esp. 242.
9. Stephen Pumfrey, "Who did the Work? Experimental Philosophers and Public Demonstrations in Augustan England," *British Journal for the History of Science* **28** (June, 1995), 131–156.

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13. *Gentleman's Magazine*, **35** (1765), 339.
14. Robert Dossie, *The Elaboratory Laid Open, or, the Secrets of Modern Chemistry and Pharmacy Revealed: Containing Many Particulars Extremely Necessary to Be Known to All Practitioners in Medicine* (London: J. Nourse, 1758), p. 4.
15. Robert Dossie, *Institutes of Experimental Chemistry: Being an Essay Towards Reducing That Branch of Natural Philosophy to a Regular System. By the Author of the Elaboratory Laid Open, &c.*, vol. I (London: J. Nourse, 1759), p. 84.
16. Jean-Francois Gauvin, "Le cabinet de physique du chateau de Cirey et la philosophie naturelle de Mme Du Chatelet et de Voltaire", in Judith P. Zinsser and Julie Candler Hayes, eds., *Emilie Du Chatelet: rewriting Enlightenment philosophy and science* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2006), pp.165–202, esp. 170; Gauvin, "The Instrument that Never Was: Inventing, Manufacturing, and Branding Reaumur's Thermometer During the Enlightenment," *Annals of Science* (2011), 1–35; Lewis Peyenson and Jean-Francois Gauvin, eds., *The Art*

*of Teaching Physics. The Eighteenth-Century Demonstration Apparatus of Jean Antoine Nollet* (Sillery: Septentrion, 2002). See also Bruno Belhoste, *Paris Savant. Parcours et rencontres au temps des Lumières* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011).

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18. Maurice Crosland, "The Image of Science as a Threat: Burke versus Priestley and the 'Philosophical Revolution'," *British Journal for the History of Science* **20** (July 1987), 277–307.
19. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France. A Critical Edition,* ed. J. C. D. Clark (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 364. The reference was likely to Milton's *Paradise Lost*.
20. Joseph Priestley, *The History and Present State of Electricity, with Original Experiments*. Second edition, corrected and enlarged (London: J. Dodsley, J. Johnson, J. Payne, T. Cadell, 1769), p. 546.
21. Priestley, *Experiments and Observations on Different Kinds of Air*, vol. II (London: J. Johnson, 1775), 6–7, quoted in Trevor H. Levere, "Measuring Gases and Measuring Goodness," in Frederick L. Holmes and Trevor H. Levere, eds., *Instruments and Experimentation in the History of Chemistry* (Cambridge, MA, and London: The MIT Press, 2002), p. 111. Emphasis in original.
22. Thomas Beddoes, *A Lecture Introductory to a Course of Popular Instruction on the Constitution and Management of the Human Body* (Bristol and London: Joseph Cottle and J. Johnson, 1797), p. 23. Emphasis in original.
23. Beddoes to Joseph Black, April 15, 1791, in Robert G. W. Anderson and Jean Jones, eds., *The Correspondence of Joseph Black*, vol. II (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 1122–1123.
24. University of Strathclyde, papers of John Anderson, 1726–1796. OA/6/9, Operator's book for the annual course of experiments given by Mr. Anderson, Professor of Physics, November–May [1760s]; OA/6/10, Operator's books for John Anderson's experiments [1760s].
25. Musson and Robinson, *Science and Technology*, pp. 179–180; John A Cable, "Early Scottish Science: The Vocational Provision," *Annals of Science* **30** (1973), 179–199, esp. 192.

26. University of Strathclyde, Anderson Papers, OA/6/8. Receipt for nails, bullets, and other items of ironmongery sold by James Watt, June 4, 1764.
27. Strathclyde, Anderson Papers, OA/6/5. Catalogue of physical apparatus belonging to Glasgow College, 1760.
28. For recent discussion of Enlightenment in industry, see Joel Mokyr, *The Enlightened Economy*, esp. chapter 3, and Peter M. Jones, *Industrial Enlightenment. Science, Technology and Culture in Birmingham and the West Midlands 1760–1820* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008); Jones, "Industrial Enlightenment in Practice. Visitors to the Soho Manufactory, 1765–1820," *Midlands History*, **33** (Spring 2008), 68–96.
29. See Musson and Robinson, *Science and Technology*, chapters VIII–X. On the relations between status, skill, and independence, see Maxine Berg, *The Age of Manufactures 1700–1820. Industry, Innovation and Work in Britain*, Second edition (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 271–279.
30. British Library, Add. MS. 28314, vol. VIII, "Translation of Some Chemical Articles in the *Encyclopédie* by Mr. Venel: Physician at Montpellier," f. 73. My italics.
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32. British Library, Add. 28318. Wedgwood Manuscripts, vol. XII, fols. 77–78; cited as Mem. Paris. 1761. Printed in 1763. On discussion of the relations of invention and experiment, see Liliane Hilaire-Pérez, *L'invention technique au siècle des Lumières* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2000), esp. pp. 155ff.; and Liliane Pérez and Marie Thébaud-Sorger, "Les techniques dans la presse d'annonces au XVIIIe siècle en France et en Angleterre. Réseaux d'information et logiques participatives," in Patrice Bret, Kostantinos Chatzis, and Liliane Hilaire-Pérez, eds., *Des techniques dans la presse à la presse technique en Europe, 1759–1950* (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2009), pp. 11–50. My thanks to Marie Thébaud-Sorger for a copy of her essay. On the *Encyclopédie* and mechanics, cf. Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven, CT, and London, 2008), pp. 91ff.
33. Keele University, Wedgwood MSS, E1-694. James Keir to Thomas Wedgwood, March 17, 1792.
34. Macquer's work was widely known since its publication in 1767, and it is evident that Chisholm's early patron William Lewis thought highly of it. See F.W. Gibbs, "A Notebook of William Lewis and Alexander Chisholm." *Annals of Science*, 8 (1952), 202–220.
35. Pierre Joseph Macquer, *A Dictionary of Chemistry. Containing the Theory and Practice of That Science; Its Application to Natural Philosophy, Natural History, Medicine, and Animal Economy: With Full Explanations of the Qualities and Modes of Acting of Chemical Remedies: And the Fundamental Principles of the Arts, Trades, and Manufactures, Dependent on Chemistry*. Trans. James Keir (London: T. Cadell, and P. Elmsly; J. Robson; and S. Bladon, in Pater-Noster-Row, 1771), p. 369; Crosland, "Early Laboratories," p. 244.

36. James Keir, *The First Part of a Dictionary of Chemistry, &c.* (Birmingham: Pearson & Rollaston, 1789), p. iii.
37. John Johnstone, *The Works of Samuel Parr, LLD, . . . With Memoirs of His Life and Writings*, vol. I (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green1828), p. 336; quoted in R. B. Rose, "The Priestley Riots of 1791," *Past & Present* **18** (November 1960), 68–88, at p. 70.
38. The comment was made by Paine in praise of American manufactures. See Thomas Paine, *The Political and Miscellaneous Works of Thomas Paine* (London: R. Carlile, 1819), II, 49.
39. Eric Robinson, "An English Jacobin: James Watt, Junior, 1769–1848," *Cambridge Historical Journal* **11** (1955), 349–355; Peter M. Jones, "Living the Enlightenment and the French Revolution: James Watt, Matthew Boulton, and Their Sons," *Historical Journal* **42** (March 1999), 157–182.
40. BCL, James Watt papers, copy books, Watt to James? Miller, October 21, 1793. See also Albert Goodwin, *Friends of Liberty. The English Democratic Movement in the Age of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 202–203.
41. BCL, James Watt Papers, copy books, Watt to Joseph Black, July 17, 1793.
42. Birmingham Central Library, James Watt Papers, 6/46/10. James Watt to Watt sen., March 31, 1756.
43. There was ample suspicion that the magistrates not only encouraged the riots but they did nothing to constrain them once the violence began. Although hardly the most sympathetic of witnesses regarding High Church politics, Thomas Beddoes reported, months after the riots, that it was not possible to "form an adequate conception of the fanaticism of the people at Birm. The dissenters are at present collecting information against one or two justices, who are supposed to have given very unequivocal encouragement to the rioters." Cornwall Record Office, Davies Gilbert correspondence, DG 41/44. Thomas Beddoes to Gilbert, December 1 [1791].
44. BCL, JWP, copy books, Watt to De Luc, July 19, 1791.
45. *Ibid.*, July 19, 1791.
46. BCL, JWP, copy books, Watt to Hamilton, July 24, 1791.
47. Ibid., July 24, 1791.
48. Cf. Christine MacLeod, *Heroes of Invention. Technology, Liberalism and British Identity 1750–1914* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), esp. chapters 1–3; cf. Maxine Berg, "From Imitation to Invention: Creating Commodities in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Economic History Review* **55** (2002), 1–30.
49. On Watt's workshop, now transferred to display in the Science Museum, London, see H. W. Dickinson, *The Garret Workshop of James Watt* (Science Museum Technical Pamphlet, no. 1, London, 1929).
50. BCL, JWP 4/12/20. James Watt to Joseph Black, January 7, 1796.
51. *Considerations on the Medicinal Use, and on the Production of Factitious Airs*. Part I. By Thomas Beddoes, M. D. Part II. By James Watt, Engineer. Third edition, corrected, and enlarged (Bristol and London, 1796), pp. 113–114. Watt to Beddoes, September 2, 1794.

52. BCL, Watt copy books, Watt to Beddoes, April 19, 1797.
53. Thomas Beddoes, M. D. and James Watt, Engineer, *Considerations of the Medicinal Use and Production of Factitious Airs*. Part III. Second edition, corrected, and enlarged (London: J. Johnson, 1796), pp. 163ff.
54. Jean-Pierre Poirier, *Lavoisier. Chemist, Biologist, Economist*. Trans. Rebecca Balinski (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), pp. 94, 108–109.
55. Claude Viel, "Le salon et le laboratoire de Lavoisier à l'Arsenal, cénacle où s'elabora la nouvelle chimie," *Revue d'histoire de la pharmacie* **42** (1995), 255–266, esp. 260; Viel, "Lavoisier avait-il un laboratoire autre que celui de l'Arsenal?" *Revue d'histoire de la pharmacie* **42** (1995), 369–373.
56. Lavoisier, *Oeuvres* (November 17, 1790) quoted in Poirier, *Lavoisier*, p. 300; on assistants, see also pp. 187, 189, 215. See Seguin and Lavoisier, "Premier Mémoire sur la respiration des animaux," *Ouvres de Lavoisier publiées par les soins de Son Excellence le Ministre de l'Instructin Publique et des Cultes*, vol. II (Paris: Imprimerie Imperiale, 1862; New York and London: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1965), pp. 688–703, esp. 703.
57. Poirier, *Lavoisier*, p. 387.
58. Marco Beretta, *Imagining a Career in Science. The Iconography of Antoine Laurent Lavoisier* (Canton, MA: Science History Publications, 2001), pp. 47–50; Baretta, "Imagining the Experiments on Respiration and Transpiration of Lavoisier and Séquin , ,: Two Unknown Drawings," *Nuncius* **27** (2012), 163–191. On Séquin ,in the laboratory, see Poirier, *Lavoisier*, pp. 304–307, 322.
59. Lavoisier, *Oeuvres*, quoted in Poirier, *Lavoisier*, p. 309.
60. On the spread of Volta's science, see Guiliano Pancaldi, *Volta. Science and Culture in the Age of the Enlightenment* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), esp. chapter 5.
61. (Thomas Beddoes,) *Extract of Letter on Early Instruction, Particularly That of the Poor* (London?, 1792), pp. 17, 20.
62. BCL, JWP, copy books, Watt to Sir A. Macdonald, Bart., December 4, 1792.
63. BCL, JWP, copy books, Watt to Sir John Scott, April 25, 1793. Emphasis added.
64. BCL, JWP, copy books, Watt to William Withering, April 29, 1793.
65. BCL, JWP, copy books, Watt to Joseph Black, July 17, 1793. Cf. Crosland, "The Image of Science as a Threat," pp. 282–286; Burke, *Reflections of the Revolution*, p. 152.
66. CRO, DG41/3. Beddoes to Davies Gilbert, n.d. (probably 1793).
67. CRO, DG42/30. Beddoes to Davies Gilbert, March 14, 1795?
68. Thomas Beddoes, M. D., *Hygeia: Or Essays Moral and Medical, On the Causes Affecting the Personal State of Our Middling and Affluent Classes*, vol. 1 (Bristol: J. Mills; London: R. Phillips, 1802), Essay second, p. 79.
69. Beddoes, *Hygeia: Or Essays Moral and Medical*, vol. II (1802), Essay seventh, pp. 27–33.
70. BCL, JWP 4/12/18. James Watt to Joseph Black, October 9, 1796.

71. See Jane Z. Fullmer, *Young Humphry Davy. The Making of An Experimental Chemist* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2000), esp. chapter 7.
72. Cf. Michael R. Lynn, *The Sublime Invention* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2010), *passim*.
73. BCL, JWP 4/27/70. Beddoes to James Watt, n.d. (probably 1802).

5

# Accounting and Accountability in Dutch Civic Life

*Jacob Soll*

On September 1, 1638, Marie de' Medici, former Queen Regent of France and mother of King Louis XIII, made a triumphal four-day royal visit to Amsterdam. There was great symbolism in this Medici princess', Queen Regent of France (although exiled by Cardinal Richelieu), visiting the great market city on the Amstel, with its policy of religious tolerance and relative political freedom, its canals full of ships overflowing with goods, its banks and stock exchange humming with the activity of entrepreneurs, mostly governed by rich merchants and university-educated commoner experts. In hindsight, Marie de' Medici appeared to be visiting the future (a little more than a month before the first Dutch settler installed himself in the Bronx). Amsterdam was a city of wonder, in which the exotic goods of the world could be seen for the first time with European eyes.

The Medici queen's visit represented diplomatic recognition, of which Spain had worked hard to deprive the upstart Protestant nation. It was a chance for propaganda, and the Dutch set one of their leading humanists, Caspar Barlaeus, to the task of describing and advertising the French queen's visit with a giant commemorative book of engravings and descriptions of this both exotic and modern city.[1] The grandeur of monarchy would, for the first time, come face to face with them, opposing grandeur of "industry" and "international trade."[2] Barlaeus saw a message to send the world. Far from Florence, the burgomasters of Amsterdam were showing the "daughter of Cosimo" the greatest trading city in the world.[3] Most importantly, she visited the House of the East India Company. If the very idea of monarchy was based in its military prowess, here was a new

force that had gutted Spain and its empire. This great "company," bragged Barlaeus, is like "a prince": it raised armies to fight wars across the globe, and despoiled the king of Spain of his empire. The Dutch elite had grown rich, and its republic had become free, not simply because of the bravery of its ordinary seamen and foot soldiers. More cerebral skills drawn from artisanal craft in practical mathematics had propelled the Dutch into their position of eminence. The story of Dutch power and wealth cannot be understood without an account of how its elite did their accounts, without an understanding of the role played by double-entry bookkeeping.

The ability to account for every item in its warehouses enabled the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC), or Dutch East India Company, to keep track of a once unimagined array of exotic goods. All were on display when Albertus Burgh, the burgomaster of Amsterdam, invited the queen to a Malasian *rijsttafel* (feast of rice) in the VOC House. There, she marveled at the exotic food of "India": all around her were placed tables displaying fish and fruit from the four corners of the globe; round and long pepper; several sorts of nutmeg, some covered in skin, others flowering; batons of cinnamon piles high in cross stacks; packets of cloves; shining borax crystals. There were stalks of rhubarb and sugarcane, piles of gunpowder and saltpeter, wax, gum, and ginger. The odors of styrax flowers, lindra plants, frankincense, and myrrh wafted across what must have been an overwhelming display.[4] This was not simple pageantry, but ideology. "Our Republic," boasted Barlaeus, clearly echoing the claims of Spain, spreads its empire "as far as the sun shines."[5] Monarchy had come and met its match in "commerce," "work," and "industry."[6]

City leaders had chosen Barlaeus to depict this visit, for he was the defender of a new Dutch philosophy of knowledge and statecraft. His inaugural oration, *Mercator sapiens*, or *The Learned Merchant* (1632), celebrated the Athenaeum of Amsterdam.[7] It was a defense of the political power of merchant burgomasters (probably in reference to Andries Bicker) against the princely pretensions of the House of Orange. And it was a defense of the practical sort of humanism espoused in Italy more than a century earlier by humanists like Leon Battista Alberti and Luca Pacioli.[8] For Barlaeus, commercial utilitarian knowledge trumped noble rights and aristocratic virtues: navigation, geography, art, geometry, medicine, but also Neostoic ethics would guide the philosopher-merchant to competently and honestly manage merchandise. Successful civic life grew directly from the skills of merchants, no matter how mundane or ordinary they were. Thus Barlaeus assigned ancient virtue to the wise and just merchant manager who could create a reasoned politics to create abundant commerce.[9] Although it shared its compartmentalized republican model with Switzerland, Holland was unique in its policy of relatively open and

tolerant government. Its force was good merchant management, of both private and state companies, associated strongly with double-entry bookkeeping, which had helped Dutch merchant interests triumph over Spanish invasion as well as Swedish competition.

Barlaeus and other humanist educators knew that the Netherlands had more mathematically literate experts in both low and high government offices than its former Spanish overlord, or any other country outside of Italy for that matter. The Dutch ruling elite was familiar with the minutiae of finance, industry, and trade. Dutch cultural acceptance of accounting was key to the development of Dutch capitalism. Accounting and concepts of accountability were central to state management. For most of Europe, accounting was a purely merchant art, considered vulgar by aristocrats and statesmen alike. Even when kings like Philip II hired accountants to help them with administration, they often did so with distaste.[10] It was artisan knowledge, associated with the marketplace and the vulgarities of trade. But in Holland, the marketplace and its tools of commercial calculation were valued and employed as the foundation of the state. The riches on the tables of the VOC and Barlaeus's philosophy of merchant management came from a merchant culture that provided expertise to the state. Where banking and trade were central to the power structure, the *ars mercatoria* was not only an essential part of everyday urban life, but it was an essential element of the state government.

The Dutch were influenced by close interaction with the Hansa cities and adopted their skill in accounting. From Augsburg to Kiel, German bankers and Hanseatic League traders had great success in finance, metal mining, and trade. Yet the Germans had neither the concentrated force of the Dutch trading cities nor their global reach, and nor did they have trading offices, naval ports, or fortresses in Brazil or the Moluccas. The Germans were very skilled at factor accounting—a form of accounting based on inventory management, but not on profit calculation.

While Dutch politics and religion were different from that of northern Italy, Holland did share one thing with its southern neighbor: their elites were highly educated and marked by humanism, with deep attachments to reading and learning, but also practical mathematics. Accounting education was part of the cement of trust and credit, and accounting education proliferated from Antwerp to Amsterdam. With the commercial decline of Italy, Flanders and the Netherlands became the center of accounting pedagogy and publishing. It was from here that Luca Pacioli's first printed accounting manual, *De computis*, a chapter from his 1494 *Summa de Arithmetica, Geometria, Proportioni, et Proportionalita*, would be disseminated throughout Europe. The Flemish Yan Ympyn Christoffels (1485–1540) first translated Pacioli in Northern Europe. A cloth trader

from Antwerp, he traveled extensively, visiting Portugal and residing in Venice for "around twelve years."[11] His wife, Anna, published the book in Antwerp only after his death, but it became the primary conduit of Pacioli's manual in Dutch, French, and English. The *Niewe Instructie ende beweijs der looffelijcker consten des Rekenboeks* (Antwerp: Gillis Copyns van Diest for Anna Swinters, 1543) differed from Pacioli in that it did not include a chapter on inventory, but did give a full sample set of books and examples of exchange bills and how to account for them.[12] Ympyn's mostly adhered to Pacioli's model. It did not systematize balance sheets of profit and loss. Books were closed when they were full, according to the volume of business, and not simply at regular intervals.[13]

In the early sixteenth century, Antwerp still held its place as the center of northern trade, with its central position in the Habsburg Empire, between Flanders, England, and the Baltic. Dutch subjects to the Habsburgs not only survived on trade (as well as fishing and above all cheese-making), but they also had to survive Habsburg Spanish taxation, with imperial audits (*Informacie*), which were an increasingly heavy weight on the richest dominion in Charles V's empire.[14] At the beginning of the sixteenth century, "French schools" sprung up in Antwerp, the financial capital of the Habsburg Netherlands. As the Habsburg dominions had once been part of the ancient kingdom of Burgundy, its tax law was in French. To learn finance in the Netherlands meant to learn French, and so the inhabitants of the Netherlands attended French schools, where accounting was systematically taught, to gain the acumen for business in a world of imperial taxes. Dutch *Rekenkammer* were thus better manned by trained accountants than the *Chambres des comptes* of the old Burgundian monarchy.

These financially literate bureaucrats came up with multiple schemes to sate the needs of the Spanish crown without crippling their economy, and mathematics was central to this. Like other states in need of public bond money, the Dutch devised ways to raise public monies through the forced sale of life annuities. Amsterdam obliged wealthy citizens to buy the annuities that gave interest-bearing returns.[15] Italian city-states, France, and Britain had used annuities with mixed results. What made Holland different was the fact that it had such an effective provincial tax collection system overseen by the Kantoor van de Financie van Holland, which oversaw tax collection from Habsburg times through to the emergence of the Dutch Republic.[16] Stable public finance created an environment of trust. Tax receipts were managed in double entry, but, even more, they were legally subject to public scrutiny.[17] Yet no one ever called for an audit of the provincial tax collectors, or for a central state account register, because they apparently did their jobs so well.[18] Provincial tax collectors paid bond interest (4 percent) at the moment taxes were collected, and the

central state never taxed these returns above 1 percent.[19] Thus the market trusted Dutch bonds and in turn provincial tax receipts were considered reliable.

Dutch credit and financial trust in state institutions (essential for raising capital for both bonds and the first public trades of the VOC) were based in the force of accounting education in Holland. Dutch elites were a small, tightly knit group. And they had a sense of the level of their own financial fluency and educations. Literacy was at the center of Dutch Protestant piety in which reading and understanding the Bible oneself was central to the individual relationship with God and salvation. It was not simply a Protestant work ethic, but also a rich tradition of mercantile, mathematical education.

Accounting schools proliferated, often alongside the prestigious and more formal Dutch universities, where even prestigious scholars and educators like Isaac Beeckman, founder of the influential Dordrecht Latin School, had detailed knowledge of accounting practices.[20] As Barlaeus stated, practical economic education grew alongside formal humanism. On April 26, 1503, Jacob van Schoonhoven from Bruges received a license from the burgomasters of Amsterdam to teach reading, writing, arithmetic, and French to "anyone who might be interested."[21] Van Schoonhoven was given the legal right to "*tegne dat totte coopmanscape dienen mach*," to "teach all that was useful for merchants." This included weights, measures, tolls, and exchange rates. As early as 1509, Amsterdam saw the introduction of a "French school" that taught double entry.[22] From the late fifteenth century onward, *Handelscholen*, or merchant schools could be also be found in Leiden, Delft, Gouda, Rotterdam, Middelburg, Deventer, Nijmegen, Utrecht, and Bergen op Zoom. Numerous formal requests were made to the city government for bookkeeping schools.[23] Influential mathematicians like Valentijn Mennher (1521–1571) and Claes Pietersz followed Pacioli in combining the teaching of formal mathematics with merchant bookkeeping, which was seen to be the "finishing touch" on a good education.[24] Mennher was a Bavarian who moved to Antwerp and became a citizen in 1549. He grew famous for teaching mathematics and double entry, rising to the head of his guild. He published four works on bookkeeping between 1550 and 1564, most notably *Practique brifue pour cyfrer et tenir livres de compte* (Antwerp, 1550), followed by books in Flemish and German, which had various different versions of more or less the same text.[25] He promised his readers the calculation of profit: "if one wishes to know how much one has gained or lost in this period, he must have his account (s) closed in all his branches on the same particular day, and if he receives together the accounts of all branches, he can see from them all his riches in the world."[26]

As the Dutch Revolt (1566–1648) became more violent and even before the northern Netherlands broke off into a republic in 1581, bookkeepers flocked from Antwerp to the north, bringing a proliferation of schools and manuals. In the 1570s until his death in 1606, Claes Pietersz (Nicolaus Petri) not only taught private courses in arithmetic in Amsterdam; in 1576, he published two manuals in Amsterdam on Italian bookkeeping, *Boeckhouwen op die Italiaensche maniere* and the *Practique om te leeren rekenen cijpheren*, calling the practice "very profitable for merchants." The former was reedited in 1588 and 1595 and the latter was translated into English under the title *The Pathway to Knowledge* (London: William Barley, 1596).[27]

The idea that the Netherlands, and Antwerp in particular, was the center of commerce, and that this was based on their mastery of double-entry bookkeeping is made clear in 1585 by the famous German woodcut *Allegory to Commerce* by the printer and calligrapher Johann Neudörfer the Elder (1497–1553). It was painted by Nicolas Neufchâtel holding a dodecahedron like Pacioli, and most likely published an accounting manual) and Jost Amman, a Swiss engraver.[28] The large woodcut is remarkable not only for its fine detail but also for showing how commerce depends on double entry. Even more, the woodcut explained how to keep books. There are three sections of the woodcut. At the top, the patron deity of commerce, Mercury, holds a scale (balance in his right hand). Each pan holds a book and they are connected by two cords marked "debitor" [STET] and "creditor." Under the scale, Fortune stands on a large book marked *Zornal*, or journal, which stands atop a pillar.[29] All of commerce rests on fortune, but it rewards moderation and deliberation, which are the products of accounting.

The central part of the engraving shows the worldly center of commerce, represented by Antwerp and ships upon the river Scheldt. Commerce and accounting had a place now, and it was not Venice or Florence. The message is even clearer in the lower third of the image. There we not only see merchants in their storerooms and accounting houses, but we also see them keeping double-entry books, and the basic practice is explained. Thus Antwerp is the center of commerce, and earthly commerce like fortune relied on double entry and the teaching of double entry, which is one of the primary functions of the woodcut. In the center of the workshops is a tabernacle, containing a book entitled *Secretorum Liber*, the *libro segreto*, or secret inner sanctum of all merchant houses and their accounts. The words above this image read:

*Das Secret werd genennet ich*
*Mein Herr Keinem vertrawet mich*

*Weil er sein sach ghaim helt bey sich.*
(I am called the Secret Book.
My master entrusts me to no one
because he keeps his business secret to himself.)[30]

Casper Brinner, a Nuremburg arithmetic teacher, provided the simple accounting verses.[31] Male figures in the forefront of the image also represent accounting values: "skill in language," "integrity," and "discretion." The female figure represents success in trade, and the sphere stands for luck. Of course there were limits to earthly science, which is why the gods hold the scales. A skull and a vase emitting smoke represent the "fugacity" of life and business.[32] Next to them reads the verse "*Sey from, förcht Gott zur Busz dich findt*," or "Be devout, fear God and repent." Yet this simple message is outweighed by a complex set of images describing how to keep double-entry books. There are three books. The first is a memorandum at the top, which shows live transactions being kept. Below it is an accountant putting entries into a journal with inscriptions on how to keep each book: "Every day I write in my Journal."

In the right-hand frame, next to each business transaction, a bookkeeper sits recording, showing how bookkeeping permeated business transactions, from exchange and banking to the sale of merchandise. The frame over the central bookkeeper in the right-hand frame reads:

*Ausz dem Zornal ins Schuldbuch fein,*
*Darzu ins Capus trag ich ein*
*Zur lincken hand den Debitor*
*Zur rechten ghört der Creditor*
(From the journal in the ledger [debts-book]
Besides in the goods-book I post
The Debit to the left-hand side
The credit belongs to the right.)[33]

Commerce rested on learning and mastering double entry. Neudörfer and Amman understood the essentials of the Dutch golden age of commerce: water and merchant-run companies mixed together brought the marvels of the VOC to the table of Marie de' Medici and the markets of Europe. But there was one element missing in the allegory: politics. Double entry was a tool not only for commerce but also for state and civic administration.

What was disparate and private among European business houses was official state culture in Amsterdam.[34] With local industry, banking, stock exchanges, and international trade, Dutch merchants' knowledge of finance became more sophisticated than that of their Italian predecessors,

or German neighbors, as their merchant empire expanded across the world and their cargoes came to include Brazilian wood, Asian plants, and Arctic whale oil.[35] The marketplace in Amsterdam was famous for its riches, luxury products, and treasures.[36] There was tight interaction between the governing elite and Dutch structures of finance. The republic was governed by financial managers who handled large amounts of varied information.[37]

Information flowed in this massive, global market, and much of this information came in the form of commercial reports, logbooks, works of scholarship and science, and, of course, accounts.[38] Holland's wide-ranging trading operations produced masses of correspondence as merchants sent form letters and balance sheets back to their main branches listing political information, trade routes, and the prices of commodities.[39] Dutch consuls from around its world trading empire sent reports from Dutch whale oil factories in the Arctic, and trading outposts in the West Indies, Europe, Brazil, Surinam, Manhattan, and the Arabian Peninsula. The Dutch did their business in the streets of the world, even in the backyard of the French monarchies, in cities such as Nantes and La Rochelle.[40] Amsterdam also ruled world trade by warehousing, which meant that much of the world's merchandise—even that of its close neighbors—was carried by Dutch ships and passed first through Holland before being resold or processed.[41] They had to be managed by those familiar with the intricacies of bookkeeping.

In republican Holland, even princes and nobles learned the common knowledge of accounting. Prince Maurice of Orange (1567–1625), *stadhouder* of the Netherlands, who duly went off to university in Heidelberg and Leiden, becoming one of the most learned princes of his time. He mastered the classics, mathematics, and engineering to make war on the Spanish, which he did with great skill. He built an army famous for its modern use of engineering and management. While at the University of Leiden, Prince Maurice met Simon Stevin (1548–1620), whom we met in the Introduction, one of Holland's leading humanists and a man who admired the practical tradition of Alberti and Pacioli. Like Barlaeus, he ignored the noble Neoplatonic remonstrances of Pico della Mirandola and mixed high learning with the merchant arts. It was extraordinary that a prince and a lowborn (indeed, bastard) engineer would meet at university and become friends and that they would study accounting together.

Stevin excelled in linguistics, cosmography, perspective, "the application of decimal fractions, the theory of numbers; the solution of algebraic equations; the behavior of heavy bodies on horizontal and inclined planes; the hydrostatic paradox; the pressure of liquids on the walls of vessels; the

theory of navigation," the impossibility of perpetual motion and double-entry bookkeeping.[42] Stevin was a civic humanist whose achievements far surpassed those of Pacioli. His learning had practical applications and he was given the most sensitive positions in civil administration. He became inspector of dikes, as well as of the quartermaster general and Intendant of the Dutch Army. In a way, he was the chief auditor of Holland. Valuing theory and practice, as well as technical vocabulary and the vernacular, Stevin was one of the first to make room for practical skills and capacities of common people.[43]

Stevin was attuned to the connection between mathematics and government. His manual of accounting, *Vorstelicke Boukhouding* (Amsterdam, 1604), in French, *Livre de Compte du Prince*, or *Accounting for Princes*, went through several editions. It innovated in using the words "debit" and "credit" for the first time in place of "*dee dare*" and "*dee havere*."[44] He recognized the difference between the capital of the enterprise and that of the owner, and he explained how to understand the principles of double entry through the concepts of "beginning" and "appearance," and "ending" and "disappearance."[45] He tried to minimize entries with compound entries.

Confident in the world of numbers, Stevin did not mention God in his treatise. In true scientific form, he called his balance sheet his *staet proef*, or "proof statement."[46] It was a revolutionary work for it went further than Pacioli. Double entry was not simply good for governments—it was essential for princes and leaders. Stevin condemned those who argued against the usefulness of double entry for municipal administrations.[47] Why, he asks, do government clerks and bailiffs become rich while leaving their offices in debt and financial chaos? He might have been the first to make the not entirely convincing argument that if this sort of management happened in a business, the business would fail. Merchants, he assured the prince, would make better treasurers than the bureaucrats and taxmen presently in the prince's employ. And a prince versed in double entry could read treasury books himself and not simply rely on the treasurer's word.[48] Prince Maurice was stunned by these ideas, and claimed he would study them further, though he found them and the rules of bookkeeping difficult. There is evidence that he applied them in his administration and in the city government of Amsterdam, but those records are lost and these practices did not continue.[49]

Accounting and practices of accountability were central in managing a state based on water engineering and seaborne trade. In 1602, concerned that too much competition among the Dutch themselves would undermine trade, Johan van Oldenbarnevelt insisted on a single federated company of

all the regions, the United Dutch East India Company, or VOC. The charter of the company showed the mixture of private capital and state interests that Oldenbarnevelt felt would best serve the republic. The company was charged not simply with a trade monopoly, but also to uphold the interests of the Netherlands.

Rather than taxing to build navies and armies, like the life annuities with which the state subsisted, the VOC privately funded the military-industrial imperial arm of the Dutch state, aggressively promoting its trade and exchanging profit for investment. The company had the authority to "make contracts, engagements and alliances with … the princes and natives of the countries comprehended therein, and also build any forts and fortifications there, to appoint and discharge Governors, people for war, and officers of justice, and other public officers, for the preservation of the places, keeping good order, police and justice, and in like manner for the promoting of trade … "[50]

The charter of the VOC stipulated that any Dutch citizen could buy shares in the company and that "there shall be a distribution of dividends as soon as 5% of the proceeds from the return of the cargo have been cashed." The company was directed by the *Heren Seventien* and the *Bewindhebbers*: 17 principal stockholders and the next sixty or so largest unlimited liability investors. The stock was traded on the Amsterdam Stock Exchange, making it the first publicly traded limited liability company in history and a milestone in the history of capitalism. Dutch citizens could freely invest and divest of the company by simply buying shares, not by removing their capital investment directly from the company.

Confidence in the company was to be based on internal accounting. The charter maintained that the company hire professional bookkeepers and that "the accounts of the furniture and outfit of the vessels, with their dependencies, shall be made up three months after the departure of the vessels, and one month after, copies shall be sent to us, and to the respective chambers: and the state of the returns, and their sales, shall the chambers (as often as we see good, or they are required thereto by the chambers) send to us and to one another."[51]

In the Dutch spirit of open government, the charter claimed that accounts and audits would be made public:

> XVI. That every six years they shall make a general account of all outfits and returns, together with all the gains and losses of the company; to wit, one of their business, and one of the war, each separate; which accounts shall be made public by an advertisement, to the end that every one who is interested may, upon hearing of it, attend; and if by the expiration of the seventh year, the accounts are not made out in manner aforesaid, the managers shall forfeit their commissions, which shall be appropriated to the use of the poor,

> and they themselves be held to render their account as before, till such time and under such penalty as shall be fixed by us respecting offenders. And notwithstanding there shall be a dividend made of the profits of the business, so long as we find that term per Cent shall have been gained.[52]

This auditing structure was based in part on that of the Dutch Water Boards. The Netherlands could not survive without their system of dikes, dunes, and canals that were administered by local *Waterschappen*, or Water Boards. Locally administered, like the different regional chambers of the VOC, the Water Board directors were directly accountable to their local populations. They had to be. If funds and public works were mismanaged, regions would simply be swallowed by water and many would die. A Dutch saying goes "*Wie het water deert, die het water keert*," or "Whom water harms stops the water." This might have been why Stevin, the finest engineer and a master of double entry, was chief inspector. Audits, or *schouw*, were thus communally recognized as part of a "pragmatic consensus," as necessary to guarantee good administration and dry land.[53]

Holland had a strange mix of compromise and swashbuckling entrepreneurialism. The public trusted the new company and invested at a level unprecedented in human history. The VOC's capitalization of 6,424,588 guilders was 10 times that of the English East India Company. This meant that the vast imperial ambitions of the charter could be realized. Investors' funds were effectively used to build ships (the English leased theirs) and to send military forces to fight against Spanish and Portuguese interests in Mozambique, Goa, and the Moluccas and Ambon.[54] At first, these military expeditions firmed the Dutch strongholds, but did not return great profits.[55]

The biggest investor in the VOC was Isaac Le Maire (1558–1624), a Flemish merchant, settled in Amsterdam, who had his hands in numerous business interests, from selling merchandise and handling bills of exchange, to selling marine insurance and equipping Eastern trade voyages. In 1602, he bought 85,000 guilders of shares in the VOC. But Le Maire was no simple investor. He had a history of dodgy accounting practices and predatory commercial ventures.[56] He not only wanted returns; when he did not get them, he secretly organized competing trade expeditions while hedging against VOC stocks by a futures share-selling scheme.[57] He was accused of embezzling from the VOC, whose board then sued him. Le Maire vowed revenge against the company, and not only continued to support competing (and failing) ventures, but corrupted the VOC's chief accountant, Barent Lampe, having him put false shares into the books to favor Le Maire's schemes.[58] In 1609, he wrote a letter of complaint to Oldenbarnevelt demanding public audits. Between 1607 and 1609, stock

values dropped from 212 percent to 126 percent.[59] To dispel stockholder fears, the *Heren Seventien* declared that they would issue more dividends, but that they could not submit to a public audit of accounts as this would play into the hands of the Spanish and threatened the interests of the state. This was no exaggeration. When the English East India Company showed its losses to investors, they pulled out their money and the venture collapsed. The VOC was the military imperial arm of the Dutch state, which could not afford such a loss. The directors successfully pushed this argument and garnered shareholder and public trust during the first 20 years of the VOC to avoid a true public audit.

What is surprising here is that while the VOC was publicly traded and paid dividends, it did not use a central double-entry ledger for management, and it refused public audits due to claims about national security. What then did the free Dutch citizens, fluent in the culture of accounting and accountability, do when faced with their opaque military-industrial, international super-company?

By 1620, no external audits had been made and no dividends paid, and there were accusations of insider trading, profits made by sweetheart deals within the company itself, and a manipulation of accounts by not including share capital on balance sheets, thus making assets appear larger than they were.[60] VOC rates of return came in at 6.4 percent while the East India Assurance Company returned 20 percent. Public opinion began to turn against the *Heren* and the *Bewindhebbers*. Stocks were now being sold not on financial data, but on rumors in the marketplace. Secrecy was undermining the first modern capitalist venture.

Finally, in 1622, disgruntled stockholders published a public pamphlet, the "Nootwendich Discours," or "Necessary Discourse," attacking the *Heren* and *Bewindhebbers*. In it, they rejected the logic of reason of state secrecy, or national security, and insisted that the company be run according to merchant values. The discourse accused the *Bewindhebbers* of practices that "conformed to neither reason nor the common practice of merchants," and demanded that the company make "a proper accounting in the manner of a steward" (Noottwendich Discours, A4 recto).[61] They insisted that the books of the VOC be "kept in the manner of merchants." The spirit of public accounting also took a religious tone:

> There has been no audit. Everything has remained obscure and they haven't come up with anything but procrastination and excuses instead of the accounts book (*rekenboeck*), which, as we suspect, they had smeared with bacon and which was eaten by the dogs. It is said that only someone who has something to conceal hides. But an honest rendering of account can, of course, bear the light of day. When our ancestors Adam and Eve hid and tried to conceal themselves behind fig leaves, they were unable to account to God

> for taking bites of the apple. Now the Dissenting Participants set everyone thinking whether all suspicion can be removed in this way from the hearts of pious people.[62]

They also complained that the directors had extended their tenure and stopped all audits, so that stockholders "would not be able to solve the mystery how the directors had suddenly become so wealthy . . . " They complained that the directors only wanted to "conduct a general audit (*de* generale *Reeckeninge te doen*) for the participants' grandchildren in the next world."[63]

The complaining stockholders argued that the logic of secrecy did not hold as any audit would only show good management and bolster the position of the directors. You Honorable Gentlemen can conclude from the above that the participants have good grounds to complain about the directors and demand a proper audit (in Dutch that meant accounting in double entry: "*Reeckeninge* in debita forma") from them before their directorships can be continued. Because their good or bad administration will be evident from such an audit. It will then be evident as well how absurdly and shamelessly they have discharged their duties, which is the reason they first request extension of the charter before they have proved that their administration is in order by conducting an audit.[64]

Then followed specific accusations of corruption, such as the sale of indigo by the directors below market price for a personal profit.

In the end, Prince Maurice's administrators found a solution. The student of Stevin rejected the language of accounting and accountability and embraced reason of state, but in a Dutch style. There would be no public reckoning. The state would audit the company in secret. Even if the company's primary books were not kept openly, or to a high standard, its day-to-day operations were capably handled by well-trained merchant managers of which the Dutch had a higher supply than any other country in Europe. Again, for specific accounts, double entry was used effectively, such as for the VOC office in Gamron, Persia (today Bandar Abbas), where books from 1623–1624 calculated profit.[65] Only later in the seventeenth century would Johannes Hudde (1628–1704)—the mathematician, mayor of Amsterdam, and, in 1672, the governor of the VOC and head of the *Heren Seventien*—apply double-entry bookkeeping to the company.[66] Men like Hudde, and later the Grand Pensionary Johan de Witt (1625–1672)—Cartesian masters of commercial and theoretical mathematics—ruled Holland by the second half of the seventeenth century and would set a model of what kind of knowledge would be deemed both common and necessary for the management of modern, mercantile, and industrialized states.

