

Images for a Lover's Eye

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Sonnets from Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft's

Emblemata amatoria

and their European Poetic Lineage

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Chapter 1

INTERSECTING ROADS: EARLY 17TH CENTURY LITERARY LIFE IN THE NETHERLANDS

LYRICAL POETRY AND EMBLEM LITERATURE

The poetry of Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft (1581-1647) stands at the very center of what is usually called the 'Golden Age' of Netherlandic culture. The 17th century was an unprecedented time in the history of the Netherlands when political and economic expansion of a country celebrating its newly-won statehood coincided with a spectacular flourishing of the arts and sciences¹. As the historian A. Th. van Deursen once wrote, the concentration of talent in the 17th century was unique². And no less unique was the range of each individual talent. In this Hooft was an exemplary figure as a playwright, author of several tragedies (*Theseus en Ariadne* – 1602-1603; *Granida* – 1605; *Geeraerd van Velsen* – 1613; *Baeto* – 1618) and comedies (*Warenar* – 1617; *Schijnheilig* – c. 1618), and also an accomplished prose writer whose *Nederlandsche Historiën* (1642-1647) is noted as a monumental account of the Dutch war with Spain.

¹ 'Er valt in onze geschiedenis geen ander tijdvak aan te wijzen dat zo'n concentratie van hoogtepunten te zien geeft. Het land van Rembrandt en Hals was ook dat van Vondel en Hooft. Grotius en Vossius waren tijdgenoten van Beeckman en Stevin. De politieke macht van de Republiek groeide tegelijk met de wereldwijde ontplooiing van haar handel en scheepvaart.' ['Never in our history was there a similar concentration of significant events. The land of Rembrandt and Hals was also that of Vondel and Hooft. Grotius and Vossius lived at the same time as Beeckman and Stevin. The political power of the [Dutch] Republic grew along with the worldwide expansion of its trade and shipping' – transl. M.P.]. A.Th. van Deursen, *De hartslag van het leven. Studies over de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden*, Uitgeverij Bert Bakker (Amsterdam: 1996), p. 37.

² Ibid., p. 40.

Hooft's lyrical poetry embodied a similar diversity, covering a significant range of lyrical genres and reconciling variety with outstanding artistic quality. Indeed Hooft's lyrical poetry proves more than any other type of writing that his work arose at the very heart of early 17th century Dutch cultural and intellectual life. In his poetry the many manifestations of vernacular literature around the turn of the 16th and 17th century converge and coexist. It was in this period that Dutch poetry underwent a profound and multifaceted transformation. Starting out with medieval modes, models, and institutions of 'rhetorical' poetry, the poets of the Netherlands set about on the momentous task of creating their own localized form of the European Renaissance.

One work of poetry where the intimations of the 'Golden Age' grew out of the fertile ground of a native lyrical tradition was Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria* – *Emblemes d'Amour* – *Afbeeldinghen van Minne* (1611). This unique volume of emblems and lyrical poetry takes the reader through a varied thematic cross-section of the love poetry of that age. It prominently features some of Hooft's best songs or sonnets, all of which are highly representative of the changes taking place in Dutch literature in that period³. Obliquely referencing such powerful cultural fields as the chambers of the rhetoricians ('*rederijkers*') or the circles of humanist Latin scholars, as well as such publications as vernacular song- and emblem books, the contents of *Emblemata amatoria* offer a wealth of information on many of the disparate strands of Dutch poetic discourse. Yet even though the *Emblemata amatoria* are positioned so clearly at the crossways of Dutch culture, to date, the volume has been the subject of only a single monograph by Karel Porteman (1983)⁴. Even so, in his edition Professor Porteman treated only the part containing emblemata, not the considerable second half comprising lyrical poetry. He conceded that the intermediate position of Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria* had effectively prevented scholars from exploring this work in its entirety. Philological research on Hooft's poetry dealt almost without exception with his manuscripts. This trend was considerably strengthened when the modern edition of Hooft's complete works, planned in 1947, appeared in 1994⁵.

³ For the development of the Dutch sonnet as a poetic form see Part II.

⁴ To the best of the author's knowledge no other monograph on the *Emblemata amatoria* has been published out since Karel Porteman's edition of *Emblemata amatoria* appeared in 1983.

⁵ 'Als zodanig is deze eerste druk van Hoofts lyrische poëzie weinig of geen aandacht ten deel gevallen. In de P.C. Hooft-filologie ging de belangstelling vrijwel uitsluitend naar de handschriften, een trend die door de voorbereidende werkzaamheden voor de in 1947 ontworpen uitgave van het Verzameld Werk aanzienlijk werd versterkt. De

The 'contrastive' study of printed texts, however, dealt traditionally with the 1636 edition, the *Gedichten* published by Iacob vander Burgh; this edition provided the foundation for all later anthologies. No research has yet been carried out on the intermediate position of *Emblemata amatoria* between the manuscripts and the *Gedichten*. Also, Hooft's sonnets were mainly examined individually and not as a sequence of texts. Nor have they been investigated in the order assigned to them by Hooft in *Emblemata amatoria*, a different arrangement from the one preferred in modern editions based on the manuscripts ('*Rijmkladboeken*').

While nearly all Dutch critics were convinced of the 'originality' of Hooft's lyrical poetry very little research was carried out to actually substantiate this claim⁶. In 1998, however, around the 350th anniversary of Hooft's death, Professor Porteman voiced his hope that the decision taken in 1983 to leave the poetry out of the picture would serve as a stimulus for other scholars to continue research on the *Emblemata amatoria* as a multi-media volume combining emblems with songs and sonnets:

Beide onderdelen van de bundel, de emblemata en de gedichten, zijn evenwel noch functioneel noch inhoudelijk uit elkaar te halen. Het gaat om één boek. (Porteman 1998, p. 45)

[Both parts of the volume, the emblems and the poems cannot be separated from one another, neither functionally nor regarding their content. It is after all a single book]

"contrastieve" belangstelling voor de gedrukte teksten ging daarenboven traditioneel uit naar de editie van de *Gedichten* uit 1636 door Iacob vander Burg, uitgave die, zoals bekend is, aan de basis lag van al de latere verzamelingen. Aan de positie die de *Emblemata amatoria* tussen de handschriften en deze *Gedichten* innemen, werd nog geen studie gewijd.'

'The first edition of Hooft's lyrical poetry [*Emblemata amatoria*] was hardly examined at all. Philological research on Hooft's poetry dealt almost without exception with manuscripts; this trend was considerably strengthened owing to work carried out in conjunction with the Complete Works edition, plans for which were made in 1947. The "contrastive" study of printed texts, however, dealt traditionally with the 1636 edition, the *Gedichten* published by Iacob vander Burgh; this edition provided the foundation for all later anthologies. No research has yet been carried out on the intermediate position of *Emblemata amatoria* between the manuscripts and the *Gedichten*' [transl. M.P.]. Karel Porteman, 'Voorwoord', in: P.C. Hooft, *Emblemata amatoria. Afbeeldingen van Minne, Emblemes d'Amour*, Martinus Nijhoff (Leiden: 1983), p. 3.

⁶ Cf. *De Nederlandse en Vlaamse auteurs van middeleeuwen tot heden met inbegrip van de Friese auteurs* ed. by G.J. van Bork and P.J. Verkruijsse, De Haan (Weesp: 1985), p. 279.

It is this conviction that the literary *and* imagistic character of Hooft's emblem book needed to be explored further along the lines suggested by Professor Porteman, that gave the stimulus to embark on a renewed study of the Dutch poet's sonnets published in this collection.

PIETER CORNELISZOOM HOOFT
AND THE LITERARY LIFE OF HIS TIMES

The publication of Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria* – *Emblemes d'Amour* – *Afbeeldinghen van Minne* in 1611 represented a major step forward for the then thirty-year-old poet. Although by this time Hooft was already quite well-established among his contemporaries in the literary world of Amsterdam, and several of his poems appeared in anthologies, he had not yet published a collection of his own. *Emblemata amatoria* came out anonymously. Surprising though this might be for modern readers, for Hooft this was most certainly a deliberate decision. He was, after all, a poet who practiced the art of verse-making among the 'rederijkers' – the 'rhetoricians' of Amsterdam. The 'rederijkerskamers' (i.e. chambers of rhetoric) were a guild-like organization of literati whose members were recruited primarily from among affluent burghers. The principal time-honored mission of the chambers was to organize civic festivities and provide intellectual entertainment. For the 'rederijkers', some of whom professed to have learned their craft from the French 'rhétoriciens' of the fourteenth century, poetry was first and foremost a collective venture. In the fifteenth-century Netherlands individual poets, identified by their *adagia*, or 'kamerspreuken', competed with other chambers at elaborate festivals (the 'landjuwelen') as members of one literary 'team'. In fact it was the collective – the chamber – that received the 'jewel' as the prize, not the winning poet. Although by Hooft's time the actual forms and customs of this rivalry had changed considerably, with some going out of fashion, the 'rederijker' model of producing literature remained the same. It was still essentially anonymous, even though this rule was not strictly enforced. And besides, most poets dropped hints as to their identity. Hooft did so as well: the first in the sequence of thirty emblems of *Emblemata amatoria*, 'Sy steeckt om hooch het hooft' ['She raises up her head'], no doubt supplied the knowing reader with a reminder as to who was the author of the volume.

While *Emblemata amatoria* are generally described as Hooft's first major publication, this does not imply the work of an inexperienced poet. By the time *Emblemata amatoria* came out, Hooft had already made his mark as an artist. His lyrical poems most likely circulated in manuscript among fellow members of the Amsterdam chamber of rhetoric 'De Eglentier' ('The Eglantine'), to which he belonged. 'De Eglentier', known under its device 'In liefde bloeyende' ('Flourishing in love'), also organized the successful staging of some of his earliest plays. Other poems appeared in collections of poetry such as *Den Bloem – hof van de Nederlandsche Jeucht* (1608).

Many of Hooft's companions in 'De Eglentier' were wealthy burghers. Some of them came to the chamber in search of intellectual diversion, while others joined in search of knowledge or wishing to converse with similarly-disposed individuals. The Amsterdam chamber, a highly influential institution, provided a creative platform for some of the age's most talented men of letters, and as a group the principal poets of 'De Eglentier' largely determined the tone and quality of literary life in the entire city.

One of the members of 'De Eglentier' was Hooft's father Cornelis Pieterszoon Hooft. Himself the son of a ship's captain, C.P. Hooft was a wealthy merchant who successfully climbed the ladder of social advancement to become mayor of Amsterdam in 1588. The Hoofts' rise to power, undeniably one of the major success stories of those years, was primarily the result of favorable economic conditions and assiduous work. Throughout the mid-16th century, the Hooft family had been generally very successful in exploiting the profitable Baltic trade in herring, grain, timber and furs, even establishing a commercial outpost (manned by Pieter Janszoon Hooft) in the city of Danzig (now Gdańsk in Poland)⁷.

The rise of the Hooft family coincided with Amsterdam's emergence as the main commercial hub of the Netherlands and the most powerful political force in Holland. There was, however, another socio-political dimension to the Hoofts' gradual ascension to the highest office in Amsterdam. C.P. Hooft's nomination to the town council ('vroedschap') occurred at a significant turning point in the struggle of the rebellious Dutch provinces led by William of Orange against the Catholic monarch Philip II of Spain. This was the *Alteratie* ('Alteration') of 1578, during which prominent Protestants purged the city's main institutions of

⁷ A.S. Dudok van Heel, 'Hooft, een hecht koopmansgeslacht', in: *Hooft. Essays*, Querido (Amsterdam: 1981), pp. 93-115.

Catholics loyal to the Habsburgs. The civic coup of the Alteration opened the way for a closer consolidation of the Protestant Northern Netherlands. Although C.P. Hooft was a religious moderate who never acceded to the more ideologically hard-line Calvinist cause which later became dominant in the North, he nonetheless owed his position as mayor of Amsterdam largely to his very early allegiance to the Protestant camp and to his leading part in the Alteration.

Besides the elder Hooft, one of the more prominent members of the Amsterdam chamber '*De Eglentier*' was Roemer Visscher. A grain merchant, Visscher was the author of a number of '*tuyters*' (sonnets translated from Petrarch and Ronsard), '*quicken*' (epigrams modeled on those of Martial) and '*jammertjens*' (elegies), all of which came out in the collected volume *Brabbeling* (1614). Visscher combined a lively interest in the cosmopolitan poetry in vogue among the younger generation, with a more conservative interest in the traditional themes favored by the older '*rederijkers*'. This '*rederijker*' side of Visscher's work as a poet is represented, e.g., by the rhymed treatise *T'lof van rhetorica*, a poem with Christian and specifically Erasmian overtones written to defend Ciceronian rhetoric as a source of true poetry⁸. The work for which Roemer Visscher is best known to this day, however, is altogether different. It is the *Sinnepoppen* (1614), an emblem book wittily illustrating a series of traditional Dutch proverbs through their relation to everyday objects.

Another of Hooft's companions in '*De Eglentier*' was Hendrik Laurenszoon Spiegel, a scion of a wealthy Catholic family which had lost its political influence after the Alteration. As one of the chamber's most important theoreticians, Spiegel did not omit to express his opinions on vernacular poetics in writing. His major work, *Twe-spraack vande Nederduitsche Letterkunst* (1584), was the first complete Netherlandic grammar published in the Low Countries. In the *Twe-spraack* Spiegel argued, among other things, in favor of modernizing Dutch poetry by applying regular meter and alternating masculine and feminine rhyme. This position he later reiterated in a treatise on rhetoric, *Rederijck-kunst, in rijm opt kortst vervat* (1587)⁹. Besides demonstrating a willingness to assimilate more recent developments in European poetry, Spiegel also wrote

⁸ Marijke Spies, 'Developments in Sixteenth-Century Dutch Poetics. From "Rhetoric" to "Renaissance"', in: *Renaissance-Rhetorik*. ed. by Heinrich F. Plett, W. de Gruyter (Berlin: 1993), pp. 86-87.

⁹ W. Waterschoot, 'Marot or Ronsard? New French Poetics among Dutch Rhetoricians in the Second Half of the 16th Century,' in: *Rhetoric-Rhetoriciens-Rederijckers*, ed. by J. Koopmans et al. (Amsterdam: 1995), p. 150.

more conventional poems, e.g. a song in the refrain (*'refrein'*) genre to celebrate New Year's Day (1580). In it he defended the significance of rhetoric, presenting it in Christian terms as a divine gift which the poet receives from the Holy Spirit¹⁰. Spiegel, like Visscher, was an Erasmian and a strong advocate of religious toleration. His philosophical views were strongly tinged with Stoic philosophy, a strain of thought which pervades his major ethical treatise, the *Hart-spiegel* (1614).

Another illustrious member of *'De Eglentier'* was Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert, a versatile man of letters, philosopher and artist. In his most important treatise, *Zedekunst dat is wellevenskunste* (1585), Coornhert responded to the social unrest and bitter infighting brought about by the Reformation by creating a Neo-Stoic vision of a society united by a universal non-denominational ethics. Coornhert's philosophy was politically highly influential: it had a particular appeal for moderate Protestants like the two Hoofts, father and son, who both in public service and in private life 'aspired to elevate the people while simultaneously transcending the conflict of confessional theologies'¹¹.

In the Northern Netherlands the other main center of literary activity in the Province of Holland besides Amsterdam was Leiden. The city of Leiden was home to a newly established university (1575) and a chamber of rhetoric, *'De Witte Acoleyen'* ('The White Columbines'). It was at Leiden's university that P.C. Hooft enrolled in 1606, most probably to study law, having completed a 'Grand Tour' of France and Italy from 1598 to 1602. This journey, an educational enterprise similar to many undertaken by sons of wealthy families with commercial interests, was intended to prepare him for the merchant profession. As it is said to have proved exactly the opposite, namely a complete lack of interest in commerce, Hooft decided to pursue a different course. Studying law was the first step a well-connected young man could make towards obtaining an administrative position. Hooft's career as an administrator would take definite shape in 1610 with his nomination (not without his father's assistance) to the position of *'drost'* (*'steward'*) of Muiden, a castle overlooking a rural area just outside Amsterdam¹².

Even before the founding of its university Leiden had been an important center of learning in Holland. During the last decades of the 16th century the Northern Netherlands (and especially Holland) started

¹⁰ Spies, op. cit., pp. 86-87.

¹¹ Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, Clarendon Press (Oxford: 1998), p. 568.

¹² H.W. van Tricht, *Het leven van P.C. Hooft*, Martinus Nijhoff ('s Gravenhage: 1980), p. 37.

to rapidly overtake the Southern Netherlands, in particular the initially more prosperous provinces of Flanders and Brabant in terms of economic growth. In the 1580s, as the Dutch revolt against Spanish dominance gained momentum, the Low Countries separated along political and confessional lines. Two distinct entities were formed: the Catholic Spanish Netherlands in the South, and an autonomous body of Protestant provinces in the North. The status of the latter as a nascent federal state, the Dutch Republic, was cemented by two decisive legal acts: the '*Unie van Utrecht*' (Union of Utrecht – 1579) and '*Plakkaat van Verlatinge*' (Act of Abjuration – 1581)¹³. As refugees from the southern cities, mainly prominent Protestants and their families, began arriving in large numbers in Northern cities such as Amsterdam, it became obvious that a new center of learning had to be created to compensate for the loss of the Southern university of Leuven (Louvain), to which access was now denied to Protestant students.

One of the main factors which made the University of Leiden a viable institution was the economic growth of the Northern Netherlands, especially the Province of Holland, from the 1580s onwards. Besides gaining from the sudden influx of immigrants, the merchants of Holland profited from the fact that their competitors from the Southern cities of Antwerp and Gent had been cut off from their markets by a maritime blockade organized by the Dutch Protestant irregular units, the '*Geuzen*', and their privateers. The military victories of the Protestant faction led by William of Orange against the Habsburgs also helped to create favorable conditions for the founding of a university by ushering in a period of relative stability in the North.

These factors alone, however, would not have allowed the University of Leiden to maintain an appropriate academic status. The University owed its intellectual prestige primarily to the energies of its scholars, and most of all to its first curator, the poet-professor Janus Dousa (Jan van der Does). Dousa was a Latinist who had studied in Paris under Jean Dorat, the tutor of Pierre de Ronsard. Equipped with this academic training, Dousa had natural access to a Europe-wide network created by humanist scholars. This experience enabled him to become, as one of his many other activities, an indefatigable organizer of literary life within Leiden's academic elite. Dousa's largely informal literary activities quickly took the form of a 'Leiden school', '(...) which in the following ten years was to include such names as [Justus] Lips(ius), Dominicus Baudius (Baude), Georgius Benedicti (Werteloo), Janus Gruter(us), and Jacob

¹³ Israel, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-220.

Walraven'¹⁴. The most important member of this body of academics was indisputably Justus Lipsius, a scholar of high international renown whom Dousa enticed to leave the university of Louvain for Leiden.

Apart from their primary academic activities as philologists, the Leiden humanists Dousa and Lipsius composed Latin poetry. Dousa, who published the main part of his verse in the volume *Nova Poemata* (1575), also wrote occasional verse in Dutch. Dousa's theoretical attention to the vernacular (apart from the all-important classical languages) most probably would not have produced significant results, however, were it not for the presence of Leiden's town clerk, Jan van Hout. This 'man of small Latin but great energy'¹⁵ was a highly talented poet in Dutch and a driving force behind the local chamber of rhetoric '*De Witte Acoleyen*'. Together, Lipsius, Dousa and Van Hout created what they called a 'Leiden Triumvirate' ('*Triumviri Amicitiae*'). This informal poetic group formed a congenial climate for assimilating a range of concepts and standards of poetic workmanship which the poets of the French *Pléiade*, basing on a thorough knowledge of Latin poetry, had been applying for some time to poetry written in the vernacular¹⁶.

The presence of Jan van Hout, the head of '*De Witte Acoleyen*', was instrumental in gradually shifting the attention of the 'Leiden Triumvirate' from poetry written in Latin towards verse compositions in the vernacular. Although few of his texts have survived, Van Hout is known to have extensively experimented with new poetic meters such as the alexandrine and new verse forms such as the sonnet. Van Hout became a proponent of such features, prominent in the work of the French *Pléiade* poets, as isosyllabicity, alternating masculine and feminine rhyme, and a median caesura. Encouraging other '*rederijkers*' to follow his example, he effectively established a series of benchmarks in the area of poetic technique. These theoretical standards soon became a respected norm, determining how poets wrote for several decades to come, i.e. up to and through the early 1600s when Hooft learned his poetic craft among the '*rederijkers*' of Amsterdam.

¹⁴ J.A. van Dorsten, *Poets, Patrons, and Professors. Sir Philip Sidney, Daniel Rogers, and the Leiden Humanists*. Oxford University Press (London: 1962), p. 35.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁶ Chris Heesakkers, 'Lipsius, Dousa and Van Hout: Latin and the Vernacular in Leiden in the 1570s and 1580s', In: *Lipsius in Leiden. Studies in the Life and Works of a Great Humanist on the Occasion of his 450th Anniversary*, ed. by Karl Enenkel and Chris Heesakkers, Florivallis (Voorthuizen: 1997), pp. 97-105.

Van Hout's poetic program spanned four major themes, which were summarized by the Dutch literary historian Werner Waterschoot as including '(...) the ignorance of the crowd, the moral integrity of the artist, the poet being inspired and technical aspects of verse and rhyme'¹⁷. Van Hout also championed the importance of the vernacular. He insisted that Dutch rhetoricians simplify their poetic diction, renouncing their traditional stock of ornamental learned vocabulary modeled on words from French and Latin. Van Hout's ideas on poetic form, taken up by the Amsterdammer Hendrik Laurenszoon Spiegel in the *Twe-spraak vande Nederduitsche Letterkunst*, soon became prevalent among Dutch poets. The historical significance of Van Hout as a pioneer of regular verse was recognized by many of his contemporaries. Many years later, for example, the 'rederijker' Maarten Beheyt eulogized his role, writing that 'Neerduytsch maetklancx voorbeelt sproot uyt van Hout in Leyden' ['The example of Netherlandic metrical verse started with Van Hout in Leiden']¹⁸. While Van Hout's concepts were mainly favorably received, they did sometimes encounter opposition. One of Van Hout's most vocal critics was one of the 'Eglentier' poets, Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert. Opting for a less strict approach to questions of poetic form, Coornhert – a proponent of '(...)the new Christian-Ciceronian rhetoric as developed by humanists such as Agricola, Erasmus and Melanchthon' – questioned the claims of the older generation of 'rederijkers' whose prescriptive stylistics went back to Jean Molinet's *Art de rhétorique vulgaire* (1493) and to its Dutch continuation in Matthijs de Castelein's *Const van rhetoriken* (1555). True to this, Coornhert consequently criticized the new poetic of inspiration promoted by Dousa and Van Hout which had its theoretical roots in Ronsard's *Abrégé de l'art poétique français* (1565). In this regard, as an author of poetry written in free verse, Coornhert took on the role of a spokesman for a less 'sectarian' and much more liberal approach to questions of poetic form¹⁹.

The two cities of Holland – Leiden, with its Triumvirate, and Amsterdam, home to the poets of 'De Eglentier' – were the stage for an on-

¹⁷ Werner Waterschoot, 'Marot or Ronsard? New French Poetics among Dutch Rhetoricians in the Second Half of the 16th Century', p. 148.

¹⁸ 'The example of regular verse in Dutch [maetklancx] originated with Van Hout in Leiden'. From *Het Leydsch Vlaemisch Orangien Lely-hof, Verciert met veel verscheyden nieuwe Vruchten Tsaem gestelt By de Broeders In Liefden Groeyende. Ghedruckt tot Leyden* [...] Anno 1632, 3. Ex. UB Leiden (UBL) 1697 C 16. Quoted in: Jan Koppenol, 'In mate volghet mi: Jan van Hout als voorman van de renaissance', *Spektator* 20 (1991), p. 55.

¹⁹ Spies, op. cit., pp. 85-88.

going debate on poetics, which lasted from the mid-1570s onwards. This debate was a powerful stimulus, shaping the practice of Dutch poetry at least until the mid-1610s – the time that saw the publication of Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria*. Yet these developments were complemented by a range of secondary factors. The most important of these was decidedly the increased range of printed publications which provided a means of publishing and disseminating written texts, and facilitated the adoption of literary models arriving from abroad.

The cultural impact of French literature and the printing activities of the chambers of rhetoric are commonly mentioned as the main factors promoting the emergence of Renaissance poetry, or the 'new poetry' ('*nieuwe poëzie*'), as it is typically called by Dutch scholars. Introduced to the Netherlands between the 1570s and 1580s, this poetry mainly comprised imitations of the continental Petrarchist discourse and the French *poésie précieuse*. 'French literature', wrote the Flemish scholar Werner Waterschoot, 'is the dominant influence in developing the new style of versification and in propagating new poetical genres'²⁰.

The 1570s and 1580s were a time when this 'new poetry', which would eventually supersede the medieval genres of the '*rederijkers*', was still read and practiced by a very narrow elite. A credible witness, quoted by Werner Waterschoot, was Flemish poet and writer Karel van Mander (1548-1606), who is best known for the *Schilder-boeck* (1606), a biography of painters from the Netherlands. Around 1590, Van Mander already 'recognizes the high status of the French alexandrine, but considers writing it very hard labour'²¹. By the close of the 16th century, this mode of producing poetry is still an exclusive domain of the literary elites. The group striving to adopt this new aesthetic initially included several of the Leiden scholars around Janus Dousa, and some of the most competent '*rederijkers*' such as Van Hout, Spiegel, Visscher, Coornhert, and Van Mander himself²².

The 'new poetry', however, did manage to reach a somewhat wider group of Dutch readers and poets in the period immediately before P.C. Hooft penned his first verse. It did so owing largely to the existence of a highly developed literary culture, which in turn was inseparable from the high degree of literacy among the inhabitants of the Netherlands.

Historians of the 17th century Netherlands, among them Jonathan Israel, make note of the fact that '(...) long before 1572 the Netherlands

²⁰ Waterschoot, op. cit., p. 153.

²¹ Waterschoot, op. cit., p. 152.

²² Waterschoot, op. cit., p. 153.

both north and south of the great rivers exhibited higher levels of literacy than the neighbouring parts of Europe, owing essentially to the very high proportions of the population dwelling in towns²³. It was a phenomenon so unique that it aroused the interest, and admiration, of contemporary visitors to the Low Countries:

It is clear that in the Dutch Republic literacy among both men and women attained a level, and a literacy culture developed to an extent, which was wholly exceptional in Europe and which did not become normative elsewhere until centuries later. When the great scholar Scaliger arrived from France in 1593, he was astonished to find that in Holland even servant girls could read²⁴.

The high rate of literacy was partly a consequence of the efforts of the Dutch Reformed Church to inculcate its morals and values among the populace. In these activities the Church strongly relied on catechization by means of various types of written texts. Another factor stimulating literacy was the vast number of commercial and professional opportunities which presented themselves to better educated inhabitants of cities as a result of a rapidly growing economy²⁵.

The high rate of literacy facilitated and intensified literary exchanges. The '*rederijkers*', who preserved most of their texts in manuscript form, also published volumes of poetry. Often collected over several years, these volumes were most probably addressed to a much broader audience than simply other rhetoricians. One such collection of poetry was *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* (1610), an anthology of verse, which owed its publication to the energy of the patron of the Haarlem '*rederijkers*', Karel Van Mander. Mainly, however, the 'new literature', comprising sonnets and odes with Petrarchist themes of unrequited love, written in the new meters, was conveyed through two types of printed works: the songbook and the emblem book.

The songbook was not a new phenomenon in the Netherlands, as printed publications of this type were already very widespread by the

²³ Israel, op. cit., p. 686.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ '(...) the great expansion of primary education in the United Provinces after 1590 coincided with the major expansion of the cities, and of the economy, (...) the spread of literacy not only buttressed the confessionalization process but assisted the diffusion of many kinds of technical knowledge, including military and naval drill, and served to enhance social mobility by increasing the opportunities available to able boys from humble backgrounds, not the least of whom was the great admiral Michiel de Ruyter'. Ibid., pp. 686-687.

mid-16th century. The secular songbook conveyed both late-medieval oral narrative literature and a repertoire of ballads, refrains and rondeaux produced by the chambers of rhetoric. One of the earliest examples of such a songbook is *Een schoon liedekens-boeck* (1544) published in Antwerp by Jan Roelants. Better known as the *Antwerps Liedboek* – a name given to it by the 19th century German philologist August Heinrich Hoffman von Fallersleben (1798-1874) – *Een schoon liedekens-boeck* is a unique source for many late-medieval secular song lyrics. Most of the songs and poems from *Een schoon liedekens-boeck* presented love from a tragic or comic angle or reflected on contemporary events. The impact of the popular songs found in this collection was in fact so pervasive that references to them can be found scattered in songbooks and poetry collections throughout the seventeenth century and even later.

In the Northern Netherlands, which initially lagged behind the South where printing was concerned, the first secular printed songbook, *Een Amstelredams Amoureuus Lietboek*, was published in 1589. Owing to a steady growth of population and increasing affluence, Amsterdam soon became the primary center of songbook publishing in the North. The other cities of Holland, and later Zeeland and Friesland, followed its example over the next decades. At the end of the 16th century, the Amsterdam songbooks, sparsely illustrated with crude woodcuts and printed using the *fractura*, changed their appearance. So-called ‘new songbooks’ were born which took on an oblong format (4°) and a Roman typeface. Early examples include the *Nieu Amstelredams Lied-boeck* (1591) and *Nieu Groot Amstelredams Liedtboek* (1605). These publications were conventionally addressed by their publishers to an adolescent reading public (*‘de jeugd’*). The contents of the songbooks were also gradually modernized. The traditional songs and ballads or *‘rederijker’* genres which supplied the bulk of what was found in earlier publications, increasingly gave way to forms characteristic of ‘new poetry’, such as sonnets, odes and pastoral songs. This evolution produced such books as *Den nieuwen Lust-hof* (1602), *Den Bloem-hof van de Nederlantsche Jeucht* (1608 and 1610), *‘t Vermaeck der Jeucht* (1612 and 1617), *Cupido’s Lusthof* (1613), and *Apollo* (1615)²⁶.

The high literacy and increased purchasing power of city-dwellers in the Northern Netherlands (and especially Amsterdam) also contributed to the rise of another type of printed publication – the emblem book. Similarly to the songbook, the emblem book also very quickly became

²⁶ E.K. Grootes, ‘Het jeugdig publiek van de “nieuwe liedboeken”’, in: *Visie in veelvoud. Opstellen van prof. dr. E.K. Grootes over zeventiende-eeuwse letterkunde verzameld door M. Spies en J. Jansen*, Amsterdam University Press (Amsterdam: 1996), pp. 30-31.

a channel for the forms and discourses of 16th century Petrarchist poetry. In fact, seventeenth-century Dutch emblem books are a powerful example of how the seventeenth-century Netherlands absorbed and transformed a concept which had been created elsewhere. And in the 'Golden Age' such cultural transmission was quite common. As the Dutch historian A. Th. van Deursen wrote, the inhabitants of the Low Countries systematically adopted ideas, inventions and institutions originally devised elsewhere:

Waar ook in het buitenland aan ontdekkingen gedaan was, [de Nederlanders] maakten er gebruik van in hun eigen bijzondere omstandigheden. Dat geldt voor de vestingbouw en de organisatie van de handel. Het geldt evenzeer voor de cartografie en de waterhuishouding. De techniek profiteerde van wat elders was begonnen. Maar wat is er Nederlandser dan een atlas van Blaeu or een Noord-Hollands polderlandschap?²⁷

[Whenever a discovery was made in another country, the Dutch put it to use in their own specific environment. This is equally true of the art of fortification and the organization of commerce as it is of cartography and managing waterways. Technology benefited from what was started elsewhere. And yet what could be more Dutch than an atlas by Blaeu or a polder landscape in North-Holland?]

Indeed, with regard to the Dutch literature of the early 1600s, one would not be far off the mark if one were to substitute 'emblemata' and 'Petrarchism' or '*poésie précieuse*' for any of the examples of technical skill and ingenuity mentioned above.

Emblem books were not an originally Dutch concept. They owed their popularity throughout Europe to such works as Andrea Alciati's *Emblematum Liber* (1531), a collection of Latin *motti* and corresponding images based on texts from the Planudean version of the *Anthologia graeca* (Florence, 1494). This vigorous European emblem tradition inspired Daniël Heinsius, one of the chief philologists at Leiden University, with the idea of creating a series of 24 amorous emblems outlining the exploits of Cupid. The resulting publication was the volume *Quaeris quid sit Amor* (c. 1601). Heinsius's emblems combined a *pictura* and a Latin *inscriptio* with vernacular eight-line poems in the new meters. These were based on a variety of earlier sources, including Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, Maurice Scève's *Délie* (1544) or Hadrianus Junius's *Emblemata* (1565). Opening the volume was a brief commentary referring to Ovid's metaphor of love as military service: 'Quaeris quid sit amor, quid am-

²⁷ Van Deursen, op. cit., p. 41.

are, cupidinis et quid Castra sequi? Chartam hanc inspice, doctus eris. Haec tibi delicias hortumque ostendit amorum: Inispice: sculptori est ingeniosa manus'²⁸.

Heinsius's *Quaeris quid sit Amor* was republished several times – from the third edition onward under the genological title *Emblemata amatoria* (1608). The 1608 edition was the first one to be published with a section of lyrical poetry, i.e., Heinsius's poems 'Elegie, ofte Nachtklachte' and 'Het sterf-huys van Cupido'. The printer of Heinsius' re-edited *Emblemata amatoria* (1608) the Amsterdammer was Dirck Pieterszoon Pers. An enterprising publisher, Pers most probably decided to revive Heinsius's text in reaction to another very prominent volume of erotic emblems, Otto Vaenius's *Amorum Emblemata* (1608). Vaenius's work was published in several editions, which featured different combinations of texts in classical and modern languages (Latin/Dutch/French; Latin/French/Italian; Latin/Spanish/Italian, Latin/English/Italian). Printed in Antwerp, Vaenius's *Amorum Emblemata* was clearly marketed with the European reader in mind – in fact much more so than Heinsius's original volume which doubtless inspired it²⁹.

Initially conceived as a form of scholarly amusement, Heinsius's *Quaeris quid sit Amor* (and his later *Emblemata amatoria*), like Vaenius's *Amorum Emblemata*, acted as a model for many other sumptuously illustrated books of multilingual erotic emblem published in Holland, including Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria* from 1611. As a matter of fact, it was not by accident that Hooft's *Emblemata* received the same title as the work of the Leiden scholar Heinsius³⁰.

Most Dutch emblem books of the early 1600s shared the same oblong format and contained not just emblems but also poetry in the vernacular. Heinsius's volume, as its appearance suggests, was obviously intended for wealthy buyers. Its title page prominently featured two blank spaces where the owner could place his coat of arms alongside that of his bride or fiancée. The close thematic link between amorous emblemata and love poetry in the vernacular prompted the printer of *Quaeris quid sit Amor*, the Amsterdammer Hans Mathysz, to publish Heinsius's volume along with an illustrated songbook, *Den nieuwen Lust-hof* (1602). This

²⁸ 'What love is do you ask, what it is to love and what it is to Follow desire's camp? Have a look at this map, you will become an expert. This shows you the delights and the garden of the Cupids. Have a look. The engraver has a talented hand'. Hooft 1983, p. 7.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 8.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 6-7.

latter publication was most probably also designed as a gift-book: a blank space was left in the dedication, where the buyer could write the name of the lady that he was courting. Regarding *Quaeris quid sit Amor* and *Den nieuwen Lust-hof*, the publisher no doubt sensed a growing demand for this type of publication among a similar group of readers.

In recent years scholars from the Netherlands invested considerable effort trying to determine the identity of the 17th century Dutch readers who purchased emblem books and songbooks. The contents of the dedicatory texts or introductory poems suggest that these publications were generally aimed at an adolescent readership. Daniel Heinsius's *Quaeris quid sit Amor* opened with a verse preface entitled *Aen de Ionckvrouwen van Hollandt* ('To the maidens of Holland'). There the author laid out his intention to teach the Latin Cupid to speak the language of the Netherlands ('Dat ick Cupido wil gaen leeren onse spraek'), and subsequently, to pass on the idiom of Latin emblemata to a Dutch public³¹. Similarly, the publishers of the *Nieu Aemstelredams Lied-boeck* (1591), announcing what can be called a manifesto of 'new poetry', addressed young maidens ('maechdekens'), urging the old competition to leave the (literary) field ('wijckt ons t'velt'):

UVech ghy oude clappeyen, malloten, aelwaerdighe sottinnen // al
Die op fabulen, droomen, en leugenen scherpt v sinnen // mal
Ruymt op, wijckt ons t'velt, en uyt die groene paden // spoet
Wy maechdekens zynt, die om den Laurier dringhen...³²

[Away, you old claptraps, crazies, worthy foolish wives, all
Who sharpen your wits on fables, dreams and mad lies
Get lost, leave the field and the green paths to us,
We are the maidens who compete for the Laurel...]

The poets of *Den nieuwen Lust-hof* (1602), by contrast, presented their songbook for the amusement ('vermaackinge') of an unspecified 'young' audience ('jonge jeught'):

Eerbare jonge jeught, de lust my hier toe riedt,
Te brengen voor den dagh hetgene ghy nu ziet.
Een *Lied-Boeck* 't welck u tot vermaackinge zal wesen³³.

³¹ Daniel Heinsius, *Quaeris quid sit Amor* (Amsterdam c. 1601), f. 2 r.

³² *Nieu: Amstelredams Lied-boeck, vol Amoreuse nieu Jaren, Mey-Lieden, Tafel Liedden, en veelderhande vrolijke ghesangen, Nu op nieu vermeerdert*. By Barendt Adriaensz. z.p. [Amsterdam: 'Inde Warmoestraet'], Int Gulden Schrijff-boeck. Anno 1591, f. 2.

³³ In: W.J.A. Jonckbloet, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche letterkunde. Deel 3: de zeventiende eeuw (1)*. J.B. Wolters, Groningen 1889 (4th ed.), p. 48.

[Honourable young youth, it is with pleasure
that I now bring forth that which you see before you.
A *Song-Book* for your amusement]

The widespread practice of addressing a prefatory poem to an adolescent readership ('ieught') was first and foremost as a rhetorical device. Not only were adolescent readers more likely to read and create amorous poetry, but such a dedication would be a matter of convention since young people were traditionally regarded as particularly susceptible to love. Recent Dutch research, however, especially by E.G. Grootes, proves that such publications were indeed marketed to and bought by mainly 'young, affluent marriageable people'. This group of individuals increased in size and gained purchasing power owing to the growing wealth and relatively stable socio-political climate in Amsterdam from the end of the 16th century onwards. The Petrarchist themes of the new publications, emphasizing the sublimation of the libido within a rigorously observed ritual of courtship, would have been well received, E.K. Grootes argued, by the parents and guardians who enforced the 'marital policy' within this group³⁴.