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Part III

# New Approaches to the Populist Voice

6

# The People in Politics: Early Modern England and the Dutch Republic Compared

*Maarten Prak*

For too long, historians have seen the French Revolution as a watershed between a political dark age of oligarchy and absolutism, and the enlightened era of democracy that presumably started in 1789. This image was the result of the combination of three research interests that all developed since the 1960s: state formation, the social composition of elites, and riots and rebellions. The first privileged the state over local authorities, even though it was at the local level that most public services were delivered. The second implied that elites were only responsive to their own interests, and disregarded the concerns of their constituents. The third suggested that ordinary people were merely relevant as political actors on an incidental basis, during riots and rebellions, and disappeared into the background again as soon as the dust had settled.[1]

New work on the political history of the early modern period makes this picture look increasingly dubious.[2] Even though absolutism, oligarchy, and of course riot and rebellion were all part of early modern politics, there were also various other mechanisms that allowed ordinary people to articulate their concerns, to communicate them to the authorities in a less spectacular manner, and to participate in their introduction and execution. There is, moreover, evidence that the authorities were responsive to these claims and maintained channels of communication to ensure that their citizens would approve their decisions. Such mechanisms existed first and foremost in urban settings, and it is on those environments that we will concentrate in this chapter. However, they were not limited to such

environments. In the Dutch Republic, the state became more responsive to citizen concerns as a result of the Dutch Revolt. In the British Isles, the incorporation of towns during the sixteenth century, and the series of seventeenth-century revolutions that resulted in the Bill of Rights of 1689, achieved a similar effect. As a result, this chapter claims, these two states became extraordinarily effective as economic and military powers. In other words: the valorization of people made a world of difference in early modern Europe.

## Urban Government—How It Worked

Europe's local government structures originated in the feudal era, and were the result of a bargaining process between weak central authorities and emerging communities.[3] They allowed those communities a fair amount of self-governance, provided they accepted the authority of the sovereign. Relations between the towns and the government would revolve around precisely this issue: local autonomy versus central authority. Usually, the trade-off would be money for privileges. The towns offered financial support to the crown, in return for greater self-rule. The amounts of money involved strongly suggest that local autonomy was highly valued by the elites and their constituents. In general, the crown refrained from direct intervention in local affairs. Local communities as such did not attempt to make national policy; in England they dealt with the government through aristocratic brokers.[4] The institutional structures that were created during the Middle Ages proved to be extraordinarily resilient. In both countries they survived into the early nineteenth century.

A good example of such institutional continuity is York, in the north of England. The first register of citizens starts in 1272–1273. By then the civic community had been established through a series of events but possibly without a specific constitution. In 1175–1176 a group of influential citizens was fined by the crown for trying to establish a "commune" without its previous permission. In the fourteenth century, bylaws were promulgated on behalf of the "the whole commonality," as it assembled in the Guildhall.[5] York became a "county corporate" in 1396 and until 1835 its governance structure remained more or less the same. As a county, York was represented in Parliament and it was not subject to any regional authorities, simply because it had that same status. In 1603 a total of 16 provincial towns in England had county status. York was ruled by the Lord Mayor, 12 aldermen, two sheriffs, and a council of twenty-four. The Twenty-Four were also known as Privy Council, to distinguish them from the Common Council that represented the citizens. The Lord Mayor and the aldermen were together the Justices of the Peace, that is, the judicial authority in the

town. This combination of executive and judicial authority was an almost universal phenomenon in Europe's late medieval and early modern towns. The Lord Mayor was elected for one year and usually came from the ranks of the recently appointed aldermen. The great majority of former aldermen became members of the Privy Council after their term in office had expired. York's Common Council represented the town's crafts and by implication its civic community. The institution slowly emerged from incidental consultations of craft representatives in the late fourteenth century. Only in 1516–1517, during a period of crisis when support from the community was especially important, were these consultations transformed into a permanent institution. Initially, the 13 most important guilds were allowed to dispatch two representatives to the meetings, and 15 smaller guilds one. The original 41 members gradually expanded to 48, but this number too was more a guideline than a precise indication of the membership, which could in fact fluctuate. From 1632, Common Council was elected by the four wards, changing the mode of representation from a professional to a geographical variety, but retaining the underlying principle of representation of the citizen community.[6]

For several centuries, Utrecht—the most populous town in the northern Netherlands in the Late Middle Ages—also had a local government dominated by the guilds. In 1304 these had managed to impose a constitution that gave them complete control over the town council. However, in 1528, Charles V, a notorious opponent of guild rule, became the new ruler of Utrecht and changed the constitution to the Holland model. The guilds were not only removed from office, but also received statutes that expressly forbade political activities. Instead, the town council was to be recruited through co-optation, and sat for life.[7] This was already the norm in the county of Holland from the very start. Minor exceptions applied in Dordrecht, where the mayors were annually selected by eight representatives of the civic community, and in Hoorn, where citizens were involved in the selection of aldermen. But otherwise, citizens would have to make their voices heard through other channels. In the eastern provinces of Overijssel and Guelders, however, a different system of local government applied. The so-called magistrate, composed of mayors and aldermen and in charge of day-to-day affairs, stepped down annually, and elections were held to either return the same individuals, or elect others. Moreover, a representative assembly, known as Common Council, had to approve major decisions, including those that would lead to new taxation.[8]

Utrecht is a relatively rare example of a town where major constitutional changes were introduced during the early modern period. In most English and Dutch towns, continuity prevailed. What changed was rather the environment in which they operated. National institutions became

more important—and more intrusive—as interstate competition intensified. Financial needs, related to warfare, and ideological concerns in the wake of the Reformation compelled national authorities to become more deeply involved in local rule, and gave local citizens a greater stake in national policies. The division of labor between local and national institutions became more of an issue in its own right.

## Popular Politics—Elections, Representation

Municipal governments in England and the Dutch Republic claimed to be the representatives of their constituents. If they had been elected by their fellow citizens, this was self-evident. In the land-bound provinces of the Dutch Republic, direct and indirect elections were customary. In the town of Zutphen, for example, all male citizens were assembled within 48 hours of a vacancy in the "magistrate" emerging. Everyone could cast a vote, which was then counted by Common Council. Candidates would canvas the citizens for their votes. Election campaigns were said to require between 10,000 and 18,000 guilders, that is, very substantial amounts of money.[9] In Bristol in 1754 the Whig party alone spent over £30,000 on a single election campaign.[10]

If municipal councils were selected through some other mechanism than elections, they had two arguments to bolster the claim to be representative nonetheless. First, and perhaps most importantly, they were themselves citizens, therefore members of the citizen community, and crucially did not inherit their offices, as was argued by Lieven de Beaufort, a Dutch municipal administrator himself during the first half of the eighteenth century.[11] Second, they had sworn an oath, on the occasion of their accession to office, to serve the community as a whole. Having said that, the representative character of municipal government was often contested by the other citizens during the early modern period—and with some reason. During the Dutch Revolt, municipal councils had temporarily become open to lots of newcomers, but soon closed ranks again. The precise details fluctuated, but the pattern was clear enough: members tended to be related, and often intimately related, to other members and to their predecessors.[12] Father-to-son successions were happening regularly, and this kind of "family government" was perceived as contrary to the spirit of the constitution. "Oligarchy" has also obsessed historians, at least since the days of Lewis Namier, but it is not so clear that contemporaries were worried about the exact same issues. It is telling, for example, that oligarchy was almost as much in evidence in the eastern and the western provinces of the Republic, even though these had very different local constitutions. In the east, citizens were, either directly or indirectly,

involved in the selection of municipal officeholders. In the west, the system was pure co-optation. Holland towns were more oligarchic than those of Guelders and Overijssel—but only marginally so.[13] This suggests that citizens worried more about the responsiveness of their local authorities, than about their social backgrounds.

In English towns too, oligarchy was much in evidence. Various authors claim to observe an intensification in the period they investigated, but an investigation of Gloucester's civic leadership covering the late sixteenth century through to the end of the eighteenth displays ups and downs, rather than a straightforward trend.[14] And even in the eighteenth century, when it was perhaps more prevalent than previously, urban elites were busy reforming their communities and thinking about the interests of their constituents, as well as, possibly, their own. The same was true for parliamentary representatives, who were often outsiders and of aristocratic backgrounds. As R. Sweet has remarked: "Parliamentary patrons had to earn their control; they had to consult the interests of their constituencies, to court the electorate, to promote their [i.e., the electorate's] concerns, to see local bills through parliament, and protect them from adverse economic legislation; they had to subscribe to charities and subsidize improvement schemes" in the community.[15]

London freemen participated to a degree in local politics that immediately belies the idea that political life was the exclusive domain of oligarchic elites. The government of the City of London consisted of the Lord Mayor, elected annually, and the Court of Aldermen, 26 men chosen for life as representatives of the wards of the city. In case of a vacancy, the aldermen chose their new colleague from among candidates elected by the resident ward housekeepers. The city's executive was assisted by a legislature of no less than 234 representatives of the wards, called Common Council and elected annually. The Lord Mayor was elected from the ranks of the aldermen, by the aldermen, but they were limited to a nomination of two names selected in Common Hall, the electoral assembly of the liverymen of the City.

The livery were the upper tier of the guilds; next to the wards the guilds were, politically speaking, the most important civic institutions in London. Around 1700 the City numbered an estimated 8,000 liverymen, who were "the most zealous guardians of the historic liberties of the London citizenry," according to Gary de Krey.[16] Besides nominating the Lord Mayor, the liverymen elected (in Common Hall) the sheriffs and other high officials of the Corporation, as well as the City's representatives in Parliament. The lower ranks of the guilds, who were all ordinary freemen of the City of London, together with the liverymen were entitled to elect the members of Common Council during the so-called wardmotes, district meetings that

took place annually on St. Thomas's Day. Even the noncitizens, or mere inhabitants, of London were included in the political process, as they had the right to participate in the selection of petty officers of their precincts and wards; they were excluded, however, from participation in the politics of the City as a whole.

A lot has been made of the "oligarchies" that came to dominate the towns during this period. It is quite possible that a smaller number of families were increasing their grip on urban offices.[17] It would be wrong, however, to infer from that observation that urban government was previously somehow open to all and sundry. This was never so, especially since high office in towns was usually poorly remunerated and required serious expenses. Taking up office also implied that one was in a position to spend time, often a lot of time, on serving the public. Moreover, many urban offices remained elective, and this suggests that the electorate found oligarchy less objectionable than inexperience, or the temptations of corruption, which were supposed to be stronger for the less well-off.[18] Even where oligarchy was a dominant feature of urban political life—and this was true in most incorporated boroughs—it did not necessarily mean that these people were merely lining their own pockets, even if they did not forget the interests of their families and relatives. There is ample evidence that they also took the interests of the community as a whole to heart, if only because they had to be reelected.[19] More importantly, the emphasis on oligarchy has obscured the conflicts that emerged and persisted among local elites, as well as the levels of civic participation that were equally characteristic of urban political life.[20]

## Popular Politics—Organization: Guilds, Militias, Neighborhoods, Clubs

Although political activities might appear "spontaneously," it is highly unlikely for this to happen regularly. To become routine participants in the political process, citizens had to be organized.[21] The medieval corporate structures offered a range of organizational forms that had at least the potential to provide a context and platform for political activities. Across Europe as a whole, guilds, civic militias, and neighborhoods seemed to offer the most common settings in which political actions were formed, but these might be supplemented by religious brotherhoods, literary societies, and so on. In the British Isles, the parish and other district organizations seem to have provided the norm; in the western provinces of the Low Countries, guilds and civic militias were more popular. However, in the eastern provinces, neighborhoods were the foundation of popular representation in the Common Councils. Moreover, the whole

organizational range was employed everywhere, suggesting that the corporatist framework as such was a crucial factor in providing European citizens with "voice."[22]

All over Europe, guilds had appeared in roughly the same centuries as when towns were constituted as separate institutions. Sometimes a merchant guild had preceded the urban community, and as a result had become the foundation for the communal organization. In York the merchant guild had preceded the urban community, and the latter only slowly emancipated itself from the former.[23] In Wells, in southwest England, the borough community coincided with the single guild, in which all professions of the town were united, a pattern that was quite common in English towns of the fifteenth century.[24] This was not what happened in the Low Countries. Here, guilds had to fight hard for their place under the political sun. We already saw how those of Utrecht were able to do so in the wake of the Flemish guilds' great victory at the Battle of the Spurs in the early fourteenth century. In Guelders, this happened only in the fifteenth century, as a result of the Duchy's aggressive foreign policy against the rise of, first, the Burgundians, and subsequently the Habsburgs as the dominant power in the region. To gain the support of urban communities, the duke of Guelders redrafted urban constitutions to give citizens a greater say in local affairs, including the taxes they so badly needed to continue his policies. In Arnhem, the guilds were summoned to elect a new council in 1466, after the duke had occupied the town to ensure its loyalty. In the course of the sixteenth century, the six "guild masters" who had originally represented the guilds were supplemented by 18 more guild representatives to form a Common Council. In the process, they transformed from representatives of the guild into representatives of the civic community as a whole.[25] In other towns in the area, it was the neighborhood that formed the basis of political representation. In Zwolle, for example, four streets would each select 12 representatives who together made up the Common Council.[26]

A similar role was played by the London wards. These also displayed a mixture of political, administrative, and social functions. Elections for Common Council were held in the wards, where attendance at the December meeting was compulsory for all freemen. Those wardmotes were at the same time occasions for communal drinking and eating. The wards were also the basic unit for assessing and collecting various taxes: local rates, such as the scavenger's rate and the beadle's wage, and national taxes like the "subsidy." Wards would also be involved in the supervision of markets and commercial practices.[27] During the Civil War, the London wards would develop into hotbeds of political activity. In November 1641, the canvassing of signatures for a citywide petition that was delivered

to Parliament on December 11 was organized through the wards. Ward officials encouraged their fellow citizens to sign, while opponents complained that these same officials had abused their authority for political purposes.[28]

In the western parts of the Dutch Republic, neighborhoods might be as much in evidence, but without a direct political role. The town of Haarlem even boasted a double system of neighborhoods, one official and another more informal. The official neighborhoods numbered 25 and their role was to facilitate tax collection and coordinate firefighting. The headmen (*hoofdmannen*) were charged with compiling the tax registers and assessing the neighbors for this purpose. At the same time they acted as spokesperson for the neighborhood in its dealings with the authorities. A lot of their business with town hall had to do with either public spaces—think of maintenance of road surfaces and similar issues—and with poor relief for pauper inhabitants of the neighborhood. The informal neighborhoods were much more numerous and hence much smaller. They would consist of several dozens of households who would get together mainly for social purposes. Many of the Haarlem neighborhoods organized an annual dinner, complete with songs composed especially for the occasion, to celebrate their neighborly bond. The authorities disapproved of the heavy drinking and general uproar that tended to accompany these neighborhood meals, which might last for several days, and they introduced legislation to curb the worst excesses. The 25 formal neighborhoods, on the other hand, were allowed to continue as before.[29] Towns like Leiden and Utrecht too had extensive neighborhood organizations. There is, however, no hint of political involvement.[30]

Instead, citizens of the towns in the seaboard provinces of the Dutch Republic utilized the civic militias as a platform to articulate their demands. During the great waves of political unrest, in 1672, 1748, and the 1780s in particular, the militias were the most important setting for popular mobilization. Significantly, the militiamen were known as "the citizenry," even though formal citizen status was no requirement for joining the militias. It had been in the past, but this was scrapped during the 1580s, when in Holland and Utrecht the militias were transformed from voluntary, elitist organizations into compulsory units with a socially variegated membership. The timing was no coincidence. During the years when the fate of the Dutch Revolt hung in the balance, citizen units that did not have to receive pay were potentially a great bonus. In those years, militiamen were regularly consulted by the authorities, who found this a convenient way to gauge public opinion. This practice had become so widespread that in 1578 the States of Holland felt compelled to expressly forbid such consultations, after some town governments had used militia

opposition as an argument to turn down proposals they disliked anyway.[31] This, however, did not stop the militiamen from discussing current affairs. These discussions even gave rise, albeit briefly, to a specific genre of pamphlets, the militia conversation.[32] In 1672 and 1748 such discussions led to massive political upheaval, the dismissal of hundreds of urban councilors, and their replacement by people who were supported by the militias.[33] The involvement of the militias was not limited to such spectacular episodes. In Utrecht, for example, the officers of the militias were routinely consulted on issues like the granting of citizenship rights to Catholics.[34] Their role in civic life was exemplified by the prominent display of the portraits of militia officers, such as Rembrandt's *Night Watch*, in the militia halls.[35]

In England, the militias were less involved in civic duties, and more straightforwardly part of the national defense effort. The English militias were an integral part of the military establishment, while those in the Dutch Republic remained primarily local. Nonetheless, some of the sentiments popular among London militiamen vis-à-vis regular soldiers—portrayed as instruments of tyrannical oppression—were reflecting those of the Dutch militias.[36] During the early stages of the English Civil War, the London militias helped secure the City for Parliament and were actively promoting the parliamentary cause.[37] Dutch militias were following a similarly revolutionary path during the 1780s, when they became the main vehicle for the Patriot Movement all over the Republic. In some towns the militias themselves, in others specially created "exercise societies," recruited from among the militiamen, proved to be very effective organizations for popular mobilization, as well as strong arms for the movement.[38] Significantly, they had been recommended for the purpose in an influential pamphlet, authored by Joan Derk van der Capellen tot den Pol, who had translated Andrew Fletcher's work on British militias. Dutch and British militias were once more referencing the same republican ideologies.[39]

During the eighteenth century, a new type of organizations emerged as a platform for popular politics: clubs and societies. In England, the earliest voluntary associations had been founded already in the late sixteenth century, but made little impact. Modest increases followed throughout the seventeenth century, but in 1688 the number was still a couple of dozen at best. The Glorious Revolution provided a turning point, with numbers rising to above 200 by the 1730s for England alone, and about double for the British Isles. From the 1760s, another acceleration took place, taking the number to well above 1,000 by the end of the eighteenth century. The first Masonic lodge, for example, was set up in London in 1717; by 1740, there were over 180 Masonic lodges throughout the country. These

and similar associations were mostly apolitical, and perhaps that was even their point: to establish a "neutral arena," away from party political conflict. However, they did create new forms of civic sociability, in not only the cultural domain (music, the arts, science), but also campaigning for moral reform, a cause that became quite popular in the first half of the eighteenth century.[40] In the Dutch Republic, the movement took longer to catch on, that is to say in its formalized guise. Societies were mostly formed in the second half of the eighteenth century. They were, however, preceded by an unknown but presumably significant number of informal circles with regular meetings, which started to emerge in the second half of the seventeenth century.[41] The increase in the number of clubs and societies interacted with the emergence of a regular political press. Newspapers and periodicals increasingly started to mix opinions into their more factual reporting. Such news media were especially available to members of many clubs and societies, which took out subscriptions for their members' benefit.[42]

A range of corporate organizations allowed citizens to get together and discuss the political issues of the day. This was not the primary function of those organizations, but by placing themselves in the heart of the urban community—for instance by requiring their members to be formal citizens of that community—they almost inevitably triggered political reflexes in their membership.

## Popular Politics—Instruments: Ideology, Petitions

Citizens in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries could use a variety of organizational settings to articulate political claims. An ideology of "urban republicanism" allowed them to frame those claims in a more general set of political principles. Petitions were a preferred and acceptable vehicle to communicate those claims to the authorities, and at the same time demonstrate the extent of support for these claims.

Urban republicanism was not a strongly theorized set of principles, but rather emerged from the practices of popular politics. This urban republicanism consisted of four main elements: personal freedom, equality among citizens, political representation, and finally collective rule and accountability. All these elements had been constitutionally anchored in the privileges that had been granted to the citizen community over the centuries. Underlying these ideals was the conceptualization of the city as a quasi-state.[43] Some such elements can be found in the "Short and Simple Deduction," a pamphlet from 1703 that was designed to demonstrate that the "common council and citizens" of the town of Groenlo, in the eastern part of the Dutch Republic, were entitled to elect the local magistrate.[44]

The "Deduction" claims that, after the death of Stadtholder William III, the election of the local town council ("magistrate") had devolved on "the people," who had enjoyed this right from times immemorial. To demonstrate that this was indeed the case, several representatives had requested permission from the magistrate, on March 1, 1703, to have access to the town's archives, "to view their [the citizens'] privileges." On March 5 and 6, the representatives, together with two members of the magistrate, had searched the old documents, and managed to retrieve various confirmations of Groenlo's citizens' right to elect their local authorities. The oldest document was a letter from Count Reynold of Guelders, dating back to 1277. Even though the original had been lost, several authenticated copies were available, confirming the citizens' claim. Letters from other counts of Guelders, dating from 1423, 1432, 1482, and 1506, were reckoned to have the same effect. In Veere, in Zeeland, citizens demanded in 1672 that the town's public finances be properly handled, and accounted for. In their capacity as taxpayers, they asked for accountability of the expenditures of the town. The annual accounts should be made available to two deputies from the guilds, who supposedly acted as representatives of the community. Likewise, the accounts of a public lottery should be made available to "*eenige Borgers*" ("a handful of citizens"). However, Veere citizens were also providing money to the town. In that capacity they wanted to make sure that tax rates were applied fairly. The registers of the 500th penny should be viewed by "*eenige Gedeputeerde uyt de Borgers*" ("some deputies from the citizens"). And as creditors of the town they insisted that interest on the Veere debt would be paid securely and promptly.[45] These citizens, in other words, had quite a clear idea of what they were expecting from their governors.

A strong version of the urban republican idea was articulated in the early eighteenth century by Richard Butcher, town clerk of Stamford, Lincolnshire, who described "cities or towns corporate as . . . small County Palatinates within themselves," which would be best served by "magistrates of their own members . . . to make laws, constitutions and ordinances, to bind themselves and every member within their jurisdiction." The citizens, Butcher explained, had "a power within themselves in their Common Hall assembled, to make laws as peculiar and proper rules for their better government, the said assembly being a little court of Parliament."[46] Even in the late eighteenth century, after decades in which national politics had been increasingly taking center stage, local autonomy, or "independence" as contemporaries preferred to call it, remained an attractive ideological option, precisely because it appealed to urban identities. Urban privileges remained a cornerstone of any such argument about citizenship, freedom, and politics.[47]

Petitions were the weapon of choice for citizens to voice their opinions, often collectively, for example as a guild.[48] These petitions were also the documents in which urban republicanism was most commonly articulated. Hundreds of such guild petitions survive in the Amsterdam municipal archives alone, and quite likely many have been lost. Many of these request a change in the guild's regulations, usually because new circumstances demand adaptation. In their petitions, significantly, the guilds never claimed legal entitlement to government support. Instead, they tried to build a case based on the civic community that included both the authorities and themselves. The carriage makers, for example, were of the opinion, that "they were paying their scot and lot, and therefore were helping to carry the burdens of the town and their guilds." Other guilds added that taxation in Amsterdam was substantially higher than in the countryside, or reminded the authorities of their contributions to the civic militias. All of this, according to the carriage makers, entitled them to the "advantages, that are due to them as inhabitants of this town, and members of their guilds, . . . with the exclusion of others, particularly aliens."[49]

It seems that, indeed, these guild petitions were generally looked upon most favorably by the Amsterdam government. A survey of Amsterdam local legislation—very important in the absence of any significant national legislation—has demonstrated that much of it was created at the initiative of those sections of the population who were directly involved. More than 40 percent of petitions led to the introduction of a bylaw. Even more telling, many bylaws copied the text of the petition verbatim into the Amsterdam statute book.[50] To be sure, guilds were the single most important group of petitioners in Amsterdam; almost half the petitions preserved from the eighteenth century were signed in the name of a guild.

Although petitions were commonly used to address routine issues, they had the potential to evolve into an instrument of popular politics, the full force of which was revealed during revolutionary episodes. London radicals used petitions to demonstrate the extent of their support to great effect during the early stages of the Civil War. Already in December 1640 a petition was presented to the House of Commons, protesting against the rise of "popery" in the Church of England. It was accompanied by some 15,000 signatures, all belonging to citizens of the City from a wide variety of backgrounds. Some 10 percent of these were also present at the delivery of the document to Parliament, all "persons of quality and worth" according to the organizers. Another petition, calling for the removal of bishops and popish peers from the House of Lords, was signed by a similar number one year later. In January 1642, the Commons received petitions pledging support, from members of the militia and other inhabitants of Westminster. In February, 1,500 porters petitioned to express their

concerns about the economy and the effect that had on their livelihoods. They blamed the problems on the "adverse malignant-blood-sucking-rebellious popish party." A few days later another petition was submitted, voicing similar concerns, by hundreds of gentlewomen, tradesmen's wives, and widows. In July 1643, another petition addressed to Parliament had attracted, reportedly, 20,000 signatories. More petitions were delivered to the Common Council.[51] The right to petition the Crown was part of the Bill of Rights in 1689.[52]

In the Dutch Republic, the Patriot radicals of the 1780s were using mass petitions in identical ways to press home their claims. In the spring of 1782, petitions were circulating in the eastern provinces in favor of the American rebels against British authority. In Deventer such a petition, demanding the recognition of John Adams as the Americans' representative, attracted 66 supporters. By the autumn, Patriot petitions demanding constitutional reform were signed by 1,460 people in Deventer, over 2,000 in neighboring Zwolle, and "the majority of citizens and residents" in Kampen. In December 1782, the Deventer petitioners selected 12 from their ranks to form a committee representing the citizens that could press more effectively for reform. By the next year petitioning had become almost routine, allowing the Patriots to articulate all kinds of claims and demonstrate public support. On various occasions members of guilds signed together, clearly showing how their organizations had been vehicles for mobilization.[53] Similar developments were taking place simultaneously in Utrecht, where petitions were filed quick and fast. The largest was signed by over 1,400 people. Some were handed in by large crowds that would gather around town hall and more or less force the local government to act upon their demands.[54]

In a previous decade, English citizens were petitioning the Crown in massive numbers too. Over 200 petitions were sent in about the American Revolution alone, by groups claiming to represent counties, towns, parliamentary boroughs, militias, as well as the universities of Oxford and Cambridge—in other words, various corporate bodies. These were signed by dozens, often hundreds of people. They displayed a range of opinions, some opposing the government's policies, other supporting it.[55] The point is not that they varied, but that they were used to voice opinions that individuals were prepared to attach their name to.

Besides direct and indirect representation, petitions were a popular instrument for what we might term "direct democracy." Through petitions, groups of citizens would articulate political points—and demand action from the authorities. Many of these petitions obtained their intellectual coherence from an ideology that was only sporadically framed in theoretical terms, but proved powerful and enduring nonetheless. Again,

that ideology was not in any way unique to Dutch or British towns. It could be found all over Europe. What was less common in other parts of Europe was the way in which this ideology managed to influence policies beyond the urban domain.

## The Dutch and the British States, and Ordinary People

The Dutch and British states experienced revolutionary episodes that not only transformed these states' institutions, but also made them more responsive to their citizens' concerns. This happened, however, in distinct ways. The outcome of the Dutch Revolt was a federal state, where decentralization created opportunities for citizens to participate in politics. In England, the Reformation increased the representation of urban interests in Parliament, while the revolutions of the seventeenth century subsequently increased the role of Parliament in national politics.

Under Habsburg rule, the Low Countries had been on a trajectory of increased centralization. If anything, the Reformation had increased that process. New institutions had been set up in Brussels that were designed to increase the powers of the central government. A special court dealt with heresy cases, overruling the normal judiciary procedures. At the same time, the tax burden and other financial pressures emanating from the government were increasing significantly, against much local opposition. The Dutch Revolt interrupted, and ultimately broke off, this process. Instead, the rebels designed a state that restricted the scope of the central state institutions—the States-General, the Council of State, the stadtholder's office—mainly to the realm of foreign policy and the military, while domestic policies were reserved for the provinces and their constituent parts.[56] In the key province of Holland, which was economically the most dynamic by far and responsible for raising almost 60 percent of the state's budget and shouldering almost the complete public debt, the provincial States were entirely dominated by the towns. Urban representation was, moreover, increased during the Revolt, from six to 18, to extend the support for, and participation in, the Revolt. From then on, all major issues of national politics were discussed in great detail in town councils. National politics had become local politics—and the other way around.

This was true not only in Holland, but in fact throughout the Republic. Only in Friesland did the towns not command half the votes in the provincial States. In Overijssel the States voted in two "chambers," one consisting of three rural districts, the other of the towns of Kampen, Zwolle, and Deventer. In those towns Common Councils were consulted about local as well as national issues. In Zwolle, for example, the Common Council blocked the introduction of a new excise on coffee and tea as "bad for

trade" on four occasions in January and February 1748, and only acquiesced after an important concession had been made by the provincial States. In that same year, Common Councilors were also drafted in to assess the citizens in their own district for tax purposes. The same happened two years later, when another tax was introduced that required the creation of a register and classification of each household in one of the 11 classes distinguished by the legislator.[57] In this and many other ways, local actions were intimately tied to the working of the Dutch national state. As a result, ordinary citizens could influence national policies, both as they were being shaped, and when they came to be implemented.

In England the Reformation set in motion a series of institutional reforms. One of these was a remarkable increase in the number of incorporated towns. Whereas in 1500 there had been 38 such towns, and 44 in 1540, the number then started to increase at a rate of almost 14 per decade for the subsequent 100 years. By 1560 the number had already doubled, by 1600 it had tripled, and by 1640 there were 4.5 times as many incorporated boroughs as there had been in 1500. The total now stood at 181.[58] Almost all these towns could send two Members of Parliament to Westminster. While urban representatives had, as a result, become the single most numerous interest group in Parliament, the role of Parliament as such was much contested. Under the Stuarts, repeated attempts were made to subject Parliament to the Crown's dominance. These led to a Civil War (1642–1660) and ultimately to the overthrow of the Stuart dynasty and the supremacy of Parliament as it was settled in the Bill of Rights, during the Glorious Revolution (1688–1689).

During the eighteenth century, local and national politics became more intensely connected, while popular involvement increased in both domains precisely because of this connection. Newspapers were becoming an increasingly important forum for political discussions. There were 25 provincial newspapers in 1735 and 50 by 1782. In 55 towns newspapers had been published at some point during the eighteenth century, in print runs of 200–400 early in the century and 1,000–2,000 later on. London newspapers were read, moreover, nationwide.[59] At the same time, the number of clubs and societies increased massively. In the quiet years of 1754–1784, when national political divides were less charged than they had been, between half and two-thirds of urban parliamentary seats were still contested.[60] During the eighteenth century, local and national politics in the British Isles became increasingly intertwined, as had happened in the Dutch Republic in the wake of the Revolt.

Even if the conclusion that ordinary people did have a role to play in local and national politics seems inevitable, it still remains to be seen if this made any sort of difference. Two indicators suggest that it did. First,

England and the Dutch Republic were the most heavily taxed states in early modern Europe, and quite likely the whole world. Moreover, Dutch taxes became less regressive after 1672, when the country seems to have hit a tax "ceiling." Clearly, elites were prepared to set an example by increasing their own contributions, so as to encourage their fellow citizens to do the same.[61] It is perhaps counterintuitive to see per capita tax spending as an indicator of citizens' trust in their government, but this is precisely what is suggested by the modern literature on tax compliance. In general, governments cannot afford to monitor tax returns in great detail. They can, however, encourage citizens to pay their taxes by making sure the tax burden is distributed evenly, by being transparent about how the money is spent, and, most significantly in this context, by giving citizens an opportunity to influence political decisions.[62] Therefore, the high levels of taxation in the British Isles and the Dutch Republic are indeed indicative of trust in the government, created by political "voice." This impression is underscored by the fact that both states borrowed against low interest rates.[63]

Although most of that tax money was spent on the armies and navies of both countries, some of it was ploughed back into society as social services. Significantly, in the late eighteenth century, England and the Dutch Republic spent more than any other country on poor relief: about 1.5 percent of their national income. If Peter Lindert's claim that welfare spending is a function of political "voice" also applies to the days of the Old Regime, this suggests that by the standards of those days, the English and Dutch political systems were more responsive than others to the concerns of their citizens.[64]

## Conclusion

Through a series of mostly unplanned developments, the English—later British—and the Dutch state became increasingly responsive to claims by ordinary people. In both states such developments started at the local level. As in many other European states, urban citizens had access to a range of instruments and organizations that allowed them to voice their concerns and propose reforms to local authorities. What made England and the Dutch Republic stand out was the way in which these local mechanisms could also have an impact at state level. While in many countries states were becoming less responsive to their citizens, as a result of absolutist ideology and administrative centralization, England and the Dutch Republic evolved along a different trajectory. The word "evolution" perhaps conjures up a gradual development. That was not at all what happened. In fact, in both states, revolutions were required to consolidate the permanent

role of citizens in the political process. The two states also supported the revolutionary process in the other country: the English sided with the rebels in the Dutch Revolt, while the Dutch helped launch the Glorious Revolution in England. This, however, was more for reasons of military strategy, than out of a natural sympathy for the other's political fate. Nonetheless, the outcome was that on both sides of the North Sea states emerged with political institutions that seemed to have the support of their citizens.[65]

## Notes

1. This argument is made more elaborately, and with appropriate references, in Maarten Prak, "Urban governments and their citizens in early modern Europe," in: Matthew Davies and James A. Galloway (eds.), *London and beyond: Essays in honour of Derek Keene* (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2012), 269–73.
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3. Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and communities in Western Europe 900–1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), chapter 6.
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Soly (eds.), *Craft guilds in the early modern Low Countries: Work, power, and representation* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006), 83–4.

8. Maarten Prak, "Verfassungsnorm und Verfassungsrealität in den niederländischen Städten des späten 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts. Die Oligarchie in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Deventer und Zutphen 1672/75–1795," in: Wilfried Ehbrecht (ed.), *Verwaltung und Politik in Städten Mitteleuropas. Beiträge zu Verfassungsnorm und Verfassungswirklichkeit in altständischer Zeit* Städteforschung, vol. A/34 (Cologne, Germany: Böhlau, 1994), 58.
9. Prak, "Verfassungsnorm und Verfassungsrealität," 63.
10. Nicholas Rodgers, *Whigs and cities: Popular politics in the age of Walpole and Pitt* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 298.
11. Wyger Velema, *Republicans: Essays on eighteenth-century Dutch political thought* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2007), 59–60.
12. A classic work is Henk van Dijk, D. J. Roorda, "Social mobility under the regents of the Republic," *Acta Historiae Neerlandicae* 9 (1978), 76–103; see also Prak, "Verfassungsnorm und Verfassungsrealität"; and Julia Adams, *The familial state: Ruling families and merchant capitalism in early modern Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).
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44. *Korte en eenvoudige deductie, waer by getoont wordt de wettigheit van de keur van de magistraet, door de gemeinsluiden . . . der stadt Groenlo, in martio 1703. . . . en 'tgeene vervolgens sig daer omtrent heeft toegedraegen* (Knuttel 15252); a comparable document from Arnhem is analyzed in Arjan van Dixhoorn, " 'Voorstanden van de vrije wetten': Burgerbewegingen in Arnhem en de Republiek tussen 1702 en 1707," *Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis* 25 (1999), 25–54.
45. *Ordonnantie of dispositijf van syn hoogheyt den heer prince van Orange, gestreckt over sekere poincten ende artijckelen, van weghens eenighe borgeren ende gildens, aen de magistraet vande stadt van ter Vere, overgelevert op den 24 september 1672* (Knuttel 10578).
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53. Wayne te Brake, *Regents and rebels: The revolutionary world of an eighteenth-century Dutch city* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 47, 49 (quote), 50, 70, 75–79.
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64. Peter Lindert, *Growing public: Social spending and economic growth since the eighteenth century*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 22–3, 46–7.
65. Van Zanden, Prak, "Economic interpretation of citizenship."

7

# The Populist Voice of the Early Enlightenment

*Margaret C. Jacob*

The anonymous author of the most outrageous clandestine manuscript of the eighteenth century, *Traité des trois imposteurs* (c.1710), addressed the capabilities of ordinary people directly: all men could know the truth, but they are duped by vain and ridiculous opinions put forward by "the partisans of these absurdities . . . if the people would learn into what an abyss of ignorance they have fallen," they would soon rid themselves of the yoke of ignorance imposed upon them.[1] They do not have to engage in "*des hautes speculations*," nor penetrate the secrets of nature; they just have to have a little good sense. In contrast to the constraint endorsed by contemporary freethinkers like John Toland (d. 1722)—some ideas are meant to be kept "esoteric," and others fit for the masses and may be classified as "exoteric"—the *Traité* consistently speaks in a populist voice. If ordinary people have one defect, it lies in their credulity. Hobbes would have agreed.

Even John Toland, while he said that his *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696) was not intended for "ordinary Readers," allowed as how he had made his words easier for "the considerable advantage to the vulgar which I'm far from neglecting." Indeed "why may not the vulgar . . . be judges of the true sense of things . . . the poor, who are not supposed to understand philosophical systems, soon apprehended the difference between the plain convincing instructions of Christ, and the intricate ineffectual declamations of the scribes."[2] His freethinking friend, Anthony Collins, although more comfortable as a country gentleman in the company of John Locke, asserted, "I may just conclude that it is necessary for every Man, instead of relying upon them, to think freely for himself."[3] In the

decade when Toland died (1722), an Anglophone French follower, to this day anonymous, began his *Essais sur la recherche de la vérité* (c.1728) with the assertion, "All men have a natural inclination that leads them to search for the truth," and then spent much of his text trying to figure out how people might indeed think freely.[4]

Usually anonymous, frequently clandestine, the heretical texts and their progenitors in the period up to 1730 shared certain fundamental characteristics: when identified as authors, they turn out to be minor figures, hardly worthy of a place in the traditional histories of the Enlightenment. Whether anonymous or not, their language was on the whole jocular, and relatively simple, thus capable of being read by any fluently literate, but ordinary reader. The populist voice made them accessible, but the clandestine presentation made them marginal, often best traceable in police and spy reports. Sampled as a whole, even when produced without any obvious relation one to the other, the texts with this voice nevertheless present a pattern, or, we may say, a genre: storytelling while being rabidly anticlerical, hostile to established authority in Church or state, friendly toward the ordinary reader, and, not least, eager to disengage from traditional Christian metaphysics that placed spirit separate from, and above, matter or body. These characteristics appear in clandestine books or manuscripts as well as in an entire collection of books supposedly by a single publisher, one Pierre Marteau. First the ideas and their creators, then the publisher of greatest fame, require examination.

The genre with its simple voice and bold ideas traveled far and wide. Ensconced anonymously in the Ardennes, the lowly and somewhat impoverished curate Jean Meslier (d. 1729) articulated an egalitarian atheism that only became known after his death. He reminisced about the "wish of a man a while back who had no culture or education, but who, to all appearances, did not lack the common sense to pass sound judgments . . . His wish was that all the rulers of the earth and all the nobles be hanged and strangled with the guts of the priest."[5] The source of Meslier's ideas remains somewhat obscure, but his testament was all over the clandestine circuit.

More is known about César Chesneau Dumarsais, the author in 1720 of *Le Philosophe*, a text widely credited with providing the name for the leaders of the French Enlightenment. Although trained as a lawyer, Dumarsais lived an ascetic life and made explicit in his writing the link between atheism and a belief in the power of the everyday social: "Civil society is, in a manner of speaking, the sole divinity that [*le philosophe*] recognizes on the earth. It inspires him, he honors it by his probity, by an exact attention to his duties and by the sincere desire not to be a useless member, an embarrassment." That said, Dumarsais was less sanguine than Meslier about the power of the people's reason, although he believed that they sought to

resist the chimeras of superstition and religion, especially with the help of *les philosophes*.[6] When finally published anonymously in 1743 and almost certainly in Amsterdam, *Le Philosophe* was dedicated to the memory of Anthony Collins.[7]

All these shadowy, or infamous, *philosophes* were proclaiming a social imaginary of kindred spirits—all of humanity—open to atheism, materialism, and generally heretical thinking that could bind them together in the shared interest of a churchless world.[8] We might be tempted to postulate a rhetorical whistling in the dark intended to fortify thinkers whose ideas were at best fit for books to be burnt, or jail time for the truly unlucky. Or, as I am arguing here, the populist rhetoric displayed by the egalitarian thinkers of the early Enlightenment reflected the social reality of ordinary people making an impact in intellectual and cultural life. Much, but by no means all, of the first generation of egalitarian rhetoric was scribbled or printed by Protestant hands.

In other words, rhetoric reflected a certain sociology. Late in the seventeenth century, a mélange of small-time Protestant journalists, multilingual publishers, minor players in the world of ideas, as well as freer presses, coffeehouses, and salons set the stage for the movement of light visible on both sides of the Channel by the 1690s. These were the highly literate "*menu peuple*," who ushered in the century of light. Denizens of large, generally English or Dutch urban centers, sometimes themselves refugees—if publishers or illegal printers, then creatures of the market—these wordsmiths knew hand-to-mouth success and failure (witness Toland who in his final illness could not pay his doctor), and none of the comforts of privilege and place. Small wonder then that they could imagine "everyman" as the audience they wanted to reach. Such a populist appeal also helped sell books, especially if authors and publishers could add the spice of the salacious to the mix; late in the seventeenth century, a nascent pornography can be located in clandestine, but printed texts of French, Dutch, and English origin.

The pornographic prose was straightforward. When describing the seducing monk in *Les Entretiens de la Grille ou Le Moine au Parloir* (Cologne, 1682, first edition) the narrator has him say: "clearly seeing that to have friendly dealings with her, which would then bring me pleasure, I had to creep more delicately into her mind . . . " Once acquainted with his lady, the aroused monk "looks, admires, gazes, turns his head, widens & tightens the ears, carries up a paw & and then the other toward that certain something, knocks lightly with one of his paw & then with the other; he intensifies so gently that our Monk persuades himself that the effect of the fire is the only cause of the shaking of that certain something . . . " This erotic narrative—with no author or publisher, nor obvious intellectual

debt—cuts monks down to size. It also philosophizes on the universality of the sexual urge: "Love is no less of all sexes than it is of all ages. If women seem not to feel so strongly the spur of love as men do, it is because they have a keen sense of modesty; once they have unmasked the shame, they appear more daring than them."[9]

Most previous accounts of the origins of the Enlightenment lay emphasis on the debt to the great philosophers, upon the entire seventeenth-century development of philosophy and science. From Cassirer through to Peter Gay and Jonathan Israel, science or formal philosophy have been seen as laying the foundations on which enlightened mansions would rise. To be sure, the seventeenth century spawned philosophers as important as any who came before or after them: Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Locke, and, more purely scientific in their writings, Robert Boyle and Isaac Newton. Their ideas were incontrovertibly important, but they, the creators, were not the foot soldiers of a new cultural movement. Spinoza could have died as he lived, a heretic, despised by the pious, destined for relative obscurity. The "ism" that bears his name was created in the minds of minor readers who could take up a text like the *Traité*—in its first iteration named *La vie et l'esprit de Spinoza* (1719)—and use it to argue a new practical morality. In one instance, its materialism justified for an anonymous reader the "happiness of the two sexes . . . of all the passions there is none more tolerable than love . . . I speak from experience." Materialism, pantheism, or Spinozism could be read as endorsing hedonism, or so one reader of the time reasoned.[10]

My intention here is to shift the historiography of the Enlightenment decisively toward *what was done* with the writings of the major philosophers, all of whom, with the exception of Spinoza and Hobbes, were devoutly Christian. By pointing to the populist rhetoric and reality of the Enlightenment, I am suggesting that it happened on such a large scale not because of *what* the philosophers said—not the complexity and richness of their thought—but *how* the reasonably educated, or fluently literate, read the major philosophers of the seventeenth century, and their admirers, the *petits philosophes* of the early eighteenth.

The consumption—and rethinking—of ideas we identify with the scientific revolution, broadly conceived, makes the contribution of anonymous publishers, obscure interpreters, unknowable readers, and booksellers, famous or unknown, central to the shift in sensibility visible in Northern Europe by the 1690s. With the obvious exception of the Reformation, in the period from 1500 to 1789 no other concatenation of ideas—namely, religious toleration, anticlericalism and anti-absolutism, deism and worse—captured the popular imagination more noticeably. By the 1750s, French army officers were writing and reading "*libelles*

*fort indécents*" against the king and his mistress.[11] Not even the new science penetrated as deeply and quickly, or inspired the same flights of imaginative fancy.

For example, some readers of Descartes announced that it was now possible to banish the soul, leaving only the mind in its place. Bodies became like automata, like the new push–pull mechanisms advertised by Boyle's air pump or demonstrated by simple engines for drawing water. A pious Dutch Calvinist minister like Balthasar Bekker could use Cartesian arguments to banish the nonmechanical actions of devils and spirits from the universe so that Christ might reign more triumphantly. Advocating Cartesian mechanism, his *De Betoverde Weereld* (*World Bewitched*, 1691) did not sit well with his fellow preachers. They spied an excess of rationalism and effectively deposed him as a minister. One of his more outspoken followers was arrested and kept in prison for three years without a trial (absent *habeas corpus*), and there he died in 1697, probably by suicide. Like English Protestantism, Dutch Calvinism was deeply split between fundamentalists, who wanted strict adherence to the Bible, ritual, and clergy, and liberals like Bekker who were risk-takers and wanted to use the new philosophy to clear superstition out of the minds of the faithful. The Dutch Calvinist church did not want to encourage belief in witches, but equally it did not want to see rationalist arguments supersede Biblical ones. Calvinism alone, without the aid of Cartesianism, would never have made Bekker's arguments against *spokerij* so powerful and compelling.

Of course there were plenty of pious Cartesians who took up Descartes' principles and method in order to support absolutism, or to argue for the rights of husbands over wives, which, they said, were similar to the rights of masters over their valets.[12] Such authoritarian piety, however, did not stop a worried Catholic Church from putting Descartes' writings on the *Index of Forbidden Books* in 1663.

The Church's condemnation of Descartes made little impact in Protestant countries, or even, for that matter, in France. Undeterred, readers found in Descartes' 1649 treatise *The Passions of the Soul* the liberation of emotion. Emotion was now defined as involuntary, relational, and not solitary, as occurring between a subject and an object of desire. The great French novelist Madeleine de Scudéry aided and abetted this "affective revolution" by defining emotion or sensibility as a shared experience.[13] The same people who did or consumed science, and others who wrote or read novels, now could identify themselves as thinking and feeling beings who defined the authenticity of an idea, or an emotion, by the effect it had on their own reason and emotions. With such assumptions in place, the novel, reinforced by the new self-centered epistemologies, developed into the most powerful literary genre of the eighteenth century. Not

least, in its pornographic versions, the novel legitimated the involuntary power of imagination through reading to transform, or erotically move, the reader.

Similarly in the hands of an art theorist like Roger de Piles, Descartes on the passions could be read as a repudiation of the classicism of Poussin, as an endorsement of the emotionalism of Rubens. De Piles valorized the emotional over the cerebral, the wildly expressive over classical restraint. Empowering all artistic expression, he championed the more egalitarian medium of engraving, and gave ammunition to those who—like his friend Bernard Picart (d. 1733)—would use it to examine dispassionately all the religions of the world. After his arrival in The Hague in 1710, Picart associated with the circle that put the *Traité* into the hands of readers.

To prove the emotional power of art to criticize and historicize, de Piles connected it with religion. It was sculptors and painters who originally set up the false divinities "which gave rise to fables," and set those images "before the eyes of the Egyptians for their adoration." Not only did art lay the foundations for religion. By comparison, what books can give a more excellent account of ancient religions than what we can learn from sculpture or art? As de Piles said, "Those who have treated of the religion of the ancient Romans, their encampments, allegorical symbols, iconology, and images of their gods, could bring no better proof of their assertions, than the antique monuments of base reliefs and medals . . . [they are] infallible sources of erudition."[14]

De Piles contradicted the scholastic version of Aristotle that maintained the superiority of literature to art (because, it was believed, mental performance must always be more noble than manual), and he proclaimed that when his principles are followed, "painting therefore yields a more lively pleasure than poesy." Reasoning is also found as much in painting as in literature. Even engravings could employ shading or graying to achieve an emotional impact. The overall effect of de Piles' mechanistic theory of art was to draw attention to the experience of the ordinary viewer, to the authenticity of the common self as moved by the artist.[15]

Extrapolating from Descartes on the passions, De Piles came very close to offering a rationale for spending a major portion of one's artistic life in explicating the nature of the world's religions by an attempt to faithfully represent their beliefs and customs. Picart would do just that. In his Parisian youth, he also made an early engraving that depicted Descartes slaying ignorance, widely interpreted by contemporaries to be Aristotle. The authorities insisted that he do a pious retraction in the form of an engraving that proclaimed the harmony of religion with philosophy. Unintentionally, the great philosophers of Christian Europe helped to spawn *les philosophes*.

Take another example, Francis Bacon. People with an interest in science read Francis Bacon, decades after his death in 1626, as the justifier of empirical work, of collecting and cataloguing. That Bacon had also been a millenarian, a believer in the end of the world and the Last Judgment, and a courtier and architect of James I's absolutism simply got left out of the story. The great Dutch doctor of the early eighteenth century, Herman Boerhaave, heaped praise on Bacon as the inspiration for his empirical work. As late as 1797 at the first industrial exposition in Paris, the minister of the interior invoked Bacon by name to justify the new emphasis being put on the mechanical arts and manufacturing in general.[16]

And then there is how Locke (d. 1704) could be read. Although dedicated to upholding the foundations of Christianity, he was taken up as entirely secular in orientation. Locke's treatise on education, aimed largely at male children of good, generally landed, Protestants, was read as a license to better educate all children. Some even said that it justified allowing women to preach.[17] Indeed, Locke should be seen as putting the issue of women's education on the Western agenda. Of course, he had feminist precursors and followers, and in the eighteenth century advocates of women's education could be found writing in a variety of languages and settings. Again, it was *how* Locke could be read by reformers looking for new solutions to old and vexed problems that created the new culture of enlightenment.[18]

By 1700 both celebrators and detractors of the new cultural movement struggled for words to describe it. Corresponding in 1706, Locke's great admirer Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, said to a journalist and Huguenot friend in the Dutch Republic that he saw "a mighty light which spreads it's self over the world, especially in those two free Nations of England and Holland; on whom the affairs of all Europe now turn." The metaphor of light allowed him to suggest that in both England and the Republic a new tolerance was dawning. With it came growing opposition to tyranny. Shaftesbury wrote from London to Jean Le Clerc, a pastor in Rotterdam, who also edited one of the most popular journals of the day, published in French with an international circulation.[19]

Indeed as the lives of the English commonwealth men Shaftesbury, Toland, and Collins illustrate, there was no other country in Europe more important to them than the Dutch Republic. This devotion did not mean that nothing would be lost in translation. Shaftesbury's *Sensus Communis, An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humor* (1709) received French translation by an up-and-coming Dutch literary figure, Justus van Effen, who at the time enjoyed a filiation with the Levier/Marchand/Picart/Rousset de Missy circle that gave the world the infamous *Traité des trois imposteurs.*

Indeed the publisher dedicated the translation of *Sensus Communis* to Jan Vroesen, named by Marchand and recently reputed to be the actual author of the *Traité.* The translator's preface allied Shaftesbury with the freethinkers and Pyrrhonists of England and made little out of his well-known, if Stoical piety.[20] It was as if the Dutch sought wherever possible to take up radical ideas of English origin and make them bolder.[21]

Cities provided the cover for such boldness. They were the natural habitat of publishers and would-be *philosophes*. In the period after 1650, cities from Amsterdam to Paris, Edinburgh to London grew in size and would continue to do so throughout the century. In addition, towns of more than 30,000 people—like The Hague or Berlin—became more numerous. If the curious could afford books and find a coffeehouse where the like-minded gathered in relative anonymity—only cities of a decent size provided such haunts—ordinary people might begin *in tandem* to think new and unorthodox thoughts. So too, in both London and Paris by 1710, cabarets and clubs sprang up where men made marriages together; the authorities called their denizens by the derogatory term "sodomites." The Parisian coterie took women's names, and fashioned ceremonies for "*la Réception des Prozelites*." In Amsterdam in the same period, hundreds of free blacks, mostly men, originally from Africa, also congregated.[22] In 1748, the pornographic *Thérèse philosophe* remarked on their presence in cafés and dance halls. By the first decade of the new century, London taverns existed where working women supped and engaged in ribald banter.[23] Among literate, more leisured women, novels and journals gave ease of access to the polemics surrounding the emerging Enlightenment. By 1700, cities had become associated with the outrageous, daring, and free.

Any urban center could nurture freethinking. A small city like Namur, in the highly censored Austrian Netherlands (i.e., Belgium), had about a dozen bookstores. When the authorities raided them in the 1730s, they found what they labeled "bad books": French translations of works by John Locke and Machiavelli, along with the anonymous and risqué. A decade later, when a local merchant-tanner died, his library contained works by Voltaire, as well as fashionable encyclopedias of the era.[24] Meanwhile, outside of Paris in 1728, yet another hapless priest, without known relation to Meslier, got himself arrested for claiming that Jesus, Moses, and Muhammad had been impostors.[25] The claim was old news by the time the curate got hold of the *Traité,* if that is what he was reading. As was so often the case, in the stories told about dangerous ideas, the curé was said to have made himself the head of an assembly of like-minded followers. In far away Saxony, a good ten years earlier, the authorities had been searching the bookstores in the hope of confiscating the very same tract.[26] Around

1710, as we now know, deists and pantheists in the Dutch Republic may have written all or part of it, and their publisher friends had put it out in a rare edition of 1719.

Once printing presses existed that the authorities could not control, and people had enough money to buy the forbidden, no one could predict how outrageous, indiscreet, or witty books and journals might become. Never before in the Christian West had the beliefs of the literate been fractured so openly, so publicly, in matters not simply of doctrine—Protestants and Catholics had been quarreling for centuries—but around the very status of Christian belief, its value and proofs. By the late eighteenth century, this same critical spirit would grip Judaism, engendering splits that endure to this day.

These changes in religiosity were visible as early as the 1690s, not just among the highly educated, but also among the ordinary. In Edinburgh in that decade, attendance at Protestant communion services dropped radically, never to rise again to their pre-1689 levels.[27] Instead, the faithful may have gone to chapel to hear sermons, but even that form of religious expression is more cerebral and less emotive than the ritual of communion. Within a few decades, Scots Presbyterians like James Watt, perfecter of the steam engine, may have been attending only scientific lectures, not chapel services. His sons had no use for organized religion. By late in the century in France, a secularizing trend can also be identified. Fewer people left money in wills for their churches, and in Britain by 1803 charity had become defined as having to offer a benefit to "the public."[28] Religious movements that laid emphasis on the end of the world and the final days before the millennial reign of Christ remained commonplace in Europe and the American colonies, but they were more visible in the provinces than in the capitals.

When Shaftesbury wrote to Le Clerc that he still hoped for full philosophical liberty to prevail in his lifetime, in what he described as "the protestant and free World alone," he certainly knew the risks.[29] By then the readers of the previous century's major philosophers had a vast sea of semi-clandestine literature from which they could draw their secularist or skeptical ideas. And they had a set of phony publishers to cover the trail of the authors.

Take Pierre Marteau. There never was a publisher by that name. He was a pure fiction, invented by Dutch publishing houses, probably taken off the top of someone's head and made an imprint for anonymous books published as early as the 1650s and 1660s by "Pierre Marteau, Cologne." We may legitimately doubt if even the paper or ink for such books had ever seen the outskirts of Cologne, across the Rhine from the Dutch Republic. By contrast in the same period, the city of Leipzig had actual publishers

who largely put out works of piety or prayer books.[30] Certainly if there was a taxpayer in Cologne by that name, he had no idea that his name was being used, probably by the Amsterdam publisher Elsevier, to promote outrageous ideas. How can the censors arrest anyone if they cannot find him? Today the renewed Elsevier is one of the largest publishing houses in the world. Sometimes crime pays.

The anonymous genre we can associate with Marteau followed a pattern. At first books started out as anti-French and anti-Catholic polemics that could have been written by devout Protestants.[31] Most were written in French, but there were also a significant number of German titles. Almost simultaneously, Pierre Marteau's books became experimental. The precise nature of French corruption and decadence required narrative description: young nuns and Jesuits, we are told, use dildos to give one another pleasure, although their actual intercourse finally occurs on the dunes near The Hague. The French aristocracy gets up to similar shenanigans.[32] The use of the epistolary form tells us that some of these authors may have been experimenting with a new narrative genre, which in time would come to be called the novel, even the pornographic novel.

Sometimes a woman is claimed to be the author of a tell-all account of the passions of Catholic nuns, whether in Portugal or France.[33] In these books monks are especially raunchy sorts, and their erections and masturbation with one another—"all the diverse emotions are rendered visible by the erection . . . "—must be recounted for a naive public.[34] Betraying its Protestant origins, another Marteau book proclaimed that the Bible is useless to Catholics. The Pope is the author of their faith, and for them the Virgin Mary is higher than God because she gave life to him.[35]

Clearly someone (probably quite a number of people, all imagining themselves cavorting in Cologne) was having an anonymously good time at the expense of the great and supposedly pious. Gradually, especially after 1685, in the Marteau literature, one villain emerged as the ogre of choice among the anonymous libellers: Louis XIV, the Sun King, the persecutor of French Protestants, who in the throes of an amorous liaison with a new mistress had suddenly become pious and devout. After 1685, the attacks on the French king become menacing: they predict that the revocation of the Edict of Nantes will be his undoing. The French court's embrace of absolutism—particularly after 1685 and the revocation—further aroused fearful Protestants, and public opinion more generally. They said that Louis XIV has made an alliance with the Jesuits, but they cannot be trusted, as they oppose all sovereignty but their own. Then comes the punch line: "eyes that are enlightened by the light [can see] that France . . . is in the grip of a Catholic fury." The ensuing surge of Huguenot refugees into England and the Dutch Republic supplied the necessary tinder in a box

that had long been smouldering with new and daring ideas, both fictional and philosophical. Marteau and friends supplied the matches.

By 1670 Pierre Marteau had fictional colleagues, more precisely competitors like "Jean le Blaue, Cologne," "Pierre Martheau, Cologne," "Pierre de la Place, Cologne," and "Jean L'Ingenu," also from Cologne. One fellow just called his publishing house ***. The actual publisher for all these imprints could not have been Elsevier alone; he had too many competitors in The Hague and elsewhere. "Jean L'Ingenu" printed books about love between priests and nuns, which could be bound with a titillating exposé that revealed the salacious goings on at the French court.[36] The copycats also published works like *La chronique scandaleuse, ou Paris ridicule* . . . (1668) and *Relation de l'État et Gouvernement d'Espagne* (1667). Because it was Catholic and absolutist, with a clergy that functioned like an arm of the state, Spain also took some heat from the Dutch publishers, supposedly from Cologne. Of course the Dutch had revolted over a century earlier against the Spanish, and there was no love lost on either side as a result. All of these books are written so as to not require a massive French vocabulary or advanced literacy.

On both sides of the Channel, journalists and anonymous pamphleteers proclaimed a new republic with anti-imperial associations. A great many citizens were excluded from this new "republic of letters," it was said; nevertheless, Europeans were on the threshold of a new age where they would have the power to correct the abuses that have been introduced into the world.[37] Republics are on the whole freer places, where prudence and "continence . . . passed from mother to daughters as an aspect of religion," and in such places the decadence of the French court could be avoided. Of course, pieties about the virtues found among female citizens of republics did not stop the publishers from describing in the same book, and in lurid detail, the mischief of kings and their mistresses.[38]

The complex relationship between Protestantism and the earliest stirrings of the European Enlightenment needs some final thought. People generally do not wake up one morning and stop believing in God, or settle for deism when they have just been to church the previous Sunday. In the lost world that Pierre Marteau represents, a gradual metamorphosis appears to be happening to some literate people, many of whom we will never know except by the books that could be sold to, or confiscated from, them. The Marteau books moved from believing in the reasonableness of the Protestant version of Christianity—vividly highlighted by the obvious irrationality of injustice and persecution in the 1680s—toward the belief that simply being reasonable is the key to virtuous living. If, however slowly, the ordinary pilgrim got to that place, the only thing to do on a Sunday morning was to read the newspaper or write letters.

Another bold anticleric from Cologne allows us to illustrate more concretely this turning point within the international Protestant consciousness. *Le Jesuite secularisé* (1683) wants the world to know how evil the Jesuits have become. A Jesuit is an assassin in disguise, a pensioner in the employ of Spain, "*un pedagogue sodomite*." By comparison, Calvinists act reasonably in their congregations, but then when you think about it, so too do the Socinians, that is, those who deny the divinity of Christ.[39] As Shaftesbury might have agreed, simply loving freedom of thought, and not being fanatical, becomes one key to true religiosity. Once traversed, the slope of anticlerical and anti-Catholic rhetoric could incline downward toward anti-Trinitarianism: for the audacious then followed by a short, but significant, free fall to deism and beyond.

A decade later John Locke would publish a tract intended to bolster Christianity, *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (London, 1695). In it he tried to pare Protestant Christianity down to essentials. The following year, when prepublication censorship had been removed, a deist-soon-to-turn-pantheist, John Toland, answered him with *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696). Why should we have religious doctrines or dogmas at all? Why not just find a set of reasonable principles founded on nature's laws on which everyone could agree? The persecutions, and the efforts to impose absolutism on the unwilling, put pressure on all Protestants to decide how to articulate the virtues of religious belief and practice. We now know that Locke wrote *The Reasonableness* after he had seen a prepublication copy of Toland's manifesto for a non-mysterious deism.[40] Both Toland and Locke belonged to the same political party. Toland had even trained for the Presbyterian ministry—briefly—at Leiden. Devout Protestants like Locke and Newton secretly did not believe in the doctrine of the Trinity. But they would journey no further. Both were horrified at where reasonableness, coupled with a grasp of the new science, could take people like Toland, especially if they had reason to be angry at the high and the mighty.

To become seekers given to heterodoxy, ordinary readers might first feel a personal anger. Louis XIV, Charles II, and James II—aided and abetted by their loyal clergies—put rage on the Protestant agenda. Imprisonment, or even the threat of it, was a serious matter. The sanitary conditions alone could kill. The threat of prison made people suspicious first of powerful Catholics: "their religion is one Grand Monarchy."[41] Their leaders, Jesuits and scholastics—the Machiavellians—were seen to be doing to Protestants what had been done to the Jews.[42] The only hope for the persecuted, the Marteau tracts claimed, was to appeal to the court of *public opinion*, a term being invented that made a direct appeal to everyman.[43]

In the court of public opinion, the enraged first tried preaching piety and humility to "*les grands*," or told their history from a negative

perspective.[44] The pundits lampooned the Catholic clergy, and did so in ways that sold books.[45] They tried mockery and satire to cut the great down to size; that, however, seemed to have little effect on the actual political situation. Saying that Louis XIV "is a true son of the Church. The Cardinal is one of his parents" might entertain readers, but it did nothing to affect the power of the French Church.[46] Thoughtful critics began to wonder: Might not the problem be more systemic, lying deep in the European consciousness?

For much of the seventeenth century, new travel literature had flourished. Perhaps travel could be used to suggest new systems of social or political organization. For some seekers the only place to go lay in the imagination, stimulated by tales from exotic lands. Almost simultaneously Europeans were discovering two new worlds: one in the heavens as detailed by Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton; the other on the earth as recounted by merchants, slave traders, and missionaries. Travel writers generally treated the distant peoples as exotic, inferior, and certainly odd. Gradually some commentators also saw the linkage between the travel literature and empire. Late in the century the translator of a vast collection of Moslem law said, "the diffusion of useful knowledge and the eradication of prejudice . . . are advantages which in part atone for the guilt of conquest."[47]

The discontent found in travel literature a mirror with which to reflect on their world, by invoking an imaginary new one, a distant utopia. For example, in a work published by Pierre Marteau, all the androgynous Australians are born with two sexes inside them, and the word "father" is unknown to them. Hence mothers and children are not subordinated to fathers, and "the great empire that man has usurped over woman, has been rather the effect of an odious tyranny and not a legitimate authority."[48] Once tyranny comes under attack, its definition could be broadened fairly easily. Once the high and mighty are seen to be libertines, why not invest whole peoples with the power of sexual license? Travel east or west, even to Africa, the pundits said, there love is made freely, without shame.[49]

The essence of humankind, according to the Australians, is liberty. They are also vague about God: "they believe that this incomprehensible being is all there is and they give him all the veneration imaginable." They never, however, talk about religion. The Australian explicator, *le vieillard philosophe*, then explains that the universe is composed of atoms in motion, nothing more. In the journey to an imagined new world, the passage from deism to materialism has become virtually effortless.

In the 1720s the great *philosophes* like Charles Louis de Secondat Montesquieu, François-Marie Arouet Voltaire, and Denis Diderot took

up the genre of travel literature, and given their literary and imaginative skill, elevated it to great and canonical status. In *Les bijoux indiscrets* (*The Indiscreet Jewels*, 1748), Diderot invented a mythical kingdom in the Congo where despots exploited the land and the people, particularly women. They in turn fight back as the narrators; their jewels (i.e., their private parts) tell the reader about perfidy, pomposity, and lavish waste—all in the service of rulers and their massive egos.[50] In the *Persian Letters* (1720), Montesquieu reversed the genre; his Persians visit Europe and find much that is irrational and comic. Voltaire became an actual traveler, and his *Letters on the English* (1733) turned England into the utopia sought by reformers—only 22 miles across the Channel.

The clandestine presses and authors of the late seventeenth century laid the groundwork upon which the *philosophes* would present their writings, even the pornographic ones. The Pierre Marteaus of the Northern European world softened readers up for the next outrageous idea. Working in tandem, anonymous readers, minor writers, and clandestine publishers constructed the populist roots of the Euro-American Enlightenment.

## Notes

1. Pierre Retat, ed., *Images et témoins de l'âge classique. Traité des trois imposteurs. Manuscrit clandestin du début du XVIIIe siècle (ed. 1777)* (Lyon, France: Universités de la région Rhône-Alpes, n.d.), pp. 5–6.
2. Preface to John Toland, *Christianity Not Mysterious* (London: n.p., 1696), pp. xviii–xxi.
3. *A Discourse of Free-Thinking* (London: 1713), p. 76.
4. Gianluca Mori and Alain Mothu, eds. *Philosophes sans Dieu. Textes athées clandestins du xviiie siècle* (Paris: Champion, 2010), p. 217, from *Essais*, "Tous les hommes ont une pente naturelle qui les porte à la recherche de la vérité."
5. Jean Meslier, *Testament. Memoir of the Thoughts and Sentiments of Jean Meslier* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2009), p. 37 and quoted in Federico Barbierato, *The Inquisitor in the Hat Shop. Inquisition, Forbidden Books and Unbelief in Early Modern Venice* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), p. xvii.
6. Gianluca Mori and Alain Mothu, eds. *Philosophes sans Dieu. Textes athées clandestins du xviiie siècle* (Paris: Champion, 2010), p. 33, in *Le Philosophe* and p. 34,

   > *Malgré les fables que le peuple croit du déluge, du feu du ciel tombé sur cinq villes, malgré les vives peintures des peines et récompenses éternelles, malgré tant de sermons et tant de prônes, le peuple est toujours le même. La nature est plus forte que les chimères: il semble qu'elle soit jalouse de ses droits* . . .

7. *Nouvelles libertés de Penser* (Amsterdam, 1743), pp. 165, 188.
8. I am borrowing the concept, but not the ideology found in Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004). A similar point about the new sociability is made in Peter Clark, "Spaces,

Circuits and Short-circuits in the 'European Enlightenment,' " *De Achttiende Eeuw*, vol. 43, 2011, pp. 50–64.

9. Quoting from the copy at BN, Res. Y2 3625, n.d., n.p., but the first edition is Cologne, 1682, p. 11 and p. 55; the original French reads:

> *jugeant bien que pour me lier avec elle d'un commerce d'amitié qui me procureroit dans la suite du plaisir, je devois m'insinuer plus délicatement dans son esprit . . . Il regarde, il admire, il contemple, il tourne la teste, élargit & resserre les oreilles, porte en haut vers le Je ne-scay-quoy une pate & puis l'autre, donne de petits coups d'une pate & de l'autre; il redouble si doucement, que nôtre Moine se persuade que l'action du feu est l'unique cause de l'ébranlement du je-ne-scay-quoy . . .*

And in addition,

> *L'amour n'est pas moins de tous les sexes, qu'il est du tous les âges. Si les femmes semblent ne pas ressentir si vivement ses eguillons que les hommes, c'est parce qu'elles ont plus de pudeur; car lorsqu'elles ont une fois levé le masque à la honte, elles sont plus hardies qu'eux.*

For illegal printers see Prefecture of the Police, Paris, Aa/7/297–303, printing in the hundreds of copies, books on freemasonry, and verses against the lieutenant of police in Rouen and the Jesuits. And Aa/218/137, f. 836, dated 1754.

10. Royal Library, The Hague, MS 132.D.30, ff. 104–7. And see the only American copy of *La vie et l'esprit de Mr. Benoit de Spinosa* (Amsterdam: Charles le Vier), 1719. UCLA Libraries and Collections, Special Collections Call Number: B3997.L96v 1719 (Barcode: G0000523258).
11. Prefecture of the Police, Paris, Aa/218/, f. 766 for an officer, Louis Mathieu Bertin de Fratteaux, 1752, and f. 788 for a soldier.
12. Pierre Sylvain Régis, *Système de Philosophie contenant la logique, la métaphysique . . .* (Paris, 1690), vol. iii, pp. 455–6; 467.
13. The argument here is deeply indebted to my reading of Joan Dejean, *Ancients against Moderns. Culture Wars and the Making of a Fin de Siècle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 78–86.
14. Margaret Jacob, "Bernard Picart and the Turn to Modernity," *De Achttiende Eeuw*, vol. 37, 2005, pp. 1–16. See Roger de Piles, *The Principles of Painting . . .*, London, 1743, pp. 270–1, and 275 for the quotation; and on Aristotle, pp. 271–3; p. 278 on reasoning. For the engravings on ignorance and religion, see Lynn Hunt, Margaret C. Jacob, and Wijnand Mijnhardt, *The Book That Changed Europe. Picart & Bernard's Religious Ceremonies of the World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 59–60.
15. *Dialogue sur le coloris* (Paris: Langlois, 1699), pp. 5–6. Here I am using the 1699 edition of this work of 1673. See also Roger de Piles, *The Principles of Painting . . .*, (London, 1743), pp. 270–1. And on Aristotle, pp. 271–3; p. 278 on reasoning. See also Svetlana Alpers, "Roger de Piles and the History of Art," in Peter Ganz, Martin Gosebruch, et al., eds., *Kunst und Kunsttheorie 1400–1900* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Otto Harrassowitz, 1991), pp. 178–9.

16. E. Kegel-Brinkgreve and A. M. Luyendijk-Elshout, eds. *Boerhaave's Orations* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Leiden University Press, 1983), p. 177; François de Neufchâteau, *Circulaire aux Administrations centrales de Départements et Commissaires du Directoire exécutif près de ces Administrations*, 9 Fructidor, Year VI, found in Archives Nationales, Paris, AN, F12 985:

    *Ces arts, que l'idiome de l'ancien régime avait cru avilir en les nommant arts mécaniques, ces arts abandonnés longtemps à l'instinct et à la routine, sont pourtant susceptibles d'une étude profonde et d'un progrès illimité. Bacon regardait leur histoire comme une branche principale de la philosophie. Diderot souhaitait qu'ils eussent leur académie; mais que le despotisme était loin d'exaucer son vœu!*

17. See Benjamin Coole, *Some Observations . . . Relating to Women's Exercising Their Spiritual Gifts* (London: Philip Gwillwim, 1716); Josiah Martin, *A Letter to the Author . . .* (London: B. Coole, 1716); B. Coole, *Reflection on the Letter . . .*, (London: P. Gwillwim, 1717); J. Martin, *A Vindication of Women's Preaching . . .* (London: J. Sowle, 1717); see also Alan Sell, *John Locke and the Divines* (Cardiff, UK: University of Wales Press, 1997).
18. See Karen Offen, "Was Mary Wollstonecraft a Feminist? A Contextual Re-Reading of *A Vindication of the Rights of Women, 1792–1992*," in Uma Parameswaran ed., *Quilting a New Canon. Stitching Women's Words* (Toronto: Sister Vision, 1996), pp. 3–24.
19. Rex A. Barrell, ed. *Anthony Ashley Cooper Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713) and "le refuge français"—Correspondence*, Studies in British History, vol. 15 (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1989), pp. 91–2, letter of March 1705–06 to Jean Le Clerc.
20. (Anon.), *Essai sur l'usage de la Raillerie et de l'enjoument dans les Conversations* (The Hague: Henri Scheurleer, 1710), translator's preface.
21. Lambert van Velthuysen, "A Letter on the Principles of Justness and Decency, Containing a Defence of the Treatise De cive of the Learned Mr Hobbes"; edited and translated by Malcolm de Mowbray; with an introduction by Catherine Secretan. (Leiden: Brill, 2013).
22. Allison Blakely, *Blacks in the Dutch World. The Evolution of Racial Imagery in a Modern Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 225–7. For the reception of proselytes, see Prefecture of the Police, Paris, Aa/4/205, arrest of Simon Langlois, 1706.
23. Robert Collis, "Jolly Jades, Lewd Ladies and Moral Muses: Women and Clubs in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Journal for Research into Freemasonry and Fraternalism*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2011, pp. 202–35.
24. Th. Pisvin, *La Vie intellectuelle à Namur sous le Régime autrichien*, (Louvain, Belgium: University of Louvain, 1963), pp. 202–3.
25. Dossier on "Vie de Louis Robert Hipolithe de Brehan comte de Plelo" where "*de tribus impostoribus*" is mentioned as a source for the ideas of the priest; see Archives Nationales, Paris, MS L10, dossier IV, no. 2–3, ff. 19–21. See S. Berti, "Unmasking the Truth: The Theme of Imposture in Early Modern European Culture, 1660–1730," in James E. Force and David Katz, eds., *Everything*

*Connects. In Conference with Richard H. Popkin* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 1999), pp. 21–36.

26. Staatsarchiv Dresden, Geheimes Konsilium, loc. 7209, cited by Martin Mulsow, "Freethinking in Early Eighteenth-Century Protestant Germany: Peter Friedrich Arpe and the *Traité des trois imposteurs,*" in S. Berti et al., *Heterodoxy, Spinozism and Free Thought in Early-Eighteenth-Century Europe* (The Hague: Kluwer, 1996), p. 220.
27. See the precipitous dip in communion attendance in Edinburgh in the 1690s from which no recovery occurs; R. A. Houston, *Social Change in the Age of Enlightenment: Edinburgh, 1660–1760 (*Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 184.
28. Gareth Jones, *History of the Law of Charity 1532–1827* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 122. For the Watt brothers, see Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, "The Affective Revolution in 1790s Britain," *Eighteenth Century Studies,* vol. 34, 2001, pp. 491–521.
29. Rex A. Barrell, ed. *Anthony Ashley Cooper . . . Correspondence*, p. 97, letter of July 19, 1710, to Le Clerc.
30. In the Wolfenbüttel library, it is possible to survey a quite large collection of books from just about every city in Europe. In the eighteenth century, the library was the second largest in Europe. A similar survey can be conducted at UCLA's Young Library, which has the largest collection of Marteau books in North America. See also, from the former DDR, Karl Klaus Walther, *Die Deutschsprachige Verlagsproduktion von Pierre Marteau/Peter Hammer, Köln* (Leipzig, Germany: VEB Bibliographisches Institut, 1983). It collects a number of German language books that bore the imprint.
31. *Memoires pour l'histoire du cardinal duc de Richelieu ecueillis par le sieur Aubery . . .* (Cologne, Germany: Pierre Marteau, 1667).
32. Wolf. Qu N 1058y (Anon.), *Eve ressuscitée ou la Belle sans chemise* (Cologne, Germany: Louis Le Sincère, 1683); bound with *Le Taureau Bannal de Paris* (Cologne, Germany: Pierre Marteau, 1689).
33. Wolf. Lm 95h (Marianna Alcoforado), *Lettre d'Amour d'une religieuse . . .* (Cologne, Germany: Pierre du Marteau, 1681), supposedly a translation from the Portuguese.
34. Wolf. Tq 1422 (Anon.), *Le Rasibus, ou le procès fait à la Barbe des Capucins. Par un Moine Défroqué* (Cologne, Germany: Pasquin ressuscité, 1680), pp. 8, 27–8.
35. (Anon.), *Drey Curiöse Tractatlein* (Cologne, Germany: Jean Marteau, 1695), p. 10. "*Glauben wir an eine Person/die da mehr als Gott ist/an die Jungfrau Mariam.*"
36. Wolf. Qu N 1080a, *Nouvelles de l'Amérique ou Le Mercure ameriquain* (Cologne, Germany: Jean L'Ingenu, 1678), bound with *Le Berger gentil-homme par Chavigni* (Cologne, Germany: Pierre Gaillard, 1685) and *Mademoiselle de Benonville. Nouvelle Galante* (Liège, Belgium: Louis Montfort, 1686), on the French court.
37. (Anon.), *La Reforme dans la république des lettres. Ou Discours sur les prétentions ridicules des demis-Scavans . . .* (Cologne, Germany: ***, 1695), pp. 28–9 on exclusion; p. 41: "*Il est vray que ce m'est présentement quelque chose de bien glorieux, de pouvoir corriger les abus qui se sont introduits parmi nous . . .*"

38. (Anon.), *Amours des Dames illustres de Notre Siècle* (Cologne, Germany: 1681 [but on the title page appears as "Jean Le Blanc Cologne 1680"]), pp. 171–3.
39. (Claude Dûpré, name written in by hand in the margin), *Le Jesuite secularisé* (Cologne, Germany: Jacques Vilebard), 1683, pp. 187–90; pp. 223–4 on the Jesuits. Cf. Silvia Berti, "At the roots of unbelief," *Journal of the History of Ideas,* vol. 56, no. 4, 1995, pp. 555–75.
40. See my book *The Newtonians and the English Revolution, 1689–1720* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976); reprinted Gordon and Breach, 1990; cf. John C. Higgins-Biddle, ed. *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999).
41. Wolf. Tq 1399, *Le Cabinet Jesuitique* (Cologne, Germany: Jean le Blanc, 1680), p. 25; written by a pious Huguenot, see p. 225 on the number of the Beast.
42. Wolf. Qu N 895u, *Relation de l'Accroissement de la Papacité et du Gouvernent Absolu en Angleterre* (Hamburg, Germany: Pierre Pladt, 1680), aimed against Charles II; (Jean Le Noir), *Les nouvelles lumiéres politiques pour le Gouvernement de l'Eglise, ou l'Evangile Nouveau du Cardinal Palavicin*, new edition (Cologne, Germany: Pierre Marteau, 1687), p. 263 on the scholastics; Wolf. Qu N 895r bound together, *Rome anti-Chretienne*, 1687, and *Le Parallèle de la persécution d'Antiochus l'Illustre contre les juifs, avec celle qu'on exerce à présent en France contre les Protestants*, 1687.
43. For an extremely early usage of "the public" in French, see Wolf. Tq 54, *L'autheur du Moine secularisé se rétractant, et faisant Amande-honoraire* (Cologne, Germany: Pierre Martheau [*sic*], 1686), p. 6 et seq.
44. The very earliest of the Pierre Marteau books do just that: *Les Devoirs des Grands* (Cologne, Germany: Pierre Marteau, 1666); *Recueil de plusieurs pièces servans a l'histoire moderne* (Cologne, Germany: Pierre du Marteau, 1663).
45. For a heterosexual, bawdy anticlerical yarn, see *Le Convent Aboly des frères pacifiques. Nouvelle Galante et véritable* (Cologne, Germany: Pierre le Blanc, 1685).
46. (Anon.), *La chronique scandaleuse, ou Paris ridicule (Claude le Petit)* (Cologne, Germany: Pierre de la Place, 1668), in verse.
47. Charles Hamilton, trans., *The Hedàya, or Guide; a Commentary on the Mussulman Laws*, vol. 1 (London, T. Bensley,1791), introduction pp. i–ii.
48. Wolf. Qu N 1013.2; Jacques Sadeur, *Nouveau Voyage de la terre australe* (Paris: Claude Barbin, 1693 [almost certainly a false imprint]), pp. 70–2; next to the Australian voice in the text, someone wrote in "Gabriel de Foigny." This text is bound with tracts published by "Pierre Marteau," *Voyage d'Espagne*, 1667, and *Relation de l'Estat et Gouvernement d'Espagne*, 1667; also in same volume, Madame d'Aunoy, *Memoires de la Cour d'Espagne* (The Hague: Moetjens, 1695).
49. *L'Infidélité convaincu, ou les avantures* [sic] *amoureuses* (Cologne, Germany: Pierre Marteau, 1676); bound with *Hattige ou les Amours du Roy de Tamaran nouvelle* (Cologne, Germany: Simon l'Africain, 1676) (attributed to Gabriel Brémond).
50. A good translation of the text can be found in Sophie Hawkes, trans., and Aram Vartanian, intro., *Denis Diderot. The Indiscreet Jewels* (New York: Marilia, 1993).