Social historians of the 17th century Netherlands, e.g. Benjamin Roberts, followed a similar line of reasoning. Pointing out the existence of a 'culture of leisure' among 17th century Dutch adolescents, Roberts concluded that book publishers saw this group as an important source of income and modified their products in such a way as to satisfy its tastes:

Tijdens de eerste decennia van de zeventiende eeuw werden door deze [welgestelde] jongeren in toenemende mate boeken en kleding aangeschaft. In het begin van de zeventiende eeuw ontdekten uitgevers in de Republiek, die al goede zaken deden vanwege de censuur elders in Europa, ook de markt voor jonge mannen en vrouwen en gingen boeken produceren waarin die lezers geïnteresseerd waren³⁵.

[During the first decades of the 17th century these [affluent] young people increasingly purchased books and clothing. In the beginning of the 17th century, the Dutch printers, who were already doing well owing to censorship elsewhere in Europe, discovered that there was a market for young

³⁴ Grootes, op. cit., p. 38.

³⁵ Benjamin Roberts, 'Rokende soldaten. Mannelijke rolmodellen voor de jeugd in de vroege zeventiende eeuw?' in: *Losbandige jeugd. Jongeren en moraal in de Nederlanden tijdens de late Middeleeuwen en de Vroegmoderne Tijd*, Verloren (Hilversum: 2004), p. 64.

men and women and started producing books in which those readers were interested]

Research done by Grootes and Roberts uncovered tangible evidence that the authors and publishers of the early 1600s, in contrast to their predecessors, were strikingly consistent in creating a literature addressed to 'adolescent' readers, serving the dual aims of amusement and instruction in line with the classical Horatian dictum of '*dulce et utile*'.

A description of the literary environment in which Hooft was active as a poet, would be incomplete without at least a brief reference to the events surrounding the publication of *Emblemata amatoria*. The available information is rather scarce. It is known that the printer was Willem Janszoon (Blauw), a capable Amsterdam publisher and cartographer who would later gain considerable renown as a maker of fine maps and atlases. Hooft's volume represented Blauw's first major commission and his first venture onto the field of literary publishing. *Emblemata amatoria* were produced in collaboration with C.G. Plemp and Richard Jean De Nerée, who furnished, respectively, the Latin and French translations of the Dutch *disticha* which accompanied the emblems. However, scholars have as yet been unable to identify the engraver who created the individual etchings.

Except for several poems which appeared in print earlier, e.g. *Den Bloem-hof van de Nederlantsche Ieucht* (1608), the *Emblemata amatoria* comprised Hooft's previously unpublished texts: a set of thirty multilingual emblems and a part containing vernacular lyrical poetry. Opening the volume is a narrative poem, *Voorreden tot de ieucht* ('Preface to the Adolescent Reader'). The emblems with verse texts in Dutch, French and Latin clearly followed the multilingual model established Otto Vaenius's *Amorum Emblemata* (1608). The contents of *Emblemata amatoria* are conspicuously arranged in iterations containing the number three. Not only are there thirty emblems with inscriptions in three languages, but the lyrical section of Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria* ('Sommige nieuwe ghesanghen, liedekens en sonnetten') comprises fifteen units, or 'clusters', each made up of three texts: two songs followed by one sonnet³⁶. Altogether, the *Emblemata amatoria* include thirty songs (ten 'Liederen' and 'Liedekens'; twenty 'Sangen' and 't Samensangen'), six madrigals ('Velddeuntjens'), and fifteen sonnets ('Sonnetten'). The lyrical section, closed off as a distinct part by the word 'Eynde', is complemented by a masque ('Mommery'). The two nearly symmetrical sections of *Emblemata amato-*

³⁶ Porteman 1998: 48.

ria – emblems and lyrical poetry – are said by some critics to recall the concept behind Jan Mathijsz's twin editions of *Quaeris quid sit Amor* and *Den nieuwen Lust-hof*³⁷.

HOOFT'S *EMBLEMATA AMATORIA*: LESSONS IN LOVE

One of the keys to interpreting P.C. Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria* as a cohesive body of emblems and lyrical poetry is the 'Voorreden tot de ieucht', a verse narrative preface opening the volume. The 'Voorreden' invokes a scene of May-day celebrations ('*meifeest*') in an allegorical dialogue between Venus, the goddess of love, and her son Min, the Dutch vernacular equivalent of the Latin Amor.

The '*meifeest*', held on the first of May to celebrate the coming of spring, was a pre-Christian festival traditionally associated with the rites and activities typical of adolescence³⁸. Hooft's 'Voorreden' shows a mythologized vision of this festival. As the smoke rises from the altars, crowds of grateful worshippers line up to offer incense and rose-wreaths to Venus, the goddess of love. Pleased with this display, Venus turns her eyes to heaven where she finds other evidence of her godly stature. No god is immune to the forces of love: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Phoebus (Apollo), Mercury, Selene and Endymion, and Venus's lover Herses are equally affected by its power. Unlike Venus, however, her son Min (Amor) has less reason to be satisfied. He realizes that while he and his mother might be the most powerful gods in heaven, on earth they encounter mainly ridicule and derision. Not only do the mortals refuse to worship the gods of love – they also abuse their sacred names, accusing them of bringing into the world a host of woes and vices, including moral laxity and infidelity, despair, indifference, wastefulness and conflict³⁹.

Ending this catalogue of grievances, Min suggests that the foolish earthlings who blaspheme against love should be severely punished for

³⁷ Hooft 1983, p. 7.

³⁸ Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, 'Inleiding. Trends en thema's in de historiographie van de jeugd', in: *Losbandige jeugd. Jongeren en moraal in de Nederlanden tijdens de late Middeleeuwen en de Vroegmoderne Tijd*, Verloren (Hilversum: 2004), p. 17.

³⁹ Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, 'Inleiding. Trends en thema's in de historiographie van de jeugd', in: *Losbandige jeugd. Jongeren en moraal in de Nederlanden tijdens de late Middeleeuwen en de Vroegmoderne Tijd*, Verloren (Hilversum: 2004), p. 17.

their behavior. Venus, however, takes a more forgiving view. Arguments, she says, are the best way of combating ‘heresy’ (*‘kettery’*): ‘reden moeten zijn met reden wederleyt’ (Hooft 1983: 74). Persuasion, and not punishment – in other words, a strategy of ‘winning hearts and minds’ – should be used to convince these ‘heretics’ to renounce their misguided ways:

[...] Dus is het nut noch recht te straffen kettery.
Maer soeckt met onderwijs van reden haer te winnen.
(Hooft 1983: 74)

[[...] There is neither purpose nor sense in punishing heresy.
Try instead to win over heretics by educating their minds]

Venus comes up with a plan. What better educator (*‘Onderrechter’*) could one hope for than the young love-god? Henceforth it will be Min who will justify the ways of love to humans, demonstrating that the gods are not to blame for what happens when love is perverted or abused. Eventually Min will prove to mortals that they alone are responsible for ill-advisedly choosing the wrong time, place and manner of love. As a result, the erring humans should amend their ways⁴⁰.

As might be expected of a 17th century Netherlandic discourse on morals, the preface to *Emblemata amatoria* conveys a scattering of concepts typical of humanist ethics. The better a thing is, Venus reminds Min, the easier it can be corrupted. Moderation, an Erasmian virtue, is clearly one of the keywords. One of the metaphors for love is wine: whoever does not want to enfeeble their constitution must not love to excess. One should find the right object on which to bestow one’s affections, keeping passion at bay for as long as it is required. Lovers should employ wisdom and prudence, as only this can guarantee that the returns, in the form of pleasure, will exceed the invested pain. This is conveyed in a monetary metaphor apparently intended to convince young readers of a mercantile bent:

⁴⁰ Doe Venus: Ghy daerom en zijt niet tongheloos,
Of schoon de daden cloeck, boven uw uytspraeck pralen.
Derhalven volcht mijn raedt; en gaet henlie verhalen
Als Onderrechter, datmen niet misbruycken dan
De goede dinghen, en oock meest de beste can.
Dat wy gheen oorsaek zijn van de ghemelde quaden,
Maer dat zy lieden, die, selve’ op haer halsen laden,
Door dien s’ons bruycken vaeck heel sonder onderscheydt
Van rechte maet, en tijdt, en van gheleghentheydt.
(Hooft 1983: 75)

Wilt soo de lusten van der Minnen brandt ghebruycken
 Dat z'uyt uw kintsch gebeent het merrech niet en suycken
 Noch dats' u drooghen uyt den Ouderdoom ghecromt.
 En port de Minne niet eer hy van selve comt.
 En legt uw Minne daer ghy vaylich moocht ghenieten:
 Of immers daer't ghenot is waerdich de verdrieten.
 Wie dese les betracht die weet ons beyden danck.
 (Hooft 1983: 75)

[Partake of the passions of Love's fire in such a way
 That they don't suck the marrow from your young bone,
 Nor that they dry you out and reduce you to wizened Old Age.
 And do not pursue Love before it comes of its own accord.
 And invest your Love where you can safely enjoy its pleasure:
 Or in any case, where the pleasure is worth the woes.
 Who minds this lesson, owes thanks to us both]

To teach this lesson in love effectively, Min decides to inspire a human author, the narrator of the 'Voorreden', who will then communicate this message to other mortals:

Of blaestse' een Minnaer in, om voor u uyt te blasen.
 'Twas wel van zynen sin. Des seyde hy: Ick weet raet
 En sonder meer quam my verschynen in den staet,
 Waer in hy wort ghesien van 't eeuwich hof vol weelden.
 (Hooft 1983: 75-76)

[Or pipe it to a Lover, who will pipe it out again.
 It was as he wished for. Upon which he said: I know what to do,
 And promptly he appeared before me just as he does
 At the eternal court of delights]

The role of the poet-narrator will be to write a text accompanying a series of images produced by a skilled engraver (implied here are the thirty *picturae* of *Emblemata amatoria*). These images of love will persuade lovers to recognize their own foolish behavior as the true cause of their amorous misadventures:

En laste my: ick souw dit schryven voor de Beelden
 Die van gheleerder handt hier nae gheteekent staen,
 Op dat de gheene die somtijds sal [v]inden aen
 Het Minnen quelling vast, hem daer af niet verleyden 'laet,
 En gheef de Min gheen schult, maer 'sMinnaers onbescheyden' raet.
 (Hooft 1983: 76)

[And he bid me: I [i.e. the narrator] should write this for the images
Which are drawn by an experienced hand,
So that the one who oft' times will be held
In the grip of Love's suffering, does not let himself be distracted;
And let him blame not Love, but the Lover's weak judgment]

Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria* reveal an allegiance to an implicit ideological program common to many song- and emblem-books of the early 1600s, which proposed educating an adolescent reading public in the ways and manners of love. The young readers of this volume, as stated in the introductory 'Voorreden tot de ieucht' ('Foreword to the Youth'), would eventually, after reflecting on the text, become aware of the true meaning of their amorous adventures. Assimilating the lessons contained in the '*Afbeeldingen van Minne*' (literally: 'images of love') they will learn to cultivate the positive aspects of love, turning their passion into a socially profitable experience. By 'images of love' one immediately understands the *picturae*, and therefore the *emblemata*, but these could also imply, by extension, the entire *Emblemata amatoria*. That the songs and sonnets could also be seen as 'images' is borne out by the Dutch critic Karel Porteman, who wrote: 'De liederen en gedichten lijken dus ook als illustraties (afbeeldingen, toonbeelden) van de liefde te worden aangeboden' ['The songs and poems appear to be presented as illustrations (images, exempla) of love']⁴¹.

One of the aims of the strategy propounded by Hooft in the 'Voorreden' was undoubtedly propagating cultural codes related to proper behavior for young persons in courtship. A reason for this can be found in the context of the social transformation taking place in the Northern Netherlands at the turn of the century. As the new Protestant middle class came to power in the Northern Netherlands from the 1580s, owing to a combination of economic growth and a realignment within the ruling patriciate, it became keenly interested in finding new cultural models to build prestige and underscore its status as the dominant social group. Another reason is the changing mores of the socially upwardly mobile merchant class, which sought to modify its behavior to mirror commercial elites in France and Italy. Important examples of cultural capital put into play at this juncture were Petrarchan poetry and the Latin (and later vernacular) art of the emblem.

Throughout the 16th century Petrarchan poetry, similarly to knowledge of the classics, functioned as a cultural marker indicating the abil-

⁴¹ Porteman 1998: 47.

ity to interact with the most influential classes in society. Unsurprisingly, those who aspired to join these groups – i.e., predominantly members of the cosmopolitan commercial elite – were among the most eager practitioners of Petrarchan poetry⁴². As a wealthy burgher Hooft was no doubt well aware of the close link between literature and commerce. As a future *mercator sapiens*, he would have seen evidence of this connection at first hand in the Amsterdam chamber 'De Eglentier' and during his European Grand Tour of the early 1600s. Hooft, of course, was not the first to discover that emblem books and songbooks could function as a vehicle for new cultural models or to respond to their (commercial) potential. He would have been, nevertheless, easily drawn to the idea of publishing an emblematic collection of poetry, as this would have allowed him to relate to an intellectual trend which was quite prominent among affluent burghers and the patriciate of Holland.

For the people of the seventeenth-century Netherlands the period of adolescence ('jeugd') was an autonomous and clearly defined stage of human life. In the literature of the time, youth was described as synonymous with disorder, rebelliousness and unbridled sexuality. Yet while adolescents displayed a propensity for vice and disorderly conduct, they were also seen as susceptible to social education and moral reform⁴³. Songbooks and emblem-books on amorous themes focused on adolescence, as a time of life traditionally believed to be best adapted to respond to love poetry. The contents of such books, comprising elegant lyrics that were mainly translations or imitations of French verse, could easily be shaped by the authors or the publisher, into an instrument of education in the forms and norms of courtship through pleasure and diversion. As the 17th century inhabitants of the Netherlands tended to marry rather late compared to the rest of Europe, that is in their late twenties, this period of extended 'adolescence' when individuals would be involved in courtship, supplied a considerable and responsive audience⁴⁴.

The 'new literature' was triggered by a need for amusement on the part of the wealthier adolescents. These wanted to read poetry and sing songs which were different and more 'modern' than the staple fare of earlier generations. Importantly, this literature – with its Petrarchan self-analysis – provided young members of this social group with a new key to understanding and expressing their emotional life. To classically

⁴² Cf. Karel Bostoen, *Dichterschap en Koopmanschap in de zestiende eeuw. Omtrent de dichters Guillaume de Poetou en Jan vander Noot*, Sub Rosa (Deventer: 1987).

⁴³ I. Krausman Ben-Amos, op. cit., p. 12.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 13-14.

educated Erasmian burghers with European connections such a strategy must have seemed culturally appealing and socially beneficial. Additionally, it could have been applied in the light of post-Reformation concepts which stipulated that poetry should convey truthful knowledge instead of idle fantasies.

That the *Emblemata amatoria* are first and foremost a lesson in love is the central message of Hooft's narrative preface 'Voorreden tot de jeucht'. Studying the operations of love as they are represented in the *picturae* and texts of *Emblemata amatoria*, the model adolescent should learn to accept and express the nature of his passion. His, as these lessons are phrased almost without exception from a male perspective. The same lessons are conveyed, albeit in a more covert manner, in the lyrical section. Forming a loose poetic cycle with a clearly defined beginning and end, the sonnets together with the other genres from *Emblemata amatoria* instruct young readers as to what they may expect when they fall in love. Starting from the very first instance of falling in love (as pictured, e.g., in the sonnet 'De Stralen mijns ghesichts die'r mengden in de stralen'), the enamoured adolescent will ultimately arrive at a socially constructive result, consistent with engagement and marriage, illustrated in the sonnet ending the volume ('Mijn Sorch wanneer ick peyns dat u soo seer behaghe'). In other words, after reviewing a series of 'dispositions' typical of a melancholy lover, the poems eventually offer a positive resolution: the damsel accepts the adoring suitor's courtship, giving her long-awaited consent. The sonnets from *Emblemata amatoria* can be seen, therefore, as a source of knowledge, allowing the reader to decode and interpret emotional states and conditions related to love, and they are consequently a lesson in the different ways of expressing love, teaching Dutch 'adolescents' how to represent feelings and emotions using the refined cultural codes of 16th century European amorous poetry.

HOOFT'S *EMBLEMATA AMATORIA*:
A FOCAL POINT FOR STUDIES
OF 17TH CENTURY DUTCH LITERATURE AND CULTURE

Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria* offers a vantage point from which to investigate the convergence of many cultural areas of the 17th century Netherlands which are typically examined in isolation. One of these areas comprises classically-inspired *emblemata* and Petrarchan love poetry,

the literary culture of the academic elites of Leiden intellectuals. Another area covers the culture of the rich bourgeoisie of Amsterdam, where *rederijkers* gradually adopted the modes of the former. Next, there are printed publications, such as songbooks, which allowed these cultural models to reach larger groups of readers, in effect promoting a new set of cultural and ideological norms.

Besides these 'horizontal' synchronic factors, a number of 'vertical' diachronic factors are involved in studying Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria*. First, there is the transformation of Dutch literature from a collective and anonymous model of production, where literary discourse was largely supervised and regulated by the chambers of rhetoric, to an increasingly privatized and decentralized enterprise, which relied on a network of individual authors, publishers and readers. Although published anonymously, the *Emblemata amatoria* are a very early example of a collection of poetry by a single author from the Northern Netherlands. The 'new songbooks', by contrast, were typically the work of a number of rhetoricians from a particular town. In 1616, only a few years after the *Emblemata amatoria* came off the press, the Northern Netherlands saw the publication of the first truly individualized collection of poetry, Daniël Heinsius's *Nederduytsche Poemata*. The introduction to Heinsius's volume, written by Petrus Scriverius, was a poetic manifesto proclaiming the ability of vernacular verse to rise to the level of poetry written in Latin. The *Nederduytsche Poemata* heralded a new ideology of individual authorship. The poet's authority over the text no longer had to be sanctioned by the chambers: from then on it would be contingent increasingly on his or her personal artistry and inspiration⁴⁵.

Another area of study where Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria* are a significant source is the transformation of individual genres. Here the refined lyrical poetry found in this volume, and especially Hooft's skillfully-wrought sonnets, mark an important stage in the process of assimilating 'modern' poetic forms in the Netherlands. Revealing what a young cultivated Dutch poet of the early 1600s considered as worth emulating, these poems reveal that Dutch literature had left the stage of *translatio* which was characteristic of the 1580s. By the end of the first decade of the 17th century this literature was already easily capable of *imitatio*, and steadily making inroads into *aemulatio*, and was ready to bring forth a 'new poetry' which would truly merit this name.

⁴⁵ Cf. Ton van Strien, 'Inleiding: dichten in de zeventiende eeuw' in: *Hollantsche Parnas. Nederlandse gedichten uit de zeventiende eeuw*, Amsterdam University Press (Amsterdam: 1997), pp. 1-9.

RESEARCH INTO HOOFT'S POETRY WITHIN AND BEYOND NETHERLANDIC-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

The position of P.C. Hooft studies at the outset of the 21st century reflects of the overall state of research on 16th and 17th century Netherlandic poetry in the academic world of the Netherlands and Belgium (Flanders). In recent decades, along with the advent of post-structuralism and other recent schools of criticism, the study of texts once considered representative of a homogenous 'national literature' (*'de vaderlandse letteren'*) appears to have fallen out of favor. Many of these once-canonical works are now entirely overshadowed by texts which had been previously marginalized or overlooked. Such processes of revision are clearly necessary and unavoidable, yielding as they do a wealth of fresh and exciting insights. Still, it is rather surprising that Hooft, who was celebrated as a canonical poet by the critics of the first half of the 20th century, over the last few decennia has become something of an 'absent presence' in the canon of Netherlandic literature. New research on his poetry appears to be less urgently stimulated, which seems partly the reason why so few fresh insights related to it have appeared since the early 1980s. Scholastic curricula in the Netherlands reproduce this trend so radically that in some cases secondary-school students are no longer required to learn about P.C. Hooft as a historical figure. The following is a very characteristic reaction of one academic displeased with this situation:

In Nederland moet je niet verbaasd staan als een eerstejaars studente al een half jaar colleges loopt in het gebouw aan de Spuistraat te Amsterdam en nog niet weet en kennelijk ook niet wil weten, wie de P.C. Hooft is naar wie dat gebouw genoemd is⁴⁶.

[Here in the Netherlands you must not be surprised if a student has been attending class for a semester in the building on the Spuistraat in Amsterdam, and does not know and apparently does not want to know, who was the P.C. Hooft after whom the building was named]

The tangibly declining interest in P.C. Hooft studies among Dutch and Flemish scholars, and the low international visibility of studies on 17th century Netherlandic literature, stand in marked contrast to the status and extent of research on the pictorial arts of the 'Golden Age'.

⁴⁶ Jan Stroop (Universiteit van Amsterdam), opening address of the conference 'Zorg om het schoolvak Nederlands', November 2001, Utrecht. Retrieved from: http://www.lvv.nl/zorg_voordrachten_stroop.html.

Unlike literature, seventeenth-century Dutch painting is the subject of highly detailed ongoing research by both Dutch and international art historians. The study of Dutch culture through the prism of painting rather than literature appears on the whole to have adapted well to the changing winds of critical fashion: a compelling example in this regard is Simon Schama's bestselling and controversial study *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (1987).

The literature of the Golden Age, however, is not in any way less significant than painting as part of the cultural landscape of the Netherlands at that time, and as such is too important to be disregarded. Referring to the role which Dutch literature can play in interdisciplinary studies of the 17th century, the Dutch critic Maria A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen raised this point in the preface to the Dutch edition of *Dutch Literature in the Age of Rembrandt*, noting that 'whoever wants to get to know the culture of the Golden Age, cannot afford to ignore the literature that it produced'⁴⁷.

The study of early modern Dutch poetry within and beyond Dutch-speaking areas, was initially shaped by largely negative views of its status in relation to other European literatures (primarily the French and Italian). Dutch poetry was criticized mainly for being excessively imitative and dependent on a variety of foreign 'sources'. A typical reaction was that of the British historian J.L. Price who wrote in *Culture and Society in the Dutch Republic during the 17th century* that the quality of Dutch literature remained generally low, owing to the preference for meticulous imitation over individual expression. Dutch poets mechanically copied the meter and structure of their examples, but they were generally incapable of imitating the spirit of these works⁴⁸.

Opposing this line of interpretation, Dutch scholars rather defensively argued for the 'originality' of the authors of the Netherlandic 'Golden Age'. Traces of this emphasis with reference to Hooft's lyrical poetry can be found in a passage from the lexicon *De Nederlandse en Vlaamse auteurs* by G. van Bork and P. Verkruijsse:

⁴⁷ 'Wie de cultuur van de Gouden Eeuw wil kennen, mag daarom de literatuur niet ongelezen laten'. M.A. Schenkeveld-Van der Dussen, *Nederlandse literatuur in de tijd van Rembrandt*, Erven J. Bijleveld (Utrecht: 1994), p. 7.

⁴⁸ J.L. Price, *Nederlandse cultuur in de gouden eeuw* [original title: *Culture and Society in the Dutch Republic during the 17th Century*], Uitgeverij Het Spectrum (Utrecht: 1976), p. 87.

[Hooft] bezigt een Hollands zoals nog niet was geschreven; hij ontgint deze taal ten bate van een petrarkistische minnellyriek die echter, voorzover bekend, nooit bepaalde modellen volgt (afgezien van enkele vertalingen)⁴⁹.

[[Hooft] writes in the Dutch language like no author before him; in this language he creates a Petrarchist love poetry that, as far as it is known, does not follow any known models (except for several translations)]

One might expect that both positive and negative opinions relying on the same Romantic notion of artistic originality would be replaced with the rise of new methods and schools of textual criticism in the mid-20th century. Surprisingly, however, such thinking has proven quite resilient, even though such privileging of 'originality' over other criteria arguably limited the ability of scholars to study early modern Netherlandic literature and its character within the broader context of European literature. Many critics decided not to investigate the significance of techniques of *imitatio* and *aemulatio* in relation to important canonical (and therefore by definition 'exceptional' and 'original') literary texts. A similar sense of unease appears to have stood for a long time in the way of reading Hooft's work in the light of texts from other European literatures.

The situation is not much different outside the Netherlands. Critical studies published in English generally make only brief mention of Hooft's poetry against a broad background of 17th century Netherlandic and European literature. Two key early works which are an exception to this rule are Leonard Forster's *The Icy Fire: Five Studies in European Petrarchism* (1969) and *The Poets Tongues: Multilingualism in Literature* (1970). Hooft's contribution to Dutch literature is also acknowledged in depth by Reindert P. Meijer in *Literature of the Low Countries: A Short History of Dutch Literature of the Netherlands and Belgium* (2nd ed. 1978). Among more recent texts, an important English-language publication is Maria A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen's *Dutch Literature in the Age of Rembrandt: Themes and Ideas* (1991). Hooft's activities in relation to the political and intellectual culture of the age are examined in detail in Jonathan Israel's *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall 1477-1801* (1995). With regard to German sources, Hooft receives a well-deserved though brief mention in Gerhard Hoffmeister's *Deutsche und Europäische Barockliteratur* (1987).

The record for books in other languages dealing even marginally with Hooft's lyrical poetry is quite modest as well. Representative for Central and Eastern Europe are monographs in Polish. To the best of the author's

⁴⁹ Van Bork, *ibid.*

knowledge these are no more than three in number. Two of these, Marian Szyrocki's *Szkice z literatury niderlandzkiej* (1983) and *Historia literatury niderlandzkiej* (1985) by Dorota and Norbert Morciniec, date from the pioneering days of Netherlandic Studies in Poland. As these publications were based mainly on research dating from the mid-20th century, they can no longer be called up-to-date. Andrzej Dąbrówka's *Słownik pisarzy niderlandzkiego obszaru językowego* (1999), the third Polish monographic publication dealing among other subjects with early modern Dutch literature, offers significantly more information about Hooft's poetry. Within the very brief space of a lexicon entry Andrzej Dąbrówka writes about Hooft's use of meter, notes his efforts to overcome the 'Platonic division of love into spiritual and physical', and places his poetry within the Erasmian strain of the Dutch Renaissance ('cały dorobek [Hoofta] można zaliczyć do erazmiańskiego nurtu renesansu'), while providing a brief bibliography of the relevant critical literature⁵⁰.

By collecting and re-reading Hooft's sonnets as they appeared in *Emblemata amatoria* my aim has been to provide a better understanding of how Hooft entwines and processes the amorous themes of 16th and 17th century European poetry. It is intended to extend the scope of studies carried out to date both within and outside Dutch-speaking countries. As much previous research was not designed to explore Hooft's poetry from a comparative angle, such readings are a much-needed contribution to existing knowledge and provide new material for studying Netherlandic literature and culture in its international context.

⁵⁰ Andrzej Dąbrówka, *Słownik pisarzy niderlandzkiego obszaru kulturowego*, Wiedza Powszechna (Warsaw: 1999), p. 142.

Chapter 2

FROM THE FIRST NETHERLANDIC SONNETS TO P.C. HOOFT'S *EMBLEMATA AMATORIA* (1550-1611)

Wishing to read Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft's early work as a poet and sonnet-writer at the dawn of the 17th century with the literary expectations of his contemporaries in mind, one has to go back at the very least two decennia, to 1580, and turn from Amsterdam to Leiden. It was in that small university town, as the Dutch scholar Wim Vermeer argued, that the sonnet first grew into a flourishing poetic form. And in fact, what was created in Leiden became a working model that Hooft, as well as his contemporaries and successors, the Holland poets Gerbrand Adriaanszoon Bredero, Constantijn Huygens, Joost van den Vondel and others, took up almost effortlessly when they began writing their own poetry. Armed with this template, the artists of the 17th century would go on to write literature that represented, in effect, a new standard of beauty and refinement (Vermeer 1981: 41).

Yet although the Leiden sonnets of the 1580s paved the way for later poets, they did not arise in isolation. The authors of these sonnets relied on a preexisting tradition, which included efforts undertaken in the provinces south of the Rhine in the 1550s and 1560s, and among refugees from the Southern Netherlands who had settled in England and France in the aftermath of the religious and political strife of the 1560s and 1570s (Forster 1967). It is with these initial attempts, therefore, which are credited as being the harbingers of the Renaissance in the Low Countries, that a 'history of the sonnet in the Netherlands' should begin.

The very first sonnet-writer from the Netherlands whose work has been preserved was Lucas De Heere (D'Heere, Derus; 1534-1584). Besides being a painter, De Heere, a native of Gent in the Southern Netherlands, was also a '*rederijker*' with a fair knowledge of French poetry. De Heere's apprenticeship to the Antwerp painter Frans Floris provided him with access to the social elite of the day. Floris' atelier also served as a salon of sorts for entertaining highborn guests, including William of Orange. It is most likely that in this multilingual environment De Heere learned

to write sonnets. His pioneering poem in that form, a eulogy on the painterly profession, was addressed to the Borluut brothers (De Heere 1969: xi). It was most probably composed around 1557:

XLII *An Ioos Borluut, Heere van Bouckeke, ende an Guillame ghebroeders.*

Alexander de groote, verwinder van al,
 Beminde soo de schilderye en schilders mede,
 Dat hi hem verneerde te sine van tghetal
 Der disciplen Appellis, en tschilderen dede.
 Den keyser Hadrianus, naervolghde ooc die zede,
 Voughende den scepter bi de verwe en tpinceel,
 En was ooc constigh inder ronde beelden snede:
 Alexander seuerus naervolghde hem gheheel.
 En Gordianus maecte menigh tafereel,
 Onder Diogenem leerende uut liefde en ionste:
 Ons Coninc is desghelijx van dese onzer conste.
 En ghilien naervolghende desen hoop van waerden,
 Hebt dees hemelsche const omhelst binnen mijn woonste
 Die u maect me'ghesellen vande meeste der aerden.
 (De Heere 1969: 51)

[*To Ioos Borluut, Lord of Bouckeke and to Guillame, brothers.* Alexander the Great, conqueror of all, / So admired the art of painting and painters too, / That he condescended to become one / Of the disciples of Apelles, and started to paint. / Emperor Hadrian likewise, following this custom, / Wielded the sceptre alongside paint and a brush, / And was skilled in cutting round images too [i.e. sculpture]: / Alexander Severus followed him entirely. / And Gordian made many an image, / Under Diogenes, learning out of love and talent: / Our King is likewise a practitioner of our art. / And you who follow this valuable example / Have embraced this divine art at my home, / This makes you companions to the mightiest on earth]¹

De Heere poem flattered his presumable patrons by comparing them to Alexander the Great, the Roman emperors Hadrian, Alexander Severus, and Gordian, and the Habsburg emperor Charles V, all of whom considered themselves (or were considered) lovers of the 'divine art' ('*hemelsche const*') of painting. By embracing this craft, De Heere argued, the Borluut brothers have become equal to the greatest (and admittedly, quite a few rather less than great) rulers of history.

Most of the sonnets by De Heere, published along with a collection of other verse (odes, epigrams, elegies and refrains) in a verse collection

¹ All translations from the Netherlandic are by the author (unless noted otherwise).

entitled *Den hof en boomgaerd der poësien* (1565), are dedicated like the Borluut sonnet to friends and patrons. One of these however, addressed to his wife Eleonora Carboniers, can be called the first Netherlandic love sonnet:

XLVI *Den Autheur tot zijn huusvrauwe*

Lief, ons liefde begonst ghelijc op eenen tijt
 Van God ghejont, die ons dese gracie dede:
 Welcke liefde blijft eenvoudigh, mids dat ghi sijt,
 Van minen sinne, en ic ooc vanden uwen mede.
 Dies en heeft twist, noch onruste bi ons gheen stede,
 En wi leuen aldus, in rechte weelde eenpaer:
 Want daer sodanigh accoord is, paeys ende vrede
 Ghebonden met Gods hant, wat can ghebreken daer?
 Naer dien ons liefde is zulc eenen stercken pilaer
 Dat si ons inde doot selfs niet en sal begheuen,
 Laet dit op ons graf (als wi steruen) zijn gheschreuen:
 Hier light man en wiif, nochtans gheen twee lichamen,
 Die gheliic en accordigh waren in haer leven,
 Storven ooc gheliic: en leven weder te zamen.

(De Heere 1969: 53-54)

[*The author to his wife* / Darling, our love began simultaneously at a time / Given by God, who gave us this grace: / This love remains one, on condition that you are / Disposed like me, and I to you as well. / That's why neither strife nor unrest has a place with us, / And we live this way, in true joy together: / Because where there's harmony, peace and quiet, / Joined by God's hand, what else can we miss? / Since our love is such a strong pillar / Which will not fail us even in death, / Let us have written on this grave, when we're dead: / Here lie husband and wife; therefore these two bodies / Which were equal and lived in harmony, / Died equally as well: and live once more together]

An equally important specimen of early sonnet poetry from the Low Countries is a text from the same volume, written by Eleonora Carboniers. As its descriptive Dutch title implies, it is a translation from a French original written by De Heere of a dialogue between two young men inspecting a painting and marveling at its mimetic power:

XLVII *Sonet ghetranslateert by d'huusvrouwe vanden Autheur, uut een François sonet bi hem ghemaect op een schilderye van M. Willem Key t'Andwerpen: twee ghesellen spreken tsamen.*

- A: Av gheselleken wat is hier, daer voor v siet?
 Ic sie ghinder een naecte vrouwe seer bequame
 B: Maer mi dinct si en verroert haer weinich oft niet
 Slaept si? neens, want ic zie open d'oogskens eersame.
 A: Van haer bi te commen niemant van ons en schame:
 Want wie sou verschricht sijn van dat ghesichte claer
 B: Maer my dinct van onse comste (naer den betame)
 En verschielt si niet, haer haudende still' eenpaer
 A: Is dat niet een goet stic, als ict werde ghewaer
 Tis schilderye, tast wilt u hant gheloof gheuen:
 Zijn wi niet wel bedodt, ende uutghestreken daer?
 B: Neen, neen, wi en sijn niet bedroghen teenegaer,
 Hebbende voor een leuende vrouwe beseuen
 De beelde die soo wel is gheschildert naer d'leuen.

(De Heere 1969: 54)

[*XLVII Sonnet translated by the author's wife, from a French sonnet made by him on a painting by Master Willem Key at Antwerp: two friends speaking.* / A: Ay, friend, what is this that you see here? / I see there a naked woman, very nice. / B: But I think she hardly moves / Is she asleep? No, because I see that her fine eyes are open. / A: None of us are ashamed to come near her / Because who'd be afraid of that clear face / B: But I think, she isn't afraid of us coming, and keeps still, alone, / A: What a good work it is, I see it now / It's a painting, touch it if you want to convince yourself: / Aren't we taken in, and made fools of? / B: No, we aren't deceived, / Having taken for a living woman / An image which is painted so true to life]

The naked lady is sleeping, says one of the lads. No, she is awake, says the other, her eyes are open: we are not being deceived – this picture that is so well made that it resembles life ('De beelde die soo wel is gheschildert naer d'leuen').

That Carboniers' poem was based on a French source text written by the Dutch-speaking De Heere should not be seen as a surprise. Many of the earliest Dutch sonnets were first written in French and only later translated into Netherlandic – a reminder of the multilingual environment in which De Heere was expected to operate as a painter. French literature, after all, provided a pattern for a new type of fashionable poetry, and although not bilingual in the strict sense of the word, De Heere knew French well enough to be able to make artistic use of it. As Werner Waterschoot writes:

Dat Eleonora een Frans sonnet van haar man vertaalt, behoort tot de eigentijdse literaire praktijk: tijdens de vroege renaissance is het normaal dat een auteur verzen in nieuwe trant eerst in het Frans schrijft, waarbij hij literair

jargon en dichtvormen kan aanpassen in het bestaande patroon. Pas daarna volgt het veel slopender werk om, uitgaande van de eigen Franse versie, een soortgelijke onderneming in het Nederlands te proberen: dat ging moeizaam, want zowel vers als genre moesten worden gecreëerd.

(Waterschoot 1994: 10)

[The fact that Eleonora translates a sonnet by her husband is compatible with the literary practice of the time: in the early Renaissance it was common for an author to first write poetry in French, adapting the literary jargon and poetic forms to an existing model. Only then would a poet set out on the more demanding task of creating, based his own French version, a similar Netherlandic text: this took much effort, as both the verse and the genre had to be created]

Carboniers' sonnet, just like De Heere's, gives a good indication of the literary function of works from *Den hof en boomgaerd der poë sien*. De Heere was a 'rederijker' for whom poetry was first and foremost a useful diversion and a tool of instruction. Poetry was a way of advertising the author's skill and erudition as well as of complementing his friends and flattering his patrons. Admitting, in the preface to *Den hof en boomgaerd der poë sien*, to having written his poetry 'on and off to pass the time' ('nu ende alsdan vvat dichtende voor tijtcortinghe'), De Heere revealed his intention of creating verse 'after the manner of the Greek, Latin and French poets' ('naer d'exem- // pelen der Griecsche, Latijnsche, en Fransoi- // sche Poëten'). His essential aim was to provide his audience with poetic licence, garnished with positive *sententiae* and good instructive reading ('Poëtelicke inuentien, goede sententien, bequaam argumenten oft materien') (De Heere 1969: 1-3). Created to display their author's wit and command of philosophical commonplaces, De Heere's sonnets most likely circulated only within a private milieu and were typically addressed to a specific person – a friend, patron or admirer.

Notwithstanding their outward 'Renaissance' form, the sonnets written by De Heere and Carboniers contain many elements which can still be called 'medieval'. The 'modern' element is isosyllabicity – a principle that De Heere himself refers to (as 'reghels mate') in the preface to *Den hof en boogaerd der poë sien*:

Beminde Lezer ick wille V.L. wel te kennen gheuen dat den Autheur ieghenwordigh in zijn dichten ghebruuckt heeft reghels mate, dat is (op datt verstaen die van der conste niet en zijn) alle de reghels, oft versen van een Refrein, oft ander werck, zijn van eender mate van syllaben: zo ghy bevinden sult.

(De Heere 1969: 2).

[Dear Reader, I wish to let Your Honour know that the author used measured verse in his poetry, that is to say (so the ones, who are not of the art, may understand it too), all the verse lines, or the verses of a Refrain, or of another work, are of the same number of syllables: this you will find to be so throughout]

In practice, the verse length of the sonnets of De Heere and Carboniers varies from 12 to 13 syllables, corresponding to the principle of alternating masculine and feminine rhyme. At the same time, though, the rather unusual rhyme schemes (respectively, *abab bcbc cdd ede* and *abab bcbc cdc cdd*) suggest a poetry that has not yet managed to free itself of its allegiance to the 'rederijker' refrain stanza (Waterschoot 1994: 11). In this sense, *Den hof en boogaerd der poë sien* must be seen as a transitional product, similar in character to the work of the poet who was De Heere's greatest inspiration – Clement Marot².

All this, however, holds true to a much lesser degree of his contemporary, the Antwerp patrician Jan van der Noot (c. 1539-c. 1595). Unlike De Heere, for whom writing verse was a side-activity, a way of gaining the esteem of renowned individuals, Jan van der Noot's ambitions lay solely in the field of literature, even though he too, in later years, wrote mostly 'utilitarian' occasional verse. To literature Van der Noot dedicated his entire life, attempting unlike any other Dutch or Flemish author before him to live from the pen and from the proceeds of his publishing activity. Seen by scholars of Dutch literature as the first truly 'Renaissance' poet of the Low Countries – and the first early modern poet not to be a member of a chamber of rhetoric – Van der Noot pioneered the development of the amorous sonnet in the Netherlandic language. This he achieved mostly by copying and imitating Petrarch (although most probably aided by the translations of a French intermediary, Marot or De Baïf), as well as Pierre de Ronsard and Joachim du Bellay, and (in later years) also the minor French poets of the mid-16th century, e.g. Olivier de Magny (c. 1529-1561) (Waterschoot 1975: 61-68).

Unlike De Heere, who continued to make the best of both 'Poësie' and 'Rhetorique', Van der Noot altogether abandoned the poetic models of the 'rederijkers'. Adhering instead to the poetry of his French con-

² 'Zijn in 1565 verschenen bundel *Den hof en boogaerd der poë sien*, inhoudende menigherley soorten van poëtijckelicke bloemen bevat naast geestelijke ook wereldlijke poëzie, waarin [De Heere] Clement Marot navolgde. Het Franse renaissancevers beheerste hij echter nauwelijks, terwijl veel rederijkerseigenaardigheden zijn poëzie kenmerken.' 'Lucas de Heere' in Van Bork 1985.

temporaries and, on a theoretical plane, to the principles laid out by Ronsard in the *Abrégé de l'art poétique français*, he strove to write isosyllabic verse, rigorously applying such typically Renaissance features as the alternation of masculine and feminine rhyme and the median caesura. Yet despite the assiduous use of all these main aspects of the poetic technique of the *Pléiade*, Van der Noot's alexandrines – melodious as they are – cannot yet be properly called iambic as they still preserve some deeply ingrained traces of the traditional medieval four-stress meter.

As regards the subject matter of Van der Noot's verse, most of his 20th century critics made a point of recognizing that he was unusually dependent on poems that he believed to be worthy of imitation. Rarely venturing beyond his sources, he contented himself – or so the critical narrative goes – only with relatively minor modifications. When it came to sonnets and other new forms, however, Van der Noot's technique of imitation proved to be an advantage, as it allowed him to internalize and reproduce a lyrical discourse that went far beyond anything that could be effectively assimilated by his contemporaries. A fair example of Van der Noot's method is this sonnet, a free translation of Petrarch's well-known Sonnet 157 ('Una candida cerva sopra l'erba'). It is a poem from *Het bosken*, a volume containing poems written prior to his forced departure from Antwerp in 1567, which was published c. 1567-1571, when Van der Noot was living the life of a religious exile in London:

Een hiende reyn sach ick wit van colure
 In een groen bosch lustich in een valleeye,
 (Wandelen gaen int soetste vanden Meye)
 Gheleghen fraey by een riuire pure,
 Neffens een bosch seer doncker van verdure:
 Des morghens vroeck deur der sonnen beleye
 Sach ick soo soet en fierkens het ghereye
 Heurs schoons ghesichts, dat ic van dier ure
 Heur volghen moet latende alle saken.
 Niemant en roer my, sach ic staen gheschreuen,
 Om heuren hals met fyne Diamanten
 Int gout gheset. Ick wil gaey slaen en waken
 Nam ick voor my, want yemant straf van leuen
 Mocht dese leet aen doen in vremde canten.

(Van der Noot 1953: 80)

[I saw a pure hind, white of hue, / In a merry green wood in a valley, /
 (Having gone walking in the sweetest part of May) / Lying beside a pure
 river, / Next to a wood of very dark green: / Early in the morning, by the
 light of the sun / I saw so sweet and proud the wonder / Of her fair face, so

that from then onwards / I had to follow her, leaving all else. / Let no one touch me, I saw, was written / Around her neck with fine Diamonds / Set in gold. I want to watch and wake / I decided, because someone of a rude nature / Might cause it harm in foreign lands]

The poem is written – rather unexpectedly for Van der Noot – in ‘*vers commun*’ (endecasyllabic verse) instead of alexandrines. Compared to the original poem, Van der Noot reworked the ending, changing it to a more nobly chivalric one, but at the same time effacing the *pointe* of the Italian text – the passage from a dream to waking reality. Instead of tripping and falling into the stream, the speaker of the Antwerp squire’s poem sets off to accompany the hind and protect her so that no unmannered stranger might harm her in foreign lands.

Jan van der Noot remained, for at least a decade, from c. 1565 to c. 1575, the only Dutch sonneteer who ventured this far into the realm of love poetry. The times in which he was writing were far from calm or restful, nor were they particularly favorable for exploring amorous themes in literature. The shifting political landscape in the Low Countries in the period between 1560 and 1580 brought about several major events, all of which had a considerable impact on the literary life in the Netherlands. Along with the re-establishment of Habsburg domination over the Southern Provinces, the years between 1570 and 1580 saw the gradual passing of the North into the hands of the Protestant revolt. This shift in the balance of power resulted in the migration of affluent Protestant burghers from the culturally superior South to the still relatively less urbane provinces north of the Rhine. While this rather circuitous exodus largely took place via Germany (e.g. the parents of the celebrated mid-17th c. poet Joost van den Vondel), other groups of exiles from the Lowlands arrived in England, where they sought (and found) religious freedom and refuge from Habsburg persecution. A vibrant community of well-to-do expatriate Protestants, among them De Heere and Van der Noot, settled for a time in London³.

Somewhat surprisingly, perhaps, for persons in their positions, the Dutch and Flemish protestant *émigrés* in London found time to engage not only in religious debate, but also to compose verse of a different, more worldly order. As among them were some of the best-educated in-

³ Apart from *Het Bosken*, while staying in London Van der Noot also wrote an allegorical treatise on worldly vanity, *Het Theatre*, containing a sequence of sonnets from Petrarch, which also came out in an English version as *A Theatre for Voluptuous Worldlings* with verse translations probably supplied by Edmund Spenser.

dividuals of the age, many experimented with new poetic forms like the sonnet, a prestigious and status-enhancing medium of social exchange. A record of this can be found in *alba amicorum*. These were albums in which noted members of the Dutch and Flemish community in exile – e.g. Emanuel van Meteren (Demetrius), Johan Radermacher (Rotarius) or the renowned cartographer Abraham Ortelius – traded epigrams, complimenting on one another's wit, learning, ethical and civic virtues (Forster 1967). Many of these epigrams were written as sonnets, like this opening poem in which Van Meteren encouraged his friends and acquaintances to make a contribution to his album:

Emanuel Demetrius tot zijn vrienden

Ghy liefhebbers der Deught, const, end' Godsalich leuen,
 Ick nood' end' bidde v hier te maken met v hant
 Eenighe schoon deuijs, die van U goet verstant
 Ende constich Ingien, rechte getuych mach gheuen.
 Op dat het zelfde zij voor eeuwich hier beneuen
 Als een vest seghel merck van desen schoonen bandt
 Onzer groote eenicheit ende liefde abundant
 In dit bouck, alsoo ook in ons herten gheschreuen.
 Ende dat ons gheslacht zij vierich veroorsaect
 Duer dees teeken hier zoo schoon en wel ghemaect
 Te dencken op haer leere en lofueelicke daden,
 Die vierich volghen nae en binden haer in een
 Met ons door desen bant die nimmermeer zal scheen,
 Want, GOD ZIJNDE MET ONS NIET EN MACH ONS SCHADEN.

(Forster 1967: 284)

[*Emanuel Demetrius to his friends* / O lovers of Virtue, art and Godfearing life, / I invite you and ask you to make here with your own hand / Some fair devices, which will give due witness / to thy good sense and artful genius. / So that they forever may remain here / As a constant seal reminding of this beautiful bond / Our great unity and abundant love / In this book, which is written in our hearts too. / And so that our kin may be passionately induced / by these signs, so fair and so well made, / To consider their learning and praiseworthy deeds, / To imitate them and to be bound / With us in this bond which will never be broken, / Because, GOD WITH US NOTHING CAN HARM US]

Van Meteren's sonnet illustrates the close link between these early epigrammatic sonnets and the fashion for displaying one's ingenuity by creating a '*deuijs*' – a device, also known as *impresa* – containing a visual description of an emblem coupled with an allegorical exposition of its

meaning⁴. A sonnet by Michiel van der Haeghen (a friend of Jan van der Noot), is specifically such an *impresa* poem. Preserved in the *album amicorum* of Abraham Ortelius, it expounds an analogy between the image and concept of a hedge ('haghe' – a pun on the name of the author Van der Haeghen) and the allegorical sense of the device, representing strength derived from unity:

Sonet

Ghelyck de haghe groen wel doorvlochten in eene
 Doer eendrachtigen band beclyft en fray oploopt
 Soo blyft lanckduerich oock, dat tsamen ik geknoopt
 Want tweedracht tgroot vernielt, eendracht doet groeyen t'cleene.
 Hoe mennich ryck gedeylt is gecomen te gheene!
 Hoe mennich stadt verheert in steenen opgehoopt
 Doer scheeringen ende twist? daer den duyvel naer loopt.
 Eendracht gheeft cracht en macht....
 (...) Soo heet dan syn deys recht SCHEYDT NIET VAN DER HAGEN

(Forster 1967:290)

[*Sonnet*. / Like the green hedge is interwoven to be one / And by a unified bond merges and runs upward / Likewise will prove permanent, what I [have] woven together / because division destroys the great, whilst unity lets grow the small. / How many an empire has come to nought! / How many a town has been reduced to rubble / By division and discord? That's what the devil aims at. / Unity gives strength and power... / (...) So his device is rightly called DO NOT DIVIDE THE HEDGE]

The texts preserved in the surviving *alba amicorum* of the London expatriates Van Meteren, Raedemacher and Ortelius reveal a mixture of simple attempts, still influenced by the stylistic canon of the '*rederijkers*', and of increasingly more complex displays of technical ingenuity. These poems show their writers in the process of mastering the new principles of isosyllabic verse, flowing iambic rhythm, alternating masculine and feminine rhyme and a fixed caesura, even as they struggled to reconcile these constraints with the demands of a 'natural' word order.

Even though the first Dutch sonnets were composed in a highly literate environment, their authors, who could easily produce capable poetry in Latin, found it initially no easy matter to create verse of equal quality in their native language (Forster 1967: 274)⁵. As Leonard Forster noted,

⁴ Cf. (Praz 1964: 55-82).

⁵ 'Het is van belang in gedachten te houden dat de kunst van het humanistische Latijnse vers algemeen beoefend werd. Velen konden aanvaardbare, zelfs elegante, Latijnse

from a purely technical point of view the ability of many of these versifiers to write presentable poetry in the new Renaissance fashion, matched or even surpassed the skill of respected literati from the Southern Netherlands such as De Heere or Van der Noot (Forster 1967: 265). Yet as nearly all of the vernacular poetry of the time circulated in manuscript copies, a large part of it was probably lost. For this reason poets such as De Heere, and above all Van der Noot, who took the trouble to publish their Netherlandic verse, have been traditionally better represented in the canon of Dutch literature than their hardly less capable contemporaries. As Leonard Forster writes,

(...) voor ons is Van der Noot verreweg de aanzienlijkste literator van de zuidelijke Nederlanden in zijn tijd. Zijn tijdgenoten schijnen hem niet in dit licht gezien te hebben. Wij kennen hem omdat zijn werk in druk bewaard is gebleven. We hebben al gezien dat we rekening moeten houden met een veel groter corpus renaissance-poëzie dan waarover we nu beschikken in druk of handschrift, en dat waarschijnlijk bekend was aan diegenen van zijn tijdgenoten die van enig belang waren. Tegen deze achtergrond (...) leek Van der Noots werk misschien niet zo uitzonderlijk...

(Forster 1967: 296)

[(...) for us Van der Noot is by far the most talented *litterateur* of the Southern Netherlands of his time. His contemporaries, however, do not seem to have been of the same opinion. We know Van der Noot because his work has been preserved in print. We have already seen that we must keep in mind that the corpus of Renaissance poetry was much larger than what we now can find in print or manuscript, and that this corpus was probably known to his more important contemporaries. Against this background (...) Van der Noot's work might not have seemed quite as exceptional...]

The London exiles, however, were no less eager to practice writing new types of poetry than the poets who made the effort to print their texts. Of course, the importance of these surviving sonnets is not to be underestimated. They provide a rare insight into the function of this form in the context of epigrammatic poetry and *impresa* literature, while highlighting its growing acceptance among the cultivated literary elites of the Low Countries.

These pioneering sonnet-writers who shuttled amidst the wartime turmoil of the late 1560s and 1570s between the Low Countries and

verzen schrijven, terwijl zij niet in staat, of niet bereid, waren hun krachten te beproeven op de nieuwe stijl in de landstaal. Dit is geen specifieke eigenschap van de Nederlandse literatuur: het is een Europees verschijnsel van de tijd' (Forster 1967: 274).

centers of Dutch and Flemish protestant activity in Northern Europe, were in most cases consumers rather than producers of literature. Assigning a public role to their literary output, they expected it to rise to the high level familiar from the Neo-Latin poetry of the time. This was a standard that their vernacular compositions, however, could seldom match. For this reason, perhaps, that Jan van der Noot – regarded by 20th century critics as the most significant early sonneteer – might have been viewed by some of his contemporaries as flouting an implicit convention by imitating the French and Italian love lyric instead of restricting himself exclusively to solidly executed – and rather more down-to-earth – occasional verse.

At about the same time as a number of expatriate Flemish patricians, merchants and scholars were toying with new vernacular verse forms in their *alba amicorum*, the city of Leiden in the Northern Netherlands resumed its role as a vibrant hub of humanistic learning. Leiden was relieved from the Habsburg forces which were besieging it in October 1574. Its special status was cemented shortly afterwards, when its academy received the title of University in early 1575. In the late 1570s and 1580s Leiden became home to a group of capable scholars – among them the Flemish Neo-Latinist Justus Lipsius (who stayed there from 1578 to 1591) and Janus Dousa (1645-1604) (van der Does, sr.), a native of the town and the curator of the University. Lipsius and Dousa not only tried their hand at Latin verse, but also shared an interest in Netherlandic poetry (Heesakkers 1997: 93-120). In this they were assisted by Jan van Hout (1542-1609) (Hautenus), the city's secretary – a highly talented and prolific vernacular poet who presided over the local chamber of rhetoric '*De Witte Acoleyen*' ('The White Columbine'). Upon arriving in Leiden, the scholar Lipsius formed a close friendship with Dousa and Van Hout, who experimented with Dutch verse, and the three met regularly in a '*Collegium poeticum*' during which they read and discussed their compositions (Heesakkers 1997: 99-109).

With Dousa and Van Hout, the Netherlandic sonnet improved in quality. One has to keep in mind, however, that just as with the poetry written by their immediate predecessors from the Southern Provinces, an accurate assessment of the *oeuvre* of the Leiden humanists is virtually impossible. The vernacular verse of the 1580s circulated largely in manuscript and much of it is assumed to have been lost⁶. A telling figure in this respect is Janus Gruterus. A Dutchman studying in Leiden in that decade, Gruterus admitted to have composed approximately 500 sonnets,

⁶ Vermeer 1981: 42.

all of which reputedly gained the approval of the recognized experts in this field – Dousa, Van Hout and the Protestant religious poet and theologian Philips Marnix. Yet, only eight have actually survived⁷.

Dousa's own extant poetic output, including sonnets, was not large either. Working with Jan van Hout, Dousa acted mostly as a trendsetter. In this capacity, his service to Dutch vernacular literature consisted largely of introducing an explicitly 'modern' poetics to a circle of skilled versifiers, many of whom were already acquainted with Neo-Latin poetry and the traditional '*rederijker*' genres, and supervising its practical application.

Yet while Dousa is seldom believed to have exerted an artistic influence solely on the strength of his own art, his sonnets are not entirely without merit. By far the most interesting examples of his work are the translations of *Basia*, the erotic poems of the Dutch Neo-Latinist Janus Secundus, which came out in print in 1619 together with a handful of texts by Van Hout as *Het boeck der kvskens // Van Ioannes Secvndvs // Nv aldereerst vviit tlatiin overgestelt // In onse gemeine Nederdviitsche taele // Eensdeels bii Ian van Hovt, ende // Eensdeels bii Dovza ende anderen, // Liefhebberen der Nederduijtscher Poëzyen*:

HET IIII. KVSKEN. SONET

Bij Douza.

Ten zijn geen kuskens, tian, welck mij Neaera biedt;
 T'is zuijker, t'is kaneel, t' zijn Indische muskaeten:
 Tis thijm, t'is Hemelbroot, t'zijn Griekze honichraeten,
 Zulck als men op d'Hymet' of Hybla vloeijen ziet.
 Woudt ghij mij met zulck aes dick voeden, eer lang ijct
 Ontsterffelijck ick werd, oic onder sHemels Staeten
 Vermeeren dat tgetal: alwaer de gulde vaeten
 Vrous Hebes volle handt mit Nectar overghiet.
 Maer zulcke ghaven doch een weijnich staeken wilt,
 En met dit zoet gekus niet wezen al te mildt:
 Of van gelijcker macht met mij zyn wilt deelachtich,
 En werden een Goddin. Der Goden disch ick haet,
 Als ick u derven moet; al wilde mij zijn staet
 Zelfs overdoen luppijn met hant, en mont opdrachtich.

(Secundus 1930: 6)

[THE IIII KISS. SONNET. / By Dousa / [These are no kisses, which Neaera offers me; / 'Tis sugar, 'tis cinnamon, they are Indian nutmeg: / 'Tis

⁷ Forster 1967: 295. Cf. also Roose 1972: 193-200.

thyme, 'tis manna, these are Greek honeycombs, / Such as one sees flowing
 on Hymet or on Hybla. / Were you to feed me such food, before long / I'd
 become immortal, and among the Heavenly States / I'd become one of that
 number: where the golden vats / Are filled to overflowing by Lady Hebe's
 hand. / But please, be gentle with such gifts for just this instant / And do
 not be too generous with this sweet kissing: / Or become an equal power
 to me / And become a Goddess. I hate the feast of the Gods, / If I must be
 without you; even if his realm / Would raise me above Jupiter with com-
 manding hand and mouth]

Featuring alexandrines of alternating length and a rhyme-scheme inherited from Clement Marot (*abba abba cc deed*), Dousa's sonnet already reveals the essential pattern that Dutch poets would follow for many decades to come. In an additional display of philological skill, Dousa consistently employs the iambic meter, selected as the vernacular equivalent of hendecasyllabic Latin verse, whereas the volta ('Maer zulcke ghaven...' in verse 9) neatly corresponds to a bipartite division in the structure of Secundus' original 15-verse poem (Heesakkers 1994: 15-16).

New verse forms such as the sonnet were still confined in the 1570s and 1580s to narrow groups of highly educated individuals such as the Leiden 'triumvirate' of Lipsius, Dousa and Van Hout. The elite status of this poetry stood in contrast to that of the '*rederijkers*', who practiced their craft almost without interruption right through the years of the Revolt and who enjoyed a large following north and south of the Rhine. Yet in spite of the apparent differences there were also areas where '*Poësie*' and '*Rhetorique*' overlapped. In Leiden rhetorical activities resumed under the *aegis* of none other than Dousa's friend Jan van Hout. A '*rederijker*' himself, Van Hout gave new energy to the activities of '*De Witte Acoleyen*' in 1577 after a period of stagnation resulting from the religious strife of the Revolt and the stranglehold that Alva's troops had imposed on the city. As an organizer of rhetorical contests, to which he invited poets from as far afoot as Ypres and Antwerp, Jan van Hout became a linchpin connecting the world of cosmopolitan scholarship and humanistic Neo-Latin poetry – and also sonnet writing – with local centers of literary activity in the vernacular (Koppenol 1991: 64). With the knowledge that he gained among the humanists, Jan van Hout proceeded to change the way the '*rederijkers*' wrote poetry. The rules that he devised in 1578 for the rhetorical contest held to celebrate the liberation of Leiden from the Spaniards, are representative of his artistic policy. While the verse invitation to the contest was a traditional stanzaic '*rederijkerskaart*', Van Hout modified the stanzas to resemble sonnets (14 lines with the rhyme scheme *abba abba* for the octave and, variously, *cde*

dee, ccd ccd, ccd cdd and *ccd ede* for the sestet). His poem (one stanza of which is quoted below) called on entrants to submit their contributions, not as it had been the custom, in irregular four-stress verse, but to follow its author 'in measure' ('in mate volget mi') – by which Van Hout implied the new principles of isosyllabic poetry:

Volhert ghi in u werck: maect dat hem elck verwundert,
Haer rijcke fraeyicheyt, in mate volget mi.
Tgetal der regelen, niet boven ga, twee hondert
Noch min dan anderhalf, zoo dichten veel, vermoorden
Guei zin, hier meest naer tracht, spreekt Nederduytsche woorden.

(Koppenol 1991: 62)

[Be determined in your work; make it such that everyone admires / Its rich fine quality; follow me in measure. / [Regarding] the number of verses, do not go above two hundred, / Nor less than hundred and a half; those who write [too] much, murder / Good sense, [and] try to be most firm in this, use Netherlandic words]

By motivating other participants in the contest to follow his example, Van Hout promoted the most innovative elements of his verse throughout the provinces of the Netherlands, helping to establish a new standard for vernacular poetry. Van Hout's role was that of a pioneer whose ungainly, 'stubborn' craft, though lacking later elegance, nonetheless brought these new norms of poetry to a wider audience, hereby spearheading the transition from 'rhetoric' to the 'Renaissance' (Koppenol 1991: 62).

As Van Hout himself described them, the main ingredients of this new poetry consisted of sonnet stanzas written in alternating lines of 12 or 13 syllables and ending, respectively, in a feminine or masculine rhyme:

De verssen dan, die ic [...] gebruyct hebbe zyn Alexandrins, zoe die bide Francoyzen werden genomt, ende bestaen van zes voeten of twaelf sillaben, hebbende haren val, rustinge, steunsel of ademverhalinge naer de derde voet, twelc de zeste sillabe es, dewelcke ic onder den anderen verdeelt of geschakeert hebbe met masculins, opte laetste sillabe rymende, ende mit feminens, rymende opte naestlaetste of voornaestlaetste. Zo nu, als ic hope, de jegenwoordige myne eerste vruchten u.L. eenichsins connen behagen, zal mi des een prikkel zyn, omme my dagelicx inde conste van poëziën, daer inne ic mi noch jong ende onervaren kenne, als dezelve noch geen twee jaren gebruyct hebbende, [...] te weten op een zekere mate ende yegelycke sillabe op zyn juyste gewichte comende, meerder en meerder te ouffenen.

(Koppenol 1991: 61)

[The verses, then, that I [...] have used are Alexandrines, as they are called by the French, and consist of six feet of twelve syllables, having a fall, rest, or intake of breath after the third foot, that is the sixth syllable, which I have among other things divided or interspersed with masculine ones, rhyming on the last syllable, and feminine ones, rhyming on the penultimate or antepenultimate syllable. So now, as I hope, these first fruits may somewhat please Your Honor, it will be an incentive for me to exercise myself daily in the art of poetry in which I still consider myself young and inexperienced, having practiced it not more than two years [...] that is knowing how to place measure and syllable according to their right weight]

Apart from establishing what he intended to be a benchmark for versification, Van Hout also stimulated his literary brethren to develop a new poetic vocabulary. Urging them to abandon the fanciful French- and Latin-influenced diction that had become the *rederijkers*' stock in trade, he recommended that poets switch to simple Netherlandic, the same 'goet plat neder-duytsch' that he demanded of his clerks at the city hall (Koppenol 1991: 68)⁸.

A sonnet dedicated to Abraham Ortelius and preserved in the pages of his *album amicorum* unexpectedly reveals some of Van Hout's confidence as a maker of poetry using the new forms of the Renaissance:

Tot Abrahamum Ortelium C.M. Aerd-scriver zinnen vrund: – Sonet

Een slecht dOR TELischsken, van geest en sap vercout
 Hebt gi begeert, um hier in diner vrunden gaerde
 T'ingriffelen, de stam, beneffens wel vermaerde,
 Wiens bladerich geruisch slaet aen de blaeuwe vout.
 Wat zalmen zeggen, als-men tgensken hier anschout,
 Mit tgraeu-geveerde vel, (dat noit geen cunst en baerde)
 Bi zwanen wit besneet? gus gens, wech, diner vaerde!
 T'geliefde'u doch; tzi zo; te pande dan behout
 Van uwen vrund van Hout, dees verskens but van geest.
 Mit recht, want tbutte' Holland zijn zoochamme' es geweest
 Daer Geest dORTE Land is vruchtloos dan deur verjaerden mis
 De mis nu missende, mist ooc de geesten vrucht
 Dus bliven wi vast but gelooft nu tou gerucht
 Dat unze' Hollandsche geest van geender gueder aerd en is.

(Forster 1967: 292)

[A meager dry branch, devoid of spirit and sap, / It is that you've wished for to plant here, / In your friends' garden, next to the famous trunk /

⁸ Jan van Hout's significance for imparting a new model of poetry based on Neoplatonism to, among others, the *rederijkers*, is described in Koppenol 1993: 20.

Whose leafy whisper rises to the blue vault. / What shall they say, seeing this gosling here / With grey-feathered quill, (that never gave birth to art) / Among these snow-white swans? Shoo goose, away, to your pond! / Yet it did please you, so then let it be, and keep as a token / From your friend Van Hout this small verse of dull spirit. / Rightly so, because dull Holland has been its wet-nurse / Since that Land Dry of Spirit is as fruitless as an expired mass, / Missing the Mass now, misses the fruit of the spirit too / So we'll surely remain dull, if you believe the rumors / That our Holland spirit is not of a good sort]

In what seems to be at first a conventional *topos* of authorial modesty, Van Hout appears to be unfavorably comparing his verse – ‘Een slecht dOR TELischken’ (‘merely a dry branch’, with a pun on the name of the addressee) – to the high quality of the ‘verdant’ poetry in the geographer’s album (‘diner vrunden gaerde’ – ‘your friends’ garden’). At the same time Van Hout is downplaying the literary value of ‘tbutte’ Holland’ (‘crude Holland’), a country that is described as being deficient in wit (‘unze’ Hollandsche geest van geender gueden aerd en is’). Yet instead of reading this sonnet, as Van Hout’s straightforward admission of the inferiority of Dutch verse in relation to that of Ortelius’s mostly Southern circle of friends, one can interpret it as a tongue-in-cheek expression of an entirely different opinion. For a first hint of irony, one can note the reference to the Catholic Mass, the loss of which was surely not mourned by Van Hout, a Protestant of strong conviction. The ‘barren North’ is dismissed as rude and dim-witted, but its poets, as Van Hout appears to be implying in a deadpan way, are capable of producing such ‘dry twigs’ and ‘verse of crude spirit’ (‘verskens but van geest’) as this witty and well-wrought epigrammatic sonnet⁹.

At roughly the same time as Dousa and Van Hout were experimenting with vernacular poetry in Leiden, the sonnet continued to find a following among epigrammatists and occasional poets, who adapted it to their purpose in novel and sometimes quite idiosyncratic ways. An example of such an approach, which appeared even then to contradict the prevailing literary taste¹⁰, can be found in the work of the philosopher, engraver and rederijker Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert (1522-1590)¹¹:

⁹ Forster 1967: 292-293.

¹⁰ Anneke C.G. Fleurkens argues that Coornhert – first and foremost concerned with establishing the philosophical truth by way of logical reasoning – eschewed the quest for inspired poetry in the humanistic vein championed by Van Hout (Fleurkens 1994: 22-23).

In tijdelijk goed vindt mer arm, middelbaar en rijk:
't Leven der armen waant elk mens ellendig,
't Gemene pijnlijk omme d'arbeid bestendig,
Maar 't rijke zalig door weeldes valse blijck.
Dus jaagt elk na zijn rijkdom met geweld oft praktijk,
Door 't verkeerde oordeel zijnde verleid schendig,
Want 't is niet buiten, maar in elk inwendig
Zo wat verblijdt oft bedroeft ons leven al gelijk.
Men vindt zowel rijken als armen die treuren:
Immers de grootste druk drukt den grootsten deuren,
Als men grote vreugde in kleine huttekenes ziet.
Dit mocht niet zijn, zo d'outerlijke dingen
Uut haren aard vreugd' oft druk noodlijk voortbringen:
Dus baart rijkdom geen lust noch armoe geen verdriet.

(Roose 1971: 38)

[As regards worldly possessions one finds the rich, the average and the poor: / Everyone considers the life of paupers a misery / The life of the average commoner is painful owing to constant work / But the rich folk are considered happy through the false pretense of wealth. / Thus everyone chases their wealth through aggression or malpractice, / Deceiving and breaking the rules through ill judgment / Because the thing is not outward, but inward in all of us / What makes all our lives happy or fills them with sorrow. / Both rich and the poor are unhappy: / After all, the greatest force breaks even the strongest doors, / If one sees the greatest joy in tiny huts. / It would have been otherwise, had external things / Brought joy or sorrow out of their own nature: / Thus neither riches bring joy, nor poverty sadness.

Published as a 'drempeldicht' (introductory poem) Coornhert's sonnet opens his treatise on the use and misuse of earthly possessions, *Recht Ghebruyck en Misbruyck van Tydtlijcke Have* (1585). Almost entirely devoid of any metaphorical ornamentation, the poem serves as a vehicle

¹¹ As an engraver, Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert cooperated with Jan van der Noot on etchings for the Antwerp poet's *Das Buch Extasis* (1579), which was a German translation of Van der Noot's unfinished allegorical epic *Cort begryp der XII. Boecken Olympiados / Abregé des douze liures Olympiades* (Zaalberg 1954: 231). As a philosopher, Coornhert became known as one of the most fervent proponents of the idea of toleration in 16th century Dutch society. 'Coornhert's *Zedekunst* (1587), a treatise in Dutch replying to Lipsius's *Constantia*, offered secularized, non-confessional biblical ethics. Both detached morality from religion, presenting ethics as a social and political matter, an 'art' as Coornhert calls it, enabling the individual to improve his life once he grasps that avoiding excess and disorderly living is an avoidance of the harmful and dangerous' (Israel 1998: 372).

for an ethical argument which confidently proceeds from the examples laid out in the first two quatrains to a paradoxical resolution in the final verse. Riches do not bring pleasure – writes Coornhert pensively – and neither does poverty bring sorrow: ‘Dus baart rijkdom geen lust noch armoe geen verdriet’. Flouting the principle of isosyllabicity even while retaining – rather unexpectedly, given the former – the alternation of masculine and feminine rhyme, Coornhert’s sonnet embodies a characteristically ambiguous attitude towards poetry as an intrinsically solipsistic, self-centered discourse¹². Coornhert’s approach found a following in Amsterdam. Traces of it can be found in the works of other poets of the Amsterdam chamber of rhetoric ‘De Eglentier’ (‘The Eglantine’), e.g. Hendrick Laurenszoon Spiegel, as well as in the works of Roemer Visscher, who took a more balanced position between these two extremes (Koppenol 1993: 7-19). Yet even though Coornhert’s sonnet lacks other more progressive features, its brevity and intellectually appealing form appear to be anticipating more advanced poetry, which – as in the case of P.C. Hooft – would frequently end on a similarly concise ‘epigrammatic’ conceit.

Apart from writing original compositions that can be assigned to the category of occasional verse, the Dutch sonneteers of the final years of the 16th century also turned to the poems of Petrarch, although they did not imitate him with the same energy as Van der Noot several decades earlier. Jan van Hout, for example, instructed young people venturing on the path of poetry to read the ‘sweet-sounding’ verse of Petrarch and other Italians¹³:

(...) De naersticheyt ziet van dItalianen
Die eeuwen drie, hier hebben in gewaect
En haerluy muederstael zoe rijk gemaect
Dat zy by hulp van dees die naerstich screven
dezelve tael zoe hooch hebben verheven.

(...) Ziet haer petrarch’ Bocacio en Dante
Haer Ariost – leest Bembo Cavalcante
den Artinum – Messire Sannasaer
haer zuete pen aenmerct nu licht dan zwaer
aenziet hue haer zuetvluende funteynen
nu maken vreucht; dan dat de ogen weynen.

¹² The same characteristic features of this poetic style can be seen in a different sonnet by Coornhert, dedicated to Jan van Hout and preserved in his *album amicorum* (Fleurkens 1994: 19-24).

¹³ Jan van Hout, *Rijmbrief*, vs. 60-64, 69-74 (Ypes 1934: 76).

(Ypes 1934: 76)

[Witness the diligence of the Italians / Who have laboured three centuries / And thus enriched their mother tongue / That with the help of those who wrote so assiduously / They raised that language to such a high level. / See her Petrarch, Boccaccio and Dante / Her Ariosto, read Bembo, Cavalcante, / Aretino, Master Sannazar, / Note her sweet pen, now light, now heavy, / See how her sweet-flowing fountains / Now create such beauty that the eyes weep]

Yet for all this undeniable appreciation of Italian poetry Van Hout is known to have personally translated only one sonnet from the *Canzoniere* – ‘Fontana di dolore, albergo d’ira’, selected most probably for its anti-Papist rhetoric (Ypes 1934: 75).

It was only when the poet and merchant Roemer Visscher (1547-1620) arrived on the scene that Petrarch’s poems would be translated in greater number. Roemer Visscher was a member of the same chamber of rhetoric as Coornhert, ‘*De Eglentier*’ of Amsterdam. It is therefore not at all surprising that Visscher’s sonnets display the same peculiarities as the ones that had set Coornhert’s poems apart from the brand of poetry propagated by the Leiden circle of Jan van Hout¹⁴. The most prominent of these features, the absence of isosyllabicity, can be readily observed in one of Roemer Visscher’s sonnets (or ‘*tuyters*’, to give them the name devised by their author)¹⁵:

Helaes wat is ‘t? Wat pijn voel ik by vlagen?
Is dat Liefde? Wat dingh mag Liefde wesen?
Is hy goet? Waerom wil ick dan voor hem vreesen?
Is hy quaet? Hoe zijn my soo soet sijn slagen?
Brand ick met mijn wil? t’ Onrecht is al mijn klagen?
En is ‘t tegen mijn danck dat ick dees Godt moet wijcken?
Hoe doet hy soo hoogmoedigh aen my sijn hoogmoedt blijcken?
Mach hy soo gebieden sonder oorlof te vragen?
O vliegende kindt, hoe vreemt is uw geweyde?

¹⁴ Cf. Fleurkens 1994: 21 for reference to a poetic debate between Leiden (Van Hout) and Amsterdam (Coornhert and Roemer Visser).

¹⁵ Among the 17th century Netherlandic substitutes for the French-Italian ‘sonnet’ were ‘*klink-dicht*’ (or ‘*klinkert*’), and ‘*tuyter*’, the onomatopoeia coined by Roemer Visscher. Alongside D.V. Coornhert and Simon Stevin, Roemer Visser is recognized as one of the Netherlands’ most active advocates of linguistic reform, and ‘*tuyter*’ certainly represents one of his most original and entertaining contributions to the Dutch language. The title of the collection in which Visser later published his ‘*tuyters*’, *Brabbeling* (1614), can be roughly translated as ‘babbling, prattling’.

Ick drijf in de Zee en dat op uw geleyde,
 Sonder Zeyl, sonder Roer, sonder Ancker of Touwe.
 Ghy voedt my met suchten, al lacchende ween ick,
 't Leven my verdriet, al singende steen ick,
 In de Winter lijd ik hitte, en in de Somer kouwe.

(Ypes 1934: 77)

[Alas, what's that? What is the pain that ever so often I feel? / Is that love? What kind of thing is love? / Is it good? Why then do I fear it? / Is it bad? How come then it is so sweet? / Do I burn of my will? Are my complaints unfair? / And is it against my will that I must run from this god? / How can he so proudly reveal to me his pride? / Can he command without asking permission? / O flying child, how strange is that which is dedicated to you! / I'm drifting in the Sea, where I am led by you, / Without Sail, without Oar, without Anchor or Rope. / You feed me with sighs, laughing I cry / Life is my sorrow, singing I am mute, / In the winter I suffer from the warmth, and in the summer from the cold]

This sonnet, with an uneven number of syllables in each verse and an uncommon rhyme scheme (*abba acca dde ffe*), is a rather free translation of Petrarch's Sonnet 102 ('S'amor non é, che dunque é ch'io sento?'). In contrast to Petrarch's original Visscher replaced the speaker's confession with an appeal to an allegorical Amor ('O vlieghende kindt...') and re-phrased the last tercet using lines taken from the final verses of Sonnet 104 ('Pace non trovo e non ho da far guerra') (Ypes 1934: 77)¹⁶.

¹⁶ Roemer Visser's translation of Petrarch's Sonnet 104 can be compared to Jan van der Noot's poetically much more sophisticated rendition of the same poem in *Het bosken* (1567), for which the Antwerp poet had used De Baïf's 'Si ce n'est pas Amour, que sent donques mon coeur?' (Baïf, *Amour de Francine* I, 22) (Van der Noot 1953: 87-88):

En ist de liefde niet, wat ist dan dat my quelt?
 En ist de liefdé ooc, wat mach de liefde wesen?
 Is sy soet ende goet, hoe valt sy hert in desen?
 Is sy quaet, hoe is dan soo suete heur ghewelt?
 Brande ic met mynen danc, hoe ben ic dan ontstelt?
 Ist teghen mynen danc, sal tsuchten my genesen?
 O vreucht van pynen vol, pyne vol vreucht geresen
 O droefheyt vol ioleyts! o blyschappé verfelt!
 Leuende doot hoe moecht ghy teghen mynen danck
 Dus velé ouer my? maer ben ick willens cranck,
 My claghende tonrecht, de liefde ick tonrecht blame.
 Liefde goet ende quaet, my leet en aenghename,
 Gheluck en ongheluck, suer en soet ick gheuule:
 Ic suke vryicheyt, en om slauen ick wule.