8

# "This Fleshlike Isle": The Voluptuous Body of the People in Dutch Pamphlets, Novels, and Plays, 1660–1730

*Inger Leemans*

It is the year 1680. A Rotterdam bailiff goes on a guided tour of the Amsterdam brothel district. To this end, he has acquired the best guide one could wish for: the devil himself. The devil takes our man from one public stew to another, and they meet the most beautiful and the ugliest whores, with dominant and cunning madams, aggressive pimps, fiddle-wielding musicians, and of course the clientele, ranging from the finest gentlemen, via sailors and peasants to the lowest of rakes. In the middle of the night, in a playhouse in an alley, they meet an impressive prostitute. She is dressed "like a servant" and has little locks "curled like those of the Negroes." Moreover, she is so enormously fat that the bailiff cannot imagine her father had any intention of making a girl "when he started laying the foundations for this fleshlike isle." "Her arms and her hands were . . . so thick and fat that one's taste had to be perverted to fall in love with them." And yet, immediately, a gentleman, carrying a jug of Rhine wine to get her in the proper mood and win her affection, jumps upon the lady. The bailiff is fascinated. "What charms does this creature possess, I asked my guide, that can infatuate this gentleman with her?" His guide resolutely answers: "In her whole body, as huge and as fat as it is, there is nothing at all that might entice an honest man." Obviously, all men do not share the devil's opinion, otherwise she would not be in her profession.[1]

This is just one of the many encounters with the daily life of Amsterdam people the seventeenth-century reader could experience, in this case through the purchase of the prose work *The Amsterdam Whoredom* (1680). The text uses a fictional premise (a bailiff guided by the devil) to describe a real world: the Amsterdam underworld in general and that of the sex workers in particular. Up to now, the work has mostly been typified as "a guide to the red-light district" for citizens and tourists in search for pleasure.[2] But the encounter with the gigantic island body of the prostitute also shows that this is a work of exploration, an expedition into a relatively unknown world: that of city folk. In the second half of the seventeenth century, the daily life of (urban) people holds a huge attraction for the Dutch writers and readers. The body plays an important role in this. Authors describe the bodily aspects of "the common man" to attract the interest of their readers in this segment of population. The immense body of the prostitute from *The Amsterdam Whoredom* can serve as an example. It represents the fascination of the whoremongers and the readers in the body of the people (Illustration 8.1).

## The Body of the People

To sketch the background of this fascination for the body of the people, we need to take several social, political, and philosophical developments into account. In the seventeenth century, Dutch cities in general and Amsterdam in particular experienced a population explosion. From the end of the sixteenth century to about 1670, the city grew from a modest town of 30,000 to a metropolis of 200,000 people. The city more than quintupled its population. The immigrants came from Dutch provinces, but also from Antwerp and the Southern Netherlands, from the German lands and farther away: a vast and undifferentiated crowd of people, of very divergent fortunes, speaking many dialects and languages. The city soon occupied large tracts of land outside its original city walls, where new neighborhoods were constructed and inhabited. The Amsterdam districts were not reserved to a specific class. Classes were mixed and were thus constantly faced with each other, confronted with their general multitude, with their physical needs and emanations.[3] So, in a few decades, Amsterdam developed into an enormous fleshlike isle, pulsating to its own undeniable metabolism.

"The people" does not only exist as an entity, an idea, or a collection of individuals; the people also function as a physical phenomenon. Both individuals from lower social classes and "the people" as an entity have a body. This body becomes an important subject of debate in the second half of the seventeenth century. In political pamphlets, in philosophical texts, but also


**Illustration 8.1** Frontispiece of *Le Putanisme d'Amsterdam* (1681), the French translation of *'t Amsterdamsch Hoerdom* (1681). VU University Library, Amsterdam, XH.05795

in plays and novels, the body of the people is a particular point of interest, and a contested concept. On the one hand, Enlightenment thinkers and literary authors present egalitarian and radical political and philosophical theories through the metaphor of the "common body"; on the other hand, the texts of this period display anxiety about the threatening potential of this body. Literary authors play with this tension between interest in and apprehensiveness for the physicality of the people.[4]

The early, radical Enlightenment provided various backgrounds for proposing both the people and the body as important forces to be reckoned with. On the one hand, enlightened philosophers stressed the need to educate the people, to include the people in public discussions. Political theorists tried to broaden the concept of political participation, while other writers promoted new egalitarian ideas that leveled the old distinctions between the social classes. On the other hand, the body and its passions became important forces of knowledge and truth.[5] I will briefly address these developments, to show subsequently how these two lines of development (the empowerment both of the people and of the body) converged in literary texts and debates about the people.[6]

## Empowering the People in Political Theory

As stated in the introduction to this book, in seventeenth-century political conflicts both in the Netherlands and in England, the common people come to the fore. "*Het gemeen*" is acknowledged to be a social and political force to be reckoned with. The people can no longer simply be dismissed. Their potential turns political.[7]

Up until the middle of the seventeenth century, Dutch literary, philosophical, and political texts emphasize the danger of the people as a political power. Their capacities, however, seem to be limited to brute force. The authors are not wont to show much confidence in the intellectual and moral capacities of the "*vulgus*" or "*het gemeen*." Dutch pamphlet authors display anxiety about "*het grauw*" as on the one hand an uncontrollable force and on the other hand a group of people easily manipulated to act as an instrument for political pressure. "The people accept each thing to the extent that it is advocated. If virtue is maligned by crafty tongues, everyone will declare himself unvirtuous. If with piercing voice and learned brain, injustice is raised onto the throne of justice, the mob will worship it as a Heavenly Goddess."[8] The rebelliousness of the people is connected to their relationship with the body. Ordinary people have not learned to control their passions and therefore have a stronger urge to rebelliousness, because "the common folk used to loosen the bridle of their urges and impetuous

passions, on the slightest occasion or appearance of reason."[9] Among all these passions, "lust" is seen as the most important force: the poorest "feed their anger through evil and mischief, either from lust or from deceit and they wish to sit neither in the Government nor on the City Council."[10] Because of their lustful tendencies, the people should be excluded from any form of political participation. In view of "each one's special urges, laws are necessary to guarantee the coherence of society."[11]

But during the second half of the seventeenth century, other voices also make themselves heard. Pamphlets raise the cautious suggestion that truth might issue from the mouth of the common people.[12] Representatives to the government of the country should also be chosen from among the people, because the "right of Nature applies to everyone."[13] Pamphlet writers invoke popular sovereignty to demand a voice in the government of a Republic, they say, plagued by nepotism and corruption. The most outspoken advocate of this principle is Franciscus van den Enden, discussed by Frans Blom and Henk Looijensteijn in Chapter 9. In his *Free Political Proposals* (1665) and *Short Summary of New Dutch Opportunity* (1665), Van den Enden envisions a new democratic world order,[14] propagating a radical new idea of equality.[15] In order to guarantee that everyone can participate equally in society, the state also needs to take care of the body of the people. Slavery is a fundamental wrong according to Van den Enden. The body should not be fettered. It is important that "the general well-being of each honest soul should be considered. It is in the interest of each body that it can, free from physical constraint or injury, be covered and fed in good health and satisfaction of all reasonable lust and affection, with the utmost mutual security."[16] Only a healthy and prosperous body can function to the full of its ability in a democracy.

A comparable opposition between liberty and slavery can be found in the 1737 *Treatise on Liberty in Civil Society* by the Dutch republican regent Lieven de Beaufort. De Beaufort stresses the importance of the protection of the life, liberty, and property for all citizens and their right to participate in government. Where "full liberty" reigns, "there Civil Society, the body of the People, participates in Government; indeed the Government, and the Sovereignty of the Land, consists of the body of the People, or those who represent it." The Dutch Republic is seen as an ideal place for this kind of "full liberty," since "the Sovereignty of the State consists of the body of the People, and that the Citizenry has no reason to complain that it is being excluded from the Government or that its voice is not heard in affairs of State."[17] Thus, the Dutch system of "politics from below," as described by Maarten Prak in Chapter 6, was taken up as an ideal by advocates for liberty and sovereignty of the people (Illustration 8.2).


**Illustration 8.2** Jan Luyken, rebellion in 1672 in the Dutch city of Dordrecht, where an angry crowd destroys an image of politician Cornelis de Witt (1698). Etching. Rijksmuseum, RP-P-1896-A-19368-1549

### Researching the Body of the People in Political Plays

In literary texts, the same developments can be traced. The people outgrow their state as brute, uncontrollable "*vulgus*" to a differentiated group of politically active individuals with specific interests and capacities. One set of texts that seems to be of particular interest to the political aspects of this development is a series of four Dutch theater plays, written between 1679 and 1707 by different authors, about the allegorical protagonist "Eigenbaat," or "Self Interest."[18] In most of the plays, Eigenbaat is a reference to Stadtholder William III or, in other plays, to James II. Here, the isle returns, as a metaphor for the Dutch Republic: the allegories are all set on the isle "Vrijekeur" (The Island of Free Choice). In these plays, the Isle of Free Choice is represented as a body. This body is ill; it has been infected by the pest or cancer of Self Interest's tyranny.

The people are visualized through the allegory of the senses. The five Senses are described as the subjects of the state. In Enoch Krook's play, the Senses speak as a chorus. This in itself is already indicative, since choruses were outdated by 1700. The fact that all the Senses speak with one voice

turns the people into an indivisible cluster of bodies. The Senses are, as the chorus indicates, best served by "Commonwealth" and "Politics." Apart from the Senses, there is also, " 't Volk," the People, in the form of Self Interest's army, which in the end will start a mutiny against the tyrant.[19] This mutiny of the people is described in visceral detail:

> Throw, hit and wound, even kill all who opposes you.
> Come follow me, we'll open up the arsenal
> and chase the favorite, the lowliest man of all
> out from the fortress.[20]
> They cry out to cut off all limbs of the king's favorite counselor, Vice.

The image one gets of the people, in Enoch Krook's play, is that of a massive, easily manipulated and agitated mass. At first, Self Interest can easily seduce them into his service with lies and small talk. It is only when he stops paying their salary that they start their mutiny. It does not take Truth a lot of convincing to show the people Hypocrisy in her true nature. The moment the people realize they have been swindled, they immediately take action and slaughter Hypocrisy. They are so incensed that "they cruelly mistreat her body and pull her tongue from her throat, so that the blood spat in the face."[21] Consideration or self-restraint do not seem to the most outstanding preoccupations of the people. When they are angry, they do not rest until they have their bloody revenge. The people act and react, and both in inertia and in motion, they are predictable as innate bodies. The body of the people is the matter that both political parties use to shift the political balance to their advantage, while there is always the risk that the body will turn and push them from their thrones.

In the "Eigenbaat" play by Ysbrand Vincent, the Senses are not just matter in motion, but five different characters reacting in their own particular way. Vincent pays more attention to the operation of the Senses. He tries to analyze what drives them and how they can be directed. Through the characters Research and Discovery, the laws of their action are mapped. Their opponents, in the guise of Vice, also study the acts of the people, or the Senses. Vice tries to persuade the Senses to the side of Self Interest, but they are quarreling among themselves about the way they can best cooperate. Vice studies the people through his binoculars:

> If I would use th' assistence of these viewers, and so see
> That which would otherwise remain hidden to me.[22]

In this way, he sees the Senses guided by Distemper and Industry in their wish to bring Self Interest down. This knowledge gives him an advantage.

He now knows how he can manage the Senses by flattering them: "For money, lust for profit are the sinew of the state." In that way, the Senses become imprisoned.

But the problem is that King Self Interest has been rendered completely senseless through the incarceration of the Senses. The state does not function without the people. To make matters worse, Self Interest also falls head over heels in love and wishes to have his wife, Staatkunde (Politics), assassinated. He himself falls victim to his passions, and yet he reigns over other people's senses.

> O, mighty king, for whom all manner of man must bow,
> who rules the senses of the highest and the low

In the end, Will frees the Senses and employs them to capture the king. "My Senses, take him in!" In this way, she reinstates her people.[23] The Senses will never leave her side again.

So, in these plays, different visions on the people are displayed. One set describes the people as a monolithic and aggressive body. The other plays pay more attention to the way the people, as separate "Senses" interact with the body of state. A state that enslaves its inhabitants is a senseless state.

## Schooling the People

One of the essential features of the early Enlightenment is the fact that radical authors demand the right to enlighten a broad public with their new insights and to open up a public sphere for unschooled participants. In the Netherlands, polemic authors such as Adriaan Koerbagh claim the right to distribute via the vernacular to a broad audience demanding philosophical concepts and ideas unwelcome to traditional authorities. Koerbagh sees himself as a teacher. He chooses the form of a Dutch dictionary to disseminate his ideas.[24] In this dictionary, Koerbagh lashes out fiercely against theologians and scholars who try to monopolize knowledge. It is his aim not only to write in the vernacular (in order for more people to profit by this knowledge without having to wear themselves out first in learning a foreign language), but also to convert difficult terms and borrowed words into intelligible Dutch. For he sees that "most of the people are ignorant" and that they feel betrayed by unintelligible magic words. Possibly, the people are needlessly afraid of such words, but, in Koerbagh's opinion, it is important to eliminate any basis for such fears. Are not the laws of the land also issued in "proper Dutch" to enable the people to form an opinion about them?[25]

Fransiscus van den Enden emphasizes the importance of education to provide every citizen with the freedom to speak his or her mind: "The most noxious, even pestilential aspect of a state occurs when it offers no reasonable freedom to teach in concise terms all that everyone needs to know for the commonwealth or deems to be advantageous."[26] Van den Enden himself is a teacher, who for instance uses stage plays to school his pupils in the Latin language. Educating and emancipating the people kept in the dark by the traditional authorities can best be done through an appeal to the imagination of the public, by feeding the pupil information in the guise of exciting and entertaining stories.[27]

## Ordinary People in Fiction

During the second half of the seventeenth century, especially Dutch prose writers develop a remarkable interest in the common people. They adopt the street, the inns, and the brothels of Amsterdam, Leiden, and Rotterdam as settings for their stories. As their protagonists, they choose seamy characters (rogues, whores, thieves, scroungers, university dropouts), who through their way of life and profession have acquired insight in the hidden lives of many different groups of society.[28] In this, the authors try to avoid old stereotypes and truly shed new light on the customs, habits, thoughts, and language of the common people.

*The Amsterdam Whoredom* may serve as an example here. The author gives an extensive survey of the Amsterdam underworld. He is interested in the daily procedures found in the world of whores, in the way they have spread across the city, in the subtle social divisions between prostitutes and madams. He registers religious habits and recounts with evident glee the superstitious rituals they employ to improve their chance of good customers. He acquaints the reader with the specific lingo of this world, the kind of jokes made, and the violent exchanges occurring. In short, as the subtitle already suggests, this participating anthropologist investigates "their way of reading and in general anything that is customary among these ladies." On the one hand, via the devil, the author vents the opinion that these "worms" have only themselves to blame for their misery; on the other, the protagonist also has real empathy with the grim ordeal of these creatures of the underworld. He calls them poor doves and pities the Jewish musicians who have to play all night without a break.[29] He shakes his head over corrupt bailiffs who turn a blind eye in exchange for a drink and a girl.[30] "In truth, I said, women that live with such madams are to be pitied."[31]

A new literary form used among Dutch novelists is the pseudo-autobiography, in which whores or rogues tell their life stories. The

pseudo-autobiographies turn the world upside down, by giving voice to the people and turning them into heroes and heroines. These "authors" know from experience how things really work and inform the reader about their daily life. Literary authors explicitly fashion themselves as "ordinary people." They present themselves as members of the people to distinguish between their kind of writing and that of the traditional learned poets. At the same time, they wish to exploit their populist appeal to enlarge their readership.

Like Koerbagh, Dutch novelists try to write readable and intelligible Dutch. They try to have their popular characters speak their own language. This is a rather hazardous undertaking: the authors themselves are clearly from the middle class. How can they capture the language of the people without resorting to the stereotypically boorish language so popular in the farces? It is hardly surprising that they turn this into an issue: in the preface to her life's story, the protagonist of the libertine novel *The Outspoken Mistress* (1680) states provocatively that she does not write the "high-falutin" language of the gentleman writers, but that her language harmonizes with her choice of material. Her story is a "story of common matters" and the language should therefore be as loose and as natural as if you would hear somebody tell it off the cuff (Illustration 8.3).[32]

## The Lustful Body as Social Leveler

In all this interest in the daily life of the lower social classes, the body plays an important role. We see it in *The Amsterdam Whoredom*, but also in other novels and "rogue pieces" about rakes,[33] lackeys,[34] farmers, and maids, such as the *The Seven Devils Governing and Seducing Present-Day Housemaids* and the retort it provoked, *The Seven Angels of Housemaids*.[35] The interest of the reader in the common people is primarily raised by means of exciting and repulsively physical stories. The lower classes are depicted as passionate and lustful, prone to physical action. *Peasants' Garden of Delight*, for instance, by the Rotterdam baker Gerrit van Spaan, is a catalogue of knife fights in the Dutch countryside. His hero Louwtje van Zevenhuizen is quick with the knife, and leaves many an opponent with a "cut on the jaw."[36]

The world sketched by these authors is a world in which people are primarily focused on the fulfillment of their own desires.[37] The protagonists continually show how they are governed by lust. Mostly, this is done implicitly, through the stories they tell. Now and again, the protagonists draw explicit conclusions from their lives. *The Leiden Rogue* for instance states that he was an epicure and put "the highest merit on carnal debaucheries." He has surprisingly little trouble in finding "brothers in sin" and ladies ready to be seduced. With his narrative he suggests that rogues


**Illustration 8.3** Frontispiece of *D'Openhertige juffrouw, of d'ontdekte geveinsdheid* (*The Outspoken Mistress, or Hypocrisy Unvealed*) (1689, second edition). KB Library, The Hague; KB: 32 A 15

and students are not alone in their pursuit of lust. From the stories about rogues who effortlessly seduce women, of women who have men satisfy their desires, an image arises of a world where sex is a paramount endeavor of the people. Naked, everybody is equal. The women with whom the Dutch rogues jump into bed do not necessarily belong to their social class: the Leiden Rogue calls himself the "happiest lover in the world"; even when his bedfellow is a scullery maid, he discovers equal joy in her embraces as in those of "the costliest dame in the world." Sexual urge, especially when unfettered by love or marriage, acts as a leveler: class and appearance are not important for sexual pleasure.[38]

In some of these novels, the all-pervading power of the libido is soberly stated, while in others, it is advocated enthusiastically. One example is *The Mighty Deeds of John Shit* (1680, part two, 1696).[39] In this novel, lawyers freely engage with prostitutes and others from the lower classes to discuss nearly every topic known to man, but specifically to exchange ideas about sex. Sex makes everybody equal, for regarding this topic, every person is a scientist. *John Shit*'s author attempts to paint a new materialist universe composed of animated bodies in motion, mechanisms driven by the laws of pleasure.[40] The genitals are described as separate entities, acting autonomously. John Shit thinks marriage is an insult to the genitals that have professed such tender love to one another that they would be saddened to know they were mistrusted.

The theater is also employed for representing the body of the people. This is for instance done in *Life aboard Ship* (1714) by Cornelis van der Gon.[41] He has the sailors speak in their own language, "in which each one shows his true character." The title plate of this play shows its overall theme: the time of the great naval heroes is clearly past (Van der Gon asks them not to mind having been pushed offstage by the mob).[42] Life aboard ship has been handed over to "John Eastindies," who appears to be governed by Venus and Lust, as the title page shows us. We see the happy Venus smiling, her heart and her bosom afire. Neptune is moping in the corner, gnashing his teeth:

> He sees lust prancing haughtily on his castles
> Of the sea and proudly play the master,
> Where once the virtue of his heroes, made
> To daunt the world and to uphold the state,
> Adorned with fame the salty waves, the corals
> Are now of glamour rid and robbed of laurels.

Neptune mourns in vain: "Since Paphos's Queen caresses, with her soft face/the fiery bosoms of the great and small." When it comes to boozing and fornicating, there are no differences among captains, officers,

lieutenants, and common sailors. Below deck, the social classes fraternize around a steady supply of drink and willing dames.

Plays such as *Life aboard Ship* thus present a lustful depiction of the life and laws of the people. Van der Gon considers his undertaking a novelty. For the first time, the "bad home economics" of "such folk" is shown.[43] The word "economics" is significant here: this concerns not only the way the sailors deal with each other, but the term also indicates the higher level of the social organization. Van der Gon's intention to not just write a farcical play, but to elevate his sketches of life aboard to the level of the national economy, appears from the way he lashes out against possible reprinters of his work. Van der Gon appeals to the law, to reason and nature to defend the uniqueness of his work. Reprinters create confusion "within civilized economy" whereas they should act in accordance to "the law of the people" (Illustration 8.4).[44]

## Nudity and Clothes

One essential theme with regard to the body of the people is the dynamics between nudity and clothes.[45] Since lust is, as we have seen, an important issue in texts about the people, we should not be surprised to see nude bodies regularly featured in these texts. Nudity is associated with naturalness and openness, but also with shame. Several texts proudly state that they are going to "reveal nakedly all mysteries of love." "Telling the naked truth about life" is put forward as one of the distinguishing characteristics of the people. The authors consider shame a hypocritical mechanism. Naked truth and naked bodies go hand in hand. For instance, John Shit (protagonist of *The Mighty Deeds of John Shit*) recounts how, to his evident delight, a recent get-together with friends developed into a nudist party where everyone freely threw off their clothes. This is what "*gentilhommes*" do, according to the author: they do not cover their genitals with fig leaves.[46] Thus, John Shit and his friends outdo Adam and Eve. They overtly break with the long tradition of their "great-great-grandfathers" to cover with fig leaves everything, thus hiding the truth.[47]

On the other hand nudity brings shame. John Shit's nudist celebration ends in embarrassment, when they discover someone has taken their clothes. The loss and retrieval of a set of clothes is an important issue in these novels. For instance, just like the author of *The Amsterdam Whoredom*, the authors of maids' novels show a profound interest in the price of the clothes the lower-class ladies wear. For the benefit of their readers, they calculate how expensive clothing is, and show to what extent social class is dependent upon these items. They discuss how crucial and how hard it

**Illustration 8.4** Frontispiece of C. van der Gon, *Het scheeps leven, bly-spel* (second edition). Amsterdam, S. Lamsveld and J. Karstens, 1731. University Library, Leiden, UB: 1096 G 24

is for a prostitute to acquire civil clothes. If the women cover themselves in rags, they will remain street whores. To get some business, you have to look not like a whore, but like a daughter of the middle class. For instance, *The Amsterdam Whoredom* tells that at some playhouses, you can find a strange mixture of ladies: "some wore middle-class clothes, others were like mermaids, not woman above and fish below, but ladies above, for they held their heads motionless and their breasts were half bared, and below, they were dressed like tramps." Then there was a third kind, consisting of women who would have preferred to have the name of ladies, "since they were dressing in robes and cymars, but these hung awkwardly on their bodies, which made it easy to see they were not used to such clothes." Their rude manners gave them away as "upstart ladies."

The madams bought these clothes for the girls, who had to let themselves be used twice a week to be able to pay them back. In many cases, clothing was a true slave master: its purchase chained the girls' hands and feet to a madam or a pimp. The outspoken mistress—the Amsterdam whore from the novel of the same name from 1680—pities this kind of whore: "Simple creatures, who so pitifully give up their honor and their freedom for a robe or a cymar of floral cotton or something of the kind, and then have to suffer all the filth the game of love has to offer"; "If there is one among them who has a double change of clothes, she can shoot the parrot." The whores are compared to Turkish slaves. They have become merchandise, and the madams determine their price.[48]

The novelists are ambiguous about the extent to which form and content are inextricably connected. For instance, the outspoken mistress remarks "that the clothes of a lady demand different manners from those of a greengrocer's or a fishmonger's daughter": when the whores would have the same ethics as those "whose bodies were born for this kind of clothing," and would be wise enough to discriminate between the different men whom they call darling, they would be better at selling themselves. On the one hand, one is born in a certain kind of body and fitting clothing and a certain kind of ethics and wisdom are connected to that. On the other hand, she herself is living proof that one can free oneself of class-determined restrictions. She knows how to sell herself smartly and in this way advances to the position of an independent lady, who as a proficient ethics expert can determine the shortcomings of society and can show how smart she is in creating the proper appearance necessary for maintaining her position.

It is therefore hardly surprising that the outspoken mistress is outraged when she is attacked in the street by her former maid, who tears her robe. She is saved by the butcher's apprentices, who later drink a toast to the happy end and to her health, but she would rather have had "that they would have toasted to the well-being of my robe, if drinking to somebody's health yields any profit; because, when I observed it closely, I saw that it was in very bad shape." The attention to clothing, disguises, and charades in the Dutch novels should not, in my opinion, be seen as an example of "joyful exchange between self and other" as described by Terry Castle in *Masquerade and Civilization*. The tales often have an undertone of fear. The Dutch novels seem to view the masquerade not as a party, but as a problematic novelty. The novelists experience that identity, traditionally linked to status and position, has been cut adrift and they furiously search for ways to anchor it anew.[49] Thus these texts propagate the empowerment of the people, but the discourse on nudity and clothing displays anxieties about the loss of distinct social identities in city life and an urge to find new ways to fix social positions and identities (Illustration 8.5).


**Illustration 8.5** Marcellus Laroon (I), "The Brothel," c.1675–1700. Print. Boijmans van Beuningen Museum Rotterdam. Inventory no.: BdH 16216 (PK)

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to argue that, during the second half of the seventeenth century, inspired by all the new developments in the fields of philosophy, theology, science, and political theory, and through the visible effects of the urbanization process, Dutch literary authors become fascinated with the people in general and with their bodies in particular. In line with radical ideas on the importance of free communication, unsupervised by ecclesiastical or political institutions, and looking to broaden their readership, literary authors address the common people as their new readership. They reinvent the identity of the author, dismissing the traditional ideal of the *poeta doctus*, and take up their pen in the guise of whores, peasants, or other "common" folk. They develop a new style of writing for their prose texts, mimicking common language, without resorting to stereotypes as the popular farces had done up then. This "plain" style, in their eyes, suits the "plain" themes of their works. Both style and topic are presented as more truthful than the older heroic themes and texts in "high" artistic writing styles. The everyday life of the common people should be discussed freely, without constraint. The topic of the body and of sexual desire is used to underline this new egalitarian ideal: in their lust all men are alike, and in matters of sex every sexually active person is a scholar. In pseudo-autobiographies, "commoners" display their philosophy of society.

But of course, most of these texts were not written by common people (apart from the exception to prove the rule, the writing baker Gerrit van Spaan), nor do whores or peasants form the bulk of their readership. Most of the readers of the prose texts and plays still come from higher social backgrounds. Like the authors, they seem to have developed an anthropological interest in the life of the common people. They have seen their cities grow out of proportion, creating new neighborhoods where new groups of people crowd the streets. They are worried about the fact that the new prosperity offers opportunities for social climbers, blurring distinctions between the different levels of social hierarchy. The people have grown in proportion and importance, not only in (philosophical and political) theory, but also in the flesh. Just as the enormous "fleshlike isle" of the Amsterdam whore in *The Amsterdam Whoredom*, they have become a force to be reckoned with.

Authors cater to the anxiety of their readership to find out what is going on in these "dark" places by focusing on the desires of the people and their physical actions. They try to remap the city by visiting its back alleys and secret doors, while describing all members of the bodies they engaged with in these places. Through the focus on the body of the people, authors

can engage their readership on their topic, by arousing them with bawdy stories and thrilling them with grotesque details. The promiscuity of the lower social classes as put forward in these texts seems to reflect the anxiety about the growing body of the people. The interest in nudity and clothes as markers of social distinctions is also dependent on this issue.

In Amsterdam, the canal ring is called the "*grachtengordel*" (the canal girdle). It seems that by undressing the people, showing them in their naked state, authors try to create a new philosophy of society, while making use of the anxieties of some of their readers and their wish to girdle and safeguard the inner city and their own class. This tension between fascination and horror highlights the tension between the conservative urge to reestablish social distinctions and the radical egalitarian ideas that are both visible in these texts. The charms of the people can work in mysterious ways.

## Notes

1. *'t Amsterdamsch hoerdom. Behelzende de listen en streeken, daar zich de hoeren en hoere-waardinnen van dienen; benevens der zelver manier van leeven, dwaaze bygeloovigheden, en in 't algemeen alles 't geen by dese juffers in gebruik is* (Amsterdam: Elias Iogchemse van Rijn, second edition, 1684).
2. See for information on Dutch early modern prostitution and *The Amsterdam Whoredom*: Van de Pol, L. C., *The Burgher and the Whore. Prostitution in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
3. Karel Davids and Jan Lucassen (eds.), *A Miracle Mirrored: The Dutch Republic in European Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). E. Kuijpers, *Migrantenstad. Immigratie en sociale verhoudingen in 17e-eeuws Amsterdam* (Hilversum, the Netherlands: Verloren, 2005). Maarten Prak, *Gouden Eeuw: Het raadsel van de Republiek* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2012).
4. This argument takes off from the work of Mowry, who describes how texts on prostitutes and prostitution in Stuart England were used by monarchist authors to control the "republican" body of the lower social classes. Melissa M. Mowry, *The Bawdy Politic in Stuart England, 1660–1714. Political Pornography and Prostitution* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004); see also Sarah Toulalan, *Imagining Sex: Pornography and Bodies in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007).
5. J. I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment. Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001). M. C. Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment. Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans* (London, 1981, Second edition, revised: Cornerstone Books, 2005). L. van Bunge, *From Stevin to Spinoza. An Essay on Philosophy in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic* (Leiden, the Netherlands, Boston, and Cologne, Germany: Brill, 2001).
6. For a compelling analysis of the treatment of political theory and the body in Dutch plays, see Frans-Willem Korsten, *Sovereignty as Inviolability: Vondel's*

*Theatrical Explorations in the Dutch Republic* (Hilversum, the Netherlands: Verloren, 2009).

7. Wayne Te Brake, *Shaping History. Ordinary People in European Politics, 1500–1700* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998).
8. *Het tweede deel van 't Hollandts praatjen, tusschen vijf persoonen een Brabander, Hollander, Zeeuw, Geldersman, en een Vries*. Antwerp, Belgium: J. Verdussen, 1650 (Knuttel 6829), p. 11. A general introduction to the politics of pamphlet culture is provided in Femke Deen, David Onnekink, and Michel Reinders (eds.), *Pamphlets and Politics in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2011). Early modern Dutch and German pamphlets can be found through TEMPO: http://tempo.idcpublishers.info/search.php.
9. *Missive van een oprecht patriot aen een lidt van de regeeringe, over de geschillen wegens de gepretendeerde sessie van W. Bentingh, grave van Portlandt*. S.l.: s.n., [1690] (Knuttel 13467), p. 2.
10. *Vervolgh op het Bootmans Praetje van het schip Hollandia, van de Princen en Predicanten* (Knuttel 10309), p. 4.
11. *Burgerlyke Redenvoering. In maniere van 't Samenspraak, gehouden tusschen drie Nederlandze Heeren, reizende van Helikon* (Knuttel 15023), p. 2.
12. *Vervolgh op het Bootmans Praetje*, p. 1. The political theory of these pamphlets is discussed in H. de Jong, "De traditie en het verlichte denken. Politieke theorie, de burger en het publieke debat in de Republiek (1650–1704)" (Utrecht, the Netherlands: unpublished dissertation, University of Utrecht, 2012). De Jong states that these pamphlets were partly written by citizens with an interest in politics and enlightened political theory. However, on the question of political participation of the people, the authors tend to remain conservative.
13. *Burgerlyke Redenvoering*, p. 2.
14. Franciscus van den Enden, *Vrije politijke stellingen*, intro. and ed. Wim Klever (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 1992). This text is translated as *Free Political Propositions and Considerations of State (1665). Text in Translation, the Relevant Biographical Documents and a Selection from Kort Verhael*, ed. Wim Klever (Capelle a/d IJssel, the Netherlands: Klever, 2007).
15. And this is what we wish to make clear through our important Principle of Equality, to wit, that, in order to establish a prosperous civil Christian Society, Republic or Commonwealth, such an Equality (between the more and less intelligent, the more and less wealthy, between men and women, governors and governed, etc) should be reached from reasoning and experience, that best ensures that the position of each member is not only not weakened, but is on the contrary strengthened and increasingly helped and advanced; because when each is considered and marked in his particular situation, all will experience improvement in the state of their needs. (Franciscus van den Enden, "Kort Verhael van Nieuw Nederlants Gelegentheit," in: *Vrije politijke stellingen*, p. 56)
16. Van den Enden, *Vrije politijke stellingen*, pp. 6, 149.
17. (L. E de Beaufort), *Verhandeling van de Vryheit in den Burgerstaet* (Leiden and Middelburg, the Netherlands: Samuel Luchtmans and Leendert Bakker, 1737), 51–52. 9. Ibid., 129–130, quoted in Wyger R. E. Velema, "Ancient and

Modern Virtue Compared: De Beaufort and Van Effen on Republican Citizenship," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30 (1997), no. 4 "Models of Virtue and Vice," pp. 437–443.

18. 1. Nil Volentibus Arduum, *Tieranny van Eigenbaat in het eiland van Vrijekeur, zinnespel* (1679, reprints in 1680, 1705, 1706, 1728, 1738). 2. Nil Volentibus Arduum, *Ondergang van Eigenbaat in het eiland van Vryekeur; zinnespél*. In: *Alle de dichtkundige werken van het kunstgenootschap*, ed. Ysbrand Vincent (1707, reprint 1708). 3. Enoch Krook, *De ondergang van Eigenbaat, zinnespel. Zynde een gevolg van de Tieranny van Eigenbaat*. In: *Tooneelpoëzy van het kunstgenootschap Door yver bloeid de konst* (1707). 4. J. Pook, *De dood van Eigenbaat: of De herstelde Wil, in het eiland van vrye keur; zinnespel* (1707). Later in the eighteenth century, the character of "Eigenbaat" is used over and over again, for instance in republican texts against Stadtholder William V.
19. This mutiny is described as a theatrical play, as a drama. One of the messengers for instance tells the king: "The message I deliver to you might well be/My noble Lord, the prelude to a tragedy."
20. Enoch Krook, *De ondergang van Eigenbaat, zinnespel*, p. 27.
21. Ibid., p. 33.
22. Nil Volentibus Arduum, *Ondergang van Eigenbaat in het eiland van Vryekeur*, p. 22.
23. Nil Volentibus Arduum, *Ondergang van Eigenbaat in het eiland van Vryekeur*, pp. 51–52, 83.
24. Sanders, E., *Woorden van de duivel. Een bloemlezing uit het enige verboden Nederlandse woordenboek* (Amsterdam: De bijenkorf, 1993). Sanders, "Een lexicograaf van de duivel," *Onze Taal* 61 (1991), 112–114. See also Adriaan Koerbagh, *A Light Shining in Dark Places, to Illuminate the Main Questions of Theology and Religion*, ed. and trans. Michiel Wielema; intro. Wiep van Bunge (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2011); Bart Leeuwenburgh, *Het noodlot van een ketter: Adriaan Koerbagh 1633–1669* (Nijmegen, the Netherlands: Vantilt, 2013).
25. Adriaan Koerbagh, *Een Bloemhof van allerley lieflykheyd sonder verdriet geplant door Vreederijk Waarmond, ondersoeker der waarheyd. Tot nut en dienst van al die geen die der nut en dienst uyt trekken wil* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Goedaert Onderwijs [Good natured Education], 1668). See also the recently translated philosophical tractate by Koerbagh, *A Light Shining in Dark Places*.
26. Van den Enden, *Vrije politijke stellingen*, p. 60.
27. Van den Enden, *Vrije politijke stellingen*, 70. See for Van den Enden the website by Frank Mertens, Ghent University, http://users.pandora.be/fvde/. Accessed July 1, 2013.
28. Inger Leemans, *Het woord is aan de onderkant. Radicale ideeën in Nederlandse pornografische romans 1670–1700* (Nijmegen, the Netherlands: Vantilt, 2002). Leemans, "Arousing Discontent: Dutch Pornographic Plays, 1670–1800," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 12 (2012), no. 2, 117–132.
29. "*Ondertusschen heeft niemand 't kwader dan deze mighel kitten als den Fioolist; want van vier uuren af, wanneer zy des winters daar wezen moeten, tot*

*des avonds, ten minsten tot elf uuren toe, staan hem de hande niet stil.*" *'t Amsterdamsch Hoerdom*, p. 178.

30. e.g. *'t Amsterdamsch Hoerdom*, p. 191: "*want zy voeren een volkomen heerschappy over deze Schepsels.*"
31. *'t Amsterdamsch Hoerdom*, p. 114.
32. To get to the point without further ado, I will say that I ask people who think the style of the following work not sufficiently highfalutin', to consider that it cannot be otherwise in a story of common matters, that the style should be also as loose and as natural as if you would hear someone tell it off the cuff, and that it would be a considerable mistake if it were as serious and as distinguished as that of a History writer. On the other hand, I do hope they have the decency to overlook a mistake here and there from a woman who has never bothered with writing and therefore does not know how to behave. (*D'Openhertige Juffrouw, of D'Ontdekte Geveinsdheid* (1680), eds. J. Kloek, I. Leemans, and W. Mijnhardt (Leiden, the Netherlands: Astraea, 1998)).

    For a translation in modern Dutch, see *De openhartige juffrouw: erotische verhalen uit de Verlichting*, trans. Han van der Vegt, preface Atte Jongstra (Amsterdam: Athenaeum-Polak & Van Gennep, 2009). The English translation of this Dutch novel is described in Roger Thompson, "The London Jilt," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 23 (1975): 289–294.
33. For example, *De vryagie van Jan de Plug en Caat de Brakkin, het welke een liefde is als kattenliefde die malkander krabben en byten. Beyde woonachtig tot Amsterdam. Gedrukt voor boeren en menschen, voor hoeren en jongens met dunne pensen, voor snyders, wevers, en schoenlappers, voor lediggangers en opsnappers* (*The Courtship of Jan de Plug and Caat de Brakkin*), s.l., s.p., s.d.
34. *De kluchtige dienstbaarheid, of de bereisde lakei* (*The Farcical Servitude, or the Travelled Lackey*) (Delft, the Netherlands: Adriaan Kornelisz, 1681).
35. *Zeven duivelen, regerende en vervoerende de hedendaagsche dienst-maagden . . . Door een liefhebber der dienstmaagden* (Amsterdam: Timotheus ten Hoorn, 1682). *De seve engelen der dienst-maagden, zijnde een rare en beknopte wederlegginge, tegen een nu-onlangs uitgegeve boekje, genaamd de 7. duivelen der dienstmaagden* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Weduwe Van Damme, 1697).
36. Gerrit van Spaan, *Lusthof der boeren, of: schermschool der huislieden: bestaande in minneryen, vegt- en snywerk* (Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Pieter de Vries, 1704).
37. On pornography and politics, see L. Hunt (ed.), *The Invention of Pornography. Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500–1800* (New York: Zone Books, 1993), and specifically on Dutch libertine texts, W. W. Mijnhardt, "Politics and Pornography in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Dutch Republic," in: *The Invention of Pornography*, ed. L. Hunt, 283–300.
38. (Anon.), *De Leidsche straat-schender, of de Roekelooze student*, ed. and intro. Rietje van Vliet (Zoeterwoude, the Netherlands: Astraea, 2010).
39. (Anon.), *De doorluchtige Daden van Jan Stront, opgedragen aan het kackhuys*, s.l., s.n., 1696.

40. M. C. Jacob, "The Materialist World of Pornography," in: *Invention of Pornography*, 157–202.
41. Cornelis van der Gon, *Het Scheepsleven* (Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Pieter van der Veer, 1714). See the recent biography on Van der Gon: Anna de Haas, *Wie de wereld bestiert, weet ik niet. Het rusteloze leven van Cornelis van der Gon, dichter en zeekapitein 1660–1731* (Amsterdam: Balans, 2008).
42. "Famed heroes, who are sitting, lying, sleeping, eating and drinking here and there in the Dutch world (because you have to keep yourself occupied) I have something to tell you: that it that you should not take the action in this work to heart." Van der Gon, *Het Scheepsleven*, preface.
43. "Now, good people, I must tell you why I have had this Life aboard Ship printed. Firstly, to show you what mischief is going on there: I want to show you the bad home economics practiced among those folk."
44. "your evil work, by which you bring confusion in the civic household, . . . because, in all natural fairness, in the rights of peoples, under all Imperial law, you cannot find a verse, proverb, chapter, note or title that tell you in the least part that you can do this; while reason fights against it, and nature dismisses it".
45. See Korsten on the politics of nudity and clothes in Dutch theater: Korsten, *Sovereignty as Inviolability*, pp. 22–44.
46. Hardly had I performed this necessary job, when these folk came bursting into the room again, and Tullia—who was willing to fuck a tune with me—said: "Now, now, my children, what is this? It is a summer's day, take off your clothes, take off your shifts, and then a dance a circle." Having said this, she threw her clothes on the table. Then I yelled: "A whore or a rogue who does not follow suit." And because these were all honest folk who could not have suffered such scorn, they followed our good example and put their clothes on the same table, which was close to the windows, one of which I had unlocked. After that, we danced a circle in our bare arse, without covering our things with fig leaves. ((Anon.), *De doorluchtige Daden van Jan Stront*, p. 134)
47. "See there, John Shit with his pipe and tobacco, and now let us discuss no more heaviness, but only of those things which our great-great-grandparents covered with fig leafs." *De doorluchtige Daden van Jan Stront*, p. 7.
48. Madams have the money, and do with these poor innocent creatures as people do with the slaves in Turkey, with only this difference, that they do not have the power of life and death over them; because they exchange them, sell them, yeah even pawn them, for such a price as suits them.

    A cymar is a fur-trimmed jacket fashionable in the period. (Anon.), *D'Openhertige juffrouw*, I, p. 172.
49. Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986). Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self. Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).

9

# Ordinary People in the New World: The City of Amsterdam, Colonial Policy, and Initiatives from Below, 1656–1664

*Frans Blom and Henk Looijesteijn*

## Introduction

Between 1656 and 1664 the City of Amsterdam, uniquely, possessed a "City Colony" in the Dutch colony of New Netherland. Called New Amstel, this fledgling colony on the South River—the current Delaware—for a brief time cemented the commitment of Amsterdam to the preservation of the Dutch colony in New Netherland, perpetually—and fatally—under threat from English encroachment. Born out of the anxiety of the Dutch West India Company, which saw the numbers of English settlers swell each year, the City of Amsterdam was persuaded to undertake the settlement of the shores of the Delaware river. There, Dutch settlers were few and far between, and were surpassed in numbers by Swedes and Finns. After the difficult early years, the colonization gained momentum after 1660, and the settlement increased considerably until the English invasion in October 1664 put an end to the Dutch colony. Amsterdam turned to other colonial endeavors with less inhibitions and more chance of success, for example, the rich sugar-producing plantations of Guyana. The memory of the unique experiment of the short-lived City Colony quickly faded.

This chapter on Amsterdam and its City Colony does not deal with its history as such,[1] but with what this episode of Dutch colonial history

reveals about the role and the capabilities of ordinary people in this enterprise. For a long time, historians of the Dutch Republic stressed the increasingly oligarchic nature of the Republic's noble and patrician ruling elite, against which the broader population could only put up resistance by vigorously supporting the counterweight of the Prince of Orange, the monarchical and centripetal element in the Dutch state. While much is to be said for this perspective, recent scholarship has shown that the "common man," and especially the Republic's large middle class, did not meekly consent to the oligarchic tendencies in government nor deliver itself wholesale to the Orangist cause.

A strong grassroots republican undercurrent existed throughout the Republic's history, emerging strongly in times of political unrest and opposing both the oligarchic developments within the elites and a too overtly monarchical stance on the part of the princes.[2] Historians from various subdisciplines have in recent years researched aspects of this undercurrent. Some have stressed for example the tenaciousness of late medieval notions of urban democracy within guilds and other middle-class organizations such as the civic militias and the *meente* in eastern Dutch cities throughout the era of the Republic.[3] Others have highlighted contemporary critiques of the way in which the Dutch Republic was governed.[4] Gradually a new image emerges of the Republic as a political entity riven with ideological strife as well as oligarchic factionalism, a society much less static and a population much less resigned to abuses of power by elite rulers than the traditional image allows. It is to this new social historiography that this chapter aims to contribute.

Amsterdam's burgomasters, the four men who held the reins of the city's government firmly in their hands and who were collectively one of the greatest powers in the Province of Holland, were seriously dependent on ordinary people for their American colonial experiment to succeed. They badly needed colonists, and were prepared to attract as many settlers as possible. As we will show, they went so far as to allow for democratic experiments of considerable magnitude in their colony, consenting to things other Dutch rulers would never have allowed. Indeed, the City's propaganda stressed more and more the liberties that awaited the migrants. Significantly their invitation was taken up with zest by at least two visionary thinkers, who came up with remarkably democratic and egalitarian blueprints for a colonial society. They proposed a society in which the common man was to be his own "boss" and firmly in control of affairs. Of course, there were limits to what was granted by the four men who ruled Amsterdam as velvet-gloved autocrats, but, we claim, their indulgence toward these ordinary people and the democratic thinkers who supported them does suggest that republican ideas of a more democratic

and egalitarian nature found some endorsement among the high and mighty *regenten*.

## Amsterdam Beckons . . .

Within the larger framework of the Dutch transatlantic colonies, the North American area of New Netherland significantly gained attention from 1655 onward. This was, paradoxically, due to the declining power of the West India Company (WIC). Brazil, the pearl in the Dutch West Indian crown, was lost in 1654, and chances were that New Netherland would be the next to fall to the neighboring European powers. It was a simple fact of population numbers. As a huge territory, roughly limited by the South River (Delaware River), the North River (Hudson River), and the Fresh River (Connecticut River), New Netherland counted less than 10,000 European inhabitants. Its population was no match for the English neighbors who from time to time encroached upon and even colonized the WIC lands. With New Netherland dangerously low on people to cultivate the territory and defend Dutch trade and commerce there, and the West India Company too weak to do the job, the City of Amsterdam entered into the fray, first by agreeing to take on a colony on the South River, and second, by launching a massive propaganda campaign.[5]

In a first step, Amsterdam acted side by side with the Company, as twin sponsors of the publication of Adriaen van der Donck's influential *Beschrijvinge van Nieuw-Nederlant* (*Description of New Netherland*) in 1655. Adriaen van der Donck (c.1618–1655) had settled in New Netherland in 1641 and had developed into a spokesman for the settlers in their struggle with the West India Company, demanding a modicum of people's representation in the authoritarian governance of the colony. In 1649 Van der Donck returned to the Netherlands to plead the settler's cause with the States-General, a visit that eventually extended to late 1653, when he returned to New Netherland, to die, presumably, in the Peach Tree War of September 1655.[6] His first comprehensive exposé of New World opportunities was meant expressly to propagate emigration to New Netherland, and it presented the powerful commercial city of Amsterdam, in the persons of its four burgomasters, as the new patrons who will take care of New Netherland now that "the West India Company is in a fallen state."[7] The City of Amsterdam thus enhanced the ultimate goal of this propaganda, the populating of New Netherland, as Van der Donck writes in the dedication:

> And because it is Your daily concern to bring people to that land . . . I felt the urge to give this [description] to my fellow countrymen, to the bold and skillful people in particular. Those who might otherwise not know of

that good and healthy air and the potentials of New Netherland, can now be stimulated to go there.[8]

The *Beschrijvinge* went through a second edition in 1656 and it undoubtedly had the pragmatic purpose of raising the interest of ordinary people. In order to reach its audience, the *Beschrijvinge* was not expensive: the text had a compact layout, in Gothic type, without any illustrations in the first edition. It was a low-cost popular production, issued by Evert Nieuwenhof (c.1631–1702), a fairly unknown low-market-oriented Amsterdam publisher.[9] However, he did have the print corrected and the book enriched by a map of the colony's territory, which included a view of the town of New Amsterdam on Manhattan, one of the first public images of the overseas area (Illustration 9.1).[10]

Amsterdam took its American colonization project very seriously. In line with its patronage of Van der Donck's *Beschrijvinge*, the City also published the circumstances under which people could most profitably migrate. That tract, entitled *Conditiën*, was issued in 1656 as a strong public display of Amsterdam's official involvement in, and commitment to, the population of New Netherland. It was published by the City's authorized printing house of Jan Banningh (c.1588–1658), and on the title page sat Amsterdam's coat of arms, the Saint Andrew's crosses.[11]

The *Conditiën* addresses "all those who intend to depart as colonists to New Netherland" and presents a list of 35 commitments made to prospective emigrants. The magistrates guarantee a secure transport to New Netherland, cost-free on the understanding that the colonists will reimburse the City on a later date. Furthermore, the settlers are promised free and fertile lands up to 20 or 30 morgen per family[12]—unclaimed by others—in a healthy climate and close to a river navigable by large ships. And they will be provided with a year's worth of clothes, food, and sowing seed. Any further necessities will be on sale for the prices current in the Republic itself, without the Company's toll. For natural resources, the colonists are allowed to take wood, for free, from the surrounding forests, or from their own private property. Also, hunting and fishing in the wilderness will be open and free to anyone. Settlers' mining minerals of any sort are free from taxes for ten years, while all new colonists will have tax exemptions for a number of years and receive the guarantee that any extracted money after the beginning of taxation is spent on local public works (Illustration 9.2).

The ordinary people meant to populate the City Colony were enticed not simply with freedom from costs or taxes. The *Conditiën* also presented them with the prospect of social freedoms: settlers are free to elect three burgomasters and five or seven aldermen—the latter selected from a list of 10–14 names drawn up by the citizenry, from which the director of

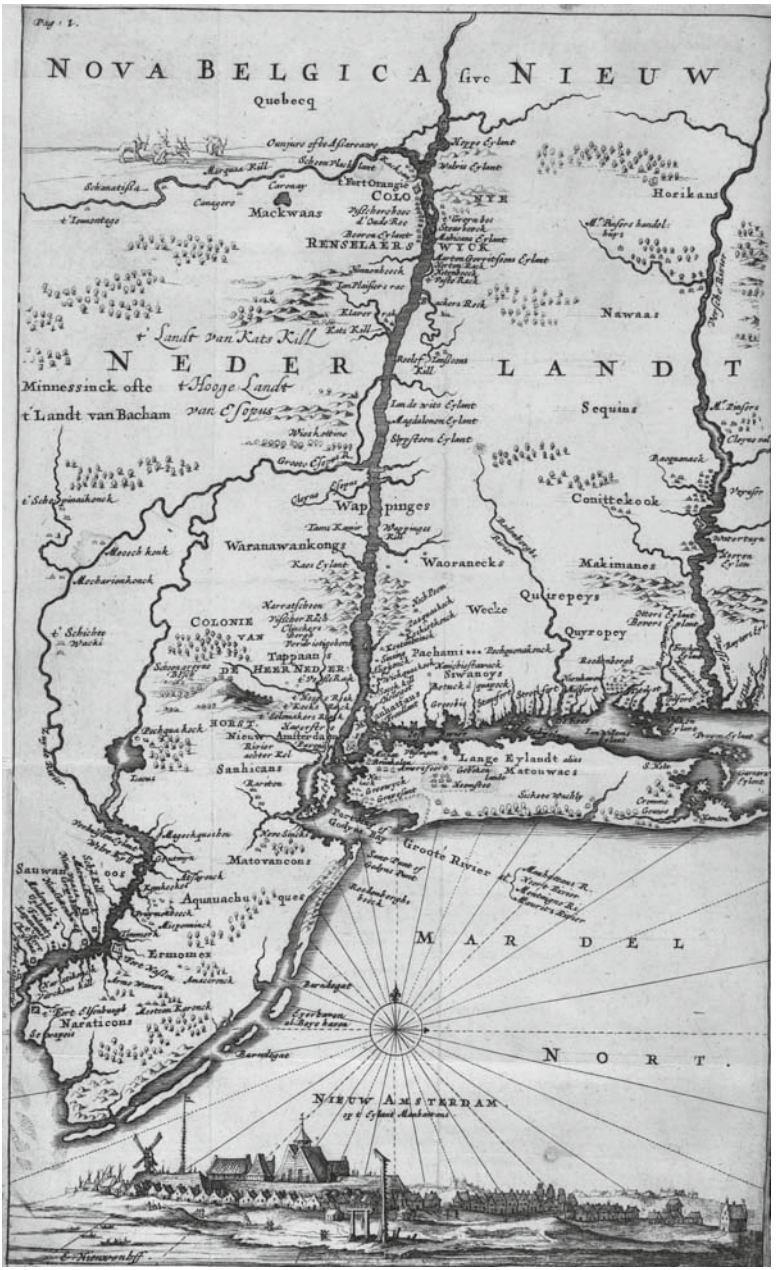
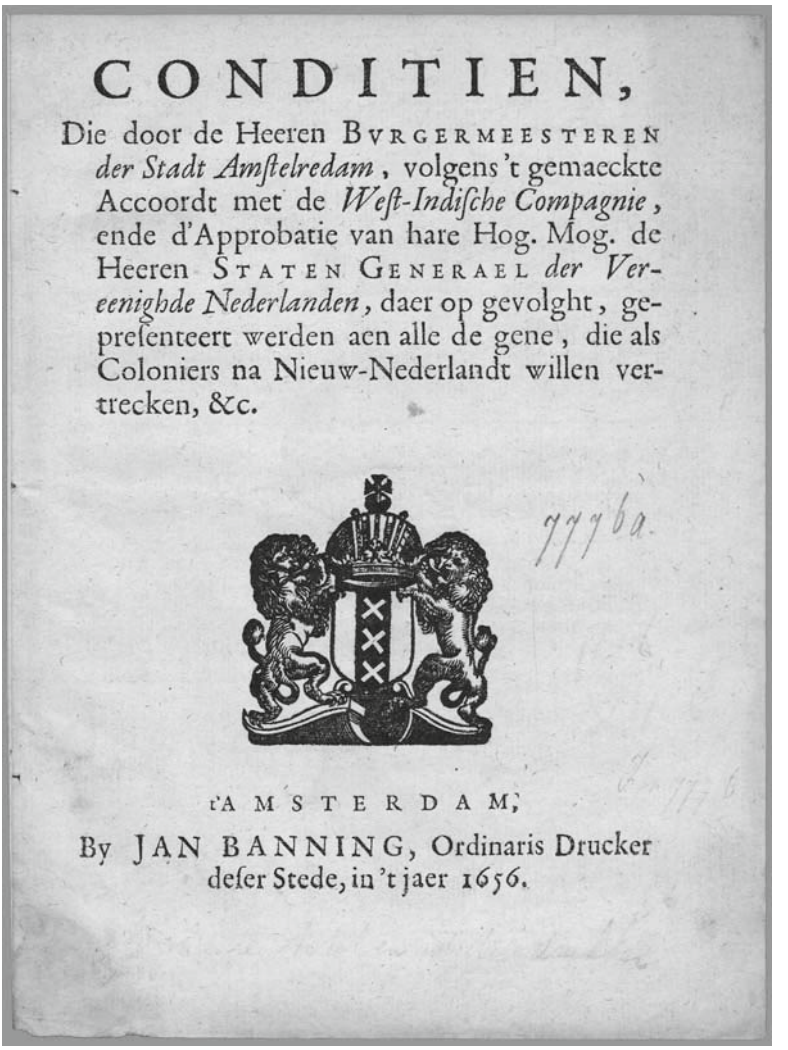



**Illustration 9.1** Map of New Netherland and view of New Amsterdam, both added by Evert Nieuwenhof in his second edition of Adriaen van der Donck's *Description of New Netherland* (Amsterdam, 1656). Special collections of the University of Amsterdam



CONDITIEN,

Die door de Heeren BVRGERMEESTEREN *der Stadt Amſtelredam*, volgens 't gemaeckte Accoordt met de *Weſt-Indiſche Compagnie*, ende d'Approbatie van hare Hog. Mog. de Heeren STATEN GENERAEL *der Vereenighde Nederlanden*, daer op gevolght, gepreſenteert werden aen alle de gene, die als Coloniers na Nieuw-Nederlandt willen vertrecken, &c.

777 ba.

t'AMSTERDAM,

By JAN BANNING, Ordinaris Drucker deſer Stede, in 't jaer 1656.

**Illustration 9.2** Title page of the *Conditiën* published by Jan Banningh. Special collections of the University of Amsterdam

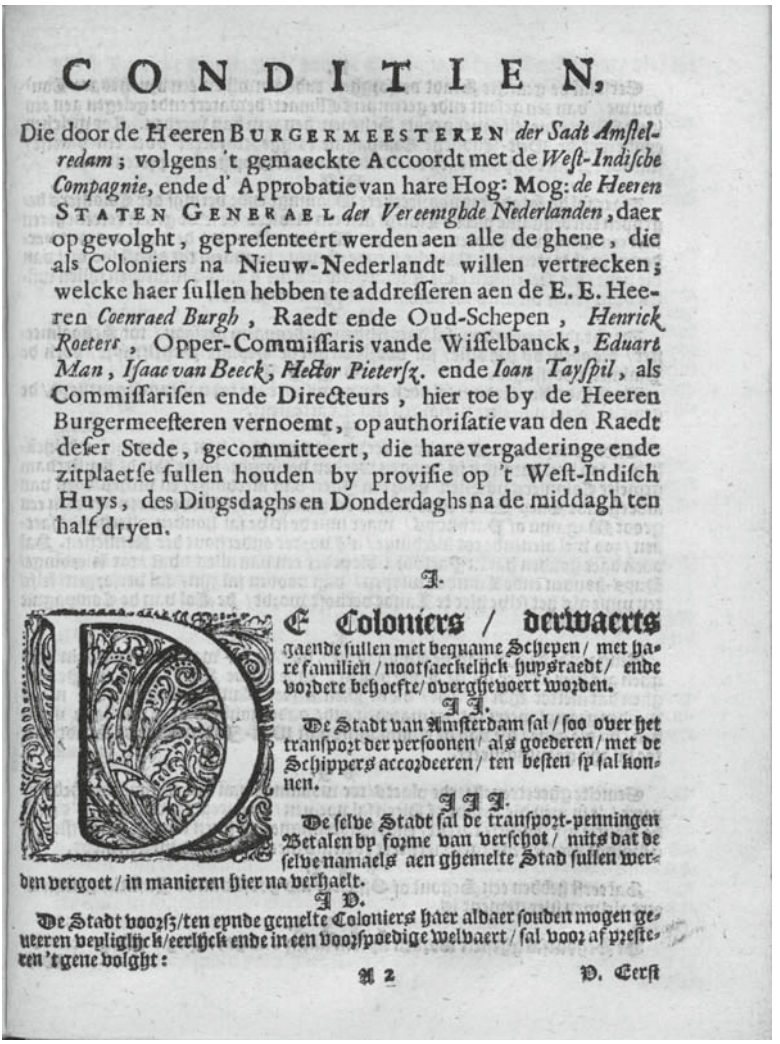
the City Colony will elect the necessary number of aldermen. When the population of the settlement reaches 200 families, they will be allowed to elect a council, which will replenish its numbers by itself, nominate persons for the position of alderman, and appoint the burgomasters. The aldermen administer justice in civil cases worth less than 100 guilders

and small criminal matters, but have to accept the tutelage of the WIC's director-general and his council. Finally, the City will take care to pay for a schoolmaster who will also read from the Bible and sing psalms.[13]

The interesting thing about the City's public campaign as presented in the *Conditiën* is the overall posture of responsibility and reassurance. Amsterdam lured potential settlers with a set of liberties and freedoms: free land grants, tax exemptions, good trading prices, civic government, election of magistrates, free use of natural resources. That was a radical break from the WIC's former practices, which had aimed at ruthless exploitation of colonists, and, therefore, constantly failed to win the hearts of commoners.

Amsterdam's vigilant book printing industry was keen to take over the City's public campaign. First, the *Conditiën* themselves were reissued by Nieuwenhof as an appendix to the second edition of Van der Donck's *Beschrijvinge*. For this practical information, most relevant to the intended readers of his book, Nieuwenhof had obtained consent to copy the official City pamphlet of the *Conditiën* as published by Banningh in the same year.[14] It was an extremely useful addition to the *Beschrijvinge*, a welcome addition to Amsterdam's propaganda campaign (Illustration 9.3).

In the next few years, Amsterdam's reliable voice in emigration policy and the City's notion of freedom for settlers—as opposed to the former exploitation of workers by the West India Company—were echoed loudly in other media. The pamphlet *'t Verheerlickte Nederland*, published in 1659, fiercely opposed the Company's strategy in managing the colony and specifically advocated the new and free way of colonizing as developed by Amsterdam. The staged dialogue of the pamphlet features three ordinary Dutchmen from the lower middle class—a skipper, a peasant, and an artisan. Discussing how to make a success of populating New Netherland, they come to the conclusion that the best option would be to take the whole area out of the hands of the WIC, as was done in the case of the City Colony, and grant the settlers freedom in property and trade, and autonomy in governance, and exempt them from the heavy tax burdens that merely exploit, rather than enlarge, the population. Moreover, the pamphlet makes a direct link to the *Beschrijvinge* by Van der Donck, as the skipper urges the peasant and artisan to go to a bookshop in town to buy the recent publication "by a man called Verdonck who has lived in the colony for many years and learned a lot about life as it was there."[15] A footnote—the only one in the tract—explicates that this means Van der Donck's book. Three years later, and apparently for the same reason, the *Kort Verhael* by Franciscus van den Enden also explicitly names the title, author, and publisher of the *Beschrijvinge*. Both later publications thus underscored the status of the



CONDITIEN,

Die door de Heeren BURGERMEESTEREN *der Sadt Amſtelredam*; volgens 't gemaeckte Accoordt met de *Weſt-Indiſche Compagnie*, ende d' Approbatie van hare Hog: Mog: *de Heeren* STATEN GENERAEL *der Vereenighde Nederlanden*, daer op gevolght, gepreſenteert werden aen alle de ghene, die als Coloniers na Nieuw-Nederlandt willen vertrecken; welcke haer ſullen hebben te addreſſeren aen de E. E. Heeren *Coenraed Burgh*, Raedt ende Oud-Schepen, *Henrick Roeters*, Opper-Commiſſaris vande Wiſſelbanck, *Eduart Man*, *Iſaac van Beeck*, *Hector Pieterſz.* ende *Ioan Tayſpil*, als Commiſſariſen ende Directeurs, hier toe by de Heeren Burgermeeſteren vernoemt, op authoriſatie van den Raedt deſer Stede, gecommitteert, die hare vergaderinge ende zitplaetſe ſullen houden by proviſie op 't Weſt-Indiſch Huys, des Dingsdaghs en Donderdaghs na de middagh ten half dryen.

I.

DE Coloniers / derwaerts gaende ſullen met bequame Schepen / met hare familien / nootſaeckelijck huysraedt / ende voordere behoefte / overghevoert worden.

II.

De Stadt van Amſterdam ſal / ſoo over het tranſport der perſoonen / als goederen / met de Schippers accoordeeren / ten beſten ſy ſal konnen.

III.

De ſelve Stadt ſal de tranſport-penningen betalen by ſomme van verſchot / mits dat de ſelve namaels aen ghemelte Stad ſullen werden vergoet / in manieren hier na verhaelt.

IV.

De Stadt voorſz / ten eynde gemelte Coloniers haer aldaer ſouden mogen gedueren veyligh ck / eerlijck ende in een voorſpoedige welvaert / ſal voor af preſteren 't gene volght:

A 2 V. Eerſt

**Illustration 9.3** Evert Nieuwenhof's second edition of the *Conditiën* adopted in the *Description of New Netherland* (Amsterdam, 1656), copied from the City's contemporary official announcement. Special collections of the University of Amsterdam

*Beschrijvinge* as the prime source of information about New Netherland. It had become the guide for emigration to America.[16]

In addition to the City's patronage of Van der Donck's book and the publication of the *Conditiën*, Amsterdam also activated public media like

newspapers to mobilize ordinary people for the City Colony. This was done, for example, in the *Ordinarise Middelweekse Courant* (*The Common Midweek Newspaper*), issued by the Amsterdam-based news provider Sara Vlamincqs (1596–1669), widow of publisher François van Lieshout (1596–1646).[17] The Lieshout printing company worked under supervision of the City magistrates and had a good reputation with official documents. The newspaper layout confirmed the official status of the calls. They were labeled as "Notifications," (Illustration 9.4) which was the technical term for governmental announcements. Also, the calls were issued as news: the City notifications were part of the news, whereas previous WIC newspaper advertisements for New Netherland were printed in the advertisement section.[18] Moreover, the Amsterdam calls for migration had a confident tone, stressing that the City was firmly in charge of the South River enterprise:

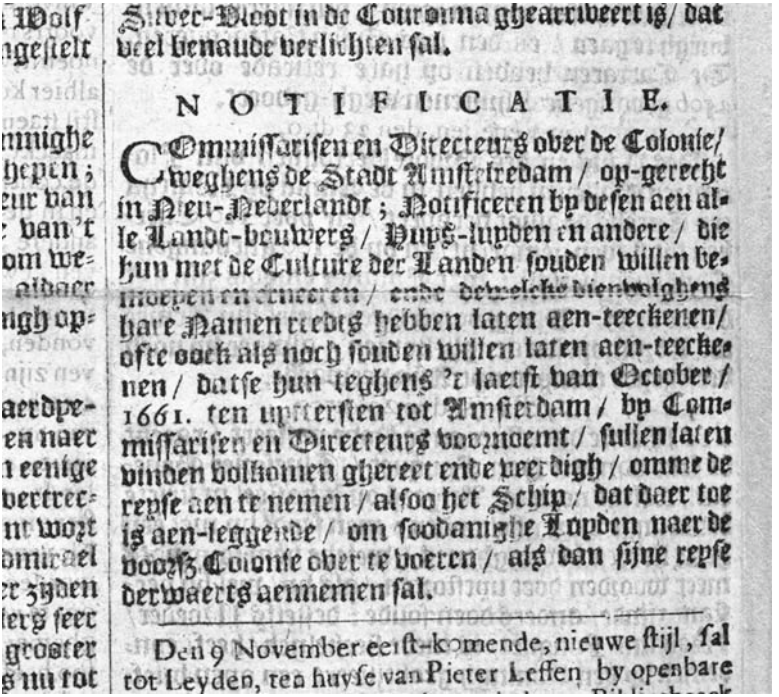
> Commissioners and Directors of the Colony of the City of Amsterdam, established in New Netherland, notify all land-workers, market farmers and other people who, for a living, are willing to cultivate those lands . . . to report themselves to aforementioned Commissioners and Directors in Amsterdam and to be all set and ready for departure by the end of October.[19]

No mention of the WIC—it is clear that the City posed here as the patron offering the prospect of finding a living in its colony.

## The Common Man Responds

In order to repair the bad public image of life in the New World, caused by the former practices of the WIC, Amsterdam used the notion of freedom as a key element in its campaign, and framed itself as its champion. This notion was soon picked up by a number of men who originated from the broad middle classes of the Dutch Republic, and responded partly as would-be settlers on their own and partly as visionaries who saw the South River colony as a means to build a new society in which the common man would be to a great extent his own man. These visionaries were Pieter Plockhoy (c.1620–1664?) and Franciscus van den Enden (1602–1674), who both proposed strikingly similar, yet also quite different plans for an egalitarian, democratic colonial settlement, without a fixed Church.

Franciscus van den Enden, a former Jesuit who had migrated from Antwerp to Amsterdam, had become a fashionable elite schoolmaster in the early 1650s. He compiled a lengthy and glowing description of New Netherland, based on a variety of sources, which was meant to accompany his plan, though it ended up being most often quoted for



Silver-Bloot in de Couronna ghearriveert is/ dat veel benaude verlichten sal.

NOTIFICATIE.

COmmissarisen en Directeurs over de Colonie/ weghens de Stadt Amsterdam / op-gerecht in Nieu-Nederlandt ; Notificeren by desen aen alle Landt-bouwers / Huys-lupden en andere / die hun met de Culture der Landen souden willen bemoeyen en exerceren / ende dewelcke dienwelghens hare Namen reedts hebben laten aen-teecknen/ ofte ooch als noch souden willen laten aen-teecknen / datse hun-teghens 't laetst van October / 1661. ten upterstien tot Amsterdam / by Commissarisen en Directeurs voornoemt / sullen laten vinden volkomen ghereet ende veerdigh / omme de reyse aen te nemen / alsoo het Schip / dat daer toe is aen-leggende / om soodanighe Lupden naer de voorsz Colonie over te voeren / als dan sijne reyse derwaerts aenmemen sal.

Den 9 November eerst-komende, nieuwe stijl, sal tot Leyden, ten huyse van Pieter Leffen by openbare

**Illustration 9.4** Newspaper notification inviting prospective colonists, October 1661. National Library of the Netherlands

precisely this description. His *Kort Verhael van Nieuw-Nederlant* (*Short Account of New-Netherland*)[20] was published in 1662, anonymously—he uses the pseudonym H.V.Z.M., *Houdt Van Zaken Meest* or "He who loves things best"—and without mentioning either a publisher or a printer. It is actually a bundle of loosely allied texts. The main body is a description of New Netherland, its native inhabitants, natural resources, and agricultural potential. This section is followed by five other texts, which set out, and if necessary defend, Van den Enden's conception of a democratic colonial settlement, envisaged in the southern part of New Amstel.

Apart from Van der Donck's *Beschrijvinge*, Van den Enden published the most elaborate propagandistic text, in which he consistently sings the praises of New Netherland,[21] and especially the part of it controlled by Amsterdam, the South River area, which he called "the most excellent and choicest part of New Netherland."[22] Indeed, the South River was "a maiden desired by all," which Van den Enden underlines by quoting earlier reports about the encroachments of the Swedes and the English in the area. The only one so far to address the problem of how to populate it was "this

praiseworthy City and Government of Amsterdam," through which for one thing the Swedish domination of the South River was now reduced. In order to preserve "this more than precious river," it should be "offered completely on honor and fair conditions to a formidable power, or gathering of Free and thereto well-endowed men as right affectionate lovers," rather than disgracefully losing it to strangers, as had happened in the Fresh River area.[23]

Freedom played an important role in Van den Enden's tract, as he regarded the lure of greater liberties across the ocean as the best way to promote emigration and in the process to allow the WIC to maintain its colony in the face of English encroachment. The price was a reduced role for the WIC in the colony. These ideas seem to be partly foreshadowed in *'t Verheerlickt Nederland*, in which a similarly modest role for the WIC was advocated.[24] Van den Enden's preoccupation with freedom also shows in his description of the Native Americans. According to him, noble as they are, Indians hardly ever kill another human, least of all women and children, so there is nothing to fear from them even in lonely forests, and they do not even mind the intrusion of others in their land: "they are not miserly worried, or plagued by envy, over the approaching and settlement of all kinds of peaceful peoples," because "For them their land is open," to come and go and to settle. Thus, Van den Enden fashions the Indians as an ideal people from whom the colonists have nothing to fear.

Van den Enden emphasizes the egalitarian and democratic character of Amerindian society, their government being described as being "Free, and wholly popular."[25] He describes the natives as "naturally very free, and magnanimous by nature, whence they, as not being able to bear dominion over them, are opposed to the same," and gives them a critical voice toward European traditions: "with regard to our respect for our government, they can't understand that one man can be so much more than another."[26] Without an ounce of experience with the people of New Netherland, Van den Enden fashioned them as the opposite of Europe's traditional and hierarchic societies, referring to the Indians as "in all manners a most excellent, tractable and freedom-loving Nation, worthy to be invited and bred by all good ways and means to right Christians and Allies."[27]

The second visionary, Pieter Plockhoy, may have regarded himself as less eloquent, for he chose to have his tract, published in 1662, accompanied by a propagandistic poem by Jacob Steendam (c.1615–c.1673), a former colonist of New Netherland who was also a prolific poet. Steendam had recently returned to the Dutch Republic and had already in previous years actively taken part in the propaganda campaign for the North American colony.[28] His "Prickel-vaerzen" or "Spurring Verses" fully picks up on the idea of freedom (See the Annex for the text of the poem). The opening stanza, for example, directly appealed to the great dream of freedom, saying

that settlers at the South River will not be servants to anyone. Indeed, they will be "free lords," as they will be served themselves, by the abundance of the lands. The words "free" and "freedom" pop up continuously in the poem. In addition to the alluring images of Eden, and the dream of a "Second Brazil," referring to the Dutch nostalgia for that lost colony, the unique selling point of the South River colony was to be autonomy and freedom under the protection of the champion of freedom, the City of Amsterdam.[29]

As a former colonist, Steendam was the right man at the right time and place to be involved in this new kind of propaganda. Moreover, he was himself a member of its intended audience, and was active in a circle of men of a similar background with a great concern for civic issues. Around 1660 he belonged to a group of poets in Amsterdam, meeting at an inn called *De Zoete Rust* (*The Sweet Peace*).[30] The poets were all ordinary, middle-class men, most of them fortune-seeking immigrants in Amsterdam. Their weekly meetings were not for the sake of art alone: they had a clearly defined social program aimed at discussing and improving social conditions for common people. In terms of religion, most of them were Collegiants, men—and women—who had turned away from the existing churches and met regularly in well-attended "colleges" to debate religious issues freely, without clergy or dogmas—much to the dismay of the Dutch Reformed ministers of Amsterdam. They found common ground in the fact that they all were fed up with traditional ecclesiastical and social hierarchies and privileges for the happy few; thus they advocated tolerance, freedom of the mind and conscience, and social solidarity.

The social engagement of the poets is best witnessed in the volume of poems entitled *Parnassus aen 't Y* (*Mount Parnas on the Shore of the Y River*), which was published almost simultaneously with the "Prickel-vaerzen."[31] The volume is organized from a set of 15 social-ethical questions concerning the happiness of ordinary people. The poems in *Parnassus aen 't Y* show that Jacob Steendam was among the most active members in the band: he was the one taking on the highest number of socio-ethical questions. Other poets concur incidentally; he writes on basically every occasion. These interventions reveal his major involvement in the quest for happiness of the common people. That is, together with his overseas experience, the reason why he contributed his "Prickel-vaerzen" to the Plockhoy tract. We will now turn to Plockhoy and his plans, to which Steendam had lent his poetic support.

## The *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp* of Plockhoy

Pieter Plockhoy was a Mennonite artisan, born in Zierikzee and later a citizen of Middelburg in the Dutch province of Zeeland, who functioned

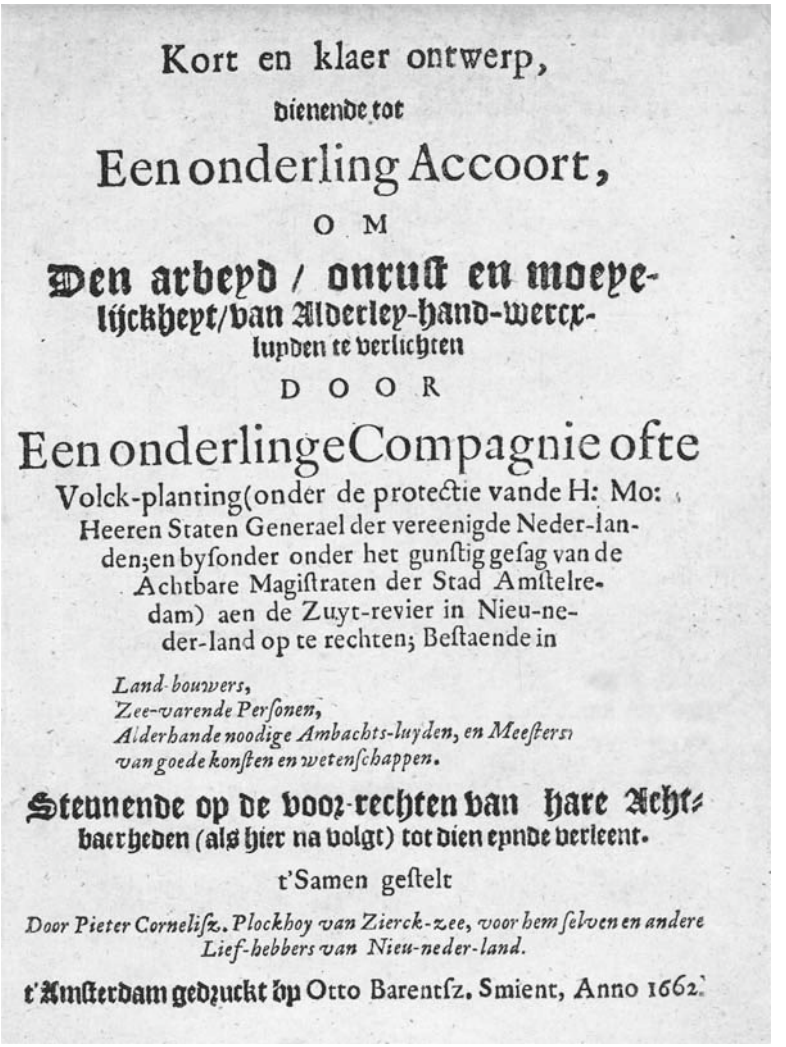
as one of the Middelburg Mennonite congregation's unsalaried ministers from 1649 until late 1652. As such he was controversial from the start, perhaps because of the heterodox religious opinions he would express later on, but certainly because of his loose sexual morals. A protracted conflict within the congregation led eventually to his expulsion in 1654. Afterward, he seems to have looked for kindred spirits elsewhere, for example, among the English Quakers, with whom he shared spiritualist ideas. He travelled to London, where he seems to have lived between the middle of 1657 and late 1660. He addressed the vexed issue of Church independence in a tract published in 1658, *The Way to the Peace and Settlement of These Nations*, in which he argued that the government should steer clear of attempts to lord over the conscience of its subjects and instead set up meeting places all over the country, where everyone would be allowed to speak freely on religious matters. This is the only way to ensure civil and internal peace.

While trying to influence government policy on religion, Plockhoy also promoted a second project, publicized in *A Way Propounded to Make the Poor in These and Other Nations Happy*, published in 1659. In *A Way* Plockhoy set out a blueprint for a "society or little commonwealth" in which artisans, farmers, mariners, and scholars might combine and pool their resources, so that, rather than struggle individually on the brink of poverty, they could work together for the greater good of all. The little commonwealth would strive for economic autonomy, and the community's combination of cost saving and diligent labor would result in a profitable enterprise, Plockhoy hoped.

Unlike his attempt to influence government policy, *A Way* became a success, and Plockhoy came close to realizing his "little commonwealth," to founding his society in Ireland. However, the Restoration in 1660 put all of this to an end, and Plockhoy returned to Amsterdam where he attended the meetings of the Collegiants and would later become notorious for defending polygamy.[32]

Amsterdam offered a new opportunity to realize his plans for a "little commonwealth"—not in Europe, but in America, in New Amstel. To that effect he drew up a contract with the burgomasters of Amsterdam, dated June 9, 1662.[33] It was published in Plockhoy's *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp*, the booklet in which he publicized his endeavor, and which also contained an abbreviated version of *A Way*. This abbreviation differs from *A Way* in details, but in general espouses the same ideas (Illustration 9.5).

It is clear from *A Way* and the *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp* that Plockhoy's proposed settlement would be egalitarian, democratic, and religiously liberal, and that it also offered an unusual economic arrangement.[34] The society was to consist of "a peaceful, unanimous, and select people" who


Kort en klaer ontwerp,

dienende tot

Een onderling Accoort,

O M

Den arbeyd / onruſt en moeye-
lijckheyt/van Alderley-hand-werck-
lupden te verlichten

D O O R

Een onderlinge Compagnie ofte
Volck-planting(onder de protectie vande H: Mo:
Heeren Staten Generael der vereenigde Neder-lan-
den;en byſonder onder het gunſtig geſag van de
Achtbare Magiſtraten der Stad Amſtelre-
dam) aen de Zuyt-revier in Nieu-ne-
der-land op te rechten; Beſtaende in

*Land-bouwers,*
*Zee-varende Perſonen,*
*Alderhande noodige Ambachts-luyden, en Meeſters*
*van goede konſten en wetenſchappen.*

Steunende op de vooz-rechten van hare Acht-
baerheden (als hier na volgt) tot dien eynde verleent.

t'Samen geſtelt

*Door Pieter Corneliſz. Plockhoy van Zierck-zee, voor hem ſelven en andere*
*Lief-hebbers van Nieu-neder-land.*

t'Amſterdam gedzuckt bp Otto Barentſz. Smient, Anno 1662.