(Van der Noot 1953: 87-88)

Roemer Visscher's importance to Dutch literature rises above what might be expected solely by taking into account his talent as a poet. Instead of being remembered for his *tuyters*, which soon fell into relative obscurity, his greatest achievement remain the *Sinne-poppen* – 'playthings for the mind' – a treasury of wisdom in the form of an emblem-book illustrating and moralizing some of the most popular Netherlandic proverbs. Yet all this being said, Visscher's sonnets cannot be simply glossed over. They point to a growing acceptance of this type of lyric poetry in the final decades of the 16th century not only among the academicians of Leiden but also, increasingly, among the cultivated members of the wealthier burgherdom and patriciate¹⁷.

Visscher's importance to the sonnet, and indeed to Dutch poetry, also extends to another area – his later friendship with some of the most significant poets of his age. The Visscher home on the Geldersche Kade in Amsterdam became, in the 1610s, a sanctuary for artists, among them P.C. Hooft and Joost van den Vondel. A vibrant hub of social and cultural activity, *'t Saligh Roemers huys'*, as it was called, was made even more attractive by the presence of Roemer Visscher's charming and accomplished daughters. All three of them, Anna, Geertruy, and Maria Tesselschade Visscher had received from their father a solid humanist education, while Anna and Maria Tesselschade also composed poetry of some merit (Van Bork 1985: 601-603).

A pioneering series of early translations of Petrarch's sonnets, and one of the first examples of a sonnet cycle in the Northern Netherlands, can be found in *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* (1610), a book of verse published by a group of mostly Haarlem *'rederijkers'* headed by the 'Dutch Vasari', Karel van Mander (1548-1606)¹⁸. Notwithstanding the late date at which this volume came off the press, *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* contained poems composed more than a decade earlier. As such, it is a decidedly transitional collection, giving a fair impression of the evolution of *'rederijker'* verse up to and beyond the turn of the 16th and 17th century (Ypes 1934: 40).

¹⁷ Visscher was a grain merchant, and although financially well off, he never actually made it to the patriciate (Van Bork 1985: 602).

¹⁸ Among the poets contributing to *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* – most of whom (like Karel van Mander and Maerten Beheyt) were refugees from the Southern Netherlands – are also two Leiden humanists, Janus Dousa and Daniël Heyns (Heinsius). Their contribution to this volume, seeing that neither of them was a *'rederijker'*, remains something of a mystery (Vermeer 1993: 84), yet it appears to point to a continuing exchange of ideas between these two groups.

The six translations of Petrarch's sonnets found in *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* ('Ses Klinck-dichten van Petrarcha, op de doot van zijn liefste Laura') are the work of Maerten Beheyt, a Flemish 'rederijker' who, like so many of his compatriots, settled in Leiden (Ypes 1934: 41). Being a rhetorician, Beheyt did not sign his poems with his own name, but – like all other authors writing in the *Helicon* – with his 'rederijker' adage ('kenspreuk' or 'kamerspreuk'), in this case the anagram 'Met arbeydt heen'. As P. Tuynman suggested, the 'kenspreuken' of the 'rederijkers' were the expression of a literary climate in which the poet was expected to contribute his personal work towards a collective goal. The 'rederijker' composed poetry as an individual within a group, yet it was the group that ultimately received the credit for the artistry of the individual:

Ondertekening van dichtwerk met diens vanste kenspreuk, geeft aan dat [de rederijker] optreedt als vertegenwoordiger van een groep. Het gaat niet om anonimiteit en het is heel iets anders dan een pseudoniem: onder een kamerspreuk brengt men geen pennevrucht als getuigenis van eigen dichtkunst, men levert een bijdrage af voor het letterkundig gezelschap dat een sector van het culturele leven van de stad verzorgt (...) Ondertekening van poëzie met een kameristenspreuk is meer dan een gewoonte van rederijkers, het is een instelling tegenover het dichterschap die deel uitmaakt van een levenshouding.

(Tuynman 1981: 14-15)

[When works of poetry are signed with a 'kenspreuk', this indicates that [the 'rederijker'] appears as the representative of a group. It does not have anything to do with a poet seeking anonymity, and it is something very different from a pseudonym: the poet writing under a 'kamerspreuk' does not produce poetry as a sign of his own poetic prowess, but rather, he contributes it to a literary society that manages a sector of the cultural life of the city. [...] Signing poetry with a 'kameristenspreuk' is more than a 'rederijker' custom, it means taking a position in relation to the poet's craft, as part of a philosophy of life]

While Beheyt's collection of sonnets is arguably, with the sole exception of Jan van der Noot's *Het Bosken* and *Het Theatre*, one of the first sonnet cycles in the Netherlands, its contents are an example of successful cultural assimilation. The concept of such a cycle most probably suggested to Beheyt by a sonnet sequence created by Clement Marot ('Six sonnetz de Petrarque, sur la mort de sa dame Laure') (Ypes 1934: 42). Beheyt's poems provide conclusive proof, if any were needed, of importance of 'le sonnet marotique' for early Dutch sonneteers. With the exception of a single text in alexandrines, all are written, like Marot's, in pentameter.

Their rhyme scheme (*abba abba cc deed*) matches the one devised by the French poet, while a pattern of alternating masculine and feminine rhyme is also consistently applied to all poems in this cycle.

With this work alone Beheydt would have deserved mention only in relation to the increasing vogue for this type of poetry among Dutch *rederijkers*. As it is, however, he is the author of yet another sequence of sonnets – also to be found in *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* – comprising poems on the days of the week, under the title ‘Seven nieuw-ghemaeckte klinck-dichten, ghestelt op de namen van elcken dagh van der Weke, ende eerst op den *Sondagh*’. Dealing with a theme that was not too common in the European literature of the early 1600s, this cycle was by contrast to the ‘Petrarchan’ poems most probably Beheydt’s original idea; as such it is entirely unique to the Dutch poetry of this period (Vermeer 1986: 77). In the last sonnet of this series, Beheydt examines the origin of the name ‘*Saterdagh*’, expounding the properties ascribed to the planet and the god Saturn:

Op den Saterdagh

Saturn gheeft Saterdag den naem door wercx aenkleven,
Dits ‘tlicht, dat by den Bock en Water-gieter paerd
Zijn hooge plaats en loop, bedwelmt hem onverklaert,
Doch wort hy koudt en droogh, oock oudtst en traeght beschreven.

Het schijnt hy heeft woort-vast en vroom getracht te leven,
Ja doodde selfs zijn soon, om blijven trouw vermaert,
Men beelt hem op een stelt, gheknielt, met langen baert,
Hy houdt een zenne rechts, en slincx een kindt al beven.

Verstaet by hem den tijt, die alles omme maeyt,
Die vruchts verwerven geeft na ‘tgeen men heeft gesaeyt,
Maer ‘t aertsche zaed met eerst in d’aarde zijn verdwenen.

‘Twaer beter onbegonst, dan ongheschickt volendt,
Die wel gearbeyt heeft vindt Sondaegs vreugd ontrent,
Het eynde kroont het werck, dus gaet

Met Arbeyt Henen.

(Vermeer 1986: 83)

[*On Saturday* // Saturn gives to Saturday its name owing to its usage, / This is the light that strikes one unexpectedly / when it climbs to the high place of Capricorn and Aquarius, / Yet he is also known as cold and dry, as well as the oldest and the slowest. / It seems he’d tried to live faithfully and piously, / Aye, he even killed his son to remain true, / He is pictured on crutches, kneeling with a long beard, / In his right hand a sickle, in his left a trembling child. / Know him then to represent time, which mows down everything, / Which gives fruit after one has sown, / But the earthly seed

must first go down in the earth. / Better not to begin at all, than to finish poorly, / Who has been working well, will find the joys of Sunday / The end crowns the work, so leave *Met Arbeyt Henen*]

Beheydt opens the poem with a reference to astrology, recalling the conventional description of the planet Saturn appearing in the houses of Capricorn and Aquarius as 'cold and dry, old and slow' ('koudt en droogh, oock oudtst en traeght'). Next, Beheydt proceeds to the mythological Saturn, portrayed as the Titan Cronos: an old bearded man on crutches, holding in one hand a sickle, and in the other a trembling child¹⁹. This image, representing 'Time the Reaper' ('Verstaet by hem den tijt, die alles omme maeyt'), Beheydt interprets in the light of Christian ethics – man will reap what he has sown, but not before his life has come to an end. This moral is then applied to the days of the week and, by extension, to the sonnet sequence itself. Weekly toil is rewarded with the joys of the next day, Sunday. The end crowns the work (*finis coronat opus*) so one has to 'keep on working', Beheydt concludes, closing off the poem with his own *kenspreuk* – 'Het eynde kroont het werck, dus gaet // *Met Arbeyt Henen*'.

Written in alexandrines and employing an *abba abba cc deed* rhyme-scheme, Beheydt's poem proves the reliance of the Dutch sonnet on French models. His cycle on the days of the week, suggesting a keen interest in allegory and astrological symbolism on the part of the poets assembled around the painter and mythologist Karel van Mander²⁰. Its complex structure and intellectually refined content provide strong evidence of the growing creative autonomy of Dutch '*rederijkers*' around 1600.

With Roemer Visscher and the poets of *Den Nederlandschen Helicon*, the sonnet now reached an expanding group of '*rederijkers*' just as Jan van Hout had envisaged in the late 1570s. By the mid-1590s, new and more intimate sonnets in the Petrarchist vein were beginning to take shape, stimulated by the same humanist environment which had given rise to the sonnet form in the first place. Around the year 1596, Simon van Beaumont (1574-1654), a young law student, enrolled at the university of Leiden and composed a series of sixteen poems, including eleven sonnets, to which he later gave the name 'Ionckheyt' ('Youth') (Vermeer

¹⁹ For a related motif in the sonnets of P.C. Hooft, cf. 'Geswinde Grijsart, die op wackre wiecken staech' from *Emblemata amatoria* (1611).

²⁰ Karel Van Mander's *Schilder-boeck* (1604) contains not only the biographies of famous painters modeled on Giorgio Vasari's *Le vite de' piu eccellenti Pittori, Scultori e Architettori* (1550), but also two compendia of classical mythological motifs – *Wtlegging op den Metamorphosis Pub. Ouidii Nasonis* and *Wtbeeldinghe der figuren*.

1994: 25). Although Van Beaumont only got round to publishing his work in 1623 (in an anthology of verse by the poets of Zeeland entitled *Zeeuwsche nachtegael*), his sonnets provide an invaluable glimpse into the Petrarchan love idiom as it gained ground in the Low Countries around the turn of the 16th and 17th century²¹.

Working with the poetic discourse of European Petrarchism, Van Beaumont became one of the first of a long line of Dutch poets who, giving free rein to their inventiveness, combined its stock elements into a sequence of poems illustrating the amorous predicaments of a single psychologically coherent lyrical persona. Van Beaumont's substantial ability to assimilate and transform Petrarchan diction is evident well in Sonnet XII from this cycle:

Tsedert den dach dat ghy mijn vryheyt hebt ghevelt
 Door 'tvriendelick ghewelt vant diamantich schijnen
 Vw's stralende ghesichts, met hoe veel duysent pijnen
 Heb ick altijt gheweest dach ende nacht ghequelt?

 D'op-gaende goude son en stroyt 'tbegraesde velt
 Met soo veel bloemen niet, noch soo veel nacht-robijnen,
 En doet de morghen-root uyt 'shemels blauw verdwijnen.
 Als wel mijn suchten zijn en smerten ongetelt.
 Doch dit, en noch veel meer, waer my wel licht om lijden,

 Soo ick versekert waer, van noch t'eenigher tijden
 Te krijgen 'tsoet gewin; voor hondert duysent een.
 Een troost-brengende Iae, voor hondert duysent clachten,
 Een vrolick oogenblick, voor soo veel bange nachten,
 Voor al mijn quelling, een, ghy weet wel wat ick meen.

(*Zeeusche* 1982: 72-73)

[Since the day that you've taken away my freedom / By the friendly violence
 of the diamond light / Of your radiant face, with how many thousand pains
 / Have I been always tormented night and day? / The rising golden sun does
 not strew the grassy field / With so many flowers, nor are the night-rubies
 / Erased by the reds of the morning from the heavenly blue / As many as
 my sighs and uncounted pains. / Yet this, and much more, it were easy for

²¹ Simon van Beaumont is believed to have mastered the sonnet as a student in Leiden, in the company of the slightly older Jan van der Does (jr.), the son of the humanist and poet Janus Dousa. Born in Dordrecht, Van Beaumont spent most of his professional career as a '*raadspensionaris*' in Middelburg, where in later life he contributed his juvenilia, along with several other poems, to *Zeeuwsche nachtegael* (1623), a volume published by the poets of Zeeland with the aim of rivaling the poetic supremacy of Holland (Vermeer 1994: 29).

me to suffer, / Were I certain that in a definite time / I'd receive the sweet victory; for hundred thousand one / Consoling 'yes', for hundred thousand complaints / One merry glance, for so many fearful nights, / For all my pains, one – you know what I mean]

This sonnet is an anguished lover's complaint against his lady's steadfast refusal to grant him her favors. Ever since love has made him a captive through the power of her eyes, the speaker has had to submit to infinite pain, sighing more often than there are flowers in the meadows and stars in the nocturnal heavens. Yet all this he would bear without complaining were he to receive a promise of 'sweet results' ('t soet gewin') or – in a bawdy innuendo – a single 'thing of the kind that goes without saying': 'een, ghy weet wel wat ick meen'.

Van Beaumont's poem attests to a largely effortless command over the sonnet form. Employing an *abba abba cc deed* rhyme scheme, which at this point can be already considered the norm for Dutch poets, Van Beaumont easily reconciles syntactic units with the stanzaic structure of the sonnet. Verse enjambment is skillfully used, while the well-placed metrical substitutions greatly increase the vigor and expressive strength of the poem's predominantly iambic alexandrines (Vermeer 1994: 27).

In 1606, several years after Van Beaumont composed the 'Ionckheyt' sonnets, a somewhat younger poet from the Southern Netherlands, Justus de Harduwijn (1582-1636), created a sonnet cycle on a related theme, *De weerliicke liefden tot Roose-mond*. Published in 1613, De Harduwijn's volume, just like Van Beaumont's 'Ionckheyt', reflects the newly acquired confidence of Netherlandic poets in dealing with an amorous subject matter and demonstrates their increasing willingness to seek out new ways of experimenting with Petrarchan diction. Sonnet IIII from *De weerliicke liefden...* illustrates De Harduwijn's commitment to applying themes and imagery derived, albeit most probably indirectly, from the *Canzoniere*:

O blond-ghestruyvelt hair! hair dat de Sonn' beraeyt,
Dat mijn ionck-iaerigh hert hauwt soo stranghe bevanghen,
O tanden van yvoir! o snee-wittighe wanghen,
Die t'pinceel van *Apell'* met purpur heeft befraeyt!

O lipkens, daer uyt dat Liefde sijn schichten saeyt!
O mond, daer uyt dat stort de Jeughd' haer soete sanghen,
O wel-besneden handt, die om mijn pijn t'herlanghen
Onsteeckt van nieuws de torts, die eens was uyt ghewaeyt!

O ooghsken, biende vreught, en droefheydt van ghelijcke!
 O borstiens, die besit *Cupido* voor zijn rijcke!
 O keel, diens zoet gheluyt zoo langh in d'oore blijft!

O cuskens, die my dwaes ydel troost-hope gheven!
 O zoet-zuerighe spraeck, die nu smeeckt, en nu kijft!
 Ghy doet my duystmael s'daeghs hersterven en herleven.

(De Harduwijn 1978: 102)

[O blond tied-up hair! Hair that the Sun radiates, / That has caught my young heart with such a strength, / O ivory teeth, o snow-white cheeks, / That Apelles with his brush has delicately painted crimson! // O lips, from which Love sends its arrows! / O mouth, from which the Youth sends its sweet songs, / O finely-shaped hand, which to lengthen my pain / Once again lights the torch that had been extinguished! // O eyes, offering just as much joy and sorrow! / O breasts, where Cupid has his empire! / O voice, whose sweet sound remains so long in the ear! / O kisses, which give me, fool, idle consoling hope! / O sweet-sour speech, which now begs and now reprehends! / Every day you make me live and perish a thousand times anew]

In this adaptation of the themes of Petrarch's Sonnet 157 ('Quel sempre acerbo ed onorato giorno'), De Harduwijn catalogues the beauties of his beloved 'Roose-mond' – from the hair that had ensnared his heart to the sweet words that both entreat and condemn. Possibly echoing the structure of Du Bellay's Sonnet 'O beaux cheveux d'argent mignonement retors' from *Les Regrets* (1558) – in itself an ironic reworking of Petrarch's poem (Verkuyl 1974: 56) – De Harduwijn's text exemplifies the efforts of poets from both North and South Netherlands to implement a native poetic based on the 1550s French version of Petrarchism. That this was a conscious endeavor on De Harduwijn's part can be inferred from his statement on the title page of *Weerliicke liefden*, informing the reader that the volume contains 'Eensdeels naerghevolght de Grieksche/ Latijnsche/ ende Francoysche Poëten' ('Partly imitated Greek / Latin / and French Poets')²².

As far as poetic craftsmanship is concerned, De Harduwijn's handling of this poem shows clear progress compared to his predecessors a generation earlier. Attesting to a growing spirit of independence, the rhyme scheme (*abba abba cc dede*) does not resemble those found in either of its potential 'sources' (Du Bellay's imitation of Petrarch's sonnet employed

²² As far as French poetry was concerned, De Harduwijn imitated Du Bellay, Belleau, Desportes and Laugier, though not Ronsard (De Harduwijn 1978: 174).

the *abba abba cc deed* rhyme scheme of Marot). Also, even though the meter of the poem is still not entirely iambic but a derivative of the traditional Netherlandic four-stress pattern (slightly leaning towards the anapestic), De Harduwijn's verse obviously reveals greater rhythmic subtlety than that of his predecessors²³. All the way up to the 'antithetical' conceit 'Ghy doet my duystmael s'daeghs hersterven en herleven' ('Every day you make me live and perish a thousand times anew'), which counterbalances the main enumerative sequence, Harduwijn's 'Roose-mond' cycle reveals a craftsman who is well aware of what can be achieved in sonnet form, proving that the lessons of the preceding decades have finally paid off.

Around 1600, the same year that the young P.C. Hooft set out on his 'Grand Tour' of France, Italy and Germany, the Netherlandic sonnet had finally come of age. Its maturity was not the result of a radical break with the past but of an extraordinary evolutionary change that had taken place by 'trial and error rather than by theoretical prescription' (Forster 1969: 69). Initially fostered by the academic communities of Leiden (or, as in the case of De Harduwijn, Leuven)²⁴, the sonnet steadily gained ground among the burgher-literati of the '*rederijderskamers*', e.g. 'De Egglentier' of Amsterdam. Yet while the trend of writing sonnets became increasingly pronounced in literary circles in the early years of the 17th century, it nonetheless remained mostly confined to larger cities. When the threat of armed conflict receded in the early 1600s, the first signs of a period of relative political stability and economic growth began to emerge. The wealthiest towns of the North – especially Amsterdam which was the first to profit from this upward trend – witnessed the gradual appearance of a new publishing market aimed at the young and increasingly affluent members of the middle classes (Grootes 1996: 31-32)²⁵. Sensing a grow-

²³ De Harduwijn 1978: 50.

²⁴ That there must have been an intense exchange of information between the academic circles of the Northern and Southern Netherlands is best illustrated by the fact that Justus De Harduwijn was a nephew of Daniël Heyns (Heinsius) (1580-1655). Heinsius, as one of the Leiden university's finest philologists, was actively involved in literary activities in the vernacular (cf. ft. 37).

²⁵ Early scholars of *Den Bloem-hof van de Nederlantsche Ieught*, e.g. L.M. van Dis and J. Smit, firmly placed its readers within the circle of the rhetoricians (*Den Bloem-hof* 1955: VII).

More recently, E.K. Grootes, but also other scholars, e.g. F.H. Matter, examined the Dutch songbooks published around 1600 (e.g. *Den Nieuwen Lust-hof* (1602), *Den Bloem-hof van de Nederlantsche Ieucht* (1608 and 1610), or *t' Vermaeck der Jeucht* (1612 and 1618)) as being explicitly aimed at young, marriageable readers of either sex ('welgestelde huwbare jongeren' (Grootes 1996: 35)). Taking more or less at face value the prefaces

ing demand among these readers for new and sophisticated literature in the vernacular, printers responded by publishing collections of verse that took the shape of songbooks and, from the latter half of the first decade of the 17th century onwards, emblem books.

Printed songbooks had already existed for some time. The *Antwerps Liedboek* (*Een schoon liedekens boeck*) came out in 1544; in Holland, an early publication of this type, *Een Aemstelredams Amoureuus Lietboek*, appeared in 1589. These new publications, however, swiftly became a medium of poetic innovation, transmitting texts that – like the Petrarchan sonnet – embodied the changing literary taste and growing confidence of the young Dutch Republic. The ‘new’ Holland songbooks of the 1600s differed from the ‘old’ ones primarily in their shape (an oblong quarto format) and execution (they were more expensive and richer illustrated). Both ‘old’ and ‘new’ songbooks coexisted side-by-side; *Den Nederlandschen Helicon*, published in 1610 (see above), represented the ‘old’ type.

One of the Amsterdam songbooks that appeared in the early years of the 17th century was *Den Bloem-hof van de Nederlandsche Ieucht* (1608). Printed by Dirck Pieterszoon Pers, it provides a good glimpse into the poetry of that time, its quality and the expectations of the reading public (Grootes 1996: 30-31). Among the diverse poems found in this collection are several by P.C. Hooft (including the sonnet ‘Leytsterren van mijn hoop, Planeten van mijn Ieught’), Daniël Heinsius and Carel van Mander, as well as contributions by unidentified ‘rederijkers’ (signed with their ‘kamerspreuken’) and entirely unknown poets²⁶.

Displaying a good command of poetic technique, most of the sonnets from *Den Bloem-hof van de Nederlandsche Ieucht* conform to a general set of standards comprising iambic alexandrines, alternating rhymes, and a rhyme scheme based on French texts. The authors of *Den Bloem-hof* typically took care to ensure the alignment of syntactic units and stanzaic structure (the octave and the tercets), whereas stylistically their sonnets represent what Wim Vermeer referred to as a ‘generous, though

in which the printer or publisher of these songbooks addresses the ‘youth’, Grootes and Matter relate their appearance on the market to economic and demographic trends occurring during that period in Amsterdam (Grootes 1996).

²⁶ It is quite possible that some of the poems of unknown authorship in *Den Bloem-hof van de Nederlantsche Ieucht* were written by otherwise well-known poets, e.g. Daniël Heinsius. It has also been suggested by O. Dambre that one of these poems (the ‘roosen-mont’ sonnet (17)) might have been contributed by Justus de Harduwijn, which is not at all improbable given the fact that the Flemish poet knew Heinsius (who was his nephew) very well and that the two shared to some degree the same circle of acquaintances (De Harduwijn 1978: 174).

not always well-advised use of images and motifs from the Petrarchan arsenal'. Vermeer described this volume as follows:

Pas met *Den Bloem-hof van de Nederlantsche Ieucht* (...) treedt het liefdessonnet te onzent ten volle in de openbaarheid. (...) Wanneer we de sonnetten op hun inhoud bekijken, komen er nogal eens zwakheden aan het licht. Er wordt een kwistig, maar niet altijd doordacht gebruik gemaakt van de geijkte beelden en motieven uit het Petrarkistisch arsenaal. Wat evenwel de vorm aangaat blijken de dichters deze al zozeer te beheersen dat het ook de minder getalenteerde weinig moeite lijkt te kosten de zinsbouw met de verdeling in kwatrijnen en terzetten in overeenstemming te brengen. De meeste sonnetten bestaan uit vier, syntactisch op zichzelf staande strofen. Onhandige enjambementen en zware syntactische scheidingen middenin de versregel komen betrekkelijk zelden voor. Op enkele uitzondering na ligt de wending tussen het octaaf en het sextet of tussen de terzetten. Alle sonnetten bestaan uit jambische alexandrijnen; de meerderheid rijmt volgens een van de Franse schema's en wisselt mannelijk en vrouwelijk rijm af.

(Vermeer 1981: 45).

[It is only with *Den Bloem-hof van de Nederlantsche Ieucht* [...] that the love sonnet goes public in the Netherlands. [...] When we look at the content of the sonnets, some weaknesses still come to light. The poets make generous, though not always well-considered, use of the standard images and motifs from the Petrarchan arsenal. Regarding the form as well, we see that the poets have already mastered it to such degree that even the less talented among them seem to have little trouble in making syntax correspond to the division in quatrains and tercets. Most of the sonnets consist of four, syntactically autonomous stanzas. Unwieldy enjambment and heavy syntactic divisions in the middle of the verse occur relatively seldom. Apart from several exceptions, the volta lies between the octave and the sestet or between the tercets. All sonnets are written in iambic alexandrines; most of them rhyme according to one of the French patterns, interspersing masculine and feminine rhyme]

Poem 14, a plea to Cupid to prove his skill by aiming his arrows at the speaker's 'friendly enemy' ('vriendlijckx viandinne'), can serve as a sample of the expectations with regard to the sonnet among the authors and readers of this volume:

Cupido, soo ghy zijt niet anders als een kindt,
Hoe comt ghy dan een Heer te zijn van alle Heeren
En laet u nacht en dach van alle Princen eeren?
Hoe comt dat ghy alleen soo veele mannen wint,
Cupido, soo ghy zijt altijt al even blint,
Als die Poëten selfs, u eyghen Dienaers leren?

Hoe condt ghy dan u rijck so grootelijcks vermeerden?
 Hoe comt dat ghy soo juyst mijn herte altijt vint?
 Maar neen, ghy zijt een Godt die door u stercke handen,
 Der menschen groot ghewelt beslaet in uwe banden,
 Neen, neen, ghy zijt een Godt die alle dinghen siet;
 Maer vindt doch eens het hert mijns vriendlijckx viandinne,
 Treft haer met eenen pijl van een ghelijcke minne,
 Soo segh ick dat ghy recht en oock met oordeel schiet.

(*Den Bloem-hof* 1955: 28)

[Cupid, since you are no other than a child / How come then that you are a Lord of all Lords / And are worshipped night and day by all Princes? How come that only you conquer so many men, / Cupid, if you are always just as blind, / As even the Poets, your own Servants, declare? / How could you then increase your empire so much? / How come that you always find my heart? / Nay, you are a God who with his strong hands / Contains the violence of humankind in his bonds, / Nay, nay, you are a God who sees all things; / But for once, please do find the heart of my friendly enemy, / And hit her with an arrow of similar love, / Only then will I say that you shoot straight and with judgment]

This elegantly written work of an unknown author was one of a growing number of sonnets composed in the first decade of the 17th century that pointed to the existence of a potent line of amorous verse in the Northern Netherlands²⁷. Like other poems from *Den Bloem-hof*, it reveals a literature that until then had only passed from hand to hand in manuscript fromor had been deposited in the archives of the chambers of rhetoric.

The love poetry of the songbooks grew for the main part out of the work of the chambers of rhetoric which are believed to have supplied most, if not all, of the published texts including sonnets such as the ones from *Den Bloem-hof* (Grootes 1996: 39). The chambers fostered a creative environment for, among others, P.C. Hooft who wrote his first sonnet around 1600. By the early 1600s love poetry of this kind was no longer unique. In the words of one Dutch critic, it was imbued with the same spirit as all other kinds of verse produced by the chambers; it copied the same fashionable themes and reflected the interests of the average burgher of that generation in the rising city of Amsterdam (Tuyman 1981: 13).

²⁷ '[Het sonnet van Hooft] sluit aan bij een jonge, maar reeds krachtige en zeer produktieve stroming' (W.A.P. Smit, 'Divagaties bij Hoofts Leytsterren in Den Bloem-hof', *De nieuwe taalgids* 49 (1956), pp. 259-262. Quoted in (Vermeer 1981: 55).

Without as yet relinquishing their communal and essentially anonymous model of literary activity²⁸, the chambers on the whole quickly adapted to what had by then already become the norm among their members. As E.K. Grootes put it, 'The songs and sonnets of the rhetoricians expressed what their own social group wanted to hear' ('De 'kameristen' vertolkten in hun liedjes en sonnetten datgene wat de sociale groep waarvan ze zelf deel uitmaakten, graag wilde horen' Grootes 1996: 40). No conflict between the rhetorical traditions of the past and the modernity of the renaissance should be presupposed here. The songbooks did much to establish a stylistic canon of native Dutch forms of '*poésie précieuse*', stimulating its dissemination throughout the Low Countries and even beyond the borders of the Republic, into German-speaking countries²⁹. Yet where the songbooks of the early 1600s actually marked a watershed, this was a transition that occurred from the predominantly handwritten vernacular verse that circulated among the *rederijkers* and academic humanists to a printed literature increasingly aimed at individual authorship and individual readers.

Apart from songbooks, the early 17th century also witnessed the coming of another type of printed publication addressed to an affluent and educated audience – the emblem book. While emblem books had been enormously popular in 16th century Europe, spreading from Italy to France, and from there onwards to the North of the continent, they only really became part of the cultural life of the Low Countries at the threshold of the 17th century. The first Netherlandic emblem books started out as a humanistic pastime, when the Leiden scholar Daniël Heinsius coupled a collection of erotic quotations from ancient Latin authors and modern Neo-Latinists to a series of etchings illustrating the ways and vagaries of love. Adding to these texts his own vernacular poems, he created the first Netherlandic volume of this type, *Quaeris quid sit*

²⁸ P. Tuynman describes this anonymity as an essential – and 'pre-renaissance' part of the poetic identity of the Netherlandic chamber poets (including Hooft) well into the 17th century, ending only with the publication of Daniël Heinsius' *Nederduytsche Poemata* (1616), which heralded the advent of individual authorship in the vernacular. Prior to that, in the early years of the 17th century, the accepted poetic paradigm of the *rederijkers* revolved around the poet as an (inspired) voice of a municipal collective, teaching and amusing the burghers in what best represented not his own values but the values of the group as a whole (Tuynman 1981: 12-15).

²⁹ '*Den Bloem-hof van de Nederlandsche Ieucht* exerted its influence not only on Holland and the outlying provinces, but also on Germany, where it inspired the poet Martin Opitz to compose poetry along similar lines in his own language (*Den Bloem-hof* 1955: vii).

Amor? (1601). Similarly as the songbooks of that time, these early books of emblems were chiefly marketed to the young and fashionable people of the upper classes:

Vanuit het standpunt van de uitgevers hoorden de liefdesembleebundels en de liedboeken vanaf het begin thuis in hetzelfde rayon: beide genres werden vaak rijkelijk geïllustreerd (waarbij de platen uit de liedbundels die van de embleemboekjes in kwaliteit meer dan eens overtreffen), beide richtten zich tot hetzelfde publiek van feestvierende en uitbundig of smachtend minnende jongelui en beide verschenen in dezelfde – en bijzondere – formaten (quarto-oblong of later als mini-boekjes in octavo-oblong of in 24°!).

(*Emblemata* 1983: 7-8)

[From the point of view of the publishers the editions of love emblems and the songbooks belonged from the start to the same area: both genres were frequently richly illustrated (where the engravings from the songbooks are quite often qualitatively better than those in emblem books), both were aimed at the same public of partying and expressively or emotionally loving young people and both appeared in the same – unusual – formats (quarto-oblong or later as mini-books in octavo oblong or in 24°!)]

Heinsius's *Quaeris quid sit Amor?* was issued by its printer together with a songbook of this type, *Den nieuwen lusthof* (1602). Both books were finely decorated, shared the same format and could be co-bound as one volume. The emblem book could also be 'customized' by the buyer as the editors had left a blank space where the owners of each individual copy could place their coats of arms and personal mottoes ('*deuijsen*'). Heinsius's volume was so successful that it was republished several years later under the title *Emblemata amatoria*. When it eventually ended up in the publishing portfolio of Dirck Pieterszoon Pers, the enterprising Amsterdam printer of the songbook *Den Bloem-hof van de Nederlandsche Ieucht* (1608), it was then upgraded to a multilingual edition with French and Italian mottoes. Heinsius's publication ultimately served as a model for P.C. Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria* / *Emblemes d'Amour* / *Afbeeldinghen van Minne*. Hooft's work came off the press of Willem Janzsoon (Blaeu) in 1611 as a dual volume combining emblems and lyrical poetry which was not unlike the paired texts of *Quaeris quid sit Amor* and *Den nieuwen lusthof* several years earlier (*Emblemata* 1983: 9).

When Hooft published a selection of his poems in the lyrical part of *Emblemata amatoria*, the Netherlandic sonnet, which had inherited its structure from the French verse of the mid-16th century, finally arrived at its definite form. It employed the rhyme scheme (*abba abba cc deed*) created by Clement Marot and later taken up by Ronsard in the *Amours*

(1552). With regard to meter, where Marot used decasyllabic verse, the Dutch sonneteers were rather quick to adopt the alexandrines of Ronsard's *Amours de Marie* (1555) and De Baïf's *Amours de Francine* (1555). Initially, Netherlandic sonnet-writers, e.g. Lucas de Heere and some of the *alba amicum* poets of the 1560s and 1570s (see above), retained the refrain stanza and the metric qualities that had been the trademark of the rhetoricians. At the same time, some of the poets who took over the rhyme scheme of Marot, e.g. Van der Noot, Van Mander and Beheyt, still wrote to some degree using the decasyllabic verse typical of early French sonnets. Yet as more and more literati followed the example of humanistic circles, e.g. those at Leiden, and mastered the principles of easy-flowing isosyllabic verse, Ronsard's alexandrines replaced the decasyllabic meter of Marot, becoming – well before the end of the 16th century – the essential measure ('*maet-dicht*') of the chambers of rhetoric. These characteristic features of the French sonnet would exert a dominant influence on the sonnet in the Netherlands through the remaining years of the 17th century, while the original Italian verse patterns of the sonnet, by contrast, hardly gained a following at all. As Catharina Ypes wrote:

Wij mogen vaststellen, dat nog vóór 1600, het alexandrijnen-sonnet van Ronsard en de overige dichters van de Pléiade ook in Nederland de opperheerschappij verworven heeft. En zo blijft het toestand in de 17de eeuw: van Hooft kennen wij slechts één sonnet in vijfvoetige jamben en van Vondel geen enkel. Zelfs wanneer Hooft rechtstreeks naar Petrarca vertaalt, houdt hij zich toch aan de vorm van het Franse Pléiade-sonnet.

(Ypes 1934: 53)

[We see that even before 1600 the alexandrine sonnet of Ronsard and the other poets of the Pléiade gained the upper hand in the Netherlands. This, too, continues throughout the 17th century: we only know of one sonnet by Hooft written in iambic pentameter and none by Vondel. Even when Hooft translates Petrarch from the original Italian, he nonetheless keeps to the sonnet form of the French Pléiade]

The young P.C. Hooft used an idiom and a technique that for a large part had already been perfected by his predecessors. Writing sonnets in the Leiden tradition, which he learned at first hand through the work of his brethren at 'De Eglentier', he remained dedicated, at least in the first decade of his poetic career, to the poetic education that he had received in the chambers. Much of Hooft's verse (including his early sonnets) reflects the nature and substance of that schooling. After his French and Italian Grand Tour Hooft did not enter Dutch literature out of the blue,

as it were, as a champion of something that was radically new and unheard of. As one literary historian wrote:

Hooft kwam niet uit den vreemde als seigneurlijke brenger van iets nieuws: hij ging als leerling en keerde terug als broeder in de const naar een oer-Hollandse Kamer van Rhetorike, en hij bleef ook 'Hóllander, wortelend in een oude traditie'.

(Tuynman 1981: 10)

[Hooft did not appear as a conceited foreigner bringing something new: he went [to Italy] as an apprentice and returned as a brother in the 'const' ['art'] to a very Dutch 'Kamer van Rhetorike' and he remained 'a Dutchman, with roots in an old tradition']

Nor is there much evidence, the same critic concluded, to suggest that Hooft considered his best poems as groundbreaking or revolutionary. It has been convincingly pointed out that the poetry which Hooft wrote in his early twenties did not diverge in terms of either style or technique from what his contemporaries and fellow rhetoricians produced in *Den Bloem-hof* and other songbooks:

(...) Hoofts vroege spelen, zangen en dichten voor zijn reden-rijke broeders in de const en voor hun publiek in Amsterdam geenszins opvallend of anders waren, omdat zij – tenminste in hun kern – dezelfde geest ademden als wat de hele kameristenkring toen produceerde, en omdat zij dezelfde themas bespeelden die opgeld deden...

(Tuynman 1981: 13).

[(...) Hooft's early plays, songs and poems for his brothers in the art of rhetoric and for their public in Amsterdam were by no means unusual or different, because at least in their essence, they breathed the same spirit as what the entire circle of poets from the chambers produced in those years, and because they played on the same themes that were in the public eye...]

In terms of themes and technique, therefore, Hooft's poetry can be regarded as broadly representative of Dutch vernacular verse of the early 17th century. Not any different from the remaining parts of his output, his sonnets too circulated among the younger generation of patricians who, for their amusement and profit, crafted occasional poetry and love poetry in the chambers of rhetoric. His work, inspired by the French '*poètes précieux*', mirrored in style and substance the themes and predilections of the refined Holland burgher of the day (Tuynman 1981: 12).

The poet-rhetoricians of Hooft's day were citizen-orators, who wrote their verse mainly for an audience of equal status, or in the words of P. Tuynman, for an organic community – the burgherdom of the city:

Het essentiële dan van de 'edele conste' van de rhetorisijnen van toen is gelegen – ik probeer een formulering – in het werkelijk grondbeginsel van de echte rhetorica: het zich richten op toehoorders, en naar die toehoorders, en dan geen willekeurig publiek en zeker geen lezers, maar een 'gehoor' dat een blijvende gemeenschap vertegenwoordigt.

(Tuynman 1981: 19).