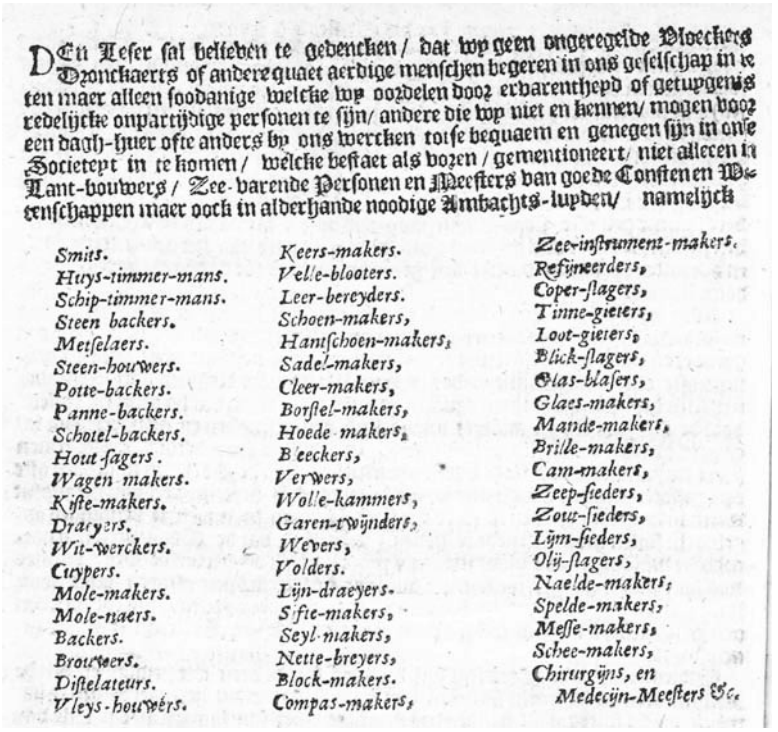
**Illustration 9.5** Title page of the *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp* by Pieter Plockhoy. National Library of the Netherlands

would endeavor communally to achieve an improvement in the situation of "many poor sad households, who live here in great affliction." The "said many-headed mutual Company," where everyone's private property is respected, would stand under the leadership of a general board of directors rather than under the command of one person.

For this mutual company were needed "reasonable and impartial people": farmers, seafarers, all kinds of artisans, and masters of good arts and sciences, who were all willing to work "with a voluntary unanimity for the common weal, as if under one family." The profits from all agricultural work, catching of fish or any other labor, would be equally divided among those participants over 20 years old, the unmarried persons not being treated differently from the married ones. The only privilege of the men over the women would be that, once the loans of the burgomasters had been paid back, they would partake in the allocation by lot of the undivided communal lands—if they so wished, for the men could also choose to leave the lands common. All married men and all unmarried men of age would be allocated a parcel of land that they might use as a private plantation to grow whatever pleases them. The sailors, unable to make use of their land, would enjoy other profit from the society, so that they too would enjoy the fruits of the common labor in an equal way with the farmers and the artisans (Illustration 9.6).

A high level of social equality would prevail in Plockhoy's ideal community. In his view, Christ had done away with hierarchy among Christians, "Abolishing amongst his disciples, all pre-eminency, or domineering, of one over another," and declaring that his followers should regard themselves as equal brothers. For a radical Christian such as Plockhoy, this meant that all human hierarchies were pointless. What mattered for salvation was not one's status in life, but one's faith and acts of faith. Plockhoy reflected: "The world hath her delights in different degrees of Dignities, States, Titles, and offices; exalting themselves above another"; Christ, however, had willed "that everyone shall perform his office as a member of one and the same body." No one should therefore exalt himself or account himself worthier than the other. What hierarchy there was in his society was based on proven skill and individual leadership qualities, not on inherited status or monetary wealth.

Plockhoy's plan suggests a strong attachment to the idea that the common man is capable of self-rule. In Plockhoy's society, the governor would be chosen not "for his riches or wealth . . . but for his wisdom." All positions of leadership, including the governorship, were for one year only.[35] They are expected to circulate: thus one is not eligible for reelection straightaway, but has to wait for a year before again being eligible for the office. Moreover, and strikingly, the governor's leadership was confined to the executive—collectively, all members of the society formed the legislative. The important, governing laws of the society are to be established democratically. Leadership was also accountable: every six or 12 months "an account shall be given." The treasury of the society would be entrusted to three men: the treasury chest would have three locks, and "three of the



DEn Leſer ſal believen te gedencken / dat wy geen ongeregelde Bloeckers Dronckaerts of andere quaet aerdige menſchen begeren in ons geſelſchap in te ten maer alleen ſoodanige welcke wy oordelen door erbarenthepd of getuygenis redelijcke onpartijdige perſonen te ſijn / andere die wy niet en kennen / mogen door een dagh-huer ofte anders by ons wercken toeſe bequaem en genegen ſijn in onſe Societept in te komen / welcke beſtaet als boven / gementioneert / niet alleen in Lant-bouwers / Zee-varende Perſonen en Meeſters van goede Conſten en Wetenſchappen maer ooch in alderhande noodige Ambachts-luyden / namelyck

*Smits.*
*Huys-timmer-mans.*
*Schip-timmer-mans.*
*Steen backers.*
*Metſelaers.*
*Steen-houwers.*
*Potte-backers.*
*Panne-backers.*
*Schotel-backers.*
*Hout-ſagers.*
*Wagen makers.*
*Kiſte-makers.*
*Draeyers.*
*Wit-werckers.*
*Cuypers.*
*Mole-makers.*
*Mole-naers.*
*Backers.*
*Brouwers.*
*Diſtelateurs.*
*Vleys-houwers.*
*Keers-makers.*
*Velle-blooters.*
*Leer-bereyders.*
*Schoen-makers,*
*Hantſchoen-makers,*
*Sadel-makers,*
*Cleer-makers,*
*Borſtel-makers,*
*Hoede makers,*
*Beeckers,*
*Verwers,*
*Wolle-kammers,*
*Garen-twijnders,*
*Wevers,*
*Volders.*
*Lijn-draeyers.*
*Siſte-makers,*
*Seyl-makers,*
*Nette-breyers,*
*Block-makers.*
*Compas-makers,*
*Zee-inſtrument-makers.*
*Refijneerders,*
*Coper-ſlagers,*
*Tinne-gieters,*
*Loot-gieters,*
*Blick-ſlagers,*
*Glas-blaſers,*
*Glaes-makers,*
*Mande-makers,*
*Brille-makers,*
*Cam-makers,*
*Zeep-ſieders,*
*Zout-ſieders,*
*Lijm-ſieders,*
*Olij-ſlagers,*
*Naelde-makers,*
*Spelde-makers,*
*Meſſe-makers,*
*Schee-makers,*
*Chirurgijns, en*
*Medecijn-Meeſters &c.*

**Illustration 9.6** List of workers/ordinary people required for Plockhoy's colony—page 16 of the *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp*. National Library of the Netherlands

uppermost in the Government, shall allwayes have the keyes," so that the chest could be opened only if all three were present. As the governor was chosen on merit, so were the masters who oversaw their fellow artisans: the best workmen would be appointed to that responsible position. All of these members of the executive ought moreover to be elected for their capability. All status within the society thus depended on merit, election, and accountability, and all members were otherwise equal.

Nevertheless, it seems that decisions about the course to be followed by the society were a male prerogative, since the governor and the masters were spoken of only in male terms.[36] There was one explicit exception: oversight of the society's provisions would be "governed by turns" by a committee consisting of both men and women. Ten to 12 men and women would govern for six months, after which half of them would be replaced by new overseers, while, to ensure continuity, the other half would continue for a further six months to instruct the newcomers. The only domain

in which women could attain a position of leadership was thus closely connected with traditional female housekeeping tasks. Nevertheless, their near-equal share in the profits of the company and their ability to do other, not traditionally female, forms of labor implies a great degree of liberty for the women of the society—unheard of outside it.

A striking, final feature of Plockhoy's project is his espousal of liberty of conscience: everyone was to retain his or her "liberty of conscience," to which end public services would be restricted to reading from the Bible and the singing of psalms. When, as time went by, a greater number of confessional groups would be present, they would be allowed to convene in private meetings and take care of the upkeep of their ministers. In the communal schools the students would be taught only the Bible, natural sciences, and languages, but no "human Forms of Religion," so that "their judgment is not spoiled by some particular opinion before they have the use of reason." Thus "no Foundation of Sectarianism or partisanship shall be laid in their hearts." Yet, if anyone would want to have his children educated in private schools or by private persons at his own cost, "therein is and remains every person free to do according to the liberty of his conscience."

### The *Kort Verhael* of Franciscus van den Enden

Before he published his *Kort Verhael*, Franciscus van den Enden started out, in 1661, as representative of an unspecified number of unnamed "principals," with whom he envisioned an egalitarian, democratic colony without a fixed Church settlement, and on whose behalf he negotiated with the magistrates of Amsterdam. In these proposals, equality was of prime importance: a recurrent phrase in his writings is the word "all-equality." Also in his proposed settlement the officials were to be elected, and capable. A set of 117 concept-articles dealing with the establishment and internal government of a small colony—which, they hoped, might be adopted with approbation of the burgomasters—was presented in early 1662. From it emerges a blueprint of an egalitarian, democratic and religiously fairly liberal society. The first article dealt with the "principal foundation of this Society," that is "All-Equality": that concept is explained by Van den Enden as the basis of a "flourishing Christ-burgherly society, Republic or Commonwealth," and is to consist of as great as possible equality between "more and less sensible, more and less wealthy, male and female gender, ruler and ruled, et cetera." Thus one will be able to attain a society in which every member will be able to flourish. All violent dominance and servile obedience must be prevented in this community.[37] Every man, over 24—he may be younger if he is married—and not being in somebody's service,

wanting to join the Society would be welcome, on condition that he would first promise never to strive for dominance over the Society, nor allow anybody else in the Society to strive for such power; and that he will accept and uphold the decisions of the Society, provided those decisions are attained by majority or two-thirds of the votes.[38]

Other articles detailed such things as the required amount of votes for the making of a decision—for example two-thirds in the case of important ordinances—and votes will be by ballot. The leaders would be chosen by at least a hundred colonists over age 24, not in service to anybody or in debt to the Society for receiving travel money. The colonists eligible to vote would choose or nominate ten men who are preferably well endowed with material means as well as the brains to match. Their names would be sent to the burgomasters of Amsterdam, who would choose five of these men to be the new leaders of the colony, for a period of one year only. They would not be reeligible the next year, but only the year after that. These five "servants of the Community" could be supplemented with one or two extra from the Mennonites or those who chose to refrain from armed defense, again from a double number for each post, as assisting servants, but without responsibility for the defenses of the colony. There would also be appointed a bookkeeper who might also be schoolmaster.[39]

The second article insisted that the society's members should dispense with "all particular strife, and fierce sectarianism regarding Religion,"[40] and therefore should content themselves with the Bible having read aloud on Sundays and high holy days, and singing psalms before and after the reading. In fact, the petitioners wanted to exclude as members "stiff-headed Papists obligated to the Romish Chair, usurious Jews, English stiff-headed Quakers, Puritans and audacious stupid Millennialists" and "all stiff-headed pretenders to present-day Revelations" in order not to disturb the peace of the Society.[41] Van den Enden stated that as his principals wanted to found a colony where people of different faiths would be welcome, they did not wish to prefer one sect to another. The Bible was minister enough, Van den Enden's principals felt,[42] which suggests there were Collegiants among his principals, and in any case Mennonites, for provision was made for the Mennonites' abhorrence of violence: instead of physically defending their homes, as is expected of the other colonists, they will instead pay a tax and be exempt from having to vote on military matters.[43]

That Van den Enden and his principals wanted to exclude the groups specified was not necessarily in contradiction to their understanding of religious liberty: those whose opinions conformed to the exact phrasing would indeed be unlikely to contribute to the stability of a religiously diverse colony. It also suggests that there was room for Catholics critical of

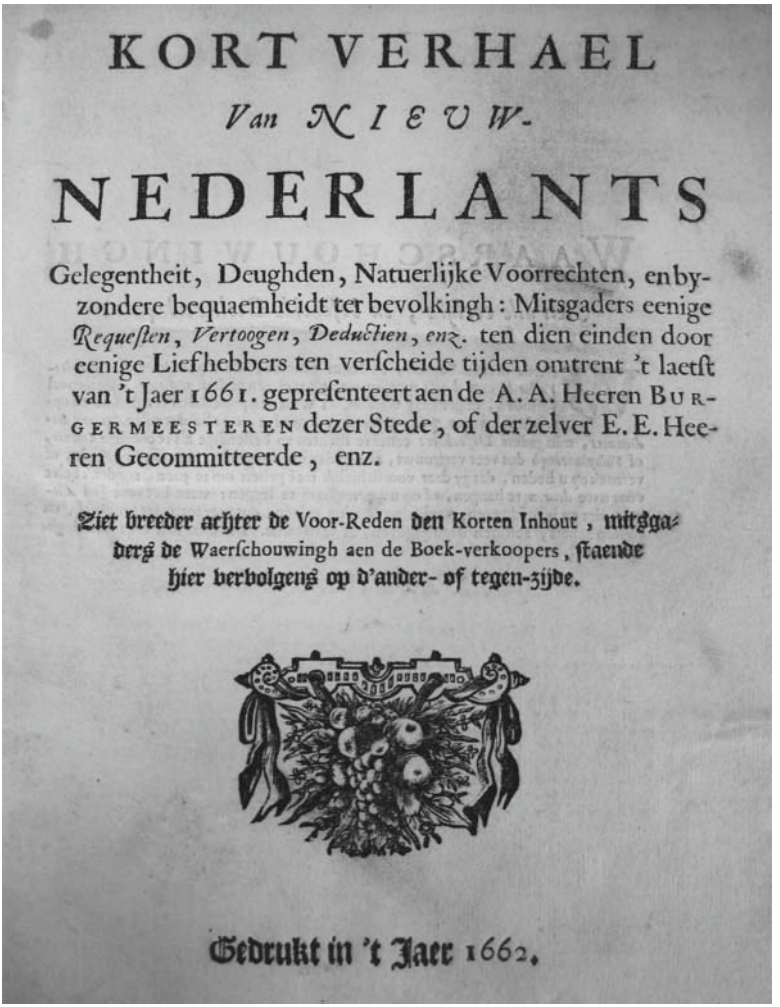
Rome, non-usurious Jews, nondogmatic Quakers and Puritans, and people who were less certain that Doomsday was imminent. Yet to modern ears this may sound like a prejudicial distinction without a difference.

Economically, Van den Enden and his principals were clearly not interested in migrants who were destitute. Settlers were expected to provide enough money for the journey to America and enough money per head to last for a year. Once in America, the colonists would join forces in building shelter for their wives, children, and baggage, sowing the fields, and building a communal, defendable winter-home. After five years this communal period might come to an end after the members of the Society had settled well and were provided with their own house.[44] This too was an uncommon feature: normally, settlers were expected to start their new life on their own, though with some assistance from the director in situ. According to Van den Enden, the newcomers were all well to do and free of sectarianism. It has been suggested that this might indicate a growing interest in the unusual proposals of Van den Enden and his principals among a number of inhabitants of Amsterdam, who thus became prospective colonists (Illustration 9.7).[45]

### Plockhoy and Van den Enden: Partners or Rivals?

Clearly, Van den Enden's and Plockhoy's plans had much in common—both proposed an egalitarian, democratic setup and a religious policy that was in every way the opposite of what was commonly the practice in European states, including the Dutch Republic. No wonder then that previous scholars have often assumed that both proposals refer to the same colonial settlement. As long as it was not known who had published the *Kort Verhael*, it was assumed the author also wrote the *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp*.[46] Now that it is clear that Van den Enden was the author of the *Kort Verhael*—and all of it, not just a part—the argument has moved somewhat to the possibility of a close cooperation, which went sour from some reason, after which Plockhoy and Van den Enden parted ways—perhaps in April 1662.[47]

The conjecture that Plockhoy and fellow candidate colonists seceded from the group for whom Van den Enden mediated may well be true. Given the religious stipulations in both proposals, both projects may have originated within a Collegiant milieu. Moreover, it is unlikely that they were ignorant of each other—at least Plockhoy must have heard of the lengthy negotiations between Van den Enden and the directors and burgomasters. It is also noteworthy he managed to make a contract with the burgomasters so soon after Van den Enden's last petition, but this is in itself hardly


KORT VERHAEL

*Van* NIEUW-

NEDERLANTS

Gelegentheit, Deughden, Natuerlijke Voorrechten, en by-zondere bequaemheidt ter bevolkingh: Mitsgaders eenige *Requeſten*, *Vertoogen*, *Deductien*, *enz.* ten dien einden door eenige Liefhebbers ten verſcheide tijden omtrent 't laetſt van 't Jaer 1661. gepreſenteert aen de A. A. Heeren BURGERMEESTEREN dezer Stede, of der zelver E. E. Heeren Gecommitteerde, enz.

Ziet breeder achter de Voor-Reden den Korten Inhout, mitsgaders de Waerſchouwingh aen de Boek-verkoopers, ſtaende hier verbolgens op d'ander- of tegen-zijde.

Gedrukt in 't Jaer 1662.

**Illustration 9.7** Title page of the *Kort Verhael* by Van den Enden. National Library of the Netherlands

exceptional. Burgomasters or directors of the City Colony made contracts with immigrants continuously, and the contract with Plockhoy is only exceptional in that it concerned a society or company.

There is however no conclusive evidence linking the two men,[48] and despite the strong similarities there are also distinct differences. One of the main differences is that Plockhoy aspires to a kind of company in which

the members partake in equal measure. Van den Enden on the other hand aspires to nothing less than a village community, with its concomitant political structure and rights. Unlike Plockhoy's plan, his concept deals mainly with the political aspects of the society, and has little to say on the organization of economic life. It is clear that Van den Enden envisions mainly an agricultural society;[49] Plockhoy, on the other hand, while the importance of agriculture is visible between the lines, maintains the fourfold labor division he also used in *A Way*, and seems to aim at a more commercially oriented colony. Furthermore, though Van den Enden also proposed an initial period of communal use of the societies' lands, this was ostensibly a temporary measure: after five years the communally cultivated lands would be divided and each family own its own farm.[50] In Plockhoy's case one can choose to leave the society, but in principle it was to endure as a cooperative community. In fact, the *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp* strongly echoes Plockhoy's earlier tract, *A Way*, to such an extent that it can easily be seen as independent of Van den Enden's plan—which was not published until October 1662, long after the *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp* had appeared.

Whereas Van den Enden negotiated for months, and his plan eventually ended up rejected, Plockhoy seems to have done business with the burgomasters quickly. We will come back to why this should be so. The strong similarities between the two proposals do however point to an interesting and seldom-noticed aspect of this history: the great preparedness of Amsterdam to allow for such a religiously liberal and egalitarian democratic experiment.

## Amsterdam and the Projectors

To start with religion, Amsterdam's ruling elite had little interest in blocking religious liberty in their colony. They wanted to populate the colony as quickly as possible. By contrast, the WIC government of New Netherland was much less tolerant of those who did not adhere to the Dutch Reformed creed, and was—along with many ministers of that Church—quite unenthusiastic about the religious policy of the City of Amsterdam.[51] Freedom of conscience was acknowledged in WIC New Netherland—but only behind closed doors. Indeed, when Amsterdam took over New Amstel, the Amsterdam Dutch Reformed ministers voiced fears that the burgomasters would not enforce orthodoxy as strictly as the WIC had done, and their fears were justified. As the magistrates had little interest in the curtailing of semipublic worship in Amsterdam itself, they seem to have been equally liberal in the overseas dominion.[52] The public style of worship Plockhoy and Van den Enden wished for their colony, confined to reading the Bible and singing psalms, was unlikely to shock the directors and

burgomasters given this liberal religious policy—indeed, when they placed marginal remarks in Van den Enden's proposal, during the negotiations, they let this pass without comment.[53] According to Van den Enden, the would-be colonists' abhorrence of a minister in their society caused many "suspicious, and insulting, profane accusations." It is probable that those accusations came from the Dutch Reformed ministers of the city.[54] Though Van den Enden's project fell through, the fact the burgomasters had no qualms about approving a similar style of public worship for Plockhoy's settlement shows that this aspect of Van den Enden's proposal could not have been a breaking point in the negotiations.

Amsterdam itself was tightly controlled by its powerful burgomasters, and popular influence had always been limited—and certainly not acknowledged. Of course, the Amsterdam ruling class was dependent on the population's acquiescence in its hegemony, but vestiges from guild influence or medieval elective procedures still found in other cities in Holland such as Dordrecht and Hoorn seem to have been wholly absent. But for its American colony, things would be different. The Amsterdam burgomasters clearly felt that Plockhoy's proposed society might have a viable future and permitted the unusual organization with its democratic traits.

By contrast, Van den Enden aimed at a society where the members would receive the privilege of justice—as if they formed a Dutch village in fact. The difference may have been in scale rather than in principle. Throughout the negotiations, his aspirations—and also that of his principals perhaps—grew from "a village, neighborhood or Christ-burgherly household," a group of about a hundred men, to one of 600, as the numbers interested in the prospective colony increased. He may already have voiced the staggering number of colonists he mentioned in his *Vrije Politijke Stellingen*, three years later. Though it was by then too late, Van den Enden still believed that his proposal would have ushered in a massive migration to New Amstel: he claimed that a properly democratic colony in America might easily draw the staggering number of 24,000–25,000 settlers.[55] If he had made such a claim three years earlier, during the negotiations with the burgomasters, he may have met with staunch, and ultimately fatal, skepticism. Indeed Van den Enden's vehement denial that he was building "Castles in the Air"[56] may have its origins with a burgomaster observing just that. Besides, Van den Enden's expanding vision from a democratic colony with equal influence for everyone to a democratic Holland with equal influence for everyone may already have germinated back then, and his political thought developed into a potent brew that would have been much more than the burgomasters were able or willing to stomach.[57]

The burgomasters of Amsterdam were clearly interested in the greatest number of colonists they could get, but not at the price of giving away control over parts of it, as Van den Enden and his principals desired. But even though they decided that Van den Enden's project was not to their liking, Plockhoy's *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp* is proof that the burgomasters were willing to condone far-reaching institutional experiments in their jurisdiction, for the sake of settling their colony. The freedom they boasted of in their propaganda for the City Colony was thus not an idle phrase—they were prepared to grant it, up to a limit. For at the same time it should be clear to everyone that Amsterdam steered its colony with a firm hand.

## Aftermath: Plockhoy and Van den Enden after 1663

Success and failure are relative terms. This also applies to Plockhoy's success, and Van den Enden's failure. Plockhoy landed in May 1663 on the shores of the South River. New Amstel developed quickly in those years. His settlement had every reason to expect a prosperous future, but it was not to be, for in the beginning of October 1664 the settlement was "destroyed . . . to a Naile" by the English invaders, in a prelude to the Second Anglo–Dutch War, which would result in the loss of New Netherland. This level of destruction may have resulted from the fact that this was the only part of New Netherland to resist the English conquest. Some people must have thought there was something worth fighting for. It is unknown what happened to Plockhoy. He disappears from view—six years later his widow was living in Amsterdam.

Van den Enden never managed to found his colony. His success was in a sense to be posthumous. Even after the burgomasters had broken off contact, Van den Enden ostensibly still hoped to attract their support for his plans. That was the reason he published his proposal—and not just that. As he wrote, his "small trouble" of conceiving, writing, and submitting a "small petition" led him to write "books of paper" afterward. Now that petitioning the magistrate had not worked, Van den Enden tried a different strategy—that of influencing the public through the *Kort Verhael*. He had it published without either indication of author and publisher, which suggests that he judged the content of the *Kort Verhael* to be sufficiently controversial as to avoid too much unwelcome governmental attention to either author or printer. The preface of publication is dated Amsterdam, October 10, 1662,[58] four months after Plockhoy's *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp* had been published. He had expanded the tract into a small book that extended his vision to "all the most principal, most actual and most necessary grounds of a good government of Free Folk."[59]

According to his preface, he was inspired by the success of the writings of Johan (1622–1660) and Pieter de la Court (1618–1685),[60] and therefore has followed up their invitation of contemplating on the subject of freedom, adding that "this our contemplation of Freedom serves also somewhat to the aim that the Regents of our Fatherland by this also come to experience what the lesser of their inhabitants foster and feed between them for thoughts about Freedom."[61] Van den Enden thus turned his petitions and proposals into a book which directly engaged with the most intensely debated Dutch writings on politics of his day, and for that purpose also added to the published petitions a reworked proposal based on the 117 articles he had previously submitted to directors and burgomasters.[62]

Van den Enden's motivation for publication of the petitions seems the still very real—and ultimately justified—fear that the Dutch colony in America could not survive without a swift and massive migration. He still hoped that Amsterdam would change its policies, for in the *Kort Verhael* he wrote that only "this praiseworthy City and Government of Amsterdam" could be an effective colonizer.[63] The burgomasters did however not change their mind, though Van den Enden was not one to give up easily: a year later, in 1663, he extended the range of his writings when he had the tract republished, with a new title page under the title *Zeekere Vrye-Voorslagen*, or *Certain Free Propositions*, and a new dedication. This may have been addressed to the States of Holland rather than the City of Amsterdam, although it is dedicated to the people of Holland as a whole rather than just the States: Van den Enden specifically addresses his tract to his "Fellow Citizens and Countrymen, both Ruler as well as Ruled, Literate and Illiterate."[64]

To Van den Enden the reissue not only meant to advocate his "Dutch free popular colony" but also to propagate a "free State" in general, and it was the start of a more ambitious program of political writing.[65] However, the *Zeekere Vrye-Voorslagen* still bears witness to its cradle of colonial propaganda, as it was designed, according to the dedication, to show the "particular advantages of Dutch free popular colonies."[66] He grew to see his American endeavor, as he stated much later, as an attempt to develop a new sort of republic, next to Plato's republic, Grotius's republic, and More's Utopia, to be set up in the "New Holland" in America.[67] Part of his thoughts on a democratic republic he would publish later, in his most well known work, *Vrije Politijke Stellingen*, in 1665.

Eventually Van den Enden even tried to realize a new republican project in France, but with disastrous and fatal consequences for himself and his allies. He was implicated in the so-called Rohan plot, an attempt to incapacitate the ability of Louis XIV to rule France. The plot was

however discovered and the main conspirators—among them Van den Enden—were executed on November 27, 1674.[68]

## Conclusion

To sum it up, Amsterdam's magistrates were surprisingly open to egalitarian, democratic ideas coming from the population, at least where it concerned its colonial settlement policy. It was willing to condone, up to a level, such institutional experiments, which it certainly would not have concocted itself—government in a Dutch city was for the people as a whole, but not by the people as a whole. As the city relied on initiatives from below to improve its lawmaking, so too it was prepared to go some way to give room for other ideas from below—provided these ideas did not touch on the position of the magistrates themselves. Hence the protracted and sometimes tense negotiations with Van den Enden and his principals, and their eventual failure. That these negotiations failed was presumably because Van den Enden wanted too much and too soon. Plockhoy's proposal was another matter. Limited in numbers and scope as Plockhoy's colonial experiment was, had the colony survived, his experiment might well have worked. What that might have meant for the development of like-minded settlements can now never be known. But his experiment does show that Amsterdam's magistrates were willing to give room for popular ideas about self-government—as long as it was at the other side of the ocean.

## Annex Spurring Verses Prickel-Vaersen

To the Candidates for the Colony and Brothership, to be Established on the South River of New Netherland, by Pieter Cornelisz Plockhoy of Zierikzee, with his associates; and the favorable privileges, for that purpose, granted by the Hon. Lords Burgomasters of the City of Amsterdam, June 9, 1662

(Aen de Lief-hebbers van de Volck-planting en broederschap, op te Rechten, by de Zuyd-revier van Nieuw-nederland, door Pieter Cornelisz. Plockhoy van Zierck-zee, met sijn medestanders: en de gunstige voorrechten (tot dien eynde) vande E. E. Achtbare Heeren Burgermeesteren der Stad Amstelredam, haer verleend den 9 van Somermaend 1662.)

1.
You poor, who know not how your living to obtain;
You rich, who seek fortune without end;
Choose you New Netherland, which no one shall disdain;

Before your time and strength here fruitlessly are spent.
Here, your labor serves and benefits others
There, the cultivated lands, will give what you deserve.

(Ghy arme, die niet wel kond aen u noodruft raken:
Gy rijke, die 't geluck in 't voor-hoofd soecken wild:
Verkiest Nieuw-nederland, ('t sal niemand billik laken)
Eer gy u tijd en macht, hier vruchteloos verspild.
Hier moet gy and'ren, om u dienstb'ren arbeyd troonen,
Daer komt een gulle grond, u werck met woecker loonen.)

2.
New Netherland is the flower, the noblest of all lands;
With rich blessings crowned, where milk and honey flow;
By the most High of All, with doubly liberal hands
Endowed; yea filled up full, with what may thrive and grow.
The air, the earth, the sea, each pregnant with its gift,
The needy, without trouble, from distress to lift.

(Nieuw-nederland is 'tpuyck, en 't eelste van de Landen.
Een Seegen-rijck gewest, daer Melck en Honigh vloeyd,
Dat d'alderhooghste heeft (met dubbeld milde handen)
Begaeft: ja op-gevult, in 't geen daer wast en groeyd.
De Lugt, de Aerd en Zee, sijn swanger met haer gaven:
Om (die behoeftigh is) oock sonder moeyt te laven.)

3.
The birds obscure the sky, so numerous in their flight;
The animals roam wild, and flatten down the ground;
Fish swarm in the waters, twinkling in the light;
The oysters there, than which none better can be found,
Are piled up, heap on heap, till islands they attain;
And vegetation clothes the forest, mead and plain.

('t Gevoogelt doofd de lucht, wanneer se sich vervoeren.
Het wild-gedierte kneust, en plet de vaste grond,
De Visschen, krielen in de wat'ren: en beroeren
Diens klaerheyd: d'oesters (die men nergens beter vond)
Verheffen hoop op hoop, en maken menigh Eyland:
'tGewas vercierd het bosch: en bou, en hoy, en Wey-land.)

4.
You have your pick, which costs not pains or gold:
But if you labor give, then shall you also share
(With trust in Him who you from want here does uphold)
A rich reward, in time, for all your toil and care.
In cattle, grains and fruits, and every other thing;
Whereby you always have great cause His praise to sing.

(Hier hebt ghy deel aen, schoon 't u geld noch moeyte koste.
Maer so gy naerstigh blijft in d'arbeyd op sijn tijd,
(In hoop tot hem, die u uyt d'armoed hier verloste:)
Gy sult een rijken loon genieten voor u vlijt.
Aen Vee, aen Graen, aen Fruyt: en duysent and're dingen,
Waer door gy stof hebt steeds, d'al-gever lof te singen.)

5.
Why always gaze upon home, your town and Fatherland?
Is God not over all? heavens ever wide?
His blessings deck the earth, — like bursting veins expand
In floods of treasures over, wherever you abide;
Which neither are to monarchies nor dukedoms bound,
They are as well in one as other country found.

(Wat siet gy op u huys, de Stad of 'tLand uw's vaders?
Is God niet over-al? den Hemel even wijt?
Sijn segen deckt de aerd: en stort (uyt volle aders)
Een vloed van schatten: die gy vind waer dat gy sijt.
Sy is aen Koning-rijck, noch Vorsten-dom gebonden,
Sy word so wel in 't een, als 't ander Land gevonden.)

6.
And there, a view alive does always meet your eye,
Of Eden, and the Promised Land of Jacob's seed;
Who would not, then, in such a formed community,
Desire to be free; and the rights decreed
To each and every one, by Amstel's burgher Lords,
Enjoy? and treat with honor what their rule awards?

(Maer daer, daer siet gy steeds, een levende vertooningh
Van Eden: en van 't Land, aen Jacobs saad beloofd:
Wie sou in dat gewest (in sulck een 't samen-woningh)
Niet wenschen vry te sijn; en yder hoofd voor hoofd,
Het voor-recht (elck gegund, van d'Amstels-Burger-Heeren)
Genieten? en 't gesach van haer beleydingh eeren?)

7.
Communities the groundwork are of every state;
They first the hamlet, village and the city make;
From whence proceeds the commonwealth; whose members, great
(as their own) interest in the common welfare take.
'T is no Utopia; it rests on firm principles,
Which for true freedom prescribe you settled rules.

(De 't samen-wooningh is, een grond van alle Staten.
Die eerst gehucht en buert, en Dorp ja Steden maeckt:
Waer uyt 't gemeene-best ontspringt, wiens onder-saten,

Den welstand van 't gemeen (als eygen) 't harte raeckt.
'Tis geen Vtopia, 't steund op gegronde wetten:
Die tot de vrijheyd u een vasten Regel setten.)

8.
You will not aliens in those far lands appear;
As formerly, in Egypt, even was Israel.
Nor have you subjection or tyranny to fear,
Since Joseph's eyes do see, and on the compass fall.
The City's Fathers on the Y, who truly perform their labors,
Are your protectors; and your countrymen are neighbors.

(Gy sult geen Vremdelingh, in dese Landen wesen:
Als eertijts Israel, self in Aegypten was.
Gy hoeft geen dienstbaerheyd noch dwinglandy te vreesen:
Mits Josephs ogen sien, en letten op 't Kompas,
De vaders die aen 't Y, haer Stad met lof bestueren
Sijn u beschermers, en u Land-aerd u gebueren.)

9.
New Netherland's South River, —a second Amazon,
For you a pleasure garden on its banks concedes.
Choose you the Swanendael, where Osset had his throne,
Or any other spot your avocation needs.
You have the choice of all; and you're left free to choose;
Keep the conditions well, and you have naught to lose.

(Nieuw-neer-lands Zuyd-revier (of tweede Almasonas)
Schaft (op haer oevers) u een lusthof: tot verblijf.
Gy kiest of Swanen-dal (daer Osets rijck en troon was)
Of wel een ander plaats, tot nut van u bedrijf.
Gy hebt de keur van al: het staet u vry te kiesen.
Betracht dit voor-recht wel, gy sult het niet verliesen.)

10.
Discard the base report, unworthy of your ear;
'Tis forged by ignorance and hate and jealous spite,
By those who are its authors, to bedim this fair
Bright morning sun before the laughing noonday light.
An accident may hinder, but not change the plan,
Whose gloss, take that away, you then may fairly scan.

(Verwerpt dan 't quaed gerucht (onwaerdigh na te luyst'ren)
'T is uyt wan-gunst of haat, of on-kun meest verdicht,
Van haer die d'oorsaeck sijn: om hatigh te verduyst'ren,
Dees schoone Ochtend-son voor 't lachend middagh-licht.
Een toe-val mach de saeck wel hind'ren, niet verand'ren,
Maer neemt se wech, gy sult diens glans en luyster schrand'ren.)

11.
'T was just an accident, which gives them stuff to slight
That land, which, as I know, no proper rival has;
In order from your purpose they may you affright,
Who there desire to live, before you thither pass.
'T is groundless, every one may easily perceive.
Who now neglects the chance, great treasures does he leave.

('T was maer een toe-val, die haer stof geeft te verachten,
Dat Land dat (na mijn kun) geen eygen weerga heeft,
Om u (die lust hebt daer te woonen) de gedachten
T'ont-roeren buyten 't spoor, eer gy u derwaerts geeft.
Doch sonder Re'en en grond, 't geen yder licht kan vatten:
Die tijd en Plaats versuymd, verwaerloost groote schatten.)

Jacob Steendam,
Noch Vaster

## Notes

1. See for that Frans Blom and Henk Looijesteijn, "A Land of Milk and Honey: Colonial Propaganda and the City of Amsterdam, 1656–1664," *De Halve Maen* LXXXV (2012), 47–56, and the literature listed there.
2. This is for example argued by Michel Reinders, *Gedrukte Chaos. Populisme en moord in het Rampjaar 1672* (Amsterdam: Balans, 2010).
3. See for example the work of Paul Knevel, *Burgers in het geweer: De schutterijen in Holland, 1550–1700* (Hilversum, the Netherlands: Verloren, 1994); Nico Slokker, *Ruggengraat van de stad. De betekenis van gilden in Utrecht, 1528–1818* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2010); and the work of Maarten Prak, Chapter 6 in this volume but also his book *Republikeinse veelheid, democratische enkelvoud. Sociale verandering in het Revolutietijdvak: 's-Hertogenbosch 1770–1820* (Nijmegen, the Netherlands: SUN, 1999).
4. For example the brothers De la Court, studied by Arthur Weststeijn, *Commercial Republicanism in the Dutch Golden Age. The Political Thought of Johan & Pieter de la Court* (Leiden, the Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2012).
5. See for this Blom and Looijesteijn, "A Land of Milk and Honey," *passim*.
6. For his life and political struggle, see Russell Shorto, *The Island at the Center of the World. The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony That Shaped America* (New York: Doubleday, 2004).
7. Adriaen van der Donck, *Beschrijvinge van Nieuw-Nederlant (ghelijck het tegenwoordigh in Staet is) begrijpende de Nature, Aert, gelegentheyt en vruchtbaerheyt van het selve lant* … (Amsterdam: 1655) fol. *2v: "Ende al-hoewel den Staet vande ghemelde West-Indische Compagnie nu als vervallen schijnt te wesen."
8. Van der Donck, *Beschrijvinge*, fol. *3v–4r:

*Ende also uwe E. W. dagelijcks met seer groote vlijt ende sorge, alles zijt bestellende, om dat Lantschap met bequaeme Colonien van Menschen te versien . . . daerom hebbe ick niet konnen nalaten alle mijne Lantsluyden ten besten, ende voornementlijck veele kloeckhertighe en bequame Luyden, mijne Mede-Burgeren, dit te laten toe komen, opdat sij, die andersins soo grondeljck van de goede ende gesonde lucht en vruchtbaerheyt des gemelten Lantschaps Nieuw-Nederland, niet bewust en zijn, te beth mogen opgeweckt worden om derwaerts te gaen.*

9. Blom and Looijesteijn, "A Land of Milk and Honey," 49; The Short Title Catalogue Netherlands (STCN) lists 12 publications by Evert Nieuwenhof. All are in the vernacular for common readers.
10. The view of New Amsterdam was based on a drawing, dated around 1650, which was made on the spot and brought to the Republic in order to underline the miserable state of the colony. See M. Gosselink, *Land in zicht. Vingboons tekent de wereld van de 17de eeuw* (Zwolle, the Netherlands: Waanders, 2007), 49–50.
11. *Conditiën die door de heeren burgemeesteren der Stadt Amsterdam* (etc.) (Amsterdam: 1656); Koninklijke Bibliotheek, pamphlet nr. 7776a. See for Banningh: M. M. Kleerkooper and W. P. van Stockum, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam, voornamelijk in de 17e eeuw. Biographische en geschiedkundige aanteekeningen* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1914–1916), vol. I, 33.
12. A "morgen" was presumably the land one could plough with a span of oxen in one morning, here c.15 or 20 hectares; J. M. Verhoeff, *De oude Nederlandse maten en gewichten* (Amsterdam: P. J. Meertens Instituut, 1982), 101, 115.
13. *Conditiën*, 2–5.
14. *Conditien*; Koninklijke Bibliotheek, pamphlet nr. 7776a. This edition was published with "the consent of the City Burgomasters," according to the printer's impressum on the title page: "*Conditien* [etc.] t'Amsterdam, Met consent vande Ed. Hoog. Achtbare Meeren [*sic*], de Heeren Borgermeesteren, by Evert Nieuwenhoff Boeckverkooper op 't Ruslandt in 't jaer 1656."
15. (Anon.), *'t Verheerlickte Nederland door d'herstelde zee-vaart* (s.l.: 1659); National Library, The Hague, pamphlet nr. 8176, 13; see also Frans R. E. Blom, "Picturing New Netherland and New York. Dutch–Anglo transfer of New World Information," in: *The Dutch Trading Companies as Knowledge Networks*, eds. Siegfried Huigen, Jan de Jong, and Elmer Kolfin (Leiden, the Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2010), 103–126, 108.
16. Blom, "Picturing New Netherland," 108, 110. See for the way in which Van der Donck resorted to a manipulative fashioning of many elements of the text: Blom, "Picturing New Netherland," 110–114.
17. Kleerkooper and Van Stockum, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam*, vol. I, 367–368.
18. WIC advertisements for New Netherland in *Haerlemsche Saterdaegsche Courant* 1658 (November 19 and 21) and 1659 (March 15).
19. *Ordinarise Middelweeckse Courante no. 41, 1661*, dated October 11, 1661, Commissarisen en Directeurs over de Colonie/ weghens de Stadt

Amstelredam/ op-gerecht in Nieu-Nederlandt; notificeren by desen aen alle Landt-Bouwers/Huysluyden en andere/die hun met de Culture der Landen souden willen bemoeyen en erneren, ende dewelcke dienvolghens hare Namen reedts hebben laten aen-teeckenen/ ofte oock als noch souden willen laten aen-teeckenen/datse hun teghens 't laetst van October/1661 ten uytersten tot Amsterdam/by Commissarisen en Directeurs voornoemt/sullen laten vinden volkomen ghereet ende veerdigh/omme de reyse aen te nemen/alsoo het Schip/dat daer toe is aen-leggende/om soodanighe Luyden naer de voorsz. Colonie over te voeren/als dan zijn reyse derwaerts aennemen sal.