[The essence of the 'edele conste' ['noble art'] of the 'rhetorisijnen' ['rhetoricians'] was, as it were, in the true principle of the real rhetoric: turning to an audience, and not an indiscriminate audience nor readers, but 'listeners' who represented a permanent community]

The 'rederijkers' practiced a collective brand of poetry: not yet fully individualistic or aimed (with the possible exception of songbooks) at a broader circle of listeners and readers. The same is true of Hooft in those years, a 'rederijker' who signed his early verse with a 'kamspreuk'³⁰.

According to some views advanced by scholars of Netherlandic literature, the decisive moment when 'Poësie' en 'Rhetorique' would ultimately part ways came a full five years after the publication of Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria*. Published in 1616, Daniel Heinsius's *Nederduytsche poemata* proclaimed the arrival of an overwhelmingly readerly literature, which no longer depended on the guidance or approval of the chambers of rhetoric (Tuynman 1981: 11-27). Yet while the sonnet would remain an appealing choice for Dutch poets throughout and beyond the 17th century, these chapters in its development extend beyond the limits set out for this study.

³⁰ Cf. Tuynman 1981: 12.

Chapter 3

IMAGES OF LOVE: P.C. HOOFT'S SONNETS IN *EMBLEMATA AMATORIA* (1611). THE ANNOTATED TEXT OF THE POEMS WITH COMMENTARY

A NOTE ON THIS EDITION

The text of P.C. Hooft's sonnets from *Emblemata amatoria* (1611) is provided in two parallel editorial variants: as a facsimile of the relevant leaves of the 1611 edition and, for comparison, in the manuscript text favored by an overwhelming majority of Hooft scholars. All leaves from the 1611 edition are reproduced with the kind permission of the Emblem Project Utrecht, which has made facsimiles of Netherlandic books of emblemata available on-line (www2.let.uu.nl/emblems). The copy used by the Emblem Project Utrecht to create the facsimiles of the 1611 edition reproduced here, is preserved in the Library of the Faculty of Arts of the Amsterdam University, shelf number UBM: 976 C 29 (Amsterdam, 1611). A copy of Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria* is preserved in Wrocław University Library (Poland), under cat. no. BUWr. OStDr. 543117 (Kiedroń 2003: 1077) where it is bound in one convolute volume with a unique copy of Daniel Heinsius's *Ambacht van Cupido* (1615) (Kiedroń 2007: 122). The manuscript text reproduced here goes back to Hooft's draft copies in the *Rijmkladboeken*. Its source is P. Tuynman's standard two-volume edition of Hooft's collected poems (Hooft 1994a/b).

The editorial differences between Hooft's manuscript draft and the 1611 edition are listed in an explanatory section provided under the heading *Variants* for each poem. Whenever the text of the 1611 edition is cited, the transcription conforms to the rules laid down by P. Tuynman for the 1994 edition (Hooft 1994b: 9-16). This means that only the linguistically significant aspects of the transcription used in the 1611 edition have been taken into account. And so, the spelling of long and

contracted *s*, and the letter-combination *vv* (representing *w*), have been normalized. By contrast, the differences between capitalized and non-capitalized words, letter-combinations *i + j* and *y* have been preserved, as well as *v*, which represents, in Hooft's transcription, the sound *u* (as in *wren* (=uren)). Inclusion of references to the manuscript text has been prompted by a desire to allow the reader to take advantage of the existing scholarly apparatus in the form of P. Tuynman's standard 1994 edition.

The decision to place Hooft's 1611 edition alongside the transcription of the handwritten text from the *Rijmkladboeken* was based on the conviction that the first printed text is in no way less important for studying the poet's work than the original manuscript. The poems which Hooft published anonymously in *Emblemata amatoria* represent, quite naturally, what he regarded at that time as a finished version that could be presented to a broader public. The 1611 text affords an opportunity for examining Hooft's sonnets in the definite form that their author settled on around 1610, when he gathered them in a single volume to produce a fairly loose yet thematically consistent poetic cycle illustrating the ways of love, from the initial *innamoramento* to the lady's ultimate decision to accept her lover's courtship. As Hooft's poems written before 1611 have hardly ever been studied in the context of their first printed edition, the aim of this study is to try, at least partially, to fill this lacuna.

S O N N E T.

77

De Stralen mijns ghesichts, die'r mengden in de stralen
 Van uwe schoonheys glans, en van u ooghen claer,
 VVeerkeerende tot my, soo brachten zy met haer
 De vvare beeltenis, dief' onvoorsichtich stalen,
Van't aerdichst, dat Natuyr deed' in u voorhoofd malen,
 En't vvaerdichst van u gheest, datmen mach lesen daer.
 Dees voerden' in mijn hart, dat voelende 't besvvaer,
 Maeckt van de noot een deucht en gaet haer selfs in halen.
Zy maeckten't tot een Kerck daerf' als Godin gheert,
 Ghestadich 'tselve dvvingt, tot vierighe begheert,
 Van't gheen dat haer ghelijckt, met heete blixem koortsen:
Voor Overst van mijn siel daer vvertf' erkent alleen:
 En van den drangh van mijn ghedachten aenghebeen:
 Daer branden tot haer eer duyfendt en duyfendt toortsen.

K 3

LIEDT.

De stralen mijns gesichts die 'r mengden inde stralen

De stralen mijns gesichts die 'r mengden inde stralen,
 Van uwe schoonheits glans, en van u oogen claer,
 Weerkerende tot mij, soo brachten sij met haer
 De waere Beeltenis dies' onvoorsichtich stalen,
 Van t aerdichst dat natuir deed' in v voorhoofd malen,
 En t'waerdichst van v geest, datmen mach lesen daer.
 Dees voerdens' in mijn hart, dat voelende t' beswaer,
 Maeckt van de noot een deucht en gaet haer selfs in halen.
 Sij maecktent tot een kerck daers' als godin geëert,
 Gestadich t harte dwingt tot vijerige begeert
 Van t' geen dat haer gelijckt, met hete blixem koortsen,
 Voor overst van mijn siel daer werts' erkent alleen,
 En van den drang van mijn gedachten aenghebeen
 Daer branden tot haer eer duisent en duisent toortsen.

Notes:

ghesichts – ‘the faculty of sight, the eyes’: ‘Het zintuig waarmede men ziet; de oogen, het oog’ (WNT 2003: ‘GEZICHT’ 2)).

met haer – ‘met zich’ (refers to: ‘stralen’).

beeltenis – ‘image, depiction’: ‘wat door het *beelden* gevormd is, het *beeld*’ (WNT 2003: ‘BEELTENIS’).

beswaer – ‘discomfort, weight, burdens’: ‘Iets dat op iemand of iets drukt: vandaar: last, moeilijkheid, onaangenaamheid, schade, al naar het verband’ (WNT 2003: ‘BEZWAAR’).

Overst – ‘ruler, mistress’: ‘Beheerscher’ (WNT 2003: ‘OVERSTE’).

aenghebeen – ‘worshipped’: ‘Als goddelijk wezen vereeren, hetzij door gebeden en eerbiedige hulde, hetzij door de toewijding en uitstorting des harten’ (WNT 2003: ‘AANBIDDEN’). In the text of the 1611 edition, this verse is represented as a separate syntactic unit from the phrase that follows it, contrasting with a lack of punctuation to that effect in Hooft’s handwritten version.

Variants:

Compared to the manuscript, the text from *Emblemata amatoria* (p. 77) contains a number of minor typographic modifications, e.g. ‘Stralen’ for ‘stralen’, ‘schoonheyts’ for ‘schoonheits’, ‘ooghen’ for ‘oogen’, ‘my’ for ‘mij’, ‘zy’ for ‘sij’, ‘beeltenis’ for ‘Beeltenis’, etc.

Verse 10: In the 1611 edition, Hooft replaced ‘t harte’ with ‘t selve’ – marked as an interlinear variant in the manuscript edition – apparently in order to avoid repeating the same word twice. Some passages of this sonnet correspond to vs. 831-842 from Hooft’s early play *Achilles [en Polyxena]* (Hooft 1994b: 54)

Commentary:

Hooft’s ‘De Stralen mijns ghesichts, die’r mengden in de stralen’ opens with a delightfully elaborate description of what happens when a man looks at a woman and falls in love. ‘Visual rays’ travel from the lover’s eyes towards those of the girl. Meeting her gaze, they mingle with her glances and absorb the radiance of her beauty. Returning to the speaker, the rays of sight bring a ‘true image’ which they had secretly stolen. This image depicts the beautiful artwork that Nature had painted in the lady’s face and which illustrates the worthiest qualities of her soul (vs. 1-4).

Carrying this purloined image, the rays enter the lover’s heart. Seeing that it would be likely to receive the blame for the theft, the heart promptly takes steps to regain control of the situation. Making apparently a virtue of necessity, the heart accosts the bearers of the image and

offers them a welcome. Once they have entered, the rays then proceed to convert the heart into a church ('een Kerck'), where the girl is worshipped like a goddess. Eventually, the 'hot lightning-like fever' induced by the image persuades the heart to desire what the image represents ('[...] Van't gheen dat haer ghelijckt') – that is the girl and her virtues (vs. 5-8). The girl is pronounced to be the only sovereign of the lover's soul. While she is worshipped by his thronging thoughts, the heart is illuminated by 'thousands and thousands of torches' lit in her honour (vs. 9-14).

As a description of *innamoramento*, or the act of falling in love, Hooft's sonnet provides a good reflection of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century philosophical and scientific thought. The accuracy with which Hooft transmutes received ideas about falling in love into complex representations of dynamic emotional states, can be judged in reference to a work by one of his contemporaries, the French scholar of medicine Jacques Ferrand (c. 1575-c. 1630?). In Ferrand's detailed compilation of the symptoms of erotic melancholy, *Traité de l'essence at guerison de l'amour ou de la melancholie erotique* (1610; expanded edition published in 1623)¹, love is described as being caused by a transmission of visual information, which passes from the eyes to the heart of the prospective lover:

The eyes are the windows by which love enters to attack the brain, the citadel of Athena; they are the true conduits by which it flows and glides into our bowels...

(Ferrand 1990: 233)

The notion that love is literally 'at first sight' was part of a repository of poetic themes which 16th century scholars cherished as a legacy of antiquity, and which had been assimilated into the scientific discourse of the Renaissance. Here, the main source for Ferrand's understanding of this concept was François Valleriola's *Observationum medicinalium libri VI*, a treatise that took its inspiration directly from Marsilio Ficino's highly authoritative commentary on Plato's *Symposium* (Ferrand 1990: 389).

What sight does is to convey a complete image by which it triggers an amorous reaction. The Dutch critic Wiel Kusters suggested that the 'love at first sight' described by Hooft corresponds to medieval views on

¹ All passages from Ferrand's *Traité de l'essence at guerison de l'amour* are quoted in the English translation by Donald A. Beecher and Massimo Ciavolella, based on the 1623 edition (Ferrand 1990).

the nature of sight which held that the visible image was emitted by the observed object, and fully formed when it travelled from the object towards the eye of the beholder. This 'theory of extramission' was broadly accepted in academic circles until well into the 17th c., when it was disproved by the discoveries of Johannes Kepler, who first established that the image was formed when light passed through the lens in the eyeball (Kusters 1997: 50-51). Kusters argued that although Kepler's discoveries were made at a time when Hooft could have known about them, in this poem the 'extramission theory' is still used as a scientific point of reference. Yet while this may be indicative, as Kusters claimed, of Hooft's scientific interest (or lack thereof) with regard to the most advanced discoveries of his time, it would nonetheless be somewhat misleading to extend this conclusion as evidence of the poet's ignorance of science in general, although his knowledge would have been hardly derived from empirical research. As Hooft's work proves abundantly time and time again, he was well informed (albeit in a traditional way) on philosophical subjects, and such is also the case here.

The poem clearly points to a parallel in at least one authoritative text indebted to Neoplatonic philosophy: Baldassare Castiglione's *Il libro del Cortegiano* (1528). Although translated into Dutch only as late as 1662 (Lambert van den Bosch, *De volmaeckte hovelinck*), Castiglione's immensely influential treatise might have been known to Hooft either in the original or at the very least in one of the multiple French versions produced before 1600. A passage from Castiglione's text, the discourse on love by Giuliano di Medici from in Book Three, contains a succession of images and concepts which might have very easily provided Hooft with a model for the machinery of love at first sight presented in 'De Stralen mijns ghesichts, die'r mengden in de stralen':

For the vital spirits that dart from [the lover's] eyes originate near the heart, and thus when they penetrate the eyes of the woman he loves like an arrow speeding to its target they go straight to her heart, as if to their true abode; and there they mingle with those other vital spirits and with the very subtle kind of blood which these contain, and in this way they infect the blood near to the heart to which they have come, warming it and making it like themselves and ready to receive the impression of the image they carry with them. In this way, journeying back and forth from the eyes to the heart, and bringing back the tinder and steel of beauty and grace, with the breath of desire these messengers kindle the fire which never dies, since it is fed on constant hope.

(Castiglione 1967: 268)

Hooft's narrative detailing the progress of the speaker's *innamoramento* reveals striking similarities with the way Castiglione pictures the same process in *Il libro del Cortegiano*. This convergence comprises in fact not just the image of glances shuttling back and forth between the eyes of the lover and the lady, but also the notion that these glances carry an image, which deposited in the heart ignites and fuels the flame of love: precisely the solution to which Hooft resorts in the sestet of the poem.

That the lady's eyes are represented as emitting rays which ignite the fire of love, is related to the solar symbolism adopted by Petrarch to depict Laura's eyes in the *Canzoniere*. One of the countless Renaissance poets who elaborated on this Petrarchan theme of sun-like eyes was the Frenchman Jean de Sponde (1557-1595). In one of his poems (Sonnet XXIV from the volume *Poesies*), de Sponde praises the light that his eyes receive from the bright solar glances of his mistress:

Mon Soleil qui brillez de vos yeux dans mes yeux,
 Et pour trop de clarté leur ostez la lumière,
 Je ne voy rien que vous, et mon ame est si fiere
 Qu'elle ne daigne plus aimer que dans les cieux,
 Tout autre amour me semble un enfer furieux,
 Plein d'horreur et de mort dont m'enfuyant arriere
 I'en laisse franchement plus franche la carriere
 A ceux qui sont plus mal et pensent faire mieux.

Le plaisir, volontiers, est de l'amour l'amorce,
 Mais outre encor ie sens quelque plus vive force
 Qui me feroit aimer malgré moy ce Soleil:
 Ceste force est en vous don't la beauté puissante
 La beauté sans pareil, encor qu'elle s'absente,
 A tué cest amant, cest amant sans pareil.

(*Recueil* 1604: 19)

Yet the rays sent forth by sun-like eyes could become an even more potent force, a flash of lightning or '*coup de foudre*' (the French expression for 'love at first sight') igniting a flame of love in the lover's heart. The French poet Honorat Laugier de Porchères (1572-1653) linked the image of the solar radiance of a lady's eyes to an image of lightning striking the lover's heart in the sonnet 'Sur les yeux de Madame la Marquise de Monceaux':

Ce ne sont pas des yeux, ce sont plustost des Dieux,
 Ils ont dessus les Rois la puissance absoluë:
 Dieux, non, ce sont des cieux, ils ont la couleur bleuë,
 Et la mouvement prompt comme celuy des Cieux.

Cieux, non, mais deux Soleils clairement radieux
 Don't les rayons brillans nous offusquent la veuë:
 Soleils, non, mais esclairs de puissance incogneuë,
 Des foudres de l'amour signes presagieux.
 Car s'ils estoyent des Dieux, feroient ils tant de mal?
 Si des Cieux, ils auroient leur mouvement esgal:
 Deux Soleils, ne se peut: le Soleil est unique.
 Esclairs, non: car ceux-cy durent trop et trop clairs:
 Toutesfois ie les nomme, afin que ie m'explique,
 Des yeux, des Dieux, des Cieux, des Soleils, des esclairs.

(*Recueil* 1604: 61)

The image of 'thousands and thousands' of flaming torches concluding Hooft's 'De Stralen mijns ghesichts die'r mengden in de stralen' may be seen as an offshoot of the *coup-de-foudre* motif, but they too point to other poems, such as the opening lines of Sonnet LXXXVII by the French poet Olivier de Magny (1530-1561), an epithalamium from *Les Souspirs* (1557):

Mille et mille flambeaux une odeur espandoient
 Qui passoit en douceur l'odeur de la Sabée,
 Mille et mille autres voix apelloient Hymenée,
 Et les undes d'Isere Hymené respondoient.
 A mille et mille ieux mille gens s'attendoient...

(De Magny 1557: 59-60)

Through images of fire and fever, along with collateral factors such as sexual desire ('begheert') and relentless mental activity ('drangh van mijn ghedachten'), Hooft's sonnet recalls a historical tradition of depicting passion which originated with the poets of ancient Greece and which, later taken up by their countless Latin successors, imbues much of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European love poetry. This tradition, however, exerted an appeal that extended beyond the realm of the purely poetic into that of philosophy and science. A representative figure in this respect is the aforementioned medical scholar Jacques Ferrand. Examining the diagnostic symptoms of love Ferrand quotes no less than three variants of a passage attributed to 'the learned and amorous poet Sappho' (by Catullus, from Dionysius Longinus, and in the sixteenth-century French of Remy Belleau), all of which illustrate the fiery nature of this affliction (Ferrand 1990: 269-272). On the matter of love, the poets supplied 'objective' information and examples which a medic

like Ferrand had to order and catalogue. Conversely, other poets' observations, 'objectivized' by their place in medical science, could not be passed over by anyone intending to write credibly about love, as Hooft certainly wanted to in *Emblemata Amatoria*.

While a scholar like Ferrand was inclined to treat the combustible sensations associated with love primarily as at best neutral symptoms of the disease of *melancholia*, Hooft assigned a more ambiguous nature to his amorous blaze, depicting it as a beneficial force that may equally well bestow life on lovers even as it ravages their hapless hearts. This duality features prominently in the sonnet 'Ghentiel goddin alleen besitster van mijn hert', an early poem which possibly owing to its private nature Hooft chose not to include in the *Emblemata amatoria*. The lyrical persona of this poem begs his lady to accept the faithful service of her 'servant'. If she complies, then his heart – which would have easily perished in the fire – will not turn to ash but will become immortal in a beautiful blaze: 'Mijn hert dat door het vuijr soud' lichtelijk verteeren, / En sal dan nummermeer in assche cunnen keeren, / Maer in een schonen brandt altijt onsterfflijck sijn' (the passage is also part of Hooft's play *Achilles en Polyxena*, Hooft 1971: 4). In contrast to this rather benign influence, in 'Mijn Aventuirs voorspooch, fatael rappier', another quite early sonnet that did not find its way into the 1611 edition, fire becomes a symbol of the destructive potential of love. Here the speaker contemplates an image on the hilt of his sword. Engraved on it is the profile of Marcus Curtius, the mythical Roman soldier who met his death by plunging into a fiery chasm in order to placate the gods who had demanded a sacrifice of 'the most precious thing of all' (the story is recounted by Titius Livius). As the speaker recalls this narrative, he muses on the resemblance between his fate and that of his mythical predecessor. Like the famed Curtius, the modern lover has to burn because of a proud beauty, willingly and honorably consigning himself to the flames of love:

Want Curtius in v knoop aenschouw ick hier
Die sich om roem, willech ter doot vermanden,
Soo moet ick nu om grootsche schoonheit branden,
En wierp mijn selfs hoochdragend' in het vier.

(Hooft 1994a: 52)

[Because here I see Curtius depicted on your hilt / Who for the sake of fame willingly chose death / Likewise now I must burn for the sake of great beauty / And throw myself into the fire]

In a later sonnet, 'Vonckende God oft gheest van Godes naeste neven' (Hooft 1611: 128 / Hooft 1994a: 180), the fiery torment of love is pictured once again, although in a more positive light, as a prelude to a union of two lovers. The 'spark-shedding' god of love ('Vonckende God') unites hearts after they have been purified with fire. Finally, a metaphorical image of the sun as a 'heavenly flame' in the sonnet 'Leydsterren van mijn hoop, Planeten van mijn jeucht' (Hooft 1611: 82 / Hooft 1994a: 56) points towards images in which this planet is a blazing yet gentle and temperate counterpart to the violent and all-consuming power of fire depicted in some of Hooft's other poems.

Although most of the sonnets built around the theme of passion as fire belong to the relatively early part of Hooft's poetic output, this imagery is one of the key components of Hooft's grammar of amorous symbols. But this goes not only for the poems. The flames of love incinerate a lover's heart in at least three of the thirty emblems of Hooft's *Emblemata Amatoria*. Emblem IV, 'Van branden blinckt hy' (with the inscriptio 'Van Minnaers daden claer 'tgherucht volmondich spreekt, / Wanneer der Minnen vlam een edel hart ontsteeckt'), refers to a lover's commitment to heroic deeds through the power of an ignited heart. Emblem XIII, 'Zij brandt en beeft' ('Verwondert u de vlam? O Min, 'tis weynich reens: / Het hart des minnaers brandt en tziddert al alleens'), treats the Petrarchan theme of an 'icy fire', whereas XVII, 'Des eenes glans des anders brandt' ('Het glinstren van het Glas een heeten brandt verweckt: / Mijns Vrouwen glans, aldus, met Minne 'thart ontsteckt'), compares the lady's beauty to a magnifying glass starting a fire (Hooft 1611: 36/44(44) / Hooft 1994a: 202-231).

Towards the end of 'De Stralen mijns ghesichts die'r mengden in de stralen' the speaker's allegorical 'rays of sight' cause two crucial transformations. While the sight worships the lady's image as though she were a goddess, her internalized image transforms the heart into a church for the speaker's worshipping inner vision. As soon as the image has been installed in the heart, it becomes a signifier pointing at and generating love towards the lady – the signified of the image. By expressing the speaker's erotic love in an idiom evocative of a religious ritual (with more than a hint as to its Catholic character), the resulting complex of imagery inverts the categories of the sacred and profane so as to make the former subordinate to the requirements of the latter within an erotic system of signs.

On a primary level the 'heart-temple' motif in Hooft's poem approaches the Pauline metaphor of man as the new temple from the Epistle to the Ephesians. It can also be said to resemble the later evolution

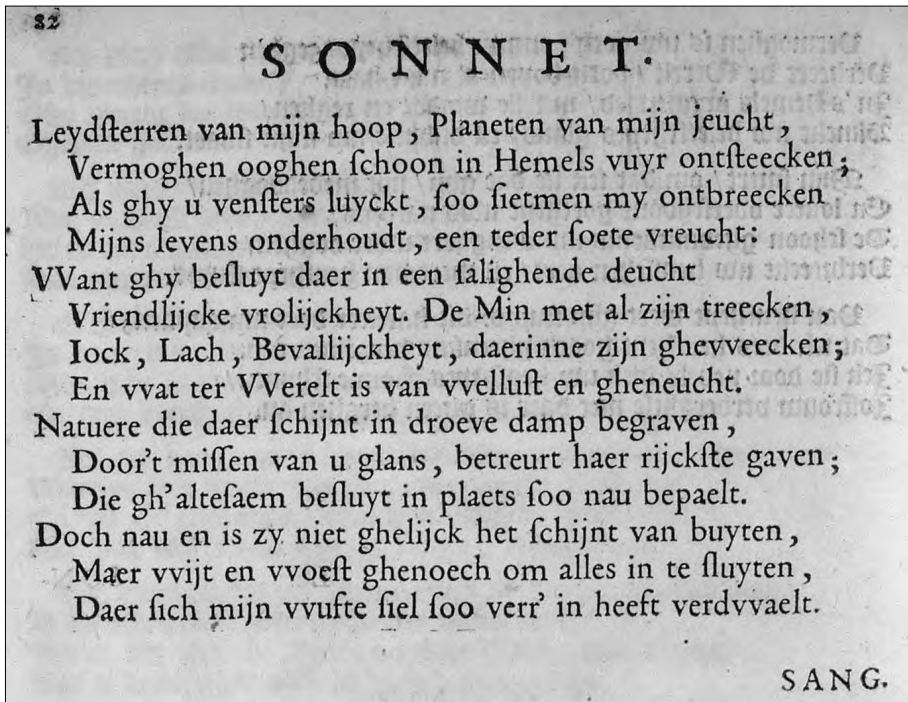
of this notion among early Christian theologians, e.g. the author of the apocryphal Epistle of Barnabas (Kittel 1995: 880-891). From yet another angle, Hooft's 'heart-temple' motif might have originated in a stylized vision of antiquity – including the worship of statues depicting gods and goddesses. This vision Hooft might have combined with ideas reminiscent of the traditional Catholic worship of images ('beeltenis') in churches ('Kerck'), possibly with an admixture of a post-Reformation Calvinist sense of the 'idolatrous' character of such devotion. The strong awareness of the status of the image as a representation, an iconic sign pointing to a real person, clearly underscores Hooft's poem and acts in favor of the latter interpretation. The 'heart-church'/'image-idol' motif reappears in a modified configuration in two other sonnets by Hooft, 'Cond ick u 't binnenst van mijn hart MeVrouwe tooghen' (Hooft 1611: 89 / Hooft 1994a: 81) and 'Schoon ooghen die vermeucht te nemen en te gheven' (Hooft 1611: 92 / Hooft 1994a: 82). Because the representational character of the lady's image appears in more than one of the sonnets from the 1611 edition, the composition of this motif is examined in greater detail in relation to the second of these poems.

Bibliography (primary text):

- Hooft 1994a/b P.C. Hooft, *Lyrische poezie*, ed. P. Tuynman, Atheneaeum – Polak & Van Gennep (Amsterdam: 1994), Vol. 1, p. 20 [no. 2]; Vol. 2, pp. 54, 154.

Bibliography (other sources):

- (Kusters 1997) Wiel Kusters, 'De waere Beeltenis'. P.C. Hoofts erotiek van de blik', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde* 113 (1997), pp. 46-61.



Leydsterren van mijn hoop, Planeten van mijn jeucht

Leydsterren van mijn hoop, Planeten van mijn jeucht,
 Vermogen oogen schoon in hemels vuyr ontfteken
 Als ghij v vensters luickt soo sietmen mij ontbreken
 Mijns levens onderhoudt, een teder soete vreucht:
 Want ghij besluit daerin een saligende deucht
 Vriendlijcke vrolijckheit; De Min met al sijn treken,
 Jock, Lach, Bevallijckheit daerinne sijn geweken
 En wat ter werelt is van wellust en geneucht.
 Natuire die daer schijnt in droeve damp begraven,
 Doort missen van v glans, betreurt haer rijckste gaven,
 Die gh' altesaem besluit in plaets soo nau bepaelt;
 Doch nau en issij niet, gelijck het schijnt van buiten,
 Maer wijt en woest genoeg om alles in te sluiten,
 Daer sich mijn wufte siel soo verr' in heeft verdwaelt.

Notes:

Leydsterren – ‘lodestars, stars used for navigation, such as the polar star (lodestar), or in a more general sense, any heavenly body pointing the way’: ‘Eene ster waardoor iemand de weg wordt gewezen, of waaraan men zich oriënteert’ (WNT 2003: ‘LEIDSTER’ I) a-c)).

vermogen – ‘powerful, potent’: ‘Machtig; ook: invloedrijk’ (WNT 2003: ‘VERMOGEN’ III) 2)).

ontsteeken – here: as the past participle of the verb ‘ontsteken’, cf. ‘het verl. deelw. luidde vroeger ook *ontsteken*, thans alleen *ontstoken*’ (WNT 2003: ‘ONTSTEKEN’).

Als ghy v vensters luyckt – ‘when you shutter (=close) your windows (=eyes)’.

treecken – ‘tricks, subterfuges’: ‘List, slimme daad, handigheid, kunst, al dan niet in pejoratieven zin’ (WNT 2003: ‘TREK’ 41) b)).

Iock – ‘humor, jest’: ‘Scherts, kortswijl, spot’ (WNT 2003: ‘JOK’ I) 1).

daerinne zijn gheweecken – ‘have taken refuge there’: ‘*Wijken in*, kiezen voor, terechtkomen bij’ (WNT 2003: ‘WIJKEN’ I) 6) b)).

droeve damp – ‘vapor, mist’ (with possible reference to the ‘vapors’ shrouding a person suffering from melancholy): ‘In de oudere taal ook in minder nauwbegrensd gebruik, in den zin van: nevel’ (WNT 2003: ‘DAMP’ I) 1)).

soo nau bepaelt – ‘enclosed within narrow boundaries’.

woest – ‘vast, measureless’: ‘*Woeste zee*, niet beschouwd als een kolkende, bewegende massa (...), maar als een uitgestrekt, geweldig, nauwelijks te bedwingen gebied’ (WNT 2003: ‘WOEST’ II) 4) b)).

wufte – ‘wandering, erratic’: ‘Voortdurend of bij herhaling van de eene plaats naar de andere trekkend; niet op één plaats blijvend; zwervend, rondtrekkend, dwalend, omdolend (...)Van de ziel of de zinnen, veelal in den zin van: rusteloos of vertwijfeld ronddolend, het spoor bijster zijnde’ (WNT 2003: ‘WUFT’ I) b)).

Variants:

The *Emblemata amatoria* text (p. 82) closely follows the manuscript except for several minor changes of a typographic nature, such as: ‘Leydsterren’ for ‘Leitsterren’, ‘ooghen’ for ‘oogen’, ‘vuyr’ for ‘vuij’, ‘ghy’ for ‘ghij’, etc.

Under the manuscript text Hooft placed the note ‘DVMS / Chariclea’. The name ‘Chariclea’ is one of a string of pseudonyms that Hooft bestowed upon his would-be fiancées, such as ‘Charifa’ (the poetic alias of Brechje Spiegel), which it resembles. ‘Chariclea’ is possibly a reference

to Heliodorus' narrative about Theaenes and Charicleia, translated into French by J. Amyot (1547) (Hooft 1994b: 159).

Commentary:

'Leydsterren van mijn hoop, Planeten van mijn jeucht' opens with the speaker's invocation to his lady's eyes. These are the lodestars from which he derives hope and the planets whose power determines the good and bad fortune of his young years. Apart from referring to the lover's age, 'youth' ('jeucht') suggests the target audience of the poem which was mainly between twenty and thirty years of age (Grootes 1996: 29-42). Youth is mentioned in the title of *Den Bloem-Hof van de Nederlandsche Ieucht* (1608), where this sonnet was initially published, as well as in the prefatory poem 'Voorreden tot de ievcht' in the *Emblemata amatoria*.

The damsel's eyes are aflame like the sun, here called 'heavenly fire'. Yet unpredictable as they are, they might just as easily disappear from view were the lady to close them, or metaphorically 'shutter her windows'. Whenever this happens the speaker finds himself deprived of a sweet and tender life-sustaining joy, since these eyes enclose glad virtue and friendly merriness. As an abode of the prankster Love ('Min'), the woman's eyes are also a welcome refuge for the allegorical figures of Jest, Laughter and Comeliness, as well as for all worldly pleasure and delight.

Deprived of the radiance proceeding from the damsel's eyes, Nature appears buried, as it were, in 'sorrowful mist'. Without this light Nature mournfully complains that the richest gifts she had given to the lady have been confined to such a narrowly encompassed space. Yet in contrast to how the eyes 'shine' or 'appear' to the outside world², they are in fact so wide and vast that they enclose all there is ('alles'). This is no strange thing seeing that the speaker's 'wandering soul' has managed to lose its way when it had ventured so far inside ('soo verr' in heeft verdwaelt').

The motif of eyes as planets belongs, like the motif of eyes as suns or stars, to the Renaissance repository of light and solar imagery, of which Hooft made use on a number of occasions. The French critic Gisele Mathieu noted in her study of the love poetry of the French Renaissance: 'Avant de devenir, dans la poésie de la fin du XVIe s. et du début du XVIIe, un cliché, le thème des yeux planetès est avant tout l'expression d'une croyance' (Mathieu 1973: 87). It is this belief in the astrological 'influence' of the planets on human life, which was taken seriously in-

² The phrase 'ghelijck het schijnt van buyten' can be read in both senses of the word *schijnen* ('to seem' and 'to shine').

deed by the inhabitants of Renaissance Europe, that 'Leydsterren van mijn hoop, Planeten van mijn jeucht' strives to express in its opening lines. By the time Hooft wrote this poem, the shift referred to by Mathieu, towards becoming 'un jeu "precieux"' (Mathieu 1973: 87) and next a mannerist cliché, was already well underway. Here, however, perhaps owing to the novelty such imagery still had for Dutch poets or to the still-relevant scientific status of astrology, the seriousness of this motif does not depart from its significance in earlier French poetry. It is still true with Hooft, as Mathieu writes, that: 'L'analogie qui fonde ce type d'image repose sur une vision du monde particulière, qui fait du microcosme en tous ses aspects le miroir fidèle du macrocosme' (Mathieu 1973: 87). In the first lines of 'Leydsterren van mijn hoop, Planeten van mijn jeucht', the relations permeating the macrocosm (which the reader is assumed to be familiar with and to some degree also to believe in) are transferred to the microcosm of the lyrical persona's inner self. When the lady's eyes appear to the lover they become 'lodestars' and 'planets' which exert an influence over his life comparable to the force attributed to actual planets in medieval and renaissance astrology.

The theme of eyes as planets appears in the poetry of Ronsard. Mathieu quotes Sonnet XX from the Second Book of *Sonets pour Hélène* ('Yeux, qui versez dans l'ame ainsi que deux Planettes / Un esprit qui pourroit ressusciter les morts...' Mathieu 1973: 87), and like in the poetry of Hooft, its function is that of a corollary to the motif of eyes as suns. Expressing a sense of power residing in the girl's eyes, Ronsard and Hooft reach to Petrarch's *Canzoniere*. Examples of this are Ronsard's Sonnet 5 from *Les Amours*, or the Dutch poet's loosely imitated 'Indien mijn leven sich soo lange can verweren' (ms. 'Wt Petrarcha. Gevolcht. Se la mia vita da l'aspro tormento') ('de Songhelijcke glans / Vrouw, van u ooghen schoon') (Hooft 1611: 106 / Hooft 1994a: 65), as well as his much later sonnet 'Doen 't eerste mael verscheen, in mijner ooghen zin' (1627-1628) recalling Petrarch's 'Come talora al caldo tempo sòle' (Petrarch 1996: 230):

Doen 't eerste mael verscheen, in mijner ooghen zin,
Die krufde zijd' waer af jck self mijn banden strengel,
En 't dubbel starrelicht, waer om jck leg en hengel,
Gelijk de mug om toorts, tot haer de vlam verslin'...

(Hooft 1994a: 408)

[When for the first time there appeared before my eyes, / The curled silk from which I weave my bonds, / And the double starlight, around which I hunt, / Like a midge around a torch, until the flames consume it...]

The damsel's eyes manifest their unpredictable potency by alternately dispensing life-giving energy and depriving the speaker of their beneficial radiance when they disappear. In 'Leydsterren van mijn hoop, Planeten van mijn jeucht', Hooft illustrates this by drawing a parallel, once again, between the speaker's point of view ('Als ghy u vensters luyckt soo sietmen my ontbreecken / Mijns levens onderhoudt...') and the natural world. No longer receiving the light of the girl's eyes, Nature retires behind a veil of sorrowful vapor, mourning the loss of life-giving luminance.

The parallel between the two situations where the 'eyes-sun' metaphor appears, are even more pronounced in the light of semantic similarities. The act of enclosing ('bepaelt') echoes the closure ('besluyt') of vs. 5 whereas Nature's regret at the loss of light coming from the girl's eyes acts as a reprise of the metaphors of vs. 3. These structural features reiterate the medieval and Renaissance principle of correspondence between the macro- and microcosm examined by Mathieu. The lady's eyes not only resemble planets in that their course shapes the lover's life, they also resemble another type of planet, the sun, in that their light is essential to the speaker's heart as much as to the natural world. In fact both, the lover and the world, share the same reaction whenever they experience the loss of life-giving radiance.

The concept of a melancholy universe prevented from enjoying the 'solar' graces of the lady's eyes, is common to Renaissance poetry. One such poem, and indeed possibly one of the most influential, is Joachim du Bellay's Sonnet XXXI from *l'Olive* (1549/1550):

Le grand flambeau gouverneur de l'année
 Par la vertu de l'enflammée corne
 Du blanc thaureau, prez, montz, rivaiges orne
 De mainte fleur du sang des princes née.
 Puis de son char roüe estant tournée
 Vers le cartier prochain du Capricorne,
 Froid est le vent, la saison nue et morne,
 Et toute fleur devient seiche et fenée.
 Ainsi, alors que sur moy tu etens,
 O mon Soleil! tes clers rayons epars,
 Sentir me fais un gracieux printens.
 Mais soudain que de moy tu depars,
 Je sens en moy venir de toutes pars
 Plus d'un hyver, tout en un mesme tens.

(Verkuyl 1979: 50)

Imitating Lodovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (stanzas 38 and 39 of Canto 45) (Verkuyl 1979: 50), Du Bellay sets in place a detailed parallel between the movement of the sun in the natural world and the power of the lady's eyes over the speaker's emotional life. In the summer the sun brings warmth to the northern hemisphere, stirring it to life, and in the winter it retreats towards the Tropic of Capricorn, allowing the cold climate of winter to take hold. Similarly, the lady's eyes, 'mon Soleil', create with their rays a springtimer ('printens') for the speaker, exposing him when she looks away to a metaphorical winter ('hyver').

Du Bellay's sonnet from *l'Olive*, which clearly formed the matrix for the central part of Hooft's 'Leydsterren van mijn hoop, Planeten van mijn jeucht', was imitated by poets from the Netherlands. Perhaps the most noteworthy of these was the Fleming Justus de Harduwijn (1582-1636). Harduwijn, one year younger than Hooft, was a Catholic cleric and nephew of the Leiden Neo-Latinist Daniel Heinsius. The amorous poems that Harduwijn wrote as a young man around 1600 appeared in a volume entitled *De Weerliicke Liefden tot Roose-Mond* (1613). This volume also contained a fairly close translation of Du Bellay's sonnet:

De wijd-vlieghende vlam, daelende t'elcken Jaere
 Uyt d'Horen-vloedicheydt vanden hemelschen *Stier*,
 Bringht ons hier over al menigherley vercier,
 En eenen soeten geur wordt den speel-hof ghewaere.
 Daer naer zijnd' om ghedraeyt met sijn wiel teenegaere
 Naer den Gheyth-horens riem, alle dinck wert seer dier:
 Het velt wert bloot, den windt snuyft met een hol ghetier,
 En snijt de blomkens af, ghelijck met eender schaere.
 Soo ist met my bestelt: als uw' ooghe my bestraelt,
 Den heeten somer comt alsdan op my ghedaelt,
 Met blom-cranskens becroont, en lauwer-tacxkens groene.
 Maer alsoo rasch als die van mijn ghesichte scheyd,
 Ghevoel ick, dat mijn hert van hooghe wordt bespreyd
 Met haeghel, mist, en snee, al in eenen saysoene.

(De Harduwijn 1978: 102)

The motif of a damsel's eyes as a source of life-giving was explored throughout Europe. Edmund Spenser, in Sonnet VIII from the *Amoretti*, has the speaker address the girl's eyes in similar terms: 'Dark is the world, where your light shined neuer; well is he borne, that may behold you euer' (Spenser 1995: 563).

More than just an organ of sight endowed with preternatural powers to illuminate and invigorate the micro- and macrocosms of man and

Nature, the lady's eyes are also containers of praiseworthy moral virtues. They enclose all the joys and pleasures of the universe ('wat ter werelt is van wellust en geneucht'), concentrating them in a measured space – 'plaets soo nau bepaelt'. A variant on this theme, where eyes were represented as enclosing virtue, is frequently encountered among other poets of Northern Europe writing at the end of the sixteenth century. For example, Edmund Spenser drew on this concept to describe the eyes of the speaker's beloved in his *Amoretti* (emphasis mine – M.P.):

Fayre eyes, the myrrour of my mazed heart
 what *wondrous vertue is contaynd* in you,
 the which both lyfe and death forth from you dart
 into the obiect of your mighty view?
 For when ye mildly looke with louely hew,
 then is my soule with life and loue inspired
 but when ye lowre, or looke on me askew
 then doe I die, as one with lightning fyred.
 But since that lyfe is more then death desyred,
 looke euer louely, as becomes you best,
 that your bright beams of my weak eies admyred,
 may kindle liuing fire within my brest.
 Such life should be the honor of your light,
 such death the sad ensample of your might.

(Spenser 1995: 563)

The same pattern is visible here: 'Vertue' ('deucht') is 'contaynd' ('besloten') in the girl's eyes from whence it imparts itself to the lover. Hooft, however, takes his motif of the eye as a microcosm a step further than Spenser in this sonnet. The lady's eyes, initially described as a narrowly encompassed microcosm, reveal themselves afterwards as more than simply a source of virtue. They are represented in spatial terms, by way of a contrast of the finite and infinite, as a limitless world of cosmic proportions into which the poet's soul strayed and where it has now lost its way.

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86

S O N N E T.

Mijn Vrouvv de Min en Ick hebben een harde strijt
 Daer in vvy alle drie vvel mochten t'onderraecken.
 Ick en de Min om haer gheduyrichlijcken blaecken,
 En zy bemint haer selfs de Min en my te spijt.
 Indien dat zy't verderf door sellselfs minnen lijt.
 De Min sal't sonder haer niet langhe konnen maecken.
 En sterrest ghy, O Min, ick sal oock moeten smaecken
 Het eynd mijns levens, daer ghy't onderhoudt van zijt.
 Doch soo dat niet ghebeurt vvat heb ick te vervvachten,
 Dan smerte van mijn smert, dan clachten van mijn clachten,
 Leetvvesen van mijn leet, vvanhopen van mijn vrees?
 Dewijl de Minne selfs mijn Ioffrouw comt te vryen:
 Die selfs haer selven mint; waer vintmen weerpartyen
 Ter VVerelt, die soo hart een Minnaer zijn, als dees?

SANG.

Mijn Vrouw de Min en Ick hebben een harde strijt

Mijn Vrouw de Min en Ick hebben een harde strijt,
 Daer in wij alle drie wel mochten t' onderraken,
 Jck en de Min om haer geduirichlijcken blaken,
 En sij bemint haer selfs de Min en mij te spijt,
 Indien dat sij t verderf door sellefs minnen lijt
 De Min salt sonder haer niet lange cunnen maken,
 En sterrest ghij O Min, ick sal oock moeten smaken
 Het eint mijns levens daer ghij t' onderhout van zijt.
 Doch soo dat niet gebeurt wat hebb' ick te verwachten,
 Dan smerte van mijn smert? dan clachten van mijn clachten?
 Leetwesen van mijn leet? wanhopen van mijn vrees?
 Dewijl de Minne selfs mijn Joffrouw comt te vrijen,
 Die selfs haer selven mint, waer vintmen weerpartijen
 Ter werelt die soo hart een minnaer sijn als dees.

Notes:

t' onderraecken – ‘emerge defeated, captive’: ‘Onder in den zin van *onder bedwang* (48, b). Van personen. Allengs *onder* iemands bedwang of macht *raken*, onder komen te liggen, de onderliggende partij worden’ (WNT 2003: ‘ONDERRAKEN’ B) 1)).

gheduyrichlijcken blaecken – [of the god of love (‘Min’, i.e. Amor) represented as fire] ‘constantly blazing’: ‘In vuur en vlammen staan, branden, gloeien’ (WNT 2003: ‘BLAKEN’ A) 1)).

De Min... niet langhe kunnen maecken – If the girl indeed becomes absorbed by ‘self-love’, this will bring about the demise of Min

Doch soo – ‘if’: ‘indien’

Leetwesen – ‘sorrow, regret’: ‘Verdriet, spijt’ (WNT 2003: ‘LEEDWEZEN’ 1))

Variants:

The text of this poem in the *Emblemata amatoria* (p. 86) closely follows the manuscript except for several minor changes of a typographic nature, such as: ‘Ick’ for ‘Jck’, ‘drie’ for ‘drije’, ‘t’onderraecken’ for ‘t’onderraken’, ‘gheduyrichlijcken’ for ‘geduyrichlijcken’, etc.

Commentary:

Love in ‘Mijn Vrouw de Min en Ick hebben een harde strijt’ is portrayed as an emotionally exhausting struggle of three participants. The parties to this conflict are the girl, Min (the personified god of love) and the speaker of the sonnet. It is a situation of paradoxical interdependence which can eventually prove fatal to all, as any of the parties involved might end up defeated by the other two. The speaker of Hooft’s sonnet is struggling with Min’s ever-burning flames whereas the girl has decided to defy both Min and the lover by loving only herself. Were she to persist in this ‘perversity’ (‘verderf’) of self-love (‘sellefs minnen’), then Min would no longer have a reason to live, while the lover, were he deprived of the love sustaining his life, would most likely perish as well.

There is no end to the hypothetical choices this situation offers to the speaker. If instead of succumbing for want of love he were to survive, he would surely face the ills that typically befall those suffering from unrequited love. Pain would yield pain and complaints would produce complaints. There are suffering and despair arising from fear. Just at that point Min would renew his courtship of the lady, she however would once again revert to self-love. This scenario completes the speaker’s narrative of a triangle of lovers locked in an impossible conflict, which is also a conflict of interest. The sonnet ends on a dejected note with words

which Hooft, in the *Emblemata amatoria* edition, appropriately turns into a rhetorical question: 'where can one find opponents who, as lovers, would be as recalcitrant as these two?' ('waer vintmen weerpartyen / Ter Werelt, die soo hart een Minnaer zijn, als dees?').

Love as a struggle between the speaker, the lady and the allegorical figure of Amor is a theme which takes its roots for a large part from the European lyrical tradition inspired by Petrarch's *Canzoniere*. Casting love as a 'guerra', Petrarch converted the *bellum intestinum* of Latin moral allegory (as represented, among others, by his favorite St. Augustine) into a device for constructing a personal psychological and erotic autobiography. The latter became hence endowed with the characteristics of a dynamic and rapidly evolving emotional struggle, a model Petrarch applied to such poems as, for example, 'Mille fiate, o dolce mia guerrera' (Petrarch 1996: 38), 'Io son de l'aspettar omai sí vinto' ('la lunga guerra de sospiri') (Petrarch 1996: 150), 'L'aspettata virtù, che 'n voi fioriva' ('Quando Amor cominciò darvi bataglia') (Petrarch 1996: 158) and 'In quella parte dove Amor mi sprona' ('di ch' era nel principio de mia guerra / Amor armato sì ch' ancor mi sforza') (Petrarch 1996: 198). Love is also pictured as a warlike contest in Petrarch's 'Amor, Natura, et la bella alma humile':

Amor, Natura, et la bella alma humile
ov'ogn'altra vertute alberga et regna,
contra me son giurati: Amor s'ingegna
ch'i' mora a fatto, e 'n ciò seque suo stile;

Natura tèn costei d'un sí gentile
laccio, che nullo sforzo è che sostegna;
ella è sí schiva, ch'abitare non degna
più ne la vita faticosa et vile.

Così lo spirto d'or in or vèn meno
a quelle belle care membra honeste
che specchio eran di vera leggiadria;
et s'a Morte Pietà non stringe 'l freno,
lasso, ben veggio in che stato son queste
vane speranze, ond'io viver solia.

(Petrarca 1996: 274)

While neither the particular actors of this allegory nor the outcome resemble the conflict described by Hooft, the triangular configuration of 'Amor, Natura, et la bella alma humile' is clearly a theme that might be reproduced in a variety of ways, including the one that we find in the Dutch poem. The interlocking fate of all combatants provides another

parallel with ‘Mijn Vrouw de Min en Ick hebben een harde strijt’. This makes it quite probable that this lyric from the *Canzoniere* might have directly or indirectly provided a general template for depicting love as an allegorical struggle of conflicting emotions and interests

Petrarch’s dissection of love was of course not the only blueprint available to a 16th century poet intending to create an allegory of the struggle raging within a lover’s heart. A somewhat different representation of love as a *psychomachia* of opposing forces can be found in William Shakespeare’s Sonnet 144. Unlike what is shown in Hooft’s poem, however, the lover here is not as actively engaged as a participant on the level of the allegorical conflict. Instead he remains an observer, watching a struggle that is being played out on the stage of his psyche:

Two loves I have, of comfort and despair,
Which like two spirits do suggest me still:
The better angel is a man right fair,
The worser spirit a woman colored ill.
To win me soon to hell, my female evil
Tempteth my better angel from my side,
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,
Wooing his purity with her foul pride.
And whether that my angel be turned fiend
Suspect I may, yet not directly tell;
But being both from me, both to each friend,
I guess one angel in another’s hell.
Yet this shall I ne’er know, but live in doubt,
Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

(Shakespeare 1969: 1478)

The irksome nature of the conflict described in Hooft’s poem is exacerbated by the female protagonist’s overtly represented narcissism (vs 12). Putting in practice a very similar strategy of positioning an indifferent lady as being wantonly narcissistic, the speaker of Philippe Desportes’s Sonnet V from *Derniers Amours* exclaims:

Vous n’aimez rien que vous, de vous meme maistresse,
Toute perfection en vous seule admirant,
En vous vostre desir commence et va mourant,
Et l’Amour seulement par vous meme vous blesse.
Franche et libre de soing vostre belle ieunesse
D’un oeil cruel et beau mainte flamme tirant,
Brûle cent mille esprits, qui vostre aide implorant
N’esprouuent que fierté, mespris, haine et rudesse.

De n'aimer que vous mesme est en vostre pouvoir,
 Mais il n'est pas en vous de m'empêcher d'avoir
 Vostre image en l'esprit, l'aimer d'amour extrême:
 Or l'amour me rend vostre, et si vous ne m'aimez,
 Puisque ie suis à vous, à tort vous presumez,
 Orgueilleuse Beauté, de vous aimer vous mesme.

(Desportes 1600: 119)

Similarly as in Hooft's poem, Desportes's addressee adores only herself. Love ('Amour') wounds her with his arrows because, in fact, she is both lover and loved. Self-love is equated with self-abuse and represented as reprehensible, even perverse. Here, the speaker of the French poem exploits the theme of pernicious self-love by sophistically suggesting that the lady has no option but to become enamoured of him, since he carries the object of her love – her own image – in his heart.

Hooft's 'Min' or 'Minne' is a Netherlandic vernacular equivalent of the Latin Amor. Of course, this figure is not the poet's own invention but belongs to a long tradition of allegorizing the emotional aspects of love, both sacred and profane. 'Min' is etymologically related to the Netherlandic linguistic vocabulary of love. As *Het Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* (WNT) explains, 'minne' (later reduced to 'min') is derived from the Germanic root 'minna', meaning 'memory, remembrance'. In later usage, it was used to refer to love, either towards God, in the context of Christian affection between individuals (which is, for example, how the medieval mystic Hadewych employed this term), or to signify erotic love between a man and a woman (WNT 2003: 'MIN'). With time the second meaning came to overshadow the first one. 'Minne' was also commonly referred to in the tradition of (courtly) love. This usage Hooft upholds in the vernacular subtitle of the 1611 edition of his poems, referring to *Emblemata amatoria* as *Afbeeldinghen van Minne*. Hooft resorts to both 'Min' and 'Minnen' in the sense of erotic love, in 'Voorreden tot de Ieucht', the preface to *Emblemata amatoria*. Here, he concludes his appeal to young lovers with a word of advice, cautioning them not to blame love ('Min') but rather a lack of proper instruction ('sMinnaers onbescheyden' raet') for their amorous misadventures ('Minnen quell-ing').

One of the most venerable exponents of the tradition of allegorizing Minne in the Netherlands was the ethicist, poet and engraver Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert (1522-1590). His moral treatise *Zedekunst dat is wellevenskunste* (1585) can be regarded as conveying one of the most detailed philosophical examinations of this principle of erotic love. Al-

though Hooft, unlike Coornhert, does not maintain a rigid distinction between the erotic and spiritual principles inherent to love, his poetic image of 'Min' does possess a number of features, which correspond to the operations of the 'onkuysche tochte des herten' ('impure passion') shown in the *Zedekunst*. According to Coornhert:

Byde naam minne werd dan eyghentlyck verstaan een heete hertstochte, voortkomende uyte ryphedy vande angheboren gheneghentheyd tot voorttelinghe, ende eensdeels uyte bevalligheyd des beminden persoons, tot byslapinghe vande welcke zy is streckende.

(Coornhert 1942: 30) [it. mine – MP]

[Under the name of minne one originally understood a warm passion, coming from the maturity of the innate urge to procreate, and partly from the comeliness of the loved person, which furthers the inclination to concupiscence]

Enticing first and foremost to 'concupiscence' ('byslapinghe') with the person one loves, Coornhert's Minne is a 'warm passion' ('heete hertstochte') like the allegorical Min in the sonnet 'Mijn Vrouw de Min en Ick hebben een harde strijt'.

Coornhert describes Minne as 'enen heeten vlamme inden sinnen' ('a hot flame in the senses'). The *Zedekunst* instructs readers to avoid playing with the 'burning coals' of love so as not to get 'burned': 'Wildy u niet branden, speelt niet met deze gloeyende kolen' (Coornhert 1942: 32). The same imagery is also used by Hooft to represent the power of Min in 'Mijn Vrouw de Min en Ick hebben een harde strijt' through the 'constantly blazing fire' ('gheduyrichlijcken blaecken') blamed for causing the speaker's unending conflict with Min.

Passion in the form of a flame imparted by a god of love comes back in several sonnets written by Hooft around 1605. In one of these, 'Vonckende God oft gheest van Godes naeste neven', hearts are purged by fire and united by a luminous deity ('Vonckende God') usually identified by critics with Anteros (Hooft 1611: 128 / Hooft 1994: 182). The love god also appears several times in poems that Hooft chose not to include in *Emblemata Amatoria*, such as the sonnet beginning with the line 'Om in te voeren in mijn hart zijn straffe wetten'. This poem too is structured around an allegorical narrative whose chief protagonist a 'frivolous Cupid' ('loose Min'). This love god, however, unlike his namesake in 'Mijn Vrouw de Min en Ick hebben een harde strijt', does not wage war but instead takes on the role of a sly and somewhat intransigent prankster by designing a snare into which he lures the speaker's heart.

The formula of an extended allegory with Min in the leading role is quite common in other poems from Hooft's manuscript *Rijmkladboeken*. In 'Sijdi van Minnaers smart een onversaedlijck vraetjen', the poet entreats a playful Min, his 'quick helpmate' ('wacker maetien'), to allow an erotic dream to become reality. Different in tone – and in this respect much closer to 'Mijn Vrouw de Min en Ick hebben een harde strijt' – is the sonnet 'Jck morden op de Min en op sijn heerschen smaelde' (Hooft 1994a: 111). Diverging from the pattern of playful depictions of a child-like Amor, it expresses the theme of a rebuke which Min delivers in response to the speaker's impatience with the suffering caused by love. Presenting the love god's arguments against the dispirited lover's blasphemy ('Ach dreijcht niet Min jck heb gelastert sonder grondt'), this sonnet also employs a dialectic structure largely similar to the one in 'Sijdi van Minnaers smart een onversaedlijck vraetjen'.

Like other 'Petrarchan' motifs in Hooft's poetry, the allegorical 'Min' appears most often in the years 1610-1620. Hooft was not to return to a similar theme in a sonnet until 'Fantazij', written in 1626, almost two decades after 'Mijn Vrouw de Min en Ick hebben een harde strijt'.

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|---------------|---|

S O N N E T.

89

Cond ick u 't binnenst van mijn hart MeVrouwve tooghen,
 Ghelijck als ick aenschouvv uvv edel siele schoon,
 VVelck, in u aenschijn claer, soo lofbaer staet ten toon,
 En spreyt haer stralen uyt, door u Cristalen ooghen.
 Ghy soudt daer inne sien, met eer niet om verhooghen,
 Soo net nae't leven staen u beeldt op rijcke throon;
 Dat ghy, door vrese van u eyghen smert of hoon,
 Mijn hart handelen soudt met meerder mededooghen.
 Misdunckens steurnis vvolck soud uyt u aenschijn vlien,
 Als ghy sulck een Godin in sulck een Kerck zout sien,
 En feer ootmoedelijck voor haer gheknielt, daer inne,
 Slaefbare danckbaerheyt, en overgheven jonst,
 Ghevlochten in elckaer, door heussche schoonheyts const,
 Met eeuwvich heete liefd, en met de Blicxem minne.

M

SANG.

Cond jck v 't binnenst van mijn hart, Charife, toogen

Cond ick u 't binnenst van mijn hart MeVrouwe tooghen,
 Gelijck als jck aenschouw v eedel siele schoon,
 Welck in v aenschijn claer soo lofbaer staet ten toon,
 En spreijt haer stralen wt door v cristalen oogen;
 Ghij soudt daer inne sien met eer niet om verhooghen
 Soo net nae 't leven staen v beeldt op rijcke throon,
 Dat ghij door vrese van v eijgen smert of hóón
 Mijn hart handelen soudt met meerder mededoogen.
 Misdunckens steurnis wolck soud' wt v aenschijn vlien
 Als ghij sulck een Godin in sulck een kerck soudt sien,
 En seer ootmoedelijck voor haer geknielt daerinne
 Slaefbaere danckbaerheit, en overgeven jonst,
 Gevlochten in malcaer door heussche schoonheits const
 Met ewich-heete liefd, en met de blixem-minne.

Notes:

tooghen – ‘show, demonstrate’: ‘Gelegenheid geven tot het zien of bekijken van iets door het te voorschijn te brengen of iem. voor te houden’ (WNT 2003: ‘TOOGEN’ I) A) 1)).

aenschijn claer – ‘clear (bright) face’: ‘Overdrachtelijk. De daad van aanzien of aanschouwen, dichterlijk opgevat als het beschijnen van iemand of iets; de aanblik, de blik; ‘Het lichaamsdeel, waarin zich de oogen bevinden, dat *aanschijnt*, aanziet. Het aangezicht, het gelaat; ‘De wijze waarop iemand of iets ons aanschijnt, tegenschijnt, in het oog valt; dus het Uiterlijk voorkomen’ (WNT 2003: ‘AANSCHIJN’ I)-2))

niet om verhooghen – ‘not to be surpassed’: ‘onovertreffbaar’ (WNT 2003: ‘VERHOOGEN’ I) 7) b))

handelen – ‘touch, handle, manipulate’: ‘Aanvatten, aanpakken; in de hand of de handen nemen; ‘Vaak met eene heilige zaak als voorwerp. Beroeren’ (WNT 2003: ‘HANDELEN’ I) A) 1)

misdunckens steurnis wolck – Under the entry ‘misduncken’, the WNT notes – citing Hooft’s passage – ‘Men vindt in de 17^{de} E. ook nog overblijfselen van de oudtijds voorkomende bet. *mishagen*’ [‘displeasure’] (WNT 2003: ‘MISDUNKEN’). Besides this (archaic) meaning, the word ‘misduncken’ was also used in Hooft’s day in the more common sense of ‘suspicion, jealousy’, which is also, in all likelihood, the meaning expressed in this passage: ‘Onpersoonlijk: *mij misdunk*t, ik heb achterdocht, argwaan, jaloezie’. For ‘steurnis’ the WNT provides two primary definitions: ‘disruption’ (‘De handling van storen, storing, verstoring’) and ‘anger’ (‘Verstoordheid, gramschap. In dezen zin niet meer in gebruik’ (WNT 2003: ‘STOORNIS’ I)-3)).

jonst – Hooft is using ‘jonst’ in this context not in the sense of ‘favor, grace’ (WNT 2003: ‘de genegenheid eener vrouw voor een man, eener geliefde voor den minnaar, of omgekeerd’), but rather as ‘will, desire’, glossed by the WNT as ‘Genegenheid, in den zin van: lust, trek, zin tot (of in) iets’ (WNT 2003: ‘GUNST’ I) A) 1) b) β); *ibid.*, d)).

Variants:

The *Emblemata amatoria* text (p. 89) closely follows the manuscript except for several minor changes of a typographic nature such as: ‘ick’ for ‘jck’, ‘tooghen’ for ‘toogen’, ‘Ghelijck’ for ‘Gelijck’, ‘edel’ for ‘eedel’, etc.

In the 1611 edition, ‘Charife’, the name of the addressee in verse 1 of the manuscript text, was replaced by the more oblique ‘MeVrouwe’ (‘Madam’). It is worth noting that ‘Charife’ is the transcription provided by the 19th century editors of Hooft’s manuscript, Pieter Leendertz and Frederik Stoett. This spelling was subsequently taken over by all later ed-

itors. This, however, is possibly derived from an erroneously transcribed Greek word 'Charis', meaning one of the Charites, the Greek goddesses of beauty corresponding to the Roman Graces. Charis is mentioned as the spouse of the god Hephaistos in Homer's *Iliad*³. While the Greek word *charis* implied beauty, grace, charm, and myrth, it could also be used to refer to the sparkling light proceeding from the eyes of a beloved person or the luminous beauty of the human form, hence the name 'Charise' (spelled by Hooft with a long 's' as 'Charife'). Roland Barthes cites *charis* in the sense of a radiant beauty in *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* ((Barthes 2002: 222). For 'MeVrouwe' see also the sonnet 'Leydsterren van mijn hoop, Planeten van mijn jeucht' (above).

Note under the manuscript text: 'M B S / Charifa.'

Commentary:

It is a bold wish, the one opening 'Cond ick u 't binnenst van mijn hart MeVrouwe tooghen'. Its substance is the speaker's desire to reveal the innermost depths of his heart to his beloved as clearly as he perceives her 'beautiful noble soul' gloriously displayed in her 'bright countenance'. If the girl were to look into the speaker's heart, she would see a true-to-life image of her own person displayed there with 'unmatched honour'. Therefore out of fear of harming or perjuring herself she would treat the image, and the lover's heart where it resides, with greater compassion. As soon as she were to see herself installed as 'such a Goddess in such a church', 'displeasure's angry cloud' would quickly vanish from her face. She then would witness the speaker's 'Slavish Gratitude' and 'Submissive Will' (both personified) kneeling in worship before her image. Finally, she would learn how beauty's joyous art had contrived by means of eternally hot love and the 'lightning Minne' to weave together these two ingredients of the speaker's amorous devotion.

'Cond ick u 't binnenst van mijn hart MeVrouwe tooghen' is, at its core, a poem about the inability to communicate one's emotions and the desire to surmount this obstacle. The central assumption is a perceived disparity on the speaker's part between what he believes is a clear picture of the lady's virtues, and the lady's unwillingness or inability to see his heart, and the love it contains, with the required clarity. Realizing this, the speaker tries to restore a state of parity by 'revealing his heart' and disclosing its contents. The image of the 'goddess' which the lady will

³ The author wishes to thank Professor Andrzej Borowski for suggesting that 'Charifa' in the printed editions based on Hooft's manuscripts might in fact have been a misreading of 'Charisa' (spelled 'Charifa') and 'charis'.

encounter in the speaker's 'church of the heart' is intended as a form of flattery. Its aim is to restore absent reciprocity. Indispensable for the success of the speaker's enterprise is an awareness of the significance of sight. Visual perception is an instrument of detecting the asymmetry of perception and correcting the initial imbalance. Describing the object of this perfect sight, Hooft's lyrical persona resorts to language, creating a representation of the contents of the heart which the lady might otherwise not be able to perceive. 'Cond ick u 't binnenst van mijn hart MeVrouwe tooghen' implies that – in a world where *innamoramento* is traditionally triggered by visual stimuli – poetry may deliver more than just meets the eye, communicating what is hidden from view. Ultimately, Hooft seems to be suggesting, words offer a more effectual means than sight to communicate what is found in the heart.

The image of the lover revealing the contents of his heart can be traced back to the poetry of Ovid, who admits in the *Metamorphoses* to harboring a similar wish:

Aspice vultus
Ecce meos, utinamque oculos in pectora posses
Insincere...

(Mathieu 1973: 332)

The next stages marking the transfer of this motif into the European vernacular lyric of the 16th century can be identified in the poetry of the Italian Petrarchist Panfilo Sasso and the Frenchman Clement Marot⁴. Taking from Sasso a characteristic preoccupation with the gorier physical details of the heart laid bare, Philippe Desportes further refined the core concept through the addition of the lady's image which has been 'imprinted' onto the open organ (emphasis mine – M.P.):

Si vous voyez mon cœur, ainsi que mon visage,
Meurdry, couvert de sang, perçé de toutes parts,
Au milieu d'un grand feu qu'allument vos regards,
Reconnoissant dessus vostre figure empreinte,
Vous seriez (j'en suis seur) de souspirer contrainte.

(Mathieu 1973: 333)

⁴ For an examination of Marot's treatment of this motif in the context of Hooft's sonnet 'Vonckende God oft gheest van Godes naeste neven', see below.

It is most likely at this point that the motif of the open heart came to serve Hooft as material for 'Cond ick u 't binnenst van mijn hart Me-Vrouwe tooghen'. Both Desportes and Hooft in their treatment of this theme rely on an identical conditional structure featuring in both cases a flash-forward to the expected effects: the sighs of pity that should overwhelm the lady once she sees her depiction.

The theme of a heart enclosing the lady's image is also found in Desportes' Sonnet V from *Derniers Amours* (also quoted above, p. 99) where the speaker turns to the woman with the argument that her self-love should be aimed not at her own person, but at the image that he is carrying in his spirit ('esprit'):

De n'aimer que vous mesme est en vostre pouvoir,
 Mais il n'est pas en vous de m'empecher d'avoir
 Vostre image en l'esprit, l'aimer d'amour extrême:
 Or l'amour me rend vostre, et si vous ne m'aimez,
 Puisque ie suis à vous, à tort vous presomez,
 Orgueilleuse Beauté, de vous aimer vous mesme.

(Desportes 1600: 119)

Hooft returned repeatedly to the concept of a heart holding an image. In the sonnets 'De Stralen mijns ghesichts, die'r mengden in de stralen' (Hooft 1611: 77 / Hooft 1994a: 20) and 'Schoon ooghen die vermeucht te nemen en te gheven' (Hooft 1611: 92 / Hooft 1994a: 82) he combined this basic theme with a more complex transformation of the heart into a 'church' and of the girl's image into a 'goddess' or 'idol' (cf. pp. 79 and 111).

The two allegorical supplicants genuflecting before the lady's image are 'liefd' and 'minne', representing love as the spiritual *Caritas* and the physical *Eros*. The idea of two types of love in Hooft's poetry was sometimes referred to by Dutch critics as 'Ficinian' (Veenstra 1971: 464-472) owing to the momentum this concept received from the Florentine scholar's commentary to Plato's *Symposium*. At the turn of the 16th and 17th century, however, such a notion had already become commonplace, and its dissemination occurred through a variety of sources. A variant on these can be found in *Traite de l'essence et guérison de l'amour* (1610/1623) by Jacques Ferrand:

(...) we must recognize, as Pausanias does, that just as there are two Venuses, the one called Urania or the celestial, [born] a daughter of the heavens without a mother, the other called Pandemia or earthly, the youngest daughter of Jupiter and Diana, so there are two loves, sons of these two goddesses: divine love and common or vulgar love. Metaphysicians and theolo-

gians discourse of the essence and properties of the first, while physicians deal with ordinary physical love, which is either honest or dishonest. They teach the means for preserving the former in marriage, and they prescribe the sovereign remedies for healing and preserving men from that lascivious, unchaste love that so often carries away base and corrupted souls.

(Ferrand 1990: 225)

While Ferrand recounted the myth of two types of love for the benefit of his fellow medical practitioners, the Dutch philosopher Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert (1522-1590) recognized it as a useful allegory for studying philosophical ethics. In *Zedekunst of wellevenskunste*, Coornhert attempted to correct what he believed to be confusion in the usage of 'liefde' and 'minne'. These two concepts in his view corresponded to two mutually opposing and incompatible moral principles:

De minne werd by velen oock uytgesproken mette naam van liefde, maar dat oneyghentlyck. Want die ouden oock verstaan hebben byde liefd een reyne, maar byde minne een onkuysche tochte des herten. Dit vintmen inde oude Neerlandsche boecken doorghaans, ende wel uytdureckelyck int oude liedeken vant Klerxken ter scholen, te weten:

Dat heete min wel magh verkouwen
Maar reyne liefd magh niet verghaan.

(Coornhert 1942: 29)

[Minne was given by many the name of 'liefde' ('love'), but incorrectly. Because the ancients understood 'liefd' to be a pure, but minne to be an impure, passion of the heart. The same one can generally find in old Netherlandic books, and especially in the old song of the School-clerk, to wit:
That warm 'min' can cool off,
But pure 'liefd' cannot pass away]

The 'old song' ('oude liedeken') 'vant Klerxken ter scholen' quoted by Coornhert is preserved in the *Antwerps Liedboek* (1543), a printed collection of (mostly) secular songs. Its provenance shows the distinction between 'liefde' and 'minne' as exclusive (though to some degree complimentary) variants of love, and that it is not only older but also more firmly embedded in the native lyrical tradition of the Low Countries than it might be initially inferred from the rather guarded reference to the authority of 'the ancients'.

Similarly to Ferrand, Coornhert subdivides 'min' into passion that is either pure ('reyne') and chaste ('kuysch') or unchaste ('onkuysche'). The former finds its proper outlet in lawful concupiscence ('wettighe byslappinghe'). The latter, caused by an overactive imagination, lustful sensa-

tions or simple curiosity, is represented as fire, a deliberate symbol of its excess and power to harm and destroy human beings:

Oock is deze minne schadelyck, wanneer hare onmatighe ende heete vierigheyd, buyten anporringhe der naturen, de nature zelve overweldight, uytmerghelt, veronghelyckt ende krenckt. Daarom men deze minne te recht wel magh heten een blinde begheerlyckheyd, maar gheenssins liefde. Want deze is altyd zo wys als kuysch...

(Coornhert 1942: 31)

[This 'minne' too is harmful when its immoderate and warm fire, outside the ordinary urges of nature, overpowers, withers, damages and destroys nature itself. For this reason one is right to call this 'minne' a blind desire, but by no means can one call it 'liefde' ('love'). Because the latter is always so wise and chaste...]

Hooft's metaphor for 'min' – lightning ('Blicxem') – matches the features that Coornhert assigns to his 'onmatighe ende heete vierigheyd', while alluding to the French *coup de foudre*.⁵ Contrasted with Coornhert's views, however, Hooft's 'eeuwich hete liefd' must seem something of a *contradictio in adiectum*. Just as 'min' cannot be at the same time pure and unpure, 'liefd' cannot be fiery while remaining eternal. Fire in Coornhert's repository of symbols refers only to transient passions that flare up only to die away seconds later, whereas 'liefd' represents love for everything that is eternal and does not pass away.

By uniting in one phrase – 'eeuwich hete liefd' – what Coornhert, looking to Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy, considered to be irreconcilable opposites, Hooft presents the lady with an image of a heart which has overcome some of the traditionally implied contradictions of love. Earthly erotic passion in all its fiery excess has been not only liberated from the constraints of a typically disparaging moralistic tradition, but it is also assigned a status hitherto reserved only for the good, beautiful and true:

Wt het voorzeyde vande hete ende onwyze minne valt licht om te mercken den aart vande reyne ende wyze liefde. Deze is een lustighe hertstochte om na maght int ghoede tgheliefde te ghelieven. Haer eyghenscappe is den liefhebber te verenighen met het gheliefde, maar dit mede alleenlyck int ghoede. Want liefde bestaat in die ghloedheyd.

(Coornhert 1942: 35)

⁵ Cf. 'Sur les yeux de Madame la Marquise de Monceaux' by Honorat Laugier de Porchères.

[From what has been said on the warm and foolish 'minne' one can easily reconstruct the nature of the pure and wise 'liefde'. The latter is a merry passion urging to love the beloved in good according to one's abilities. Its properties are such that it wishes to unite the lover with the beloved, but only in what is good. Because 'liefde' resides in what is good]

'Liefde', according to Coornhert, represents a desire to be united with the person one loves, but only in what is truly good: 'alleenlyck int ghoede'. Although fiery symptoms would suggest a pernicious and disruptive nature, Hooft's 'eeuwich hete liefd' reconciles Neoplatonic opposites, and conveys a reassurance to the addressee of the poem that the true lover's heart is capable of embracing every aspect of love, 'liefde' as well as 'min'.

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92

S O N N E T.

Schoon ooghen die vermeucht te nemen en te gheven
 De sielen die ghy vvilt door uvven harssenstrick.
 Die, met het spelen van een vriendelijcke blick,
 Soo vaeck ontsteect, en bluscht, de vlamme van mijn leven.
 Ach in vvat dampe moet mijn siel onseecker svveven,
 Door vvrevle nydicheyt, en't ongheval vol schrick,
 Met haer verbolghen storm, en svvarte wolcken dick,
 Sint datse tusschen mijn en u mijn Sonne dreven!
 MeVrouwve' in dese nacht, in desen hel vol smart,
 Neem ick mijn toevlucht tot u beeldt, dat in mijn hart
 Soo groot verheven staet, en vult alleen mijn sinne.
 Maer uyt haer claecheyt, (laes!) my gheen verlichtingh rijst;
 En zy doet meer niet dan dat zy my annevvijsst,
 Hulpeloose afgodin, op u alleen Godinne.

SANG.

Schoon ooghen die vermeucht te nemen en te gheven

Schoon ooghen die vermeucht te nemen en te gheven
 De sielen die ghij wilt door vwen harssenstrick,
 Die met het spelen van een vriendelijcke blick
 Soo vaeck ontsteect, en bluscht de vlamme van mijn leven,
 Ach in wat dampe moet mijn siel onseker sweven
 Door wrevle nijdicheit en 't ongeval vol schrick,
 Met haer verbolgen storm en swarte wolcken dick,
 Sint datse tusschen mijn, en v mijn Sonne dreven!
 Charifa' in dese nacht in desen hel vol smart
 Neem ick mijn toevlucht tot v beeldt, dat in mijn hart
 Soo groot verheven staet, en vult alleen mijn sinne.
 Maer wt haer claecheit las! mij geen verlichting rijst,
 En sij doet meer niet dan dat sij mijn annewijst
 Hulpeloose' afgodin op v alleen Godinne.

Notes:

vermeucht – ‘have the power to’: ‘De kracht of macht bezitten tot; in staat zijn tot’ (WNT 2003: ‘VERMOGEN’ I) 1))

harssenstrick – ‘mind-snare’: ‘[een] lus waarin de geesten (van de minnaars) gevangen raken’ (Hooft 2004: 134)

dampe – ‘vapor, mist’: ‘In de oudere taal ook in minder nauwbegrensd gebruik, in den zin van: nevel’ (WNT 2003: ‘DAMP’ I) 1)).

wrevle – ‘malicious, ill-inclined’: ‘Kwaadaardig, boosaardig, misdadig’ (WNT 2003: ‘WREVEL’ II) 3))

ongheval vol schrik – ‘terrible fate’: ‘verschrikkelijk lot’ (Hooft 2004: 134)

verbolghen – ‘raging, violent’: ‘Toornig, vertoornd, kwaad, boos’; ‘Onstuimig, opgezweept, stormachtig, ruw’ (WNT 2003: ‘VERBELGEN’ I) 1,2))

Variants:

The *Emblemata amatoria* version (p. 92) closely follows the manuscript except for several minor changes of a typographic nature such as: ‘ooghen’ for ‘oogen’, ‘gheven’ for ‘geven’, ‘onseecker’ for ‘onseker’, ‘nydicheyte’ for ‘nijdicheit’, etc.

A slightly modified punctuation is displayed in the 1611 edition, with a comma in verse 2: ‘Die, met het spelen van en vriendelijcke blick...’, commas marking the pause after the sixth syllable in verses 6 and 7, commas and parentheses in verse 12 (‘Maer uyt haer clærheyt, (laes!) my geen verlichtingh rijst’), etc.

The name of the addressee, ‘Charifa’ (possibly related to ‘Charita’ or ‘Charisa’), occurring in verse 9 of the manuscript text, was replaced in the 1611 edition by the more formal ‘MeVrouwe’ (‘Madam’). The word ‘ghy’ in the phrase ‘die ghy wilt’, typically read as standing for ‘schoon oogen’, might also be interpreted as referring to the addressee, ‘Charifa’ or ‘MeVrouwe’, identified by the speaker in the sestet.

Note under the manuscript text: ‘Charifa’.

Commentary:

While in some poems from the Petrarchan tradition the lady’s eyes are a source of life-giving light, in ‘Schoon ooghen die vermeucht te nemen en te gheven’ they are a ‘mind-snare’ capable just as easily of imprisoning as of liberating the soul of any lover they might wish to capture. This metaphor becomes more specific when these eyes are represented as a force that controls the speaker’s entire emotional and physical well-being. With only the slight effort of a friendly glance the girl’s eyes con-

tinually light and extinguish the flame of his life, becoming a force that can be malign even as it is benign.