20. (H.V.Z.M. (i.e., Franciscus van den Enden)), *Kort Verhael van Nieuw-Nederlants Gelegentheit, Deughden, Natuerlijke Voorrechten, en byzondere bequaemheidt ter bevolkingh: Mitsgaders eenige Requesten, Vertoogen, Deductien enz. ten dien einden door eenige Liefhebbers ten verscheide tijden omtrent 't laetst van 't Jaer 1661. gepresenteert aen de A.A. Heeren Burgermeesteren dezer Stede, of der zelver E. E. Heeren Gecommiteerde, enz.* (s.l.: 1662). Frank Mertens has convincingly shown that the tract was published by Jan Rieuwerts and Pieter Arentsz, as he will show in his impending edition of the text and translation. We are much indebted to him for allowing us to read this in advance of publication. All quotations are from his translation.
21. See for example Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 3, 6–8, 10, 12–14.
22. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 10.
23. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 12–13. The Fresh River was the Dutch name for the Connecticut River, lost to the Dutch by virtue of continual English encroachment.
24. *'t Verheerlickt Nederland*, 8–9.
25. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 19–21. Klever believes it is "without doubt" that Van den Enden's later political theory may have been inspired partly by what he had read about Native American societies; Franciscus van den Enden, *Vrije Politijke Stellingen. Met een inleiding van Wim Klever*, ed. Wim Klever (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 1992), 37.
26. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 19.
27. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 23.
28. Blom and Looijesteijn, "A Land of Milk and Honey," 50–52.
29. See Blom and Looijesteijn, "A Land of Milk and Honey," 52–54, for a more detailed treatment of the poem.
30. See for this: R. Cordes, *Jan Zoet, Amsterdammer 1609–1674. Leven en werk van een kleurrijk schrijver* (Hilversum, the Netherlands: Verloren, 2008).
31. Digital edition at http://www.dbnl.org/titels/titel.php?id= zoet001parn01.
32. See for the above: Henk Looijesteijn, "'Born to the Common Welfare'. Pieter Plockhoy's Quest for a Christian Life (c.1620–1664)" (Doctoral thesis, European University Institute, November 25, 2009).
33. The original manuscript contract is in SAA, Archive 5023, Groot-Memoriaal 5 (1659–1669), fol. 79–80, but does not differ from the published contract: All further references are therefore to the published contract.

34. For what follows, unless indicated otherwise: Plockhoy, *A Way*, 9–11, 24–25; Plockhoy, *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp*, 3, 6–9. All quotations from the latter are translated from the original Dutch by Henk Looijesteijn.
35. Incumbents could though stand for reelection, since, in Plockhoy's opinion, "he that hath a mind to continue in the Government will have an Inducement to rule well"; Plockhoy, *A Way*, 9.
36. Unfortunately, Plockhoy is vague about whether women had a say in the society's legislative and religious meetings: He does not exclude them explicitly, which suggests that, like many other dissenters of that period, he was not unfavorably disposed to women speaking in public.
37. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 27–28.
38. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 50–51.
39. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 51–53.
40. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 51.
41. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 52.
42. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 28–29.
43. Articles 40–42; Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 54.
44. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 55–56.
45. By Wim Klever: Van den Enden, *Vrije Politijke Stellingen*, 58.
46. If they did not simply conflate the two texts to begin with, as did E. B. O'Callaghan in his *History of New Netherland, or New York under the Dutch* (New York: Appleton, 1855), vol. II, 465–469, who summarizes the *Kort Verhael* and then proceeds with the contract between Plockhoy and Amsterdam without mentioning the *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp*.
47. Klever, for example, thinks Plockhoy only became the spokesman of the colonists after Van den Enden had made himself impossible with the burgomasters, and presumes Plockhoy joined Van den Enden's principals and did book fast results after having removed the more radical concepts in Van den Enden's design in his own *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp*; Van den Enden, *Vrije Politijke Stellingen*, 31–32.
48. Van den Enden writes nothing in the *Kort Verhael* about Plockhoy or his contract with the burgomasters; Plockhoy never refers to him either. The attempts of most notably Klever and Israel to link the two and thus provide Spinoza with Plockhoy as a source of the philosopher's egalitarianism should thus be regarded with some skepticism in the absence of further evidence. See for their opinions Van den Enden, *Vrije Politijke Stellingen*, 31–32; to be sure Klever sees here only an indirect relation: Van den Enden, *Vrije Politijke Stellingen*, 114, note 17. More emphatic is Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment. Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 177; Jonathan I. Israel, "The Intellectual Origins of Modern Democratic Republicanism," *European Journal of Political Theory* 3 (2004), 7–36, 17.
49. See, for instance, articles 43, 55–57, 62, and 114; Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 55, 56, 61. He also pays much attention to agriculture in New Netherland in a chapter devoted to agriculture in the description: Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 23–27. There were of course to be such craftsmen as carpenters and pottery

bakers, who would cater for essential needs: Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 36. But such crafts as professional weaving were not allowed: article 83, Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 64–65.

50. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 56, article 62.
51. Evan Haefeli, "The Creation of American Religious Pluralism. Churches, Colonialism, and Conquest in the Mid-Atlantic 1628–1688" (unpublished dissertation, Princeton University, NJ, 2000), 17–18, 49, 86, 91–92, 128–143.
52. Haefeli, *Creation*, 119, also points this out.
53. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 50–51.
54. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 28.
55. Van den Enden, *Vrije Politijke Stellingen*, 125–126, 131, 241–249; Th. Van Tijn, "Franciscus van den Enden (1602–1674): een zelfbenoemd woordvoerder van het 'mindere slagh' van ingezetenen van Holland," in: *Van Amsterdam naar Tilburg en toch weer terug. Opstellen aangeboden aan dr. Johan de Vries ter gelegenheid van zijn afscheid als hoogleraar economische geschiedenis aan de Katholieke Universiteit Brabant op 16 november 1992*, eds. J. F. E. Bläsing and H. H. Vleesenbeek (Leiden, the Netherlands, and Antwerp, Belgium: Martinus Nijhoff, 1992), 191–201, 197.
56. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 66.
57. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 28; Van Tijn, "Franciscus van den Enden," 200–201.
58. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, "Voor-Reeden," fifth page.
59. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, "Waarschouwingh."
60. The "Free-Writers of Political Considerations, Counts' and Stadtholders' Governments, Dutch Interests, Discourses, et cetera," as he calls them; Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, "Voor-Reeden," second page.
61. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, "Voor-Reeden," second page.
62. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 33–42.
63. Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 12–13.
64. H.V.Z.M. (i.e., Franciscus van den Enden), *Zeekere Vrye-Voorslagen, en Versoeken, tot Bevorderingh van een bestandige, voor Hollandt hooghnutte, en niet min verheerlijkende Vrye Volx Uitzetting etc.* (Amsterdam: 1663), dedication. This edition was published also by Jan Rieuwertsz and Pieter Arentsz, at the cost of the author, as the title page shows.
65. Van den Enden suggested it was the first part of a series of publications. Eventually, only two of these ever made it into print, the second of it focusing almost exclusively on his blueprint of such a "free State"; Van den Enden, *Vrije Politijke Stellingen*, 29, 125.
66. Van den Enden, *Zeekere Vrye-Voorslagen*, dedication.
67. Van den Enden, *Vrije Politijke Stellingen*, 84.
68. Jan V. Meininger and Guido van Suchtelen, "*Liever met wercken, als met woorden.*" *De levensreis van doctor Franciscus van den Enden, leermeester van Spinoza, complotteur tegen Lodewijk de Veertiende* (Weesp, the Netherlands: Heureka, 1980), 68–69, 71–72, 98, 104–105,109, 115, 118–121.

Part IV

# Forging the Individual

10

# Depression and Evangelicalism in the Family of Esther Tuke

*Phyllis Mack*

I feel the language of encouragement . . .

*Esther Tuke, 1792*

During his visit to England in 1726–1729, Voltaire made the acquaintance of a retired Quaker merchant who received and entertained him in his simple country house.

> The Quaker was a hale and hearty old man who had never been ill because he had never known passions or intemperance; never in my life have I seen a more dignified or more charming manner than his . . . He kept his hat on while receiving me and moved toward me without even the slightest bow, but there was more politeness in the frank, kindly expression on his face than there is in the custom of placing one leg behind the other and holding in one's hand what is meant for covering one's head.[1]

Voltaire admired the man's estate (comfortable but not luxurious), his contempt for the superstitions of Catholics and Jews, and his pacifism, which, in Voltaire's rendition, was expressed with the naive wit of a character in *Candide*:

> Our god, who has bidden us love our enemies . . . undoubtedly does not wish us to cross the sea to go and slaughter our brothers just because some murderers dressed in red, with a two-foot-high bonnet, enroll citizens by making a noise with two little sticks on tightly stretched ass's skin.[2]

So the Quaker took his place alongside the Incas, Tahitians, and other exotics who provided the *philosophes* with a mouthpiece for debunking their own corrupt society. He also stands as an exemplar of the ideal Enlightenment citizen as seen through the eyes of a premier exponent of Enlightenment values. We may see the Quaker as ordinary in his lack of luxury or pretension; Voltaire saw him as extraordinary and exemplary, a model of rationality and politeness. Neither account takes into consideration his emotional state.

Voltaire's rendition of the Quaker persona captured the poise and self-possession of many British Friends (as they called themselves), but not their hypersensitivity or their tendency to depression. Richard Shackleton was master of a highly respectable boarding school and a close friend of Edmund Burke and other eminent contemporaries, yet his letters to his children convey a surprising timidity and defensivenesss toward the outside world. "The friendship which the world professes," he wrote to his daughter Lydia, "is . . . capricious and insincere: their favour is deceitful, and their applause uncertain; but by . . . doing service to God rather than to man, we shall be upheld over and above the fluctuating tempers of men—over their insidious smiles, as well as their overbearing frowns."[3] Another prominent Friend and businessman, William Tuke, recorded an almost hour-by-hour account of the fluctuations in his mental state in a letter to his wife Esther:

> I found an inclination to . . . inform thee how it has been with me, since I wrote to thee yesterday morning. My mind was pretty much oppressed the remaining part of the day, but greatly so for a considerable time in the fore part of the evening, after that rather easier. This morning I was a good deal comforted, and drawn in much nearness to thee.[4]

Esther in turn wrote many letters to her niece Tabitha about her own depressive temperament:

> having for the most part, neither cheerfulness, nor any agreeable conversation . . . scarcely able to look after, or give proper directions about what is to be done . . . It often appears to me that my life is to be attended with a considerable degree of secret gloominess, or perhaps I may call it mourning . . . so that I have frequently little satisfaction or comfort in any thing in this world, and often pity my husband and children that they have such an unsociable companion.[5]

Meanwhile Esther's beloved stepdaughter Sarah Tuke Grubb confided to a friend that she could barely screw herself up to attend a Quaker Quarterly Meeting, even though nothing was actually wrong:

> My present affliction hath gained great ascendency over my mind, so that I seem fast losing my hold, and sense of Him that is invisible . . . I know that nothing hath yet occurred, which needs to scatter a well regulated mind from the source of good; but I am left to such a sense of my own wretchedness, that even the grasshopper or things comparable to it, are become a burden. To attend a quarterly meeting under such impressions, is a prospect which I need not describe.[6]

These expressions of disquiet reflect the concerns of a group of pacifist sectarians, striving to uphold their religious values while adapting to the rhythms of a volatile commercial and secularizing society. This was the indirect result of the Act of 1689, which granted partial toleration to religious sects, giving Friends protection against arrests and confiscations while keeping them out of the universities and other desirable positions. Its effect was not only to increase Friends' physical and economic security; it also increased their vulnerability to both the slights of society and the lure of assimilation.

As social reformers and innovators in science, education, medicine, mental health, and the administration of prisons, eighteenth-century Quakers seemed to be breathing the clear air of the Enlightenment. Dr. John Fothergill, for one, was an experimental gardener, member of the Royal Society, humanitarian, and friend of Benjamin Franklin—another exemplar of the ideal Enlightenment citizen. Yet Quakers were also quietists striving for self-transcendence, mystical insight, and radical pacifism, all of which isolated them from the social and political worlds of their contemporaries. From the middle years of the century onward, Quakers subjected themselves to a system of discipline that seemed to give them no air to breathe at all. "How safe is diffidence," wrote John Fothergill's brother Samuel, an eminent minister, "even if obtained through chastisement for error!"[7]

From Voltaire's perspective, it might have seemed that Friends had simply subsumed their spiritual goals within the secular ideals of the Enlightenment; indeed, many Quakers used "God" and "wisdom," "conscience" and "the Inner Light" as interchangeable terms. From the Quakers' own perspective, however, all of life was permeated by a religious consciousness, every action infused by a combination of self-government and attentiveness to the divine will. Dinner and the dispensing of charity were spiritual events; business problems were spiritual problems. Indeed, the Inner Light was to be as clearly perceptible in the dignified demeanor, fair trading practices, and thoughtful discourse of merchants and traders as in the behavior of the traveling ministers who visited remote Quaker meetings on horseback to monitor the discipline and piety of Friends. The archetypal

Friend was no longer a visionary or a social critic, but a once ordinary man like the minister Samuel Bownas, who was described by an observer as

> a wealthy merchant out of Dorsetshire, a very fair and honorable tradesman both in the wholesale and retail way, a punctual payer of the King's duties, and a detester of the smuggling trade. He delivers vast quantities of excellent goods, gives large measure and good pennyworth. He was but a blacksmith . . . in his younger years, and not then worth five pounds per annum, but really I think he has been at the university since he left the anvil, for even whilst he is exposing his traffic he talks like a philosopher.[8]

Undoubtedly, Friends like Samuel Bownas *were* often comfortable in affirming both a quietist spirituality and an engagement in worldly business (particularly "innocent trades" like horticulture or medicine rather than, say, the manufacture of weapons). Thus the successful pharmacist and businessman William Cookworthy expressed himself in a quietist vein: "To be distinguished from the generality of mankind, who are lost among the vanities of the things of Time, by the eye turned towards the heavenly inheritance is an honourable distinction."[9] For many other Friends, however, the attempt to sustain the correct mix of secular and religious values generated confusion and discomfort; it was as great a challenge to their peace of mind as the confiscations and jail sentences they had endured a century before. So William Tuke ruminated in a letter to a friend,

> We see it is not the rich and the prosperous who are most at liberty to attend their religious duties, but such as . . . make it their care not to be involved in a greater multiplicity of business than their necessities, and that of their families, truly call for at their hands. But in this case there cannot be any general limitation; some may be greatly engaged in business, and their minds much at liberty whilst others who seem to have little to do in the world, may be almost buried in the Earth.[10]

Focusing on the writings of a single family and attending to their anxieties as well as their achievements, I ask how a group of Yorkshire Quakers, most of them women, transformed themselves from religious quietists into modern social activists. Female Quakers were prone to the same collective angst that afflicted male Friends, but they were also instrumental in moving Quakerism from the inertia and inwardness of quietism to the vigor of an evangelical movement. Indeed, Quakerism's survival as a community and its later prominence in movements of social justice were largely the result of women's efforts as preachers, as leaders in the Quaker meeting system, and in the creation of new institutions, and surely one of the

most creative and energetic of all these women was the indefatigable Esther Tuke.[11]

* * *

Integrity in financial dealings had always been a tenet of Quaker practice; the earliest Friends were enjoined to give fair weights and measures and to avoid bargaining, and this emphasis on fairness had gained them a high reputation as traders, shopkeepers, and artisans. In the eighteenth century, their material and moral competence in business was reinforced by new opportunities as well as new strictures on their behavior. English law or their own religious principles prevented them from entering either the university or the military, and continued penalties for nonpayment of tithes (taxes on land) made farming precarious; nor could they engage in luxury trades or the manufacture of products used in warfare. So Friends became involved in the textile and clothing trades, iron foundries, the production of domestic ironware and porcelain, mining, and banking. Because of strictures against marrying outside the community, all of these enterprises came to be dominated by huge self-made manufacturing and trading families, whose kinship ties reinforced Friends' sense of corporate responsibility for solvency and honest dealing, as well as devotion to private property and the virtues and pleasures of domesticity. The busy trader, teacher, or capitalist was elevated to a higher spiritual plane when he retired into his family, divested his mind of all aggression and greed, and transcended class differences by treating his workers, servants, and children as his moral apprentices. Thus Richard Shackleton's daughter Mary observed the interplay of the principles of democracy and deference at family dinners:

> When the varied business of the day was over, it was a comely sight to see the parlour supper-table surrounded by the master, mistress, their children, the young men who were parlour-boarders, the ushers, the housekeeper, all on an equal footing; all equally at liberty to express their sentiments . . . Without losing the respect due to their own characters and situation as heads of the establishment . . . R(ichard) and E(lizabeth) S(hackleton) treated them with a kind familiarity, which attached them to home, and precluded the desire of seeking more enjoyment elsewhere, which is too often the effect of repulsive manners.[12]

The members of these elite families tended to become the elders and overseers of Quaker meetings, where they monitored the moral and material welfare of poorer Friends. Their concern about correct business ethics was chiefly motivated by their anxiety about Friends' public image: not

only their fear of public disgrace, but their spiritual mission to stand as exemplars of a particular way of life, a purified respectability. Material pressures accentuated this anxiety about debt and bankruptcy, because the local Quaker meeting, not the parish, was responsible for the material survival of the entire Quaker community. If a husband went bankrupt or absconded with the shop's inventory, his wife and children would throw themselves on the mercy of the meeting, which might support them in a Quaker workhouse and instruct the husband to pay his debts, making certain that he was not withholding any property that might rightfully belong to his creditors. Bankruptcy was thus both a material catastrophe for the family and meeting and a spiritual catastrophe for the individual—indeed, for the movement as a whole—and nonpayment of debts could mean expulsion from the Society of Friends.[13]

The importance of self-control as both the road to success and a defense against worldly corruption was graphically depicted in the "Map of the Various Paths of Life," a kind of moral Monopoly game for the edification of Quaker children, published in 1794.[14] The steady young tradesman travels a (literally) straight and narrow path through Discreet County and Courteous Square, building his strength by climbing Manly Hill along the way. He proceeds through Steady Plains (dutifully pausing at Submission Valley and Diligent Bank) and continues onward to Serenity Province, where, after inhaling the bracing air of Integrity Level, he is refreshed at a Thriving Farm House, situated just between Competent Close and Economy Precinct. Making an easy descent down Retiring Slope, he comes to rest at Happy Old Age Hall before the final journey to the PEACEFUL OCEAN. The weak young man sneaks out the back door of Parental Care Hall and embarks on a zigzag path to perdition. "Many a young Tradesman," says the commentary,

> has arrived at <the Temple of Fame> and yet missed of Esteem Hall; by not keeping a guard over his appetite, he has gone to Feasting Hall . . . and though many are in Perplexity Parish, they will to Decoy Theatre and Spendthrift Ordinary; which leads to gambler's Hotel . . . down Losing Vale, by Needy Maze, to Misery Square.

Barely avoiding Horror Bog, he finally struggles through Hopeless Slough and No Friend Shed, hurtles into Despair Gulph, is sucked down into the Sinking Sands, and finally disappears into the BOTTOMLESS PIT.

Our young Quaker meets no women on either path (except, perhaps, in the kitchen of the Thriving Farm House), but in fact the Women's Meetings had extensive responsibilities toward morally wayward and poorer members, though more serious cases required the authority of the Men's

Meeting as well. In Bristol, Ann Webb, who was living in a "house of ill fame," refused to leave; the Women's Committee left it to the Men's Meeting to adjudicate. Thomas Ridley was obliged to make shoes provided Friends consent that he be provided with leather. Sarah Stagg asked to be secreted in a secure place away from her husband during the coming election. Widow Ferris complained of little work, and when she did work her children "were running about to no good purpose." The meeting ruled that "it would be quite unreasonable to take either of her children into the workhouse without some part of her present pay being taken [care] of." The Men's Meeting approved but Widow Ferris quibbled about the amount. She was also unwilling to assume more debts, "without it is that of her husband's coffin." Hester Jefferies's husband abandoned her and their six children; she was awarded a weekly allowance, pending agreement of the Men's Meeting. The committee visited Jane Bullock, who "owns she has been to blame in pawning her own and children's clothes to buy bread but denies the charge of drinking to excess"; the children were sent to the workhouse.[15] Samuel Armitage addressed the York Monthly Meeting after he lost his business in 1788:

> I am Bowed in mind under the Reproach I have brought on the holy Profession . . . and sorely distressed on my family's account . . . one thing I most tenderly beg of you that you don't disown my wife who is in no measure guilty of the disagreeable scandal I have brought on your holy Christian profession, the many things that crowd in on my poor distressed mind that I most sincerely desire . . . that you intercede with . . . God . . . that the enemy do not prevail against me.[16]

His wife Mary wrote to the same meeting the following year, pleading ignorance of her husband's misdeeds:

> And had not the tender regard of an indulgent husband kept me in ignorance <of his debts> I should most assuredly have acted . . . very differently . . . and even submitted willingly to the most servile drudgery . . . these mournfull particulars I hope will excite your pity, so far as not to add to my affliction by depriving me of the privileges I have enjoyed in the society.[17]

Esther Tuke (1727–1794), a pillar of the York Women's Meeting, understood these anxieties all too well, having spent the first half of her life in a household with too little money, and the second half with too much. When she was a young woman, one of her brothers moved to America, leaving the family to pay his debts, another brother was a spendthrift, and a third died before he could recoup his investments. Her father's money worries undermined his health, and when he died in 1752, Esther, aged 25, promised to

help restore the family's solvency, which she did by opening a shop. She described her feelings at that period in a letter to William Tuke, written many years later during their courtship.

> I sought death but could not find it . . . neither life nor anything was to me in that day of much value . . . I was much concerned for my dear mother and the family and felt the weight come upon me . . . I was sure nothing could prosper and became then more weary of life, indeed of all things my eyes could see.[18]

William, who had taken over the family's grocery and tea business when he was 20, confessed that he too had run into serious debt, having been extravagant with his first, much loved wife, who had died in childbirth.

> I not only most anxiously grasped after the greatness of the world . . . but my corrupt inclination so far prevailed as again to push me on to such delight in forbidden gratification . . . I seemed to go on during part of this time prosperously in business . . . but when I looked over my affairs was disappointed . . . I was almost upon the brink of destruction when my dear wife was taken from me.[19]

William believed that his wife's death and his economic problems were judgments on his extravagance, and that in a later romantic involvement,

> I ran back very fast . . . I let out my affections, and formed to myself a prospect of too much ease and satisfaction for me for surely scarce any ever formed greater schemes in idea than I, nor any perhaps more unfit to be trusted with affluence . . . I wanted more satisfaction in it [both emotional and financial] than was meet for me to witness.[20]

His marriage to Esther would, he thought, bring a more sober satisfaction, both inwardly and outwardly. He concluded his declaration of intent to marry by giving the current worth of his grocery and tea business as between 600 and 700 pounds.

When Esther and William married (she at 38, he at 33), Esther took on the care of William's five children, the oldest only ten years old, and gave birth to two more living children. The duties of motherhood did not come easily, especially the need to protect her children from the temptations of a materialist society. Thus she wrote to a friend in 1772,

> do we not see how pride, superfluities in meat, drink & apparel abound amongst us, and like a torrent seem to carry all before them, and I think cry loudly for a stop? For my part the prospect is often so distressing on

> account of training up our own children . . . For it seems scarcely possible to bring them up in the way we would have them to walk.[21]

Esther's response to the stress of domestic life and the decline of discipline in the meetings she visited was not to withdraw into domesticity and quietism, as many Friends did, but to multiply her public religious activities. At age 54, she came into her own as a minister. Unlike most Friends, who preached chiefly to other Quakers, she was an active missionary in every sense, climbing the Derbyshire hills and preaching on at least one occasion to an audience estimated at over a thousand.[22] Her four daughters, son Henry, and grandson Samuel all became ministers or leaders of the local meeting, and it was this tiny cohort that introduced an evangelical spirit into Quakerism in the north of England.

The members of the Tuke family were institution-builders, par excellence. Esther, William, and their daughter Sarah Tuke Grubb founded and administered three schools. The Ackworth School (which still exists) was founded in Pontefract, Yorkshire, in 1779 by Dr. John Fothergill, David Barclay (of Barclays bank), and William Tuke, the only one of the three who was actually on site.[23] Designed for the education of Quaker children of limited means, it was attended by poor and middle-class children from all over England, the poorer students mixing with those who were more prosperous. The curriculum emphasized the attainment of "useful" knowledge, teaching reading, writing, and accounts to prospective tradesmen and merchants. It also included Quaker history and horticulture, as gardens were a prominent element of Quaker domesticity, scientific experimentation, and religious contemplation.[24] Students also learned a particular work ethic. In their exercise books for penmanship, they copied, over and over, the phrases, "acquire useful learning," "bounty is admired," "knowledge is the most advantageous acquisition," and "success accompanies diligence."[25] The slogans must have been at least partially absorbed, for Ackworth produced a remarkable number of men who were active in the worlds of commerce and industry.

Ackworth's mission was not only as a vocational institution but as a school for character, shaping in its students an even-tempered, malleable disposition. As an extension of Quaker child-rearing practice, it aimed to provide a completely controlled environment, instilling habits of moral and emotional discipline through a regimen of work, study, silence, cold baths, and general austerity. So far as possible, all masters, housekeepers, domestic staff, and students were Friends. No vacations were allowed, and parents were not permitted to take students off the premises. Students could write home four times a year. There was silence before, during, and after meals, except for whispered requests to pass the food. Students

might exercise and play after lunch, but there was no coed mingling. Punitive discipline consisted largely of beatings, which were delivered in a calm frame of mind and entered in a record book; in one year, 1784–1785, there were between 40 and 50 records of whipping, birching, or chastisement with a rod.[26] When beatings proved inadequate to control the children, other punishments were added: solitary confinement, arraignment before the school, public confession, and the "coffins," introduced for a brief period in 1821. These were coffin-size boxes that stood on end next to a teacher's bed, where a delinquent student might be enclosed for several hours. Quaker visitors to Ackworth appreciated the calm atmosphere and the subdued, adult carriage of the pupils. Richard Shackleton's daughter Mary visited the school in 1786 and was charmed by the orderly demeanor of the children. She described the farm, gardens, washing linen, and the punishments (not the coffins), of which she approved.[27]

In 1784 Esther Tuke led a deputation of English and American Friends who traveled to the Yearly Meeting in London to plead—successfully—for recognition of a yearly Women's Meeting. The same year she published a proposal for a boarding school for girls at York, the Trinity Lane School. It opened in 1785 under her direct supervision. Esther's chief ambition for both the school and her own daughters was to revitalize Quakerism by nurturing a new generation of female leaders and ministers. Complete simplicity—of manners, dress, reading habits, needlework, and conversation—was the key. All excess and frivolity, all that was merely ornamental, was discouraged.[28] Tuition was considerably more expensive than that of Ackworth: 14 guineas a year for instruction, board, and washing. The school year lasted 52 weeks, and there were no examinations and almost no visits home. Esther ran the school herself, assisted by several women Friends and two of her daughters, until shortly before she died in 1794.

William Tuke was also the prime figure in establishing York Retreat, a mental hospital and religious hospice founded in 1796. (His grandson Samuel Tuke wrote the institutional history.) The treatments, conceived by William after consultation with a physician, were acknowledged to be far in advance of contemporary medical practice. Among much else that was innovative, they included arts and crafts and gardening—the first use of occupational therapy—as well as informal and formal social events. These were based on the concept of benevolence as both a social virtue and an ethical principle. Drawing on the quietist idea of "stillness" or "centering down" into one's deepest self, William Tuke hoped to induce a feeling of calm benevolence in both attendant and patient. He then tried to focus the patient's energy and affect outward, toward the physical environment and

relationships with others. Many were judged to be suffering from what he called partial disorders, such as an unreasonable hostility toward a family member, while other relationships remained untouched; the therapy was designed to build on these healthy relationships and encourage new ones. To that end, the female superintendent gave occasional tea parties for eligible patients. "All who attend, dress in their best clothes, and vie with each other in politeness and propriety . . . It rarely happens that any unpleasant circumstance occurs; the patients control, in a wonderful degree, their different propensities; and the scene is at once curious, and affectingly gratifying."[29] Female visitors in the neighborhood were appointed by a committee to visit women patients or take tea with them. Animals such as rabbits, seagulls, hawks, and chickens were also introduced, not only to divert and amuse patients but to awaken social and benevolent impulses, a process that ebbed and flowed as patients tested their own capacities for social interaction and self-control. The hoped-for effect was to expand the areas in which the patient was able to function, acquiring incremental degrees of self-confidence as he achieved proper social behavior by his own efforts. The patient's attachment to his attendants was especially noted and encouraged:

> Those who have had the opportunity of observing the restoration of reason, will be aware, that she does not, in general, at once, resume her lost empire over the mind. Her approach resembles rather the gradual influx of the tide; she seems to struggle to advance, but again and again is compelled to recede. During this contest, the judicious attendant, may prove the most valuable ally of reason, and render to her the most essential assistance, in the recovery of her lawful throne.[30]

The emphasis throughout was on the patient's agency in striving to maintain self-control without being compelled by the usual violent physical therapies or visible locks and bars.

Patients at the Retreat were thought to be motivated to behave "normally" by fear, but even more by their desire to be esteemed by others.

> This principle [of esteem] in the human mind . . . is found to have great influence, even over the conduct of the insane . . . when properly cultivated, it leads many to struggle to conceal and overcome their morbid propensities; and . . . materially assist them in confining their deviations, within such bounds, as do not make them obnoxious to the family. This struggle is highly beneficial to the patient, by strengthening his mind, and conducing to a salutary habit of self-restraint; an object which experience points out as of the greatest importance, in the cure of insanity, by moral means.[31]

The desire for esteem was all the more powerful in a context where the staff and patients were referred to as a "family" and individuals as "friends" (as in Quakerism itself).

Defending Friends' achievements in the treatment of insanity, an observer wrote,

> It will, I trust, be readily admitted, that the habits and principles of the Society of Friends, are at least not more unfriendly to mental sanity, than those of other societies; and this opinion will derive some confirmation, from observing the large number of cases in which the disease has been ascertained to be constitutional or hereditary.[32]

It is not surprising that Friends were defensive about the issue of insanity within their community, for the supposed propensity of Friends to suffer from mental illness had been observed from the movement's earliest days. Sarah Tuke Grubb's own perception was that the Quakers as a group were collectively and terminally depressed: "Our national yearly meeting here is nearly ended," she wrote in 1789. "It has been upon the whole a low time. If the feelings of my mind are right, and unavoidable observations operate wisely, it is a time to teach daughters mourning, and each one his neighbour lamentation. The head is sick."[33]

Addressing himself to Friends' neuroses, if not their propensity to insanity, Michel Foucault denounced the entire enterprise of the Retreat as an exercise in religious and social coercion:[34]

> The obscure guilt that once linked transgression and unreason is thus shifted; the madman, as a human being originally endowed with reason, is no longer guilty of being mad; but the madman, as a madman, and in the interior of that disease of which he is no longer guilty, must feel morally responsible for everything within him that may disturb morality and society . . . In fact Tuke created an asylum where he substituted for the free terror of madness the stifling anguish of responsibility; fear no longer reigned on the other side of the prison gates, it now raged under the seals of conscience.[35]

Like Foucault, today's reader might well be disturbed by the emotional straitjacketing in Quaker child-rearing and in their institutions of education and mental health. But while Foucault's diatribe captured the covert and coercive aspects of Quaker social reformism, it ignored the basic theological and moral precept of the Inner Light, or divine spark, existing in every person. At the Trinity Lane School for girls and the Ackworth School for children of poor Friends, the inculcation of self-discipline was constant, but the emphasis on the innate *depravity* of children—a feature of

most evangelical education—was absent.[36] At York Retreat, the punitive therapies that were commonly inflicted on mental patients were rejected in favor of "moral treatment" based on a concept of benevolence that was fundamentally optimistic. Whether defined as conscience, wisdom, the soul, or the voice of God, the Quakers' belief in the Inner Light and in the sanctity of all human beings allowed the caretakers at the Retreat to view the smallest human victories—patting an animal, attending a tea party—as openings to a wider and more spiritual engagement with that of God in nature and in human society. Samuel Tuke (William's grandson) quoted Dr. Conolly's magnum opus *The Treatment of the Insane without Mechanical Restraints* in this context:

> The substitution of sympathy for gross unkindness, severity, and "stripes"; the diversion of the mind from its excitements and griefs by various occupations; and a wise confidence in the patients when they promised to control themselves, led to the prevalence of order and neatness and nearly banished furious mania from this wisely devised place of recovery.[37]

* * *

The eighteenth-century Friends felt themselves to be undergoing a crisis both in their private lives and in the life of their community. For the Tuke family and others, their attempts to balance material ambition with inward simplicity created "emotional" problems, and their social activism helped them to solve those problems. The self-discipline and watchfulness that made serenity and relaxation difficult also sparked a tireless activity, transforming self-interest and personal ambition into an engaged reformism which acted in turn as a cure to Friends' afflicted spirits. It was surely a relief for people struggling with their own inner demons to reflect that, for all they themselves needed spiritual restoration, the insane and children—especially the ones from poorer families—needed it more.

To some extent, the equanimity and self-possession the Tukes wanted to teach students and mental patients—curing their chaotic willfulness and emotionalism "from the inside"—was also what they were trying to teach themselves. Sarah Tuke Grubb was more concerned about her own capacities as a teacher than she was about the girls she was educating in her new religious school. "To educate children religiously," she wrote,

> requires a quietude of mind, and sympathy in their guardians, with the state of the good seed in them, which will lead rightly to discriminate between good and evil; to discover the corrupt source of many seeming good actions; and to perceive that a real innocency is at the root of others, which custom, and a superficial investigation, have rendered reprehensible.[38]

This "quietude of mind" is reminiscent of her father's concern about the attendants at the Retreat, who were urged to look beneath their patients' wild inconsistencies and to view them as both subhuman "automata" and as brothers:

> they who have had an opportunity of observation, and they only, can conceive the difficulty of entirely subduing the vindictive feelings, which the inconsistent, but often half rational, conduct of the patient, frequently excites in the minds of the inferior attendants. It is therefore an object of the highest importance, to infuse into the minds of these persons, just sentiments, with regard to the poor objects placed under their care . . . But even this view of the subject is not exempt from danger; if the attendant does not sufficiently consider the degree in which the patient may be influenced by moral and rational inducements . . . These contradictory features in their character, frequently render it exceedingly difficult to insure the proper treatment of deranged persons. To consider them at the same time both as brothers, and as mere automata; to applaud all they do right; and pity, without censuring, what ever they do wrong, requires such a habit of philosophical reflection, and Christian charity, as is certainly difficult to attain.[39]

The austerities and punishments at the Ackworth School seem miles apart from the principles of nonviolence and sociability that defined therapy at the Retreat. But in fact, both institutions adopted the same basic axiom that self-governance and a quiet mind were the prerequisites for a life that was both personally authentic and obedient to Friends' principles.

* * *

In 1792, Esther Tuke, aged 67, delivered an epistle at a York Quarterly Meeting that was published by Friends:

> an inordinate pursuit after riches, and a multiplicity of business . . . have become snares to themselves, and . . . to their children, whereby they have departed from under the government and simplicity of truth, into the friendship, customs, and maxims of a delusive world . . . I feel the language of encouragement . . . to all in this day who have endeavoured to keep their garments clean; especially to the younger sort of this class . . . The time seems approaching for many . . . to be brought forward in the holy warfare, and to repair to the ancient standard, leaving . . . the commotions and bustles of this world; whereby the unwatchful are brought into a state of unsettlement and perplexed anxiety.[40]

Despite the call to return to Friends' "ancient standard," Esther Tuke did not envision a return to Friends' original mission of prophecy and political confrontation. Instead, she introduced into northern Quakerism (and especially to women) the techniques of social activism—reforming the

meeting system and the welfare system, taking on issues of social justice—as the components of an evangelical spiritual vocation. Under Esther's tutelage and encouragement, her daughters built their mission by broadening the traditional feminine roles of teacher and caretaker. In 1781 Esther wrote to them,

> I know you are but children in age, but it hath often appeared clear to me since you were sent forth that as many of the mothers are removed and the church stripped, I believe the master will make you and some others . . . as mothers, teachers, and nurses of others, when for age you might expect to be nursed—that instead of parents there shall be the children.[41]

Writing to her daughter Sarah, she encouraged her like an old soldier encouraging a new recruit:

> I believe all your exercises of visiting the hungry, naked, sick and in prison, will be recorded in that book of remembrance which the natural eye can neither read nor erase. My mind daily travels with you, and tho' at times I pity yet I feel often more disposed to envy, or at least to say, how much better is the lot to be out in actual service . . . than like a poor worn out or disabled soldier in a hospital, whose shield is gone, and his armour laid aside, who has to live on a little pittance, brood over his wounds and infirmities, and contemplate battles lost.[42]

This was a new, dynamic religiosity, rooted in Christian suffering and the sanctity of the Bible, steeped in the imagery of warfare and motherhood, and engrossed in projects of social activism and institutional reform. Neither the prophetic language nor the organizational energy is to be found in the contemporary women's meeting records of York or Bristol; on the contrary, some of the York women expressed dismay at what they took to be the bossiness and elitism of the Tuke family. Her husband William also felt himself on the sidelines of Esther's missionary career, writing to a relative, "My wife says [she has] not an hour to spare. She hoped to return home soon, but public opportunities to preach stood in her way." "I seem lonely," he added, "being now deprived of three of the best of my family."[43]

Of all the religiously active members of the Tuke family, Esther Tuke was most clearly on the cusp of the new evangelical culture, focused on the Bible and pious activism, which would dominate Quakerism in the nineteenth century. For women in general, evangelical Christianity would mean a transmutation of their original prophetic authority and an acceptance of a more circumscribed self-definition and spiritual ambition. It would also generate a renewed energy to evangelize and educate and a vastly increased scope for the use of their own spiritual education and worldly position in careers of philanthropy and social activism. The contradiction between

activity in business and a self-absorbed religiosity was resolved by turning the energies of the individual outward, in charitable impulses toward others; the ecstatic prophecy of the seventeenth century was transmuted into the aggressive altruism of the nineteenth century. The movement for the abolition of slavery that was begun by quietist Friends like John Woolman was adopted by evangelicals like the Tuke family. Esther's daughter Sarah actually nursed Woolman—and was inspired by him—during his final illness.

Given the stresses of living both in the world and outside it, it is not surprising that the challenge of sustaining their identity as both members and critics of bourgeois culture might cause Friends' self-confidence to waver. So Esther wrote to her niece Tabitha Hoyland,

> I have of late view'd the society like an army much shatter'd and broken, many of the generals and captains honourably fallen . . . but . . . the time seems approaching that Davids will arise . . . [and] turn the plowshares to swords, and the pruning hooks into spears, and the weak to say, "I am strong," [and] make his people again as an army with banners . . . But I just admire how I came to write this . . . for I can scarcely ever look for, or expect to see good or better days.

Immediately following this passage, whose optimism surprised even herself, she wrote that she thought she would be able to train her maid, "but her unaccountable wildness and spirit make me ready to faint at the prospect."[44] Thus spoke Esther's two personae, the middle-class matron and the biblical hero: anxious and pessimistic, but also open to encouragement as she successfully—and painfully—forged a new, evangelical mission.

## Notes

1. Voltaire, *Letters on England*, tr. Leonard Tancock (London: Penguin Books, 1980, orig. 1734), Letter No. 1, "On the Quakers," p. 23.
2. Ibid., p. 26.
3. R. S. to daughter Lydia, Waterford, 17/7th mo/1779. Mary Leadbeater, ed. *Memoirs and Letters of Richard and Elizabeth Shackleton, Late of Ballitore, Ireland; Compiled by Their Daughter, Mary Leadbeater*, 2nd ed. (London: Harvey and Darton, 1823) pp. 138–40.
4. "Letters of William and Esther Tuke," 1764 or later, MSS, Friends Historical Library (hereafter FHL), MSS T 3/2, pp. 176–7.
5. Esther Tuke to My dear cousin (Tabitha Hoyland), York 6 mo 1, 1773, Ms. T3/2, FHL, "Letters of William and Esther Tuke," pp. 20–1.
6. Sarah Grubb, *Some Account of the Life and Religious Labours of Sarah Grubb* (Trenton, NJ: Isaac Collins, 1795), p. 224.