The description of a bipolar love is then replaced by a sense of loss and deprivation as the speaker laments his condition in words suggesting insecurity and alarm. Ever since 'angry jealousy' and a 'horrible misfortune' intervened between him and the lady ('my Sun') in the form of a raging storm and thick black clouds, his soul has been reduced to wandering blindly in mist and vapor. Darkness and heavy mist-like vapors impeding vision were commonly seen by 16th century scholars and poets as a symptom of amorous melancholy. As one medical author wrote, in those suffering from this disease '(...) black humor thickens and obscures, as with smoke, the animal spirits, which should be clear, pure, subtle, luminous' (Ferrand 1991: 241). These sensations are aggravated for the speaker by unfavorable incidents. Envy and a terrible fate prevent him from seeing 'his Sun': the lady and the sun-like radiance of her eyes.⁶

Describing the 'hell full of torment' that 'this night' has become, the unhappy lover confesses to seeking refuge before the lady's image which towers in his heart and alone dominates his senses. The brightness of the image, however, does not 'illuminate' the speaker, neither does it 'lighten' his worries (a pun on the Dutch 'verlichten'). As he becomes aware of the impotence of the image, he realizes that this hapless and helpless idol is pointing in one direction: towards his beloved who is 'the only Goddess'.

'Schoon ooghen die vermeucht te nemen en te gheven' owes its structural unity to the theme of light. The inner universe of the speaker's emotions is represented initially as a place that is either illuminated or cast in darkness depending on the favor or disfavor of the lady's eyes. The darkness eventually sets in for good in the sestet: henceforth the speaker searches in vain for the sun-like presence of his beloved who can bring him light and consolation. Both here and there the relation between the 'I' and the addressee is disrupted. At first the lover is prevented from seeing his 'Sun' because his view is obstructed by clouds and mist, while afterwards the simulated radiance of the image is proven to be inadequate to alleviate his cares. Yet while the true 'Sun' vanishes from view behind the allegorical clouds of envy and an unfavorable fate, the iconic

⁶ The phrase 'V mijn sonne' can be also read, in the context of the apostrophe of the first quatrain, as a reference to the lady's eyes. Cf. 'de Songhelijske glans / Vrouw, van u ooghen schoon' in the sonnet 'Indien mijn leven sich soo langhe kan verweren' (ms. 'Wt Petrarcha. Gevolcht. Se la mia vita da l'aspro tormento'), cf. Hooft 1611: 106 / Hooft 1994a: 65.

sign of the idol-image points beyond the simulacra of a melancholy state of mind, towards a true and only 'Goddess' of extra-textual reality.

The theme of beautiful eyes may be considered by and large one of Hooft's preferred 'Petrarchist' themes. It occurs most often in his earliest poetry composed up to several years before the *Emblemata amatoria* were published (1611). Parallels may be found among the sonnets selected for the *Emblemata* as well as the ones Hooft omitted. These are for example 'ooghen clær' ('De Stralen mijns ghesichts, die'r mengden in de stralen' (Hooft 1611: 77 / Hooft 1994a: 20)), 'ooghen schoon' ('Leydsterren van mijn hoop, Planeten van mijn jeucht' (Hooft 1611: 82 / Hooft 1994a: 56)), 'ooghen schoon' ('Indien mijn leven sich soo langhe kan verweren / Ms. 'Wt Petrarcha. Gevolcht. *Se la mia vita da l'aspro tormento*') (Hooft 1611: 106 / Hooft 1994a: 65)), or variants, such as 'cristalen ooghen' ('Condicke u 't binnenst van mijn hart MeVrouwe tooghen' (Hooft 1611: 89 / Hooft 1994a: 81)), and 'schrande ooch' ('Om in te voeren in mijn hart zijn straffe wetten' (Hooft 1994a: 99)). While not all realizations of this motif stand for the girl in the very same way as 'schoon ooghen' in this poem, Hooft's frequent recourse to the theme of beautiful eyes in these love sonnets effectively follows on his indebtedness to Petrarch and his later (most notably French) followers.

Hooft's reliance on Petrarchist imagery can be proven by reading this poem alongside Sonnet 40 by Philippe Desportes (from *Diane. Premieres Amours. Livre Deux*). Here, the speaker despairs of being deprived of the brightness of his lady's eyes and finds an unexpected source of light in the flames of love raging in his heart:

Las ie ne verray plus ces soleils gracieux,
 Qui seruoyent de lumiere à mon ame egaree,
 Leur diuine clairté s'est de moy retiree,
 Et me laisse esperdu, dolent et soucieux.
 C'est en vain desormais, ô grand flambeau des cieux,
 Que tu sors au matin de la plaine azuïree,
 Ma nuict dure tousiours, et ta tresse doree,
 Qui sert de jour au monde, est obscure à mes yeux.
 Mes Yeux hélas! mes Yeux, sources de mon dommage,
 Vous n'aurez plus de guide en l'amoureux voyage,
 Perdant l'astre luisant qui souloit m'éclairer.
 Mais si ie ne voy plus sa clairté coustumere,
 Je ne veux pas pourtant en chemin demeurer:
 Car du feu de mon coeur ie feray ma lumiere.

(Desportes 1600: 59)

Similarly to Hooft's sonnet, here too the speaker discovers that his world plunges into darkness when the lady refuses him her glances. Yet in the world of Desportes, the blaze ignited in the lover's heart proves to be a more than sufficient replacement for the missing light, and there is no need to question its strength or its efficacy.

Solar and light imagery is one of the most prominent themes that Hooft resorts to in the love sonnets from the *Emblemata amatoria*. Some of these poems, such as 'Schoon ooghen die vermeucht te nemen en te gheven', have the speaker addressing the damsel as the 'Sun'. In the somewhat later sonnet 'Wanneer de Vorst des Lichts slaet aen de gulden toomen', the lyrical persona also resorts to a comparable solar metonymy:

Al eveneens, wanneer uw gheest de mijne roert,
Word' ick ghewaer dat ghy, in 't haylich aenschijn, voert
Voor my den dach, mijn Son, de nacht voor d'andre vrouwen.

(Hooft 1611: 132 / Hooft 1994: 182)

[Likewise, when your Spirit moves mine, / I am aware how your blessed face brings / For me, the day, my Sun, but night for other women]

Whether referring directly to the lady's eyes, or as a metonymy for the female protagonist herself,⁷ images of light evoke the unique radiance that surrounds her, suggesting the life-giving nature of love. Calling on associations with divine truth and purity, Hooft's imagery of light not only increases the intensity of the lover's confession but also complements the lady, and, no less importantly, increases the credibility of the psychological situations represented in the text.

The initial verse of this sonnet, 'Schoon ooghen die vermeucht te nemen en te gheven', highlighting the 'give and take' of love, provided Hooft with inspiration for emblem XXVI from *Emblemata amatoria*: 'Die sielen neemt en gheeft'. For the *inscriptio* of this emblem – representing Amor reclining while in the background the wind extinguishes a candle – Hooft wrote a distich into which he slipped this phrase: 'De windt blaest op, en uijt, de kaerssen, daer zy streeft: / Mijn Vrouw heeft oock een cracht, die Sielen neemt en gheeft' (Hooft 1611: 62-63 / Hooft 1994a: 227) (fig. 1-2).

⁷ Cf. '(...) Al eveneens, Mijn Licht, wanneer ghij mij verschijnt' in 'Wanneer, door 's werelts licht, de blindtgebooren jongen', a sonnet not included in *Emblemata amatoria* (Hooft 1994: 105).

'Schoon ooghen die vermeucht te nemen en te gheven' is one of several sonnets in the *Emblemata amatoria* where the speaker worships an image of his beloved. The setting for all of these versions is the lover's heart represented as a church. In the sonnet 'De Stralen mijns ghesichts, die'r mengden in de stralen', the lady's image converts the heart into a church where she is worshipped as a goddess by the enraptured mind's eye of the speaker (Hooft 1611: 77 / Hooft 1994: 20). In another sonnet, 'Cond ick u 't binnenst van mijn hart MeVrouwe tooghen', the lady is expected to treat the lover's heart with greater kindness and compassion after she has seen her own image raised on a rich throne – a vision that the speaker believes should persuade her to abandon feelings of angry displeasure:

Misdunckens steurnis wolck soud uyt u aenschijn vlien,
Als ghy sulck een Godin in sulck een Kerck zout sien

(Hooft 1611: 89 / Hooft 1994: 81)

[The angry cloud of displeasure would vanish from your face / Were you to see such a Goddess in such a church]

Hooft's concept of the lover worshipping the lady as an 'idol' has several equivalent motifs in sixteenth-century European poetry. Frequently encountered in the love poetry of Ronsard, it appears to be a distant echo of two songs by Petrarch, i.e. respectively, Canzone 30 'Giovane donna sotto un verde lauro' ('[...] l'idolo mio, scolpito in vivo lauro' Petrarca 1996: 30) and Canzone 50 'Ne la stagion che 'l ciel rapido inchina':

Misero me, che volli
quando primier sì fiso
gli tenni nel bel viso
per iscorpirlo, imaginando, in parte
onde mai né per forza né per arte
mosso sarà fin ch'i'sia dato in preda
a chi tutto diparte!

(Petrarca 1996: 80)

As far as Ronsard is concerned, one can refer to a passage from Sonnet II in *Amours de Cassandre* (1552) where the poet compares the image of his beloved to a portrait imprinted in his heart:

Du ciel à peine elle estoyt descendue
Quand je la vi, quand mon âme éperdue
En devint folle: et d'un si poignant trait,
Le fier destin l'engrava dans mon âme,

Que vif ne mort, jamais d'une aultre dame,
Emprainct au cuœur je n'auray le portraict.

(Ronsard 1992: 7)

Mixing the sacred with the profane, the speaker of Sonnet XXV ('Ces deux yeulx bruns, deux flambeaux de ma vie') refers to the addressee as the only 'idol' whom he adores within his heart: 'Ny aultre idole en mon cuœur je n'adore' (Ronsard 1992: 28). Like the lyrical voice of 'Schoon ooghen die vermeucht te nemen en te gheven', Ronsard emphasizes the exclusive character of his persona's emotional passion, and the meaning of his 'Aultres penses en moy ne couvent point' parallels Hooft's 'vult alleen mijn sinne'.

In what points to a wide circulation of this motif throughout sixteenth-century Europe, a heart is represented as a church, and the lady as a goddess/holy image/idol, in two sonnets from the English poet Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*. While Sidney's Sonnet 4, quoted below, merely hints at the possibility of the female protagonist being a deity 'enshrined' in the speaker's heart,

I sweare, my heart such one shall shew to thee,
That *shrines in flesh so true a Deitie*,
That Vertue, thou thy selfe shall be in love.

(Sidney 1962: 167) [it. mine – M.P.]

in Sonnet 5 the poetic persona consistently deploys the imagery of religious worship within a series of arguments aimed at downplaying a critique of his passion:

[...] It is most true, what we call Cupid's dart,
An image is, which for our selves we carve;
And, fooles, adore in temple of our hart,
Till that good God make Church and Churchman starve.
True, that true Beauty Vertue is indeed,
Whereof this Beautie can be but a shade,
Which elements with mortall mixture breed:
True, that on earth we are but pilgrims made,
And should in soule up to our countrey move:
True, and yet true that I should Stella love.

(Sidney 1962: 167)

The rhetorical tension achieved by the 'heart-church' / 'image-idol' motif in Sidney's sonnet is not quite comparable to what Hooft achieves in

'Schoon ooghen die vermeucht te nemen en te gheven'. However, what appears in both is a mistrust (if not a downright condemnation) of the image. In Sidney's poem, the speaker's primary rhetorical aim is to overrule the negative conventional judgements passed on love, as introduced by the phrase 'It is most true...'. One of these arguments deflates the significance of the image, representing it, in an ironic *apodixis*, as nothing more than a vacuous semblance which only 'fooles' adore. The critique of the 'idol' in Hooft's poem, while not overturned as spectacularly as by Sidney, does in fact overtly draw attention to the image as representation, revealing it to be a powerless signifier which derives its potency exclusively from the signified.

In yet another use of this theme, the metaphor of the heart as a church retains its positive meaning in a sonnet from Edmund Spenser's *Amoretti*:

[...] Her temple fayre is built within my mind,
 In which her glorious ymage placed is,
 On which my thoughts doo day and night attend
 Lyke sacred priests that neuer thinke amisse.
 There I to her as th'author of my blisse,
 Will builde an altar to appease her yre:
 And on the same my heart will sacrifice,
 Burning in flames of pure and chaste desyre:
 That which vouchsafe O goddesse to accept,
 Amongst thy deerest relicks to be kept.

(Spenser 1995: 566)

While the location of the metaphorical temple oscillates between the speaker's heart and mind, the underlying poetic motivation – the application of religious imagery to an erotic context – remains very close to Hooft's practice in all three of the sonnets from *Emblemata amatoria*.

What Hooft does add in 'Schoon ooghen die vermeucht te nemen en te gheven', and what is missing from the Spenserian and Sidneyan realizations of this theme, is the distinction between *signifiant* and *signifié*: an ineffectual mental image or 'afgodin' and an implied actual person, the true 'Goddinne'. This distinction should be seen in the light of a shift in contemporary philosophical thought regarding the concept of the image. The Protestant Reformation, which was the predominant force shaping the Dutch culture of Hooft's day, relied in its 'iconophobic impulse' (Jay 1994: 43) for a large part on the Biblical condemnation of the heathen worship of graven images. This rejection of the image was intellectually reinforced by 'a new awareness of the difference between

representation and fetishism' (Jay 1994: 44) based on both 'the distinction Aquinas made between a venerating iconolatry and a worshipping idolatry' (Jay 1994: 44) and afterwards, on the Erasmian critique of medieval forms of piety. As a Calvinist, Hooft was no doubt strongly aware of the scriptural and ideological associations of the 'heart-church' / 'image-idol' motif for his contemporaries. Obviously, although the use of imagery with clear Catholic provenance can be attributed quite simply to poetic fashion, by alluding to symbols and rituals discarded by the Reformation (when sometimes, as in the case of the iconoclastic upheaval of the 'Beeldenstorm' (1566), this rejection had been accompanied by a fair dose of violence), Hooft's sonnet opens a different store of meanings than the ones accessible to a Catholic like Ronsard.

In a biographic footnote, quoting Hooft's biographer, it may be added that the girl to whom Hooft referred when writing this sonnet in 1604 was Brechje Spiegel. A niece of Hooft's friend and mentor Hendrik Laurenszoon Spiegel (1549-1612), Brechje came from a well-connected Catholic family whose members were opposed to her relationship with the protestant poet. The forced break-up of Brechje Spiegel's relationship with Hooft perhaps goes some way to explain not only the cruel fate alluded to in verse 6 of this sonnet (Van Tricht 1980: 53), but also Hooft's critique of the 'idolatrous' worship of representations which to him and his readers would have been unequivocally associated with Catholic religious practice.

While two of Hooft's earlier sonnets featuring the 'heart-church' motif maintain the sense of a playful reversal of the sacred and profane, the poem 'Schoon ooghen die vermeucht te nemen en te gheven' shows him taking a different path. The integrity of the image is undermined as it is revealed to be an untrustworthy representation. It betrays its inadequacy by pointing towards the true 'deity' whom the speaker in vain tries to reach. In this, Hooft's poem demonstrates its proximity to Sidney's, rather than to either Ronsard's or Spenser's treatment of this theme.

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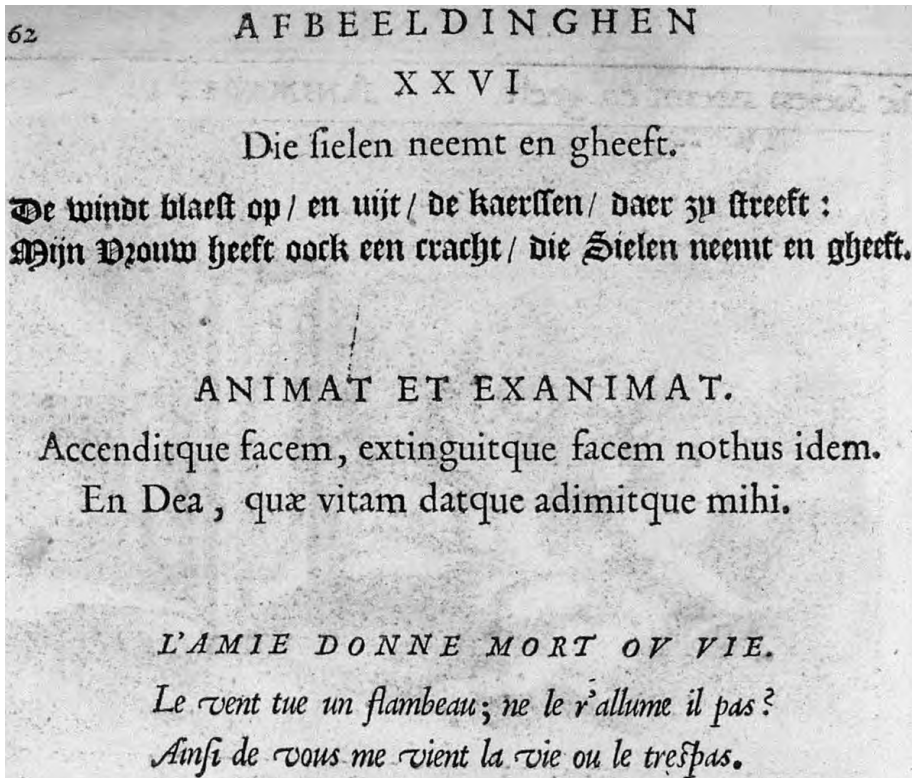
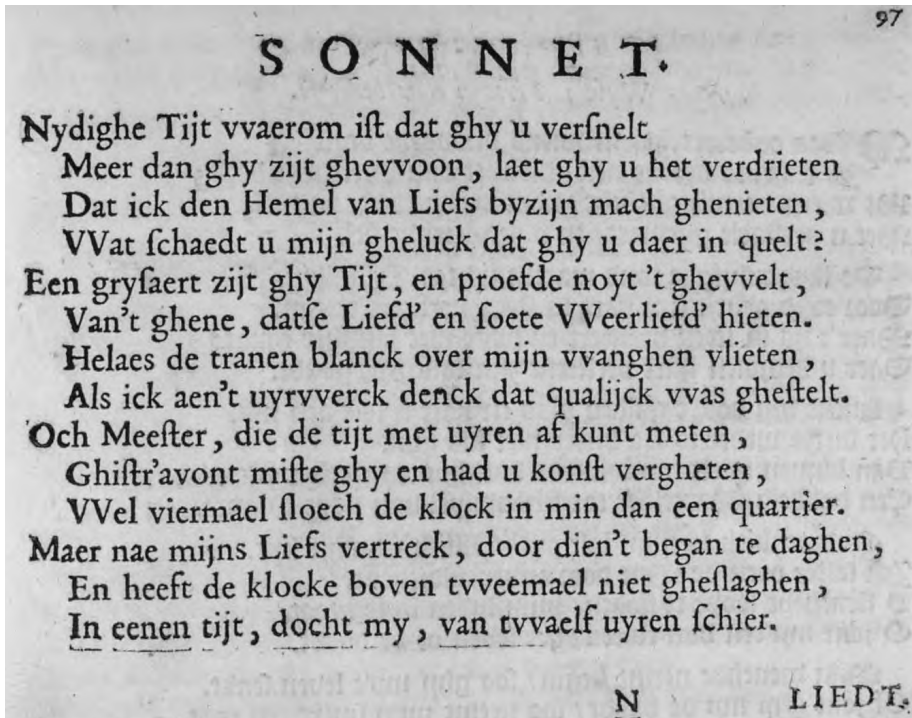


Fig. 1. The *inscriptio* of Hooft's emblem 'Die sielen neemt en gheeft' (XXVI)
 from *Emblemata amatoria*



Fig. 2. The *pictura* of Hooft's emblem 'Die sielen neemt en gheeft' from *Emblemata amatoria*



Nijdighe tijt waerom ist dat ghij v versnelt

Nijdighe tijt waerom ist dat ghij v versnelt
 Meer dan ghij sijt gewoon? laet ghij het v verdrieten
 Dat ick den hemel van Liefs bijsijn mach genieten?
 Wat schaedt v mijn geluck dat ghij v daerin quelt?
 Een grijsaert sijt ghij Tijd en proefden noijt t geweld,
 Van t geene datse Liefd' en soete weerlieft hieten
 Helas de traenen blanck over mijn wangen vlieten,
 Als ick aent wrwerck denck dat qualijck was gestelt:
 Och meester die de tijt met wren af cunt meten
 Gistr'avont misten ghij, en had v const vergeten
 Wel viermael sloech de clock in min dan een quartier
 Maer nae mijn liefs vertreck doordient began te dagen,
 En heeft de clocke boven sesmael niet geslaegen
 In eenen tijt docht mij van twaelef wren schier.

Notes:

dat ghy u daer in quelt – ‘that it causes you to feel upset’: cf. ‘Hinderen, (iemand) lastig vallen, het lastig maken, hinder —, last veroorzaken’ (WNT 2003: ‘KWELLEN’ I) A) 2)), with the general meaning of causing offence.

had u konst vergheten – this passage should be probably interpreted along the lines of ‘your skill has failed you’. Verse 10 is paraphrased in (Smits-Veldt 1981: 84) as ‘gisteravond bleek dat u in uw vakmanschap te kort schoot’.

door dien’t – ‘since, because’: ‘In de oudere taal, gevolgd door *dat*. (...) Uit oorzaak *dat*. Thans in de spreektaal verdrongen door *doordat*.’ (WNT 2003: ‘DOORDIEN’ 1), 2)).

docht my – ‘it seemed to me’: past tense of the verb ‘dunken’

schier – ‘nearly’: ‘Bijna, nagenoeg’ (WNT 2003: ‘SCHIER’ IV) B) 5))

Variants:

Except for several minor changes of a typographic nature, such as: ‘Nydighe Tijd’ for ‘Nijdighe tijt’, ‘ghy’ for ‘ghij’, ‘zijt’ for ‘sijt’, ‘ghenieten’ for ‘genieten’, etc., Hooft’s editorial revisions include changing the number of chimes that the clock strikes in each of the printed editions of the poem published during his lifetime. In the manuscript text, the clock strikes ‘four times’ in ‘less than a quarter of an hour’ (‘Wel viermael ... in min dan een quartier’) before the lover’s departure, and ‘not less than six times’ in a space of ‘twelve hours’ afterwards (‘boven sesmael ... van twaelef wren’) . In the *Emblemata amatoria* (p. 97) this was revised so that the clock struck ‘no less than two times’ over a period of ‘twelve hours’ after daybreak (‘boven tweemael ... twaelf uyren’) ; the number of chimes before dawn remained the same. In the 1615 edition, *Apollo of Ghesangh der Musen* (Hooft 1994b: 161), the frequency was once again revised to, respectively, two and six chimes. The sonnet was not published in the last collected edition of Hooft’s poems issued before his death, *Gedichten van den heere P.C. Hooft*, printed in 1636 in Amsterdam by Jacob van den Burgh.

Note under the manuscript text: ‘J W B. / Diana’

Commentary:

‘Nydighe Tijd waerom ist dat ghy u versnelt’ has been identified by Dutch scholars, beginning with Leonard Forster and P.K. King in the 1960s, as an *alba*, a genre known in Dutch as ‘dageraadslid’ (‘dawn song’). The *alba* first made its appearance in Provençal poetry. In the Netherlands, the earliest text of an *alba* may be found in a medieval collection of ver-

nacular verse known as the Gruuthuse Manuscript. One of the characteristic features of this type of lyric is the identity of the lyrical persona – it is a woman, and not a man, who is the default speaker. Hooft's 'Nydighe Tijd waerom ist dat ghy u versnelt' gives voice to a young girl who has just said farewell to her lover after a night spent together, expressing her sorrow and amazement at Time's frustratingly irregular changes of pace (Smits-Veldt 1981: 74-75).

Addressing the allegorical figure of 'envious Time' ('Nydighe tijd'), the speaker questions its motives. Why is Time running faster than usual, she asks. Is Time upset because she is enjoying 'the heaven of Love's company'? Or is it simply her good fortune that gives Time offence? The girl has an answer at hand: Time is a grey-haired old man ('grysaert') who has clearly never experienced 'the thing they call Love and sweet love in exchange'.

This perspective is re-adjusted as the speaker blames a poorly-set clock for causing her tears. With the mechanical device established as the point of reference, in the sestet the girl turns to another addressee – the master clockmaker skilled in measuring time in hours. Clearly the clockmaker's craft has failed him since the clock struck four times in what must have been less than a quarter of an hour. And yet, she concludes, after her lover had left the clock did not bother to strike more than six times over a period of nearly twelve hours.

The late-night visit and departure before dawn can be read as a loose reference to the courting ritual of 'kweesten' – a customary practice, popular especially in rural areas of the Low Countries, such as Hollands Noorderkwartier. The suitor was allowed to visit the woman whom he courted in her room after sunset, spent the night with her (according to some versions, on the blanket) and leave just before sunrise (Exalto 2004: 89).

The allegorical figure of the 'grysaert' whom the girl reproaches in the opening half of 'Nydighe Tijd waerom ist dat ghy u versnelt' is frequently encountered in Renaissance poetry and pictorial arts, and is known to scholars of iconography under the name of 'Father Time'. Over the centuries, Father Time combined attributes assigned to three different deities of antiquity: Chronos as a personification of time, the Greek titan Kronos, and his equivalent Roman, the god Saturn (Panofsky 1967: 76-78). This complex lineage can be easily traced in the figure of Hooft's 'Envious Time'. This greybeard combines the trait of swiftness historically derived from representations of Chronos, who was depicted in antiquity as a winged young man, with the attribute of grizzled old age,

which arose from the medieval astrological symbolism associated with the god and planet Saturn.

As Erwin Panofsky remarked, 'Time is sometimes called *πολιός* (grey-headed) in Greek poetry' (Panofsky 1967: 72), yet the epithet of 'grysaert' ('greybeard') is not the only trait pointing to Saturn. The protagonist of Hooft's poem is endowed with even more features related to this god in medieval astrology. Saturn sometimes assumed the appearance of 'a morose, sickly old man' (Panofsky 1967: 76-77). This appears twice in Hooft's sonnet: in the suggestion of sexual jealousy provoked by the happiness of the young couple, and in the erotic deprivation hinted at by the girl. This clearly reflects the 'unfavourable implications' of Saturn, as those unfortunate enough to have been born under his astral reign 'were classed with the most miserable and undesirable of mortals', and the planet itself was 'associated with old age, abject poverty and death' as well as with sexual impotence and frigidity (Panofsky 1967: 76-77).⁸

While here both the grizzled old man, the clockmaker and the clock act as symbolic messengers of time, in *alba* poetry its representatives manifested themselves in a variety of conventional forms. In Hooft's 'Galathea siet den dach comt aen', a 'dageraadslid' in the literal sense of the word as its protagonists are pictured looking at dawn, the light of the rising sun announces the break of day ('Las! ick sie den daegeraedt de tijt is snel'). Even so, other more reliable measuring devices exist to remind the lovers of the time, as the girl exclaims:

Hoe t' is noch geen een geslagen // wat soud 't dagen?
Hoe? t' is noch geen een, t' en can den dach niet sijn'

(Hooft 1994a: 49-50)

[How come it hasn't struck one // what, is this dawn?
Why? If it isn't one o'clock yet, then it cannot be daylight]

Clearly even when seeing the rising sun, she anticipates the clock striking. It is precisely this discrepancy between natural signs and the signals of culture which forms part of the appeal of this poem, and the entire genre. In other variants of the *alba*, especially the vernacular variant known as the 'wachterlied', it was a gatekeeper ('wachter') who reminded lovers of daybreak (Van Bork 2002).

⁸ Apart from being treated by Hooft in 'Nydighe tijt, waerom ist dat ghy u versnelt', the motif of 'Father Time' also appears in another sonnet from *Emblemata amatoria*, 'Geswinde grijsart die op wackre wiecken staech' (cf. below).

Other Renaissance poets also chose to allow the sun to disturb the lovers with its rays, as John Donne did in two of his poems, 'Break of day' and 'The Sunne Rising'. In the latter dawn is a reminder for the man to resume his daily 'business', to which the woman curtly replies: 'He which hath business, and makes love, doth do / Such wrong, as when a married man doth woo.' By contrast 'The Sunne Rising', where the harbinger of dawn, the sun, is called a 'busy old fool', is an exceptional *alba* in that its speaker is a man (Donne 1966: 11-12).

A temporal boundary runs through Hooft's poem dividing it into two parts before and after vs. 6-7. The first part, corresponding to the girl's reproachful questioning of the 'grysaert' Time, is phrased in the present tense. The girl's remark that the grizzled old man has been flying faster than usual is represented as spoken *before* dawn, when she was still in the company of her lover. The second part, however, is narrated in the past tense. Unlike the first one it conveys words uttered after daybreak. Recollecting the events of the night the girl tries to account for a disturbing sense that time is less predictable than expected. Taking issue with the clockmaker for the uneven speed of the poorly-regulated clock, she reflects on the alternating lack and overload of time, both in equal measure beyond her control.

Combining what might almost be parts of two different poems, a lover's complaint aimed at Father Time, and the second, a delightfully whimsical explanation of Time's erratic behavior as a result of a cantankerous clock, Hooft's sonnet brings up a changing subjective perception of time, variously expressed in symbols and references to objective signs. In the first six verses the mythological image of the swift flight of the 'grizzled old man' confirms the girl's perception of 'fleeing' time. The situation changes when the clock appears. Time is now conditioned by two factors: the vagaries of a mechanical device and the emotional state of an individual. As Mieke B. Smits-Veldt writes, the intensity of 'Liefd' and 'soete weerliefd' creates its own time-space which differs from ordinary objective time (Smits-Veldt 1981: 83). Yet the girl's subjective awareness of time is expressed in objective increments. The phrases 'in min dan een quartier' and 'twaelf wren schier' only make sense if she (and the readers of Hooft's sonnet) told the time by means of a clock which struck every fifteen minutes. In 17th century Holland such clocks were proof of the skill of the most ingenious craftsmen. They were treasured possessions available only to the very affluent, as opposed to less costly clocks which struck once every hour (Smits-Veldt 1981: 77). As the girl contends, the mechanism of the clock has failed, compressing four chimes into one when the lovers were together, and striking six

times after they parted in what seemed like twelve hours. Thus, effectively, the clock becomes the reference-point of how time is understood in the poem. Paradoxically, time is not seen as a linear process, but as an uneven movement consisting of accelerating and slowing down.

In the end, the clock does more than measure time. Like a new mechanical timegod, it governs the hours by adding or subtracting them as programmed by the clockmaker. Of course, as readers we suspect that the clock was not actually tampered with and that we are witnessing a subjective reaction: in other words, that the girl is using the timepiece as an external sign onto which she projects her emotions; we believe that the clock is an 'objective correlative' for a sense of confusion. And yet, is there more to it? Is there a deliberate hint of naïveté in the way Hooft shows her identifying a non-linear sense of time with the irregular motions of the clock? And would Hooft's readers have interpreted it this way? Ultimately, the text presents us with an irreconcilable tension. As Mieke Smits-Veldt writes, when passion measures out a different time than the clock, this very same instrument, a symbol of linear regularity, is represented, subjectively, as the root cause of an irrational experience of time (Smits-Veldt 1981: 79).

The phenomenon of time running slower according to emotional circumstance is found in a sonnet from the *Canzoniere*, where Petrarch's lyrical persona reflects on the burden of time after Laura's death: 'Ogni giorno mi par più di mill'anni / ch' i' segua la mia fida et cara duce...' (Petrarch 1996: 490). A song from the Netherlandic Gruuthuse manuscript presents a lover expressing a related statement: 'Een ure dinct mi sijn een jaer' (Smits-Veldt 1981: 79). Ronsard expresses the tedium of endless hours in these words:

Il me semble que la journée
Dure plus longue qu'une année
Quand par malheur je n' ay ce bien
De voir la grand' beauté de celle
Qui tient mon coeur!

(Smits-Veldt 1981: 79-80)

The notion that two incompatible ways of experiencing and expressing time might coexist independently of each other is a relatively new phenomenon that came into being most likely at the beginning of the early modern period. As Mieke B. Smits-Veldt notes, the first traces can be found in the poetry of Georges Chastellain, c. 1455 (Smits-Veldt 1981: 79). It is precisely this sense of incompatibility that informs the speaker's

exclamation in John Donne's 'The Sunne Rising' (Donne 1966: 3). 'Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?' asks Donne's speaker, questioning the motives of that 'saucy pedantic wretch', the sun. The general sensibility that people have private 'seasons' not necessarily related to those of the world at large corresponds to the discrepancy in Hooft's poem: 'Helaes de tranen blanck over mijn wanghen vlieten, / Als ick aen't uyrwerck denck dat qualijck was ghestelt...'.

There is much reason to believe with Mieke Smits-Veldt that in this sonnet Hooft articulated the coexistence of two world-views: a medieval one, which inherited concepts transmitted from antiquity, alongside an early-modern one in which a nascent empiricism was beginning to cast a shadow over the certainties of the past. The symbolic figure of the swift 'grijsart' was the only means afforded by a medieval world-view to substantiate a personal conviction that time could be flying faster than usual. With the arrival of the clock, however, the same subjective experience of non-linear time is expressed by referring to the fixed, measurable intervals of linear time. However, regardless of the existence of a device to incrementalize time into minutes and hours, temporal relations cannot be taken for granted, as the words 'docht my' ('methinks') and 'schier' ('nearly') seem to suggest. As a mechanical contraption, the clock is prone to failure, even though, unlike an envious time-god, it clearly runs to a quantifiable margin of error. Ultimately, therefore, it is the 'meester', the maker of that device, who with a disarming matter-of-factness is held accountable for making time run contrary to the lovers' passion.

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S O N N E T.

101

VVech soete sotterny, flux segg' ick vvilt verreyfen,
 Eer dat mijn krancke breyn sich t'eenemael vergeckt.
 Soo niet dan anxt, en vaer in't sotte Minnen steckt,
 En sorghe vol verdriet, vvaer van het hart mach eyfen;
 O Min uyt mijn verstant vvilt dan te rugghe deysen,
 Ghy die my het vernuft, met loofse schijn, beveleckt.
 Flux soete sotterny, vvech segg' ick, en vertreckt,
 Met u beloften schoon van ydele ghepeysen.
 Datmen der Minnen cracht in zijn ghemoet ghedoocht,
 VVanneer een vaste gront sich aen u hoop vertoocht,
 Is eenichsins gheraen, maer die kunt ghy niet vinnen.
 Te minnen sonder hoop is droom en beuseling:
 Dies soete sotterny vertreckt van hier ghering,
 VVech segg' ick, en vertreckt uyt mijn vervverde finnen.

N 3

SANG.

Wech soete sotterny, flux segg' ick wilt verreyzen

Wech soete sotterny, flux segg' ick wilt verreyzen,
 Eer dat mijn cranke brein sich t' eenemael vergeckt.
 Soo niet dan anxt, en vaer int sotte minnen steckt,
 En Sorge vol verdriet, waer van het hart mach eijsen;
 O Min wt mijn verstant wilt dan te rugge deijsen,
 Ghij die mij het vernuft, met lose schijn, beveleckt.
 Flux soete sotternij, wech segg' ick, en vertreckt,
 Met v beloften schoon van ijdele gepeijsen.
 Datmen der Minnen cracht in sijn gemoet gedoocht,
 Wanneer een vaste gront sich aen v hoop vertoocht,
 Js eenichsins geraen, maer die cunt ghij niet vinnen.
 Te minnen sonder hoop is droom en beuseling:
 Dies soete sotternij vertreckt van hier gering,
 Wech segg' ick, en vertreckt wt mijn verwerde sinnen.

Notes:

verreysen – 'leave, depart': 'Vertrekken, afreizen, wegzeizen' (WNT 2003: 'VERREIZEN' 2)).

vaer – 'fear' (paired as a synonym with 'anxt'): 'Gevoel van benauwdheid; angst, vrees, schrik' (WNT 2003: 'VAAR' I) 1)).

hart ... eysen – 'terrifies, fills [the heart] with fear': 'Schrikken, gruwen; griezelen; rillen (eigenlijk en figuurlijk)' (WNT 2003: 'IJZEN' 2) a)).

te rugghe deysen – 'retreat', here used in the sense of 'leave, abandon, withdraw', cf. 'Achteruit gaan, (achteruit) wijken' (WNT 2003: 'TERUG-DEINZEN').

vertoocht – 'appear': 'vertonen'. (WNT 2003: 'VERTOOGEN').

vinnen – 'find': 'vinden'. An assimilated form of the infinitive 'vinden' common in 16th and 17th century spoken and written Dutch (WNT).

beuseling – 'work done in vain': 'IJdel werk' (WNT 2003: 'BEUZELING' A) 2).

ghering – 'at once, immediately': 'Spoedig, weldra, aanstonds' (WNT 2003: 'GERING' II).

verwerde – 'confused, dazed, muddled': 'Van streek, ontdaan, ontsteld, bang, of een zoodanig voorkomen hebbend' (WNT 2003: 'VERWEERD' I) 3)).

Variants:

The *Emblemata amatoria* version (p. 101) closely follows the manuscript, except for several minor changes of a typographic nature such as: 'sotterny' for 'sotternij', 'verreysen' for 'verreijzen', 'krancke' for 'cranke', 'in't' for 'int', 'Minnen' for 'minnen', etc.

This poem corresponds to a passage from Hooft's early play *Theseus* [*en Ariadne*], vs. 337-350 (lines spoken by Ariadne) (Hooft 1994b: 56).

Analysis and Commentary:

Hooft's 'Wech soete sotterny, flux segg' ick wilt verreysen' opens with a passionate appeal that the 'sweet madness' tormenting the speaker depart before his 'diseased brain' goes utterly mad. Over the next several verses, this amorous malady is dissected, revealing such symptoms as apprehension, fear, and sorrowful anxiety. Then the lyrical voice once again appeals to love: addressing 'Amor' ('Min'), the speaker asks him to withdraw from his mind and reason, which have been filled with empty simulacra. Repeating the same plea, the speaker implores the sweet madness of love to leave and take with it the 'pretty promises' produced by 'vain thoughts'.

Next, the speaker lays out his case against Min in terms not out of place in a philosophical or even legal debate. The argument used here is an *apodixis*, taking a generalized principle and applying it to a specific

situation. It is generally advisable, Hooft's speaker admits, to 'tolerate' the power of Minne in one's heart, yet on one condition: that the hope derived from love rests on solid ground. This, however, is clearly not the case. Min is unable to come up with the proof required to substantiate its claims. Having stated this argument, the speaker resumes his familiar plea. Loving without hope is nothing more than a 'dream' and a 'vain pursuit'. In the final words of the poem, the speaker once again implores the 'sweet madness' to quickly depart from his confused senses.

Hooft's 'soete sotternij' can be read as a commentary to the notion of 'dilettoso male' ('pleasurable harm') from Petrarch's Sonnet 104 'S'amor non è, che dunque è quel ch'io sento?':

S'amor non è, che dunque è quel ch'io sento?
ma s'egli è amor, per Dio, che cosa et quale?
se bona, ond' è l'effetto aspro mortale?
se ria, ond'è sì dolce ogni tormento?

S'a mia voglia ardo, ond'è 'l pianto e lamento?
s'a mal mio grado, il lamentar che vale?
O viva morte, o dilettoso male,
come puoi tanto in me, s'io nol consento?

E s'io 'l consento, a gran torto mi doglio.
Fra sì contrari venti in frale barca
mi trovo in alto mar senza governo:

sì lieve di saver, d'error sì carica,
ch'i' medesimo non so quel ch'io mi voglio,
e tremo a mezza state, ardendo il verno.

(Petrarch 1996: 216)

The poets of the 17th century and earlier were very well aware of the deeply-embedded cultural associations linking amorous passion to the operations of a deranged mind. The keyword was *melancholia*, a disease of the spirit that could be extended to include the symptoms of unhappy love, providing the medical basis for treating the latter as a malady of the intellect. Exemplifying the early 17th century's treatment of amorous melancholy as a disease, the French medical scholar Jacques Ferrand refers to its etymological link with madness, writing in the *Traité de l'essence et guérison de l'amour*:

Melancholy, according to Galen, is a form of dotage without fever (...) for which reason the Greeks use the term μελαγχολαν, meaning to be out of one's mind.

(Ferrand 1990: 235)

In another passage, Ferrand defines amorous melancholy through the 'insanity' that forms the primary cause of this disease:

All maladies, according to our Galen, take their names from the diseased part (...) or finally from the efficient cause, as with our erotic or amorous melancholy – called by certain physicians ἐρωτομανίαν, which is to say love madness or amorous folly, for quite rightly one can say of these lovers what Demodocus said of the Milesians (as stated in Aristotle), that if they are not crazy, they behave at least as if they were.

(Ferrand 1990: 232)

Ferrand's observation is not unique, of course, and it appears to have been based on a number of sources. One of them was Donato-Antonio Altomari, who reached a similar conclusion in his *Opera Omnia* (Lugduni: apud Gulielmum Rovillum, 1565): 'quarum una melancholia tum a Graecis, tum a Latinis dicitur, reliqua vero μανία Graece, Latine insania, su furor nuncupatur, de hic propterea non immerito pertractabimus, de melancholia prius verba facientes' (Ferrand 1991: 387). In fact, on close inspection it becomes clear that Hooft's representation of erotic melancholy, just as Ferrand's, derives nearly all of its components from the writings of 'ancient physicians', that is to say, mainly from Galen's original catalogue of symptoms.

First of all, the speaker's 'sotternij' primarily afflicts the intellect: his 'diseased brain' is on the verge of madness. Taking hold of his mind or reason, the disease then wreaks havoc in the lover's 'confused wits'. Describing these symptoms, Ferrand notes that 'love or erotic passion is a form of dotage, proceeding from an inordinate desire to enjoy the beloved object' (Ferrand 1990: 238). Restating this, Ferrand adds that 'what we call dotage the Greeks call more appropriately παραφροσύνην [wandering of the mind]' (Ferrand 1990: 235). *Paraphrosyne* was '[...] used in Greek medicine as a general term for various forms of mental derangement' and 'faulty reasoning accompanied by loss of memory or hallucinations' (Ferrand 1990: 392). Like Ferrand's definitions of melancholy, quoted above, this is also a concept that can be traced back to the works of Galen, in this case *Hippocratis Epidemiorum I et Galeni in illium commentarius* (Ferrand 1990: 392).

The second defining component of Hooft's insane love ('sotte Minnen') is the presence of fear coupled with sorrow and worry. Ferrand, as a good disciple of Galen, recognized these emotions as one of the chief elements of the disappointed lover's dotage: 'Fear and sorrow are the inseparable symptoms of this miserable passion [of melancholy] that prevents the immortal soul from exercising its faculties and virtues' (Fer-

rand 1990: 235). Galen himself wrote on this subject in *De loci affectis*: ‘Although each melancholic patient acts quite differently from the others, all of them exhibit fear or despondency’ (Ferrand 1990: 393).

Related to this pair of symptoms is the third manifestation of ‘soete sotternij’ in Hooft’s poem – delusions that take the form of ‘semblances’, ‘idle thoughts’ and ‘dreams’. In the Galenic framework that Ferrand follows when examining the symptoms of erotic melancholy:

‘(...) fear and sorrow – the characters and accidents inseparable from the state of melancholy – are traceable to the blackness of the humor; (...) once the animal spirits have become darkened by the black vapors arising from the melancholy blood, all objects presented to the imagination become horrible and frightening, just as the blackness of the night normally provokes a sense of dread and fright, especially in idiots and small children, according to the Coryphaeus of the physicians [Hippocrates].

(Ferrand 1990: 240)

Erotic melancholy is a condition which causes ‘a thousand fantastical chimeras’ to take possession of the mind: the lover starts imagining ‘objects that neither exist nor ever will’ (Ferrand 1990: 235). As the manuscript text of this sonnet reveals, the reference to ‘idle dreams’ was acquired from Ariosto when Hooft translated the latter’s ‘L’amar senza speme é sogno et ciancia’ in the form of a motto: ‘Te minnen sonder hoop is droom en beuseling’ (Hooft 1994a: 47).

Reconciling Galen’s stance with that of Averroes (who attributed the sensation of fear not to the blackness of the humor but to its coldness), Ferrand arrives at a complete picture of the disease and its causes:

The melancholy humor, being cold, chills down not only the brain but also the heart – seat of that courageous strength called irascible – quelling its ardor and instilling fear. The same black humor thickens and obscures, as with smoke, the animal spirits which should be clear, pure, subtle, and luminous. Then the spirits, the first and principal element of the soul, blackened and chilled at the same time, begin to disturb the more noble faculties, and above all the imagination, presenting it always with black species and strange visions that can be perceived with the eye (though they arise from within)...

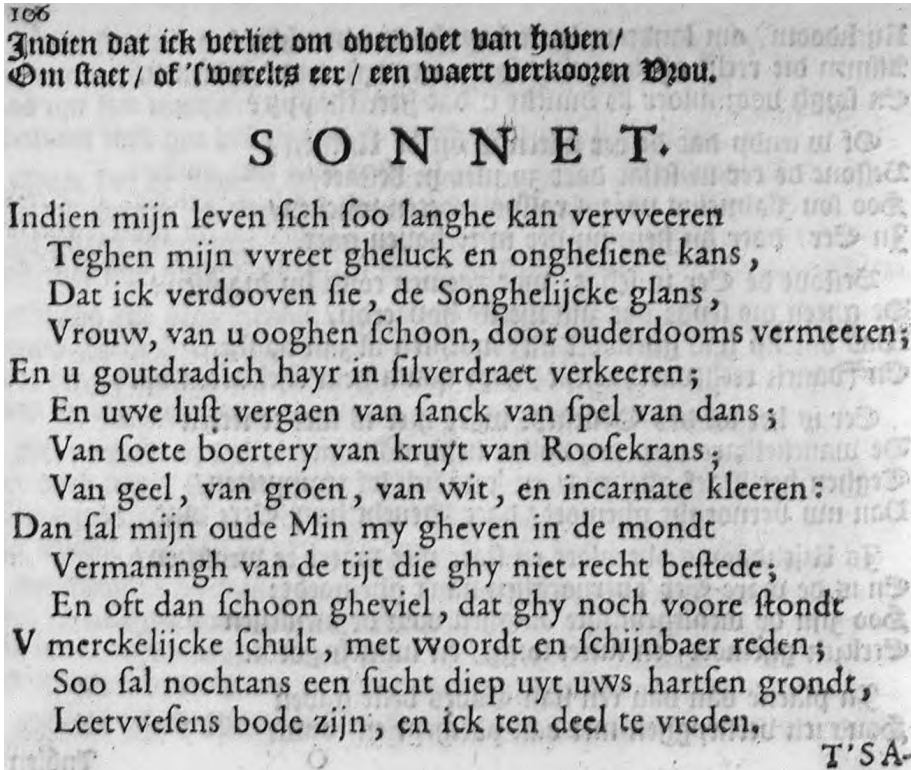
(Ferrand 1990: 240-241)

Hooft’s ‘sotte sotternij’ clearly mirrors in all aspects both the structure and contents of the relevant passages of Galen’s *De locis affectis*. Either directly, or through 16th century medical treatises such as Ferrand’s, Galen’s work provided 16th and 17th century poets with a comprehensive set

of symptoms – including fear and despondency, an impaired judgement, erroneous impressions and false imaginings (Ferrand 1990: 392–393). Descriptions of these symptoms, catalogued by the medical theorists of the age, could have supplied Hooft with the raw materials for creating what one can see, in the light of then-current standards, as a scientifically accurate image of a lover suffering from amorous melancholy.

Bibliography (primary text):

- Hoof 1994a/b P.C. Hoof, *Lyrische poëzie*, ed. P. Tuynman, Athenaeum – Polak & Van Genneep (Amsterdam: 1994), Vol. 1, p. 42 [no. 11]; Vol. 2, pp. 56, 156.



Wt Petrarcha. Gevolcht.

Se la mia vita da l'aspro tormento.

Indien mijn leven sich soo lange can verweren
 Tegen mijn wreet geluck en ongesiene cans,
 Dat jck verdoven sie de Son-gelijcke glans
 Vrouw, van v oogen schoon, door ouderdoods vermeren
 En v goudt-dradich haijr in silver-draet verkeren,
 En vwe lust vergaen van sanck, van spel, van dans,
 Van soete boerterij, van cruit, van Rosecrans,
 Van geel van groen van wit, en jncarnate cleren.
 Dan sal mijn Oude Min mij geven inde mont
 Vermaning vande tijt, die ghij niet recht besteden,
 En oft dan schoon geviel dat ghij noch voorestont
 V merkelijcke schult met woort, en schijnbaer reden,
 Soo sal nochtans een sucht diep wt vws hartsen gront,
 Leetwesens bode sijn, en jck ten deel te vreden.

Notes:

wreet gheluck – ‘bad luck’.

onghesiene kans – ‘Ill-fortune’. Both ‘wreet geluck’ and ‘onghesiene kans’ refer to unfavorable fate: ‘Van omstandigheden. Ongunstig, kwaad’ (WNT 2003: ‘ONGEZIEN’ 2)).

ouderdooms vermeeren – ‘advancing age’: ‘In niet exact meetbaren of te bepalen omvang —, in graad, kracht, intensiteit, frequentie e.d. toenemen; grooter, heviger, sterker worden’ (WNT 2003: ‘VERMEEREN’ I) 9))

incarnate – ‘incarnate [a shade of reddish pink]’: ‘Ontleend aan fra. *incarnat*: ital. *incarnato*. (Roode) vleeschkleur, of ook wel eene kleur tus-schen het kersrood en het rozerood’ (WNT 2003: ‘INKARNAAT’)

oft dan schoon gheviel... voore stondt – A paraphrase for this passage might be: ‘should you nevertheless persist (in your mistake)’; cf. ‘m. betr. t. laakbare (of als zoodanig beschouwde) feiten of handelingen: goedpraten, verdedigen’ (WNT 2003: ‘VOORSTAAN’ I) 6) b))

Variants:

The *Emblemata amatoria* text (p. 106) closely follows the manuscript, except for several minor changes of a typographic nature, such as: ‘Indien’ for ‘Jndien’, ‘langhe’ for ‘lange’, ‘kan’ for ‘can’, ‘Teghen’ for ‘Tegen’, ‘gheluck’ for ‘geluck’, etc.

‘Gevolcht’ was added later to the title of the poem in the manuscript (Hooft 1994b: 65).

Note under the manuscript text: ‘D W B / Diana.’

Commentary:

Although Hooft did not usually assign titles to his sonnets, he did so in the case of ‘Jndien mijn leven sich soo lange can verweren’, identifying it in the manuscript (though not in the 1611 edition) as ‘Wt Petrarcha. Gevolcht. Se la mia vita da l’aspro tormento’. Petrarch’s sonnet, which Hooft imitates here, was in fact very well known to the poets of the 16th and 17th century, giving rise not only to this but also to a number of even more successful paraphrases. Foremost among the latter is doubtless Pierre de Ronsard’s famous Sonnet XLIII from *Le second livre des sonnets pour Hélène*, ‘Quand vous serez bien vieille, au soir, à la chandelle’. Ronsard recasts Petrarch’s theme of love and the passage of time in the light of an Epicurean call loosely based on the Horatian ‘Carpe diem’, where the poet pleads with his mistress not to postpone her love until later but to allow him to enjoy it here and now.

Hooft’s ‘Indien mijn leven sich soo langhe kan verweeren’ opens similarly as Petrarch’s ‘Se la mia vita...’ with a meditation on old age. If the

speaker of the poem resists misfortune and ill luck, he will see the sun-like radiance of her eyes grow faint due to advancing age. The golden threads of her hair will turn to silver as she loses all pleasure in song, merriness, and dance, sweet pranks, herbs and rose-garlands and yellow, green, and white, and incarnate clothes. At this point the speaker's 'Aged Love' would let him say words of reproach, condemning the lady for the time that she had inappropriately spent. Were she to persist, however, in her grievous error of not loving, a sigh issuing from the depths of her heart would be a fitting messenger of despair, giving the speaker at least partial compensation for his misery.

Petrarch's poem clearly served as the model. On the level of meter, however, Hooft substituted alexandrines for the pentameter of the original. The contents were translated with some accuracy, and the syntactic layout is preserved for the first five verses of the octave, yet from verses 6 and 7 onwards Hooft increasingly departed from his model. Verse 8 ('Van geel, van groen, van wit, en incarnate kleeen') seems to echo a different poem by Petrarch, Song 29 from the *Canzoniere*: 'Verdi panni sanguigni oscuri o persi / non vesti donna unquanco' (Petrarch 1996: 46). The most powerful evidence, however, showing how substantially Hooft reworked the situation described by Petrarch, can be gathered by comparing the closing stanzas to the final part of 'Se la mia vita da l'aspro tormento':

(...) pur mi darà tanta baldanza Amore
 ch'i' vi scoprirò de' miei martiri
 qua' sono stati gli anni, e i giorni, et l'ore;
 et se 'l tempo è contrario ai be' desiri,
 non fia ch' almen non giunga al mio dolore
 alcun soccorso di tardi sospiri.

(Petrarch 1996: 12)

Where Petrarch tends to focus primarily on the lover's patient suffering and passive resignation, Hooft's poem turns from a confession of long-suppressed love into a rebuke for the time that the lady had 'wasted' through her disdain. Since Hooft's persona certainly does not in fact lack the *baldanza* needed to issue this warning, his poem takes on an entirely different tone, abandoning the abject humility which forms the dominant trait of Petrarch's lyrical persona. Hooft endows his speaker with a more masterful attitude – so much more so that his attempt to drive home an argument sounds nearly like legal sophistry. In a motif shared by both poems, it is suggested that the lady might react to love's message with sorrowful sighs ('tardi sospiri' / 'sucht diep uyt uws hartsen

grondt'). Yet while in 'Se la mia vita da l'aspro tormento' these sighs alleviate the lover's sorrow inspiring him to compassion and forgiveness, the speaker of the Dutch poem accepts them haughtily and perhaps not without *Schadenfreude* as confirmation of a belated (and entirely gratuitous) victory over the scornful lady.⁹ The much more categorical and argumentative conclusion to 'Indien mijn leven sich soo langhe kan verweeren' retains relatively little of the melancholy mildness of 'Se la mia vita da l'aspro tormento'. As Hooft's persona appears to be deliberately engaging here in a game of amorous blackmail, his words are quite alien to the poetic spirit of the *Canzoniere*.

Hooft's reference to time 'wasted' by the lady may be linked to a considerably more refined treatment of the themes of 'Se la mia vita da l'aspro tormento' in Pierre de Ronsard's 'Quand vous serez bien vieille, au soir, à la chandelle'. In that poem the speaker asks his mistress to imagine herself as a grey-haired woman spinning wool by the fireplace. Arguing that the loss of youth and beauty would convince her to regret her disdain, he persuasively ends his plea with a paraphrase of the Horatian theme of 'Carpe diem'. Urging her not to wait until later but to yield to his passion, and to pluck 'life's roses' while she can, he remarks:

(...) Vous serez au fouyer une vieille accroupie,
Regrettant mon amour et vostre fier desdain.
Vivez, si m'en croyez, n'attendez à demain:
Cueillez dès aujourd'huy les roses de la vie.

(Ronsard 2002: 55)

Ronsard's encouragement given to the damsel to comply with the speaker's wish stands in marked contrast to the rhetorical strategy pursued by Hooft, who disparages her refusal. Ronsard expresses in the form of an Epicurean appraisal of the pleasures of life what the speaker of the Dutch poem conveys by a negative rebuke – 'tijt, die ghij *niet* recht besteden'. In this sense the 'Carpe diem' of 'Quand vous serez bien vieille, au soir, à la chandelle', taking the form of an invitation to partake of life's delights, is a lively and persuasive equivalent to Hooft's moralizing (and slightly petulant) chastisement of the lady.

As the title of the poem in the manuscript makes clear, 'Indien mijn leven sich soo langhe kan verweeren' represents Hooft's imitation ('Gevolcht') of 'Se la mia vita da l'aspro tormento'. Not quite content with following the original, Hooft significantly altered some of the as-

⁹ An interpretation offered by Catharina Ypes (Ypes 1934: 111).

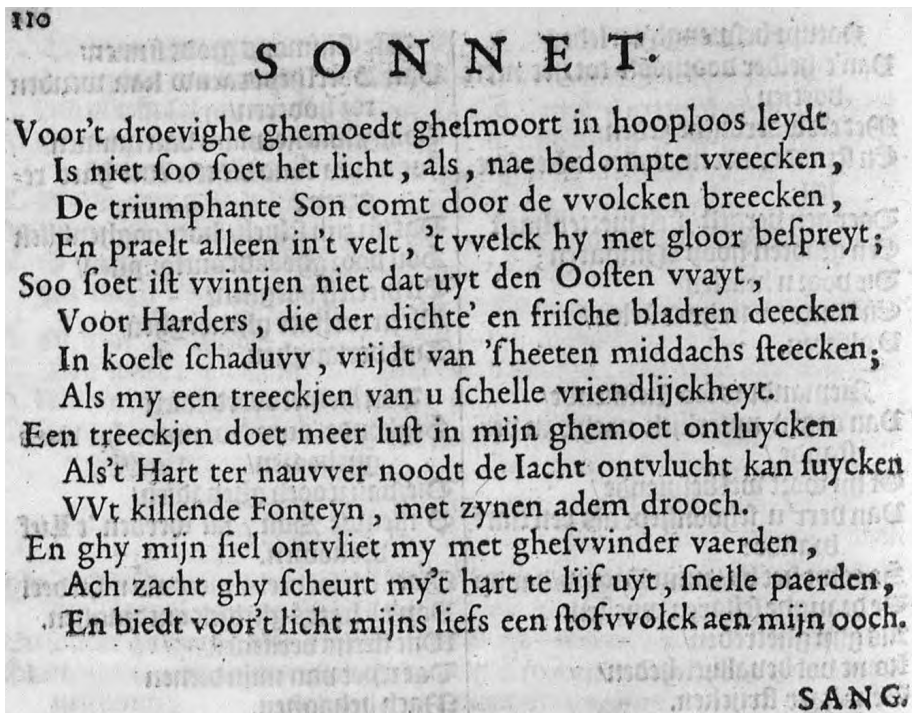
sumptions of the Petrarchan model of love expressed in that poem. The overall tendency to redesign the Petrarchan paradigm of love, although not necessarily through overt ‘imitation’, is present, characteristically, in most of Hooft’s poems containing elements derived from the *Canzoniere*. As Catharina Ypes concluded in her research on the Dutch Petrarchan tradition, the relation of Hooft’s explicit imitations to their originals was tenuous at best, while the overall number of poems belonging to this category, as compared to the output of French or English poets, was hardly impressive. Although Ypes did not distinguish between *translatio* and *imitatio* (treating this sonnet as an example of the former), her principal conclusion is most certainly correct: while Hooft’s reworking of the Petrarchan model cannot be viewed in isolation from the European, and most notably French, variations on these themes, it is not the central or most important trait of his work (Ypes 1934: 113).

Bibliography (primary text):

- Hooft 1994a/b P.C. Hooft, *Lyrische poëzie*, ed. P. Tuynman, Athenaeum – Polak & Van Gennep (Amsterdam: 1994), Vol. 1, p. 65 [no. 29]; Vol. 2, pp. 65, 161.

Bibliography (secondary text):

- Ypes 1934 Catharina Ypes, *Petrarca in de Nederlandse letterkunde. Academisch proefschrift ter verkrijging van de graad van Doctor in de Letteren en Wijsbegeerte aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam...*, Uitgeversbedrijf De Spieghel (Amsterdam: 1934)



Voor 't droevighe gemoedt gesmoort in hooploos leidt

Voor't droevighe ghemoeft ghesmoort in hooploos leydt,
 Js niet soo soet het licht; als, nae bedompte weken,
 De Triumphant Zon comt door de wolcken breecken,
 En praelt alleen in 't veldt 't welck hij met gloor bespreit;
 Soo soet ist wintjen niet dat wt den Oosten wait,
 Voor harders, die der dichte' en frissche bladren deken
 In coele schaduw vrijdt van 's heten Middachs steecken;
 Als mij een treeckjen van v schelle vriendlijckheit.
 Een treeckjen doet meer lust in mijn gemoedt ontluycken,
 Als 't hart ter nauwer noodt de jacht ontvluucht can suicken
 Wt killende fontein, met sijnen adem dróóch.
 En ghij, mijn siel, ontvliet mij met geswinder vaerden!
 Ach sacht! ghij scheurt mij 't hart te lijf wt snelle paerden,
 En biedt, voor 't licht mijns liefs, een stofwolck aen mijn óóch.

Notes:

bedompte weeken – ‘weeks of overcast skies’: ‘weken van bewolking’.

’t velt – ‘heavens’: ‘hemelveld’. The word ‘veldt’ might also, as W.A.P. Smit remarks, refer to a metaphorical battlefield where the Sun strides in triumph after overcoming the forces of darkness (Smit 1968: 71).

gloor – ‘glow, brightness, radiance’: ‘Met betrekking tot licht en lichtgevende voorwerpen. Schijn, schijnsel; ‘met betrekking tot hemellicht, het Westen, de kim enz.’ (WNT 2003: ‘GLOOR’ 1) b)).

treeckjen – ‘sip, mouthful’: ‘Teug, dronk’ (WNT 2003: ‘TREK’ I) 22) b)).

schelle – ‘fair, radiant’: ‘helder stralend’ (WNT 2003: ‘SCHEL’ IV) A) 3)).

killende Fonteyn – ‘refreshing fountain’: ‘Killend, van een drank: verkoe-lend’ (WNT 2003: ‘KILLEN’ I) II))

met gheswinder vaerden – ‘swiftly, at a rapid speed’: ‘met snelle vaart’ (Smit 1968: 72)

voor ’t licht mijns liefs – ‘in exchange for the radiance [of the addressee’s eyes]’: ‘in plaats van (het licht van mijn geliefde)’

Variants:

The *Emblemata amatoria* text (p. 110) follows the manuscript except for several changes of a typographic nature, such as: ‘ghemoedt’ for ‘gemoedt’, ‘ghesmoort’ for ‘gesmoort’, ‘leydt’ for ‘leidt’, ‘triumphante’ for ‘Triumphante’, ‘Son’ for ‘Zon’, etc. A slightly different punctuation is used in verse 13: ‘Ach zacht ghy scheurt my’t hart...’ replacing ‘Ach sacht! ghij scheurt mij ’t hart...’. Note under the manuscript text: ‘1608’ and ‘D I A’, as well as the dates ‘ $\frac{8}{1}$ Vrijdach.’ after the octave, and ‘ $\frac{8}{2}$ Saterd.’ under the sestet of the poem.

Commentary:

‘Voor’t droevighe ghemoedt ghesmoort in hooploos leydt’ opens with two parallel images of delicate sensual joy. The first image is that of light bringing solace to a saddened heart engulfed by hopeless suffering. After weeks of cloudy weather a ‘Triumphant Sun’ emerges from the clouds and struts in full glory, spreading its radiance across the skies. The second scene is a pastoral one. An eastern breeze brings relief to shepherds seeking refuge from the scorching heat of the noonday sun in the shade provided by a thick canopy of leaves. Yet both of these images are discounted as trifling and insignificant, revealing the main argument bracketing the octave: not even such powerful emotions of joy and relief could ever match the speaker’s own happiness when receiving a seemingly unimportant ‘sip’ of the girl’s ‘radiant friendship’ (vs. 1-8).

These sensual images are succeeded by a more symbolic motif. Using a similar rhetorical procedure, the speaker now describes his enjoyment of a 'sip' of his lady's friendship as far exceeding what a stag feels when having narrowly evaded its pursuers it discovers a refreshingly cool fountain where it can quench its thirst. Unlike the vaguely classical arcadian images of the preceding lines, the motif of the stag is a Biblical one, coming from Psalm 42:2 (Smit 1968: 72). Here, however, it might also be called Petrarchan, as a related topos can be found in Song 270 from the *Canzoniere*:

E' non si vide mai cervo né damma
con tal desio cercar fonte né fiume
qual io il dolce costume
onde ò già molto amaro;

(Petrarch 1996: 386)

Crucially, it is a similar discursive framework in both poems: the rhetorical resemblance lies in the way a conventional superlative is rephrased in the negative as a means of affirming and emphasizing the speaker's own passion or delight (vs. 9-11).

An unexpected change takes place at the end of the poem. Here, the speaker turns to the addressee at the very same moment as she disappears from view, presumably driving away in a carriage. In the next lines the 'fast horses' pulling the vehicle are ruefully called by the speaker to account for their actions. Ripping out his heart as they depart, they take along the 'radiance of [his] beloved', whereas he is left staring disconsolately at a cloud of dust (vs. 12-14).

The poem operates with a series of contrasts between conventional and non-specific images called by W.A.P. Smit 'non-essentiële gewaardwording' (Smit 1968: 72), and images predicated on personal values assigned to them by the speaker. The former, predominantly relying on conventional associations, are revealed as inconsequential and displaced by the latter, which though seemingly trivial, rank uppermost in the speaker's mind. Smit's dichotomous division can be neatly expanded into the following scheme:

<u>conventional (non-specific, seemingly significant)</u>		<u>personal (specific, significant)</u>
Voor 't droevighe ghemoedt	licht }	{ voor mij treeckjen
Voor Harders	wintjen }	
Voor 't Hart	killende Fonteyn	
		{ ...is niet soo soet als... }
		{ voor mijn ghemoet treeckjen

Within this dialectic of *actually* and *only seemingly* significant signs, images of generalized human experience (the sun, a breeze, water), are superseded by an intensely personal token of friendship. In other words, the conventional is supplanted by the subjective: 'it is not what *they* (the world, people in general) would think but how *I* feel about it'.

Another of the structural patterns that Hooft employs here is the distribution of the imagery of light, which reveals a bracket-like chiasmus spanning the length of the poem:

droevighe ghemoedt	{emotional loss → darkness}	bedompte weecken
de triumphante Son	{light → concealed deficiency}	is niet soo soet het licht
't licht mijns liefs	{light → concealed deficiency}	ontvliet my met gheswinder vaerden
ghy scheurt my't hart	{emotional loss → darkness}	stofwolck aen mijn ooch
te lijf uyt		

Images of vapors and clouds of dust, symbolically representing restricted vision and additionally coupled with references to emotional loss, act as an outer perimeter, enclosing an inner core of light. This central area of light, however, consistently reveals its deficiency. The victorious sun ('de triumphante Son') is nothing compared to a 'treeckjen' of personal happiness and the 'light of [the speaker's] love' departs leaving him in the dark. This bracket-like structure of Hooft's imagery of light endows the sonnet with a cyclic structure of hoped-for breakthroughs followed by a return to an original dejected state.

The elements described by W.A.P. Smit as 'superficial and non-essential [forms of] expression' ('een uiterlijke en non-essentieële gewaarwording'), such as the triumphant sun, are paradoxically an essential structural feature of the entire poem. W.A.P. Smit even pointed out a lack of stylistic unity in Hooft's poem between the octave and sestet, attributing this structural failing to each of these parts having been written on two consecutive days (Smit 1968: 72). Yet where the sonnet does seem inconsistent in its imagery, insofar as the quasi-classical images of the octave belong to a different category from the Biblical and Petrarchan symbol of the stag, it regains that cohesion through its structure, and the resultant series of interpolated patterns of light and darkness ultimately proves more complex than one might initially expect.

Bibliography (primary text):

- | | |
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| Hooft 1994a/b | P.C. Hooft, <i>Lyrische poëzie</i> , ed. P. Tuynman, Athenaeum – Polak & Van Gennep (Amsterdam: 1994), Vol. 1, p. 143 [no. 85]; Vol. 2, pp. 84, 184-185. |
|---------------|--|

Bibliography (secondary text):

- Smit 1968 W.A.P. Smit, *Hooft en DIA*, Atheneum, Polak en Van Gennep (Amsterdam: 1968).

Des die van't overwelven // des Werelts Bouwheer is /
Gheef dat ick mis my selven // eer ick u liefde mis.

113

S O N N E T.

VVaert dat Iuppijn ten hoof my in zijn hemel bade,
En op mijn koomste, met zijn trotse ghesellin,
Opreef' uyt zynen throon, om my'r te setten in,
En voor my fijn van goudt een tafel overlade
Met Goddelijcke spijs, en VVynen vol ghenade,
Daer sang noch spel ontbrack, en soeten reuck veel min;
En hy vveeck uyt de sael met 't vveeldich hofghesin,
En liet my daer alleen, my dunckt ick't al versmade.
Maer vvaer Iuppijn te vreen, dat hy u in mijn stee
Mijn Vrouvv in zynen stoel ter tafel sitten dee,
En jonde dat ick stondt en sach u lust ghenieten;
VVel vvaerder vvaer miin vreucht dan, als gheneucht en rust;
Soo lief vvaer my u lief, soo lust my anders lust;
En eensaem lusten ziin my meer nauvv als verdrieten.

P

SANG.

Waer 't dat Juppijn ten hoof mij in sijn Hemel baede

Waert dat Iuppijn ten hoof my in zijn hemel bade,
En op mijn coomste, met sijn trotse gesellin
Oprees' wt sijnen throon, om mij 'r te setten in,
En voor mij fijn van goudt een taefel overlaede
Met goddelijcke spijs, en wijnen vol genaede,
Daer sang noch spel ontbrack, en soeten reuck veel min;
En hij weeck wt de sael met 't weeldich hofgesin,
En liet mij daer alleen: mij dunckt jck 't al versmaede.
Maer waer Juppijn te vreên, dat hij v in mijn stee,
Mijn vrouw, in sijnen stoel ter taefel sitten dee,
En jonde dat jck stond en sach v lust genieten,
Wel waerder waer mijn vreuchdt dan als geneucht en rust;
Soo lief waer mij vw lief, soo lust mij anders lust,
En eensaem lusten sijn mij meer nauw als verdrieten.

Notes:

overlade – ‘well-stocked, abundantly supplied [with food]’: ‘rijkelijk, overvloedig beladen [...] soms nog met het bijdenkbeeld aan overdaad’ (WNT 2003: ‘OVERLADEN’ I) 3)).

vol genade – ‘graciously’: ‘hoffelijk’; refers to the invitation given by Jupiter.

en soeten reuck veel min – ‘incense was not absent either’: ‘nog minder, laat staan’ (WNT 2003: ‘VEELMIN’).

jonde – ‘granted, consented’: ‘Gunnen – (soms ook junnen), een jongere vorm nevens gonnen, jonnen –, bedr. en onz. , thans zwak vervoegd ww.: *gunde, gonde, jonde; gegund, gegond* enz.’ (WNT 2003: ‘GUNNEN’).

waerder – ‘of more value’: ‘meer waard’.

soo lief waer my u lief – the word ‘lief’ occurs in two different meanings, in ‘uw lief’ it is used nominally as ‘something pleasant’: ‘Iets aangenaams, een handelwijze, omstandigheid enz. die iemand genoeg doet’ (WNT ‘LIEF’ I) I) 1)).

nauw – ‘oppressive’; cf. ‘Geen ruimte latende, beklemmend, beangstigend, hachelijk’ (WNT 2003: ‘NAUW’ 9) b))

Variants:

The *Emblemata amatoria* text (p. 113) follows the manuscript except for several minor changes of a typographic nature, such as: ‘Waert dat Iuppijn’ for ‘Waer ‘t dat Juppijn’, ‘my’ for ‘mij’, ‘zijn’ for ‘sijn’, ‘koomste’ for ‘coomste’, ‘ghesellin’ for ‘gesellin’, etc.

Notes under the manuscript text: ‘20 Januario / Woonsdach. 1610.’ and ‘Mithra Granida.’

Commentary:

An intricate appeal designed to convince the addressee of the magnitude of her lover’s passion and devotion, the sonnet ‘Waert dat Iuppijn ten hoof my in zijn hemel bade’ is structured around two sets of hypothetical propositions. The first one explores the theme of loneliness and dissatisfaction in the midst of plenty, while the second proposes a remedy to the dilemma posed by the opening situation.

Were Jupiter to invite the speaker to attend his heavenly court, the god and his ‘proud consort’ Juno would rise from their throne and let him take their place. A well-stocked table would be set before him – wrought in gold and laden with ‘divine provender’ and ‘goodly wines’. Yet were his hosts to unexpectedly leave the banqueting hall, he would most certainly renounce all the culinary wonders placed at his disposal.

In the next verses of the poem the speaker advances an alternative proposition to the one in the octave, offering his place of honour to his beloved. Surrendering his place and waiting on the damsel as she enjoyed the feast would give the speaker much greater satisfaction than any pleasure he might otherwise have derived from the banquet, for such luxuries are worthwhile only if they bring the other person equal joy and happiness.

Verses 13 and 14 provide a playful intellectual paraphrase. Giving up his place to the lady, the speaker can now prove how much he ‘delights in her delight’ and ‘enjoys the enjoyment of others’. Combining this *epanalepsis* with a *polyptoton* – where ‘lief’ and ‘lust’ appear both in two different grammatical functions – the *adagium*-like phrases of verse 13 are then coupled with a restatement of the central opposition of the poem: pleasure enjoyed in solitude causes incomparably greater pain than any sorrow or suffering.

The motif of a feast at the heavenly court of Jove, which forms the setting for Hooft’s sonnet, is partly a paraphrase of a poem from the *Basia* (1541) of the Dutch Neolatinist Janus Secundus:

BASIVM IIII.

Non dat basia, dat Neaera nectar,
 Dat rores animae suaueolenteis,
 Dat nardumque, thymumque, cynamumque,
 Et mel, quale iugis legunt Hymeti,
 Aut in Cecropijs apes rosetis,
 Atque hinc uirgineis et inde ceris
 Septum, uimineo tegunt quasillo.
 Quae si multa mihi uoranda dentur,
 Immortalis in ijs repente fiam,
 Magnorumque epulis fruar Deorum.
 Sed tu munere parce, parce tali,
 Aut mecum dea fac Neaera fias:
 Non mensas sine te uolo deorum:
 Non si me rutilis praeesse regnis,
 Excluso Ioue, dij deaeque cogant.

(Heesakkers 1994: 16)

Secundus’s poem begins with the speaker’s recollection of the kisses that his beloved, Neaera, passionately imprinted on his lips. Resembling nectar, these kisses very nearly make him a god – yet his beloved should not dispense too many of them. Otherwise, she should also become a god-

dess since he would prefer not to sit alone with Jupiter at the table (Heesakkers 1994: 16).

Secundus's *Basium* IIII inspired a number of other poets to produce their own versions in vernacular languages. One of these was Remy Belleau, a French poet whose volume *Bergerie* (1565) contains a cycle of thirteen *Baisers* – sonnets loosely based on the *Basia* of Secundus (Heesakkers 1994: 17). Belleau's 'Baiser' VII – with its image of the speaker rising up from the table, refusing to partake of the dainty delicacies laid out before him, unless his beloved were to be invited as well – emphasizes a different point from Secundus's original poem:

Quant je baise tes yeux je sens de toutes pars
 La fleur de l'oranger, la fleur de l'aube-spine,
 Le thin, le poulliot, et la rose aiglentine,
 La framboise, la fraize, et les fleurons de Mars.
 Mais quant en me baisant, douce tu me depars
 Les soupirs dérobez de ta blanche poitrine,
 Le mouvoir tremblotant de ta levre poupine,
 Et l'air entre-couppé de petits mots mignars:
 Je quitte dédaigneux les tables plus friandes
 De la bouche des dieux, je quitte leurs viandes,
 Le nectar, l'ambrosie, et la manne, et le miel:
 Je les quitte vrayment, et la troupe immortelle
 Ores me commandast de manger avec elle,
 Car sans toy je ne veux commander dans le ciel.

(Heesakkers 1994: 17)

Belleau's scene of feasting, evoking in its final part tables stocked with 'viandes, / Le nectar, l'ambrosie, et la manne, et le miel', has much in common with Hooft's, not just as regards the imagery bringing to mind verses 4-5 of the Dutch text (e.g. 'een tafel overlade / Met Goddelijke spijs, en Wynen vol ghenade'), a resemblance going back to Secundus, but more importantly the speaker's abandonment of solitary luxuries.

Remy Belleau's adaptation of the *Basia* is believed to have inspired the Leiden humanist and scholar Janus Dousa to try his hand at translating Secundus's poems into the vernacular (Heesakkers 1994: 18). Dousa's translation of *Basium* IIII, cast in the form of a sonnet, is a much more faithful rendering of the original Latin, although in several places its author took liberties with Secundus's text:

Ten zijn geen kuskens, tian, welck mij Neaera biedt;
 T'is zuijker, t'is kaneel, t' zijn Indische muskaeten:
 Tis thijm, t'is Hemelbroot, t'zijn Grieckze honichraeten,

Zulck alsmen op d'Hymet' of Hybla vloeijen ziet.
 Woudt ghij mij met zulck aes dick voeden, eer lang ijert
 Ontsterffelijck ick werd, oic onder sHemels Staeten
 Vermeeren dat tgetal