7. Samuel Fothergill to his sister, Warrington, 10th mo/18/1766, *Memoirs of the Life and Gospel Labours of Samuel Fothergill*, with Reflections from her Correspondence, (London and Liverpool: Charles Gilpin and D. Marples, 1843), p. 463.
8. David Hall to Wilson, 14/4th mo/1738, Newport in Isle of Wight, Reynolds MSS, FHL, p. 117–18.
9. Geoffrey Cantor, *Quakers, Jews, and Science: Religious Responses to Modernity and the Sciences in Britain, 1650–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 23.
10. Wm. Tuke to Dear Friend, York, 4/5th mo' 1763.
11. Sheila Wright, *Friends in York*: *The Dynamics of Quaker Revival* (Keele, UK: Keele University Press, 1995), p. 134.
12. *Memoirs and Letters of Richard and Elizabeth Shackleton*, pp. 28–9.
13. In 1779 the Yearly Meeting in London issued this epistle:

    > We observe, that contrary to . . . the repeated advices formerly given by this meeting . . . against an inordinate pursuit after riches, too many have launched into trades and business above their stocks and capacities; by which . . . they have involved themselves and their families in trouble and ruin . . . We therefore recommend to Friends . . . to have a watchful eye over all their members; and where they observe any deficient in discharging their contracts and just debts in due time . . . that friends do earnestly advise them to a suitable care . . . and if any proceed contrary to such advice, and by their failure bring open scandal and reproach on the Society, that then Friends justifiably may, and ought to, testify against such offenders. (At a Yearly-Meeting held in London, from the 24th of the fifth Month, 1779, to the 29th of the same, inclusive, British Library: Society of Friends Tracts, p. 151)

14. "A Map of the Various Paths of Life" (London: W. Darton & J. Harvey, May 30, 1794), Tract Box LL2/25, FHL, London.
15. Bristol Record Office: Bristol Women's Meeting 19/7th mo/1762; 2/12th mo/1765; 7/3rd mo/1768;24/7th mo/1769;31/1st mo/1774; 10/10th mo/1774.
16. Samuel Armitage to York Monthly Meeting 26/9th/1788.
17. Mary Armitage to York Monthly Meeting 29th/3/1789. In 1771 the Bristol Monthly Meeting had stated, "We avoid enlarging on the manifest impropriety of a wife's getting a settlement separate from her husband, even tho' he be disowned, it would open a door for divisions and consequently disagreements in families, which in our rules . . . are now wisely guarded against." Bristol Monthly Meeting 18/9th/80, appeal of MM Bristol vs. Wiltshire MM. Bristol Record Office.
18. William K. Sessions and E. Margaret Sessions, eds., *The Tukes of York in the Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (London: Friends Home Service Committee, 1971), p. 13.
19. Ibid., p. 15.
20. William Tuke to Esther, York, 12th mo 5, 1764, "A Collection of Miscellaneous Pieces compiled by Sarah Shackleton," 1789, Trinity College Library, MSS 3523, pp. 159–66.

21. Esther Tuke to Samuel Emlen concerning the death of John Woolman, n.d.Letters of William and Esther Tuke, MSS T 3/2, FHL, 157–61.
22. Wright, *Friends in York*, p. 17.
23. Cantor, *Quakers, Jews and Science*, pp. 49–50.
24. Cantor, *Quakers, Jews and Science*, p. 50.
25. FHL, MSS note book for good penmanship of William Sturge 1797, Ackworth School, MSS Box G 1/5/1–2; and Edward Milligan, *Biographical Dictionary of British Quakers in Commerce and Industry, 1775–1920* (York, UK: Sessions Book Trust, 2007) pp. 552–5 for students at Ackworth from 1779. Thanks to Margaret Jacob for this information.
26. W. A. Campbell Stewart, *Quakers and Education as Seen in Their Schools in England* (Port Washington, NY, and London: Kennikat Press 1971, orig. 1953), p. 200.
27. Leadbeater diary, 1786, pp. 209–10.
28. Sessions and Sessions, *The Tukes*, p. 35.
29. Ibid., p. 178.
30. Samuel Tuke, *Description of the Retreat,* pp. 178–80.
31. Ibid., pp. 157–8.
32. Samuel Tuke, *Description of the Retreat*, p. 212.
33. Sarah Tuke Grubb to a friend, Dublin 5th mo 1789. Sarah Grubb Letters MSS Box P2/7, FHL.
34. Louis C. Charland, "Benevolent Theory: Moral Treatment at the York Retreat," *History of Psychiatry*, 18 (1): 061–080, 2007.
35. Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, tr. Richard Howard (New York, Toronto, and London: New American Library, 1965), 246.
36. Paul Sangster, *Pity My Simplicity: The Evangelical Revival and the Religious Education of Children 1738–1800* (London: The Epworth Press, 1963).
37. John Conolly, *The Treatment of the Insane without Mechanical Restraints*, 1856, quoted in "State of an Institution near York, Called the Retreat, for Persons Afflicted with Disorders of the Mind" (York: W. Blanchard and Son, 1815), p. 23.
38. Sarah Grubb, "Some Remarks on Christian Discipline as It Reflects the Education of Youth," *Account of the Life of Sarah Grubb*, pp. 272, 273–4.
39. Samuel Tuke, *Description of the Retreat*, pp. 174–6.
40. York Quarterly Meeting, 12th Month, 1792, An epistle to Friends of York Quarterly Meeting, pp. 2–3.
41. Esther Tuke to her children, York 2mo/12/1781, FHL, London, Robson MSS 92, pp. 84–7.
42. Esther T(uke) to Sarah G(rubb), 6th mo, 1782, Letters of William and Esther Tuke; MSS T2-88-89, FHL.
43. William Tuke to Tabitha Hoyland, York fifth month 12, 1778.
44. Esther Tuke to Tabitha Hoyland, York, 9/12th mo/ 1776, pp. 54–9.

11

# Self-Discipline and the Struggle for the Middle in Eighteenth-Century Britain

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One of the difficulties of writing the history of ordinary people in the early modern era is that the category belongs mainly to those who never left enough of a trace to be written about. "In any society the conditions of access to the production of documentation are tied to a situation of power," as Carlo Ginzburg has put it, and this is to say nothing of more indifferent killers of would-be archival survivors, like time, impermanence, or contingency.[1] But if most people never inhabit the sources on which historical recovery depends, then the ones who do are unusual for that reason alone. The paradox is unavoidable: ordinary people lose something of their ordinariness as soon as they become knowable in any kind of detailed sense.

Here historians have yet another reason to redouble their efforts to ensure that they do not overlook the ordinary in other ways. This holds true even for the observant practitioners of microhistory. In one sense, microhistory has been an antidote to historiographical elitism. Particularly in the field of biography, which was once the preserve of the famous to such a degree that "ordinary people" could functionally be defined as its least likely subjects, microhistory has shown how to locate and thickly describe the exemplary in a broader range of lives.[2] Yet much of microhistory's justification has also been the discovery of the unusual. As Giovanni Levi explained in what remains the clearest statement of its goals, microhistory was a reaction to the "preponderance of macro contextual interpretation" in the 1970s.[3] It therefore used the social or cultural

microscope to detect and elucidate discrepancies between normative systems and the people over whom those systems are alleged to hold sway. Much of what makes Carlo Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms* paradigmatic is the way in which it can be invoked to counter a range of totalizing, agency-stripping claims about early modern Europe: that there was an unbridgeable gap, at least if coming from below, between popular and elite culture; that belief was constrained by the limits of the possible; that the language of exclusion cannot be accessed by hegemonic discourse, and so on.

The search for indeterminacy in the effort to counter totalizing claims is undoubtedly important, but looking insistently for the extraordinary in the ordinary may dull our awareness of lives whose distinctiveness can at first appear to be irretrievable or nonexistent. Those appearances are especially deceptive in the case of the puritanical, the religiously and cultural orthodox, the sort of men and women typically construed as slavishly devoted to one prescriptive form or another as they quietly await a rescue operation from condescending posterity.

* * *

These thoughts come to mind as I recall beginning a book on an eighteenth-century middling-sort wool clothier and diarist from Leeds, Joseph Ryder.[4] Ryder seemed anything but eccentric to me when I first opened his diary. Clothiers were nearly ubiquitous in manufacturing Europe at the time. So were Ryder's ambitions to get married and have children.[5] So, in Britain, were his Protestantism and industrious efforts to find surplus income and salvation. But as I pieced together a more detailed image of his life from his stray remarks in his diary, he began to seem more surprising. For all his talk of family, he had no siblings, did not know his father, never had children, and married for the first time at the late age of 40. For all his reluctance about acquisitiveness, he and a household of about a dozen workers made enough surplus income for him to slow down working a decade before his death, at which time he still had £250 alongside property and other assets.[6] At a time when evangelicals were inventing Methodism and rationalists inventing Unitarianism, Ryder clung to his Old Dissent, which more or less stayed true to the reformist ideas of John Calvin's generation. Spiritual diaries like his may have been common in the Puritan culture he dutifully represented, but few were so massive: he wrote in it virtually every day of the last half of his life, which gave it a final word count in excess of the combined total of words found in Shakespeare's complete works, the King James Bible, *War and Peace*, and *Moby Dick*.

Much of what began to make Ryder's story compelling arose from a tension that this brief description alone suggests: neither he nor his world quite lined up with his spiritual expectations. Accessing his life was nevertheless made both possible and difficult because of his particular diary, which fell short of meeting my own initial expectations.[7] Diaries in the broadest sense are usually repositories of information about the concrete, but despite his prolificness Ryder was largely silent on the nature of the material world. The inclusion criteria for his diary were thoroughly religious—so, for example, ministers' names are mentioned while coworkers' are not; chapels are referenced with more specificity than places of business—and the net effect is that the full image of what he must have encountered in life is obscure.[8]

Getting at Ryder's life was also difficult for theoretical reasons. Any diary's meaning is in some sense structured by virtue of it being an artifact of a genre.[9] But this is emphatically the case with spiritual diaries in the Puritan tradition, which were written to meet the demands of a religious culture that, one the one hand, encouraged individualism by giving believers the autonomy to be moral examiners of their lives but, on the other, curtailed autonomy by encouraging people to individually arrive at the same pious expression of selfhood. Ryder's pages are only slightly more interchangeable with one another than with those of Puritan diaries written in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is as if godly diarists were writing the same book: they shared a sense of the path to Heaven; they sought to preserve their community by embracing and projecting scripted models of piety; and they used their spiritually inflected diaries, the writing of which was aided by a handful of homogeneity-inducing, how-to books, to ensure these goals.[10]

If it has been eye-opening to notice that the form of the genre shapes its content, to exaggerate that point is to deny the distinctiveness of the people who wrote these texts. We cannot simply learn the overarching style and expect specific iterations of it to reproduce the same substance. For one thing, there is appreciable change in form over time. From the late sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, spiritual diaries graphically reflect the process by which egoism escaped Puritan self-denial.[11] At the end of the 1500s, when diaries were first written, they were messy and utilitarian, more like palimpsests or commonplace books than anything authors might proudly display on their bookshelves. By the 1600s, signs of self-conscious authorship were already evident in handmade tables of contents, frontispieces, and so on. By Ryder's lifetime, spiritual diaries were often only manuscripts by virtue of being handwritten, while some godly journalists, in what had by then had become a denominationally broader

tradition, went so far as to send what they had written about themselves to a publisher.[12]

Ryder's diary, for its part, is more polished than its predecessors. He never made notes to himself in any part of a volume but the back or, very occasionally, front pages. He may not have designed a frontispiece or table of contents, but he worried about what his future readers might think, and on at least one occasion felt authorial rivalry with another local godly diarist whose lack of originality in bringing into his text whole passages from other authors Ryder could not help but disparage.[13] Ryder also filled his pages with verse, almost all of which summed up the sermons they followed. Thousands of these verses populate the diary, and while Ryder found nothing spiritually wrong with words arranged like the hymns of Isaac Watts, at least one Puritan of an earlier generation would have classified Ryder's rhymed lines under the "vayne exercise of Poetrie."[14]

Form matters in other ways. The assignment of any historical document to a genre is typically a way of stressing its narrative construction and, by extension, its opacity or unreliability.[15] But the generic nature of diaries can lead to the opposite conclusion. Philippe Lejeune has classified diaries more shrewdly as "antifiction."[16] Their obscure allusions fail to communicate; their discontinuities make the stories they tell as messy as lived experience; by virtue of their repetition and redundancy they're artless. Diaries fail as novels for the same reason that, Lejeune has argued, novelists fail to write realistic diaries in the pages of their fictions. Because novelists cannot ignore that they know where they are going, they belie the aimlessness of diary keeping (think Sartre's *Nausea*, or Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, the latter of which is especially poignant since Defoe and Crusoe, in what turned out to be the first novel in English, wrote a somewhat inauthentic Puritan diary—the sort of text that, in reality, helped model the introspective novel).[17] "Antifiction" in the archives can actually close the distance between the text and the mental world of the person who wrote it. Artlessly endless repetition can, for example, be mind-numbing to encounter in a diary, but it is an indicator of something important that a diarist could not shake from his or her mind.[18]

Writing about the seemingly predictable for Ryder meant not simply trying to balance on some line between form and content; it meant making productive use of the porosity of that line. There is content in the form—in narrative schemes, as Hayden White argued—but also in marginalia, stray remarks, marked-out pages, the glaring absence of informality, and the way in which diaries change shape to reflect ramped-up egoism. And hybridized evidence like this does not just offer clues about how these artifacts can be read; it tells us about the capacities of the people who authored

them. Awareness of the prescribed role that "Puritan diarists" all in some sense performed—a role that illuminates the culture that demanded the performance—should be met with equal awareness of the complexity of their relationship to that prescription, or any other structure.

* * *

The first people who we know read Ryder's diary evince no uneasiness about interpretation. The text was briefly consulted in a mid-nineteenth-century history of Leeds's Mill Hill Chapel, authored by one of its ministers, Charles Wicksteed.[19] Mill Hill was a stronghold of Protestant Dissent from its radical beginnings in the Restoration through the nineteenth century, by which time it was also an incubator of the city's economic and political elite. Probably most notable in its history was Joseph Priestley's ministry in the late 1760s and early 1770s. If Priestley was a later-day Isaac Newton, his time in Leeds was his *annus mirabilis*, as he delved into chemistry, optics, theology, and political philosophy in the characteristically enlightened effort to discover first principles. His politics drew a clear separation between what was fundamentally public and private; his theory of air showed it to be a mixture of essential gases; most controversially, his theological study yielded the belief that, underneath it all, Jesus was just as man.

It turns out that other ministers at Mill Hill were saying the same thing about Jesus decades earlier, and none more vocally than a pastor named Thomas Walker, whose radicalism impressed Priestley as a young man and whose provocative sermons Ryder noted in his diary from the late 1740s until Walker's death in 1762.[20] Writing in the mid-nineteenth century, with Unitarianism by then culturally sanctioned, Wicksteed found Ryder's sermonic notes useful in telling his chapel's brief history. But his impatience with Ryder's obscure prose meant that he dedicated a mere six pages to the lay diarist, in the end drawing the conclusion that Ryder's regular claims of memory loss in his sermon summaries were code for theological disapproval.[21] Nothing Ryder himself thought, either implicitly by virtue of that disapproval or explicitly in the expanse of prose outside the notes on sermons, was worth investigating further.

It was up to another Mill Hill minister, the eminent Unitarian historian Herbert McLachlan, to try to make more sense of Ryder's diary in an article written in 1925, when the diary passed from private hands to public archives.[22] McLachlan gave plenty of evidence that he read most, if not all, of what Ryder wrote. He also discerned in the diary not simply that Walker was denying the Trinity—a criminal offense in Britain until 1813—but that the subtext of the diary pointed to religious ferment in the 1740s and 1750s, decades that saw many Britons move in earnest away from

traditional Christianity and toward the beliefs that would coalesce in the 1770s as denominational Unitarianism. McLachlan may have been more interested than Wicksteed in the worldview of a quiet, spiritual layman, even if as a foil to a bold minister exploring uncharted territory. But in the end McLachlan thought "no reader of the Diary would willingly return to it or be tempted to esteem its author a man of any mark."[23]

We should not fail to notice that these historians were taking at least one ordinary person seriously long before there was an elaborate theoretical justification for doing so. It is revealing of their historiographical assumptions, nonetheless, that Ryder mattered because of what he said about other people, namely his ministers, of which he was seen to be an echo rather than a worthy adversary. The implication is that common people should be listened to when they made a note of things more important than themselves, but their outlook can basically be surmised from the sermons they heard of the books they read.

Ryder's relationships to his ministers and the way he recorded sermons were, in fact, more complicated. He had a distinct and audible voice when, for example, he turned to his Bible to highlight a passage that contradicted something a minister preached. His voice is equally evident in silences—on those occasions, for example, when he simply avoided writing down the more radical things a minister said. The circumstantial evidence of him regularly doing this can be made more concrete by the one sermon Walker published, which by chance Ryder happened to witness as a parishioner.[24] The setting was not Leeds but the nearby Wakefield, where Walker and Ryder traveled to be part of the dedication of a new chapel built for one of the wealthiest, and soon to be a Unitarian, congregations in the booming north of England. Ryder sat in the pews doing what he regularly did during sermons: making mental notes that he would write down in his diary later that night. But the differences between Walker's text and Ryder's summary of the sermon are revealing. Walker in his own words sounds like a Newtonian aesthete, a Unitarian in the making, as he draws attention to the architectural beauty of the new church, as well as the personal liberty (code for heterodoxy) of the rich, open-minded, reasonable men who parted with some of their wealth for the chapel's construction and worshipped a rational deity beyond the ridicule to which the Puritan God was now subject. In Ryder's words, Walker sounds more like a provincial pastor, commending the new chapel as a "decent place" to worship.

Ryder surely knew what he was doing at moments like this. He struggled with Walker's radicalism, as the diary more obviously reveals in many other passages. He also loved the religious culture from which he could never fully dissociate the nominally Presbyterian Thomas Walker or Mill Hill. And he found a way, in the end, to selectively experience that changing religious culture: he went weekly to hear even radical sermons, sometimes

openly disagreeing in the diary, but more often writing down the things from which he could derive spiritual succor while remaining silent about whatever he lacked the theological acumen to refute.[25] Yet, by choosing not to record much of the thorny heresy around him—heresy that could have given him a chance, had he been interested in pure reportage, of documenting in detail a seismic shift in the history of Christianity—he also chose to deprive us of a detailed view of the origins of a denomination that his traditional piety gave him a religious mandate to obscure.

* * *

The biggest missed opportunity of these early-twentieth-century forays into Ryder's life is that they paid attention less to the religion he was attached to than to the one he descried on the horizon. The former was, in essence, Puritanism. Ryder never actually used the word "Puritan," which was a term of abuse from its late-sixteenth-century beginnings that took on an even more damning association after the mid-seventeenth-century revolution. He instead saw himself as a Dissenter or Nonconformist. But he was clear that his was the tradition of Richard Baxter and John Bunyan, the latter of whom "made such remarks upon what I find in my heart as if he had been alive and heard my complaints."[26] Ryder was avowedly tied, that is, to Puritan culture. His religiosity expresses a nearly soul-crushing belief in human worthlessness set alongside Christ's saving grace; an intense searching for salvation; a singular zeal; a deep commitment to prayer, sermons, and the Bible, which he could endlessly quote, and anything outside of which he had license to reject. That strenuous adherence to *sola scriptura*, and the deep aversion to *adiaphora*, helped to protect his religion from idolatry and to define acceptable ways of being social: by attending sermons, meeting with others to discuss those sermons, leading household exercises after public worship—and always on Sunday, which was sacrosanct. And since the social was spiritually circumscribed, Ryder expressed his religiosity not simply through his heroic efforts of self-restraint but through his attempts to exert paternalist influence over others, whether in the community or in the household.[27]

Ryder could capture the complexity of his religious outlook with one signifier, which he highlighted in his first entry while praying to use the diary, above all, to live up to "that single word watch." In fact, this is a cultural keyword of Puritanism that historians have overlooked. Diaries, sermons, and the literature of practical divinity tell us that for Ryder and others "watching" was the praxis of the doctrine of providence. God made the world with total awareness of how it would unfold, but he was still constantly involved in its day-to-day operations, and it was up to his faithful to decode divine intent by scrutinizing their experience both in real time

and in writing.[28] "I find no Liberty for One that professes to be a Christian," Ryder once told his diary, "to Let down his Watch."[29]

Like eighteenth-century Dissenters on the whole, Ryder was more politically passive than the Puritans of the previous century. But his relentless spiritual vigilance still demanded that he strive to reform the world. He took to heart the words of Isaac Ambrose, a seventeenth-century author whose works still resonated a century after they were first published: "Watchfulness is the first and principal help to all exercises of Religion; it is the eye to see them all well done and used, and therefore we set it in the front of all Duties."[30] True to form, Ryder can be found throughout the diary keeping an eye on his godly community as closely as on himself, trying to ensure that the faithful did not lose their way as he counseled them in private or in evening group meetings. In one memorable entry, he buys an admittedly—and unfortunately unnamed—heretical book solely for the sake of concealing it from more innocent eyes (an instance that gives us additional evidence that he deliberately kept his own readers from the full range of Thomas Walker's radicalism).[31]

Ryder was at his most visibly coercive in his family. To say that the basic unit of the economy in early modern times was the household only goes part of the way toward capturing the complex relationships that could exist under a single roof. Ryder's family, for example, consisted not of blood relatives, at least after his mother died in 1743, but rather of his wife and a collection of workers, some of whom came from the workhouse, and some of whom were orphans that Ryder and his wife Elisabeth either adopted as their own or took in temporarily with the help of local magistrates.[32] The discipline that Ryder encouraged was effectively the fulfillment of a role that religious and economic authorities increasingly played in liberalizing societies elsewhere in Europe. Witness the elites in the Netherlands who used religion at the local level to encourage the sort of self-control that theoretically prevented a slide into chaos amid the relative absence of external authority.[33] But Ryder's complaints in the diary about the refractoriness of his householders also hint at the fragility of paternalism. His householders may have struck him, in his words, as "difficult," a "labour," "continual trouble," and so on, because they were acting out the frustration of parents whom elites had made out to seem incapable in one way or another.[34] Or maybe they resisted being made pious and productive for their own particular reasons. We are left guessing about the details. These young men and women are precisely the sort of ordinary people who live almost entirely outside the archival zone into which Ryder was relatively unusual to have written himself.

Watchfulness was not simply about other people, however. Even more, for Ryder at least, it was a strenuous self-examining practice meant to cultivate personal piety and industriousness. "Be laborious with your hearts in all God's worship to keep them employed on their duty; and be watchful over them, lest they slug or wander," Richard Baxter advised in his *Christian Directory*, a text out of which Max Weber got as much mileage as did Ryder.[35] But, critically, watching had built into it a safeguard against the loss of its potency. It was not just important to watch the world and the self. Satan, who one of Ryder's favorite authors Philip Doddridge warned was "watching and labouring for your Destruction," also had the power to deceive one in the very act of watching.[36] Hence the need, Isaac Ambrose argued, "to watch over the senses."[37]

This was a dizzying ethos—not just a hierarchical way of seeing the self in relation to other people, but an intensely demanding mode of self-reflection. And not surprisingly, Ryder was a depressed and anxious victim of his heightened self-consciousness mixed with his spiritually suspect immersion in the world. "I have found my heart Strangely carried away with Vain Thoughts," he wrote in his late thirties in words he would reuse throughout his life.

> I scarce know what Judgment to form of my Self, under perplexity of heart with respect to what at Some times attends me I am at Times too much dejected notwithstanding the word of God says Rejoyce . . . Sometimes in the morning I am ready to say, would God it was Evening, thoughtfull how to get the day over free from guilt and sin and sorrow. Sometimes at Evening, would God it was morning, because of Trouble in the night.

Intense spiritual vigilance nevertheless did not only lead to despair. It could be economically empowering, as Max Weber argued a century ago.[38] Over and over in the diary, Ryder makes clear that the right spiritual path was tied to what he saw as moderate material success. And he was far from alone in seeing things this way. The message regularly came from the pulpit and appears in other spiritual diaries.[39] Joseph Williams, a contemporary Dissenter, diarist, layman, and clothier from near Birmingham, described himself in this remarkable image in which "trade" effortlessly captures success in Heaven and on earth:

> I am an old man: in man's account, a Dissenter; in God's, I trust, a Christian. I am also a tradesman, of no small account in this town and neighbourhood; but I trust my more beloved, because most gainful trade or traffic, lies in a far country . . . My traffic is to the country beyond Jordan, and my chief correspondence with the King of Zion, a good friend to merchantmen; he first condescended to traffic with me, furnished me with the stock, made me

> many valuable remittances, and hath firmly assured me of an infinitely great and good inheritance, richer than both Indies, to which I am to sail and take possession as soon as I shall be ready for it . . . [40]

* * *

To the industrious godly, excess was obviously corrupting (and relative), but no better was poverty, "the product of sloth" as Ryder described it as a young man.[41] Measured success was the goal, and watching was the spiritual habit by which spiritual discipline and economic potential restricted and benefited one another. One of the major innovations of the Puritans who customized the Reformed tradition for England, in other words, was to ensure that worldly striving had *self*-restricted limits. And one of the major innovations of the people who were still tied to that tradition as they also more fully embraced a capitalist ethos was to create a middle class that both materially and spiritually held them between extremes.

Insofar as "middle" suggests "ordinary," another outcome of the watching that led to a moderated life was the assignment of moral validity to a world in which pious and industrious people would be the new normal. Of course, though, in this sense Dissent in Ryder's era represents only one segment of eighteenth-century Britain that was making everyday folk normative. The Enlightenment, with which Ryder was mostly out of sync, was a watershed in this process. Lynn Hunt has seen in the invention of human rights, for example, a gathering capacity of readers of novels to empathize with protagonists whose lives stood in contrast to the heroes of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literature, much as it was stimulated by an aversion to torturing criminals and captives that grew in tandem with fellow feeling for the accused and confined.[42] Or witness the discovery of the heroic in the usual lives of hardworking men and women as reflected in a new style of painting of the late eighteenth century, the domestic subjects of which a *philosophe* like Diderot could admire as "beings who live, feel, and think."[43] We could find the same cultural shift implied in the Lockean epistemology that swept through the century. The amalgam of experiences that empiricists thought configured the self could—and did—still lead to the cultural reproduction of inequality. But the novel major premise that enlivened so many followers of the Enlightenment was that everyone starts from the same place.

Positive cultural meaning was also imparted to everyday people by the exponents of the world Ryder worrisomely saw on the horizon. Economic thinkers at the time struggled to convince their implied audience, which included no one if not industrious traditionalists like Ryder, that the spread of the market was no road to social and moral ruin. In their various ways

of saying that the market is self-regulating, those theorists drew so much attention to the value of economic life as experienced at the mundane, individual level that they located a new set of virtues in the commonplace. It is a trio of a butcher, brewer, and baker who appear as the shining examples in one of the most quoted lines in *The Wealth of Nations*. The ordinary is no less present any time an eighteenth-century *laissez-faire* thinker lays emphasis on the right to personal independence, the necessity of individual judgment, the value of local knowledge, and so on.[44] We could say it more bluntly. It is not simply the invention of human rights but the move away from "mercantilist" assumptions that represents a crucial step toward the valorization of ordinary people. This seems to be a subtext running through many of the essays in this book: a new kind of cultural validity was given to everyday people at the moment that economic worth was thought to come from their industry, enterprise, and ingenuity. We are telling a story here about the broader implications of the acceptance of the labor theory of value.

The fear of the free market leading to a free-for-all was as understandable then as it is now. But one of the more striking facts of eighteenth-century Britain is that much of the middle class that the new economy empowered turned out to show the sort of restraint that traditional moralists were convinced the market would erode. Writing in the 1750s, Adam Smith offered a psychological explanation. Equilibrium, he thought, would characterize the social outcome of empathetic beings—the sort of beings he assumed all reasonable people were—seeking praise and avoiding scorn.[45] Ryder's spirituality has no place in this godless psychology: five out of the seven times Smith uses the word "watch" in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, it is in reference to a timepiece; Ryder wrote effectively anti-Smithian poetry:

> Oh that I more & more may take delight
> To act what is well pleasing in Gods Sight
> Not with a View of mortall's approbation
> But with the hopes of Sharing Gods Salvation[46]

But there is also overlap in both Smith's secularly and Ryder's spiritually bourgeois encouragement of restraint. The ocularity of the trope Ryder used to conceptualize order and discipline survives, for instance, in Smith's famous "impartial spectator," his metaphor for the perceptions of other people that live inside us and limit our behavior as we watch ourselves the way we imagine being watched. More than that, the mechanism for order and regulation in both Ryder's Puritanism and Smith's psychology was functionally the same. Both were about self-control in a world relatively

free of external management; for both, agency is shaped by the perceptions of others; both required a careful reading technique to find approval or disapproval in an array of signifying systems; and both expected social equipoise where individual people could claim self-government alongside personal liberty.

This is a more than curious continuity. It points to one of many subtle ways in which Protestantism provided cultural tools for the early expression of the modern Western capitalist spirit.[47] However much Ryder would have baulked at Smith's secular account of approval-seeking, the self-discipline that shaped his moderated life was a linchpin of the unregulated economy that Smith cautiously envisioned. But the other point is that zooming in on the perspective of an obscure diarist does more than confirm the image of a culture that we can capture from authoritative figures like Adam Smith. If we read Smith alone we get the sense that men and women in the world he drew from had an easy time performing various roles to win social capital. We see another side by delving into the interior life of someone who outwardly would have seemed to be taking part in the Smithian performance. Or rather we see both sides. Ryder was well behaved around his social betters according to the impression he gives us in the diary. Not surprisingly. Entrepreneurs could not be "self-made" without the sociability needed to gain credit, which in turn was necessary for the sort of capital projects that helped make eighteenth-century Britain wealthy. But the more fundamental justification for the middle way that Ryder craved was the potential resolution it offered to a spiritual tension he could not help but find between his commercial ambition and his Protestant self-denial. When he surveyed his world and found "some as it were swimming in prosperity and fullness, others in great distress," it was "the middle station" that promised happiness, because even "fullness is very apt to make [people] unmindfull of God . . . as if by their own power and skill they had got all their abundance." Ryder could articulate the solution over and over:

> On the One hand I am often afraid of Giving way to Such a measure of Ease as may prove my Snare, On the Other hand, I am afraid of too much Care & labour. The middle way which is well Consistent with True Christianity, & real practicall Holyness I would Long after.

Ryder's ostensibly ordinary perspective, to put it in different terms, tunes us in to the emotional and psychological meaning of Britain's transition to modern capitalism.[48] He is admittedly only one case, but his condition is culturally revealing inasmuch as tension in his life arose from two externalities that countless of his contemporaries would have experienced. He came into the world as 1688 was leading to a reevaluation of the

social consequences of the free market that so troubled traditional moralists, and it was not until he left it that the Puritan ethos, which had survived the seventeenth century in the form of "Old Dissent," was denominationally amorphous. A self-denying ethos still lingered in his lifetime even as the moral sanctions against self-interest began to lose their authority. It is unthinkable that everyone else managed to escape this cultural tension.

There is also nothing unusual in the eighteenth century about seeking a moderate life. There was, for that matter, nothing unusual in the entirety of England's early modern era about "moderation" being a stated goal, even if it meant different things in the hands of different people.[49] But what we should note here, in particular, is that the watchful self-discipline that made it possible to detect and occupy an economically middling state was also the recipe for despairing self-scrutiny. Almost every scenario Ryder encountered and saw fit to include in the diary embodied some version of this tension. He projected moral shortcomings onto his family of adopted children. He was episodically depressed from worry about the fate of his corrupted soul. He could hardly have a social experience without thinking about how vain it was when devoid of religious content. Despite his incredible prolixity, he even chided himself for being a lackluster diarist. The balance that simply fell into the lap of Smith's self-interested protagonist was for Ryder a lifelong struggle to achieve. Self-discipline in the lives of people like Ryder was therefore both in theory and in practice a way to order society from below; it was a key to making real the Enlightenment dream of autonomous people as a basis of both prosperity and stability; it was a major component of what Foucault called the automatic functioning of power. But it came at a cost. Under the surface of Ryder's seemingly ordinary life lurked extraordinary struggle.

## Notes

1. Carlo Ginzburg, "Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know about It," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Autumn, 1993), 21.
2. Here I am thinking of microhistorical work on individual lives. Class formation, popular rebellion, and various other social groupings that obtain coherence only when underpinned by common motives necessarily emphasize shared goals and ideas over differences. On the now more complex relationship between microhistory and biography, particularly as it relates to the emotional distance between historians and their subjects, see Jill Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography," *Journal of American History*, Vol. 88, No. 1 (June, 2001): 129–44.
3. Giovanni Levi, "On Microhistory," in Peter Burke, ed., *New Perspectives in Historical Writing* (University Park, PA: 1992), 97. A similar concern can be

found among the British Marxist historians. E. P. Thompson worried that the "materialist vocabulary" left no room for "agency, initiatives, ideas, and even love." Structuralism and determinism were simply continuations of "Milton's old argument with predestinarianism" and signaled that we live in a "defeated and disillusioned age." E. P. Thompson, *Making History: Writings on History and Culture* (New York: 1994), 362–3. Similarly, for Christopher Hill there were times in early modern England, most notably during the Civil War, when, without the guidance of a Rousseau or a Marx, people "had to improvise." Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (New York: 1994), 8.

4. *The Watchful Clothier: The Life of an Eighteenth-Century Protestant Capitalist* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013).
5. Not everyone in Ryder's general era wanted to build a traditional family. See Amy M. Froide, *Never Married: Singlewomen in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
6. "Will of Joseph Ryder of Leeds (1695–1768)," Leeds wills, 1700–1830, Borthwick Institute, York, UK.
7. For the diary see Q/6, "Diary of Joseph Ryder, in 41 volumes" (henceforward JRD), Unitarian MSS, John Rylands University Library, Special Collections, University of Manchester.
8. Merely one sample of Ryder's vagueness:

> This Day being Concern'd about the high ways, and having Severall Things relating to this affair to Look after it has I fear Got So much of my Time & Thought that Little Good has been Done any Other way, & Towards Evening allowing My Self a Little in Such Pleasures as to Others are Lawfull Yet being at Some uncertainty about the Object it raises a Sort of Timerousness & perplexity in my mind, But Would fain hope, that finding my Self Call'd to Self denyall by the word of God or from ye Counsell of my Friends I shall be I hope ready to part with my dearest comfort, & Endeavour after ye mortification of my most darling Corruption rather that live in a course of Disobedience against God." (JRD, April 28, 1735)

   Over time, it does become clear to Ryder's reader that "dearest comfort" and "most darling Corruption" were expressions of his materialism, which the diary illustrates, over and over, lived in tension with the essential "Self denyall" of Christianity.
9. There is no modern book-length study on the Puritan diary, although a few articles tackle the subject. See Tom Webster, "Writing to Redundancy: Approaches to Spiritual Journals and Early Modern Spirituality," *Historical Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (1996): 33–56; Margo Todd, "Puritan Self-Fashioning: The Diary of Samuel Ward," *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (1992): 236–64; and Andrew Cambers, "Reading, the Godly, and Self-Writing in England, circa 1580–1720," *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (2007): 796–825. Two recent book-length studies consider the matter of godly self-writing more broadly: Michael Mascuch, *Origins of the Individualist Self: Autobiography and Self-Identity in England, 1591–1791* (Stanford, CA: Stanford

University Press, 1996); and John Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination: English Puritanism and the Literature of Religious Despair* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). Also filled with insights about spiritual diary writing are Paul Seaver, *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985); and Alan Macfarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin: A Seventeenth Century Clergyman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

10. For important guidebooks to diary keeping, see Isaac Ambrose, *Media: The Middle Things, In Reference to the First and Last Things: Or, the Means, Duties, Ordinances, Both Secret, Private, and Publike, for Continuance and Increase of a Godly Life* … (London: 1649); and *A Critical Edition of John Beadle's* "*A Journall or Diary of a Thankfull Christian*," ed. Germaine Fry Murray (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996).
11. For the most elaborate version of this argument, see Mascuch, *Origins of the Individualist Self*.
12. For Rutty's diary, see *Extracts from the Spiritual Diary of John Rutty, M.D.* (Falmouth, UK: J. Trathan, 1840). Also see "Rutty, John (1698–1775)," Max Satchell in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Lawrence Goldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
13. JRD, April 26, 1761.
14. Alexandra Walsham, Providence in Early Modern England, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 159.
15. Natalie Zemon Davis classically found a way around this tendency in her *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990).
16. Philippe Lejeune, "Le journal comme antifiction," *Poétique* 149 (February 2007): 3–14.
17. This is not to deny Defoe's piety or the general way in which *Robinson Crusoe* can be read allegorically as a spiritual self-account. But as Leopold Damrosch observed, it is inconsistent with the genre of Puritan diary keeping for Crusoe's conversion to happen during rather than at the beginning of the journal he keeps in the novel. See Damrosch's *God's Plots and Man's Stories: Studies in the Fictional Imagination from Milton to Fielding* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).
18. Ramona Wray, "Autobiography," in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing*, ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 197.
19. Charles Wicksteed, *Lectures on the Memory of the Just: Being a Series of Discourses on the Lives and Times of the Ministers of Mill-Hill Chapel, Leeds …; with a Farewell Sermon Delivered on the 14th of March, 1847* (London: Chapman, 1849).
20. *Memoirs of the Rev. Dr. Joseph Priestley, to the year 1795, Written by Himself; with a Continuation, to the Time of His Decease by His Son, Joseph Priestley* (London, 1809), 11.
21. Wicksteed, *Lectures on the Memory of the Just*, 61, footnote.

22. Herbert McLachlan, "Diary of a Leeds Layman, 1733–1768," *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (1929–1930): 248–67.
23. McLachlan, "Diary of a Leeds Layman."
24. Thomas Walker, *The True Christian Worship Explained and Recommended: A Sermon Preached at the Opening of the New Chapel in Wakefield, Yorkshire. Wednesday, Nov. 1. 1752* (London: 1753), and JRD, November 1, 1752.
25. When one of Ryder's friends gave him reproof "for not speaking more freely in defence of a Gospell truth which he knew I heard Struck at . . . Namely the Doctrine of the Trinity," Ryder responded that "if one is not duly furnished with convincing Arguments I yet rather choose to say little than to make ill worse, and the Point was Such as the greatest Divines cannot bring down to our reason." JRD, November 18, 1758.
26. JRD, October 7, 1748.
27. I am here adopting a definition of the Puritan ethos found in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560–1700*, eds. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (London: Macmillan, 1996), 11.
28. Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England*.
29. JRD, April 11, 1748.
30. Ambrose, *Media*.
31. JRD, October 31, 1749.
32. On the instrumental and affective nature of the family in this era, see Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
33. Philip Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution: Calvinism and the Rise of the State in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), chapters 2–3.
34. Here I am drawing on a more general insight in Steve Hindle, *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England c.1550–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 210–11.
35. Richard Baxter, *A Christian Directory . . . Part III* (London: 1673), 679.
36. Philip Doddridge, *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul* . . . , 4th ed. (London: 1748), 66.
37. Ambrose, *Media*, 47.
38. The historiography on Weber is vast. Still the best place to begin is Hartmut Lehmann and Guenther Roth (eds.), *Weber's Protestant Ethic: Origins, Evidence, Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Readers might also see my *Watchful Clothier*, chapter 4.
39. See, for one of many examples, JRD, February 11, 1760.
40. Quoted in Isabel Rivers, "Joseph Williams of Kidderminster (1692–1755) and His Journal," *Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society*, Vol. 7, (2005): 359.
41. JRD, August 26, 1733.
42. Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007), especially chapters 1 and 2.

43. Diderot quoted in Emma Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments: Adam Smith, Condorcet, and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 21.
44. A point Rothschild makes in her *Economic Sentiments*, 20–2.
45. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, vol. 1 of the *Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith*, eds. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976). "Empathy" is a twentieth-century word that Smith could not have used, but it covers precisely what he meant by his keyword "sympathy."
46. JRD, January 28, 1738.
47. There is nothing of a structural nature in the more intentional Stoic underpinnings of Smith's psychology that could not also be found in the Calvinism Smith knew from his youth in Scotland. The Stoic influence is discussed at length in Nicholas Phillipson, *Adam Smith* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).
48. Some of the most important works written in the last century on Britain's transition to economic modernity have left us with an extremely useful but emotionally flat impression. Max Weber looked mostly at ideal types, like Benjamin Franklin's Poor Richard (if not "Benjamin Franklin" himself, the half-human character of Franklin's autobiography whose creator deprived him of a complex inner life in the effort to create a cheery national archetype); R. H. Tawney was interested more in broad social and political forces and abstract personal characteristics than in lived experience. R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: A Historical Study* (New York: Hartcourt, Brace, 1926). If more recent scholars to tackle this transformation have been more interested in practice than in theory, they are still focused on the world of outward behavior. See, for example, Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People 1727–83* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); and Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (London: Macmillan, 1998). Other works have dealt with this transformation in ways that consider emotion from a general cultural perspective. Not without justification, Eiko Ikegami has recently placed Albert Hirschman's *The Passions and the Interests* (1979) in this historiography—see her "Emotions" in *A Concise Companion to History*, ed. Ulinka Rublack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 351. But Hirschman's short book offers no indication of how people actually felt at the visceral level about the big changes that he instead discerns through theorists like Smith, Montesquieu, and Hume. Despite, and maybe because of, the abstract elegance of recasting rational interest as a harness for the passions, historians have underestimated how much the implied audience of the de-moralizers of self-interest were disturbed by this new direction the culture was taking.
49. Ethan Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation: Violence, Religion and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

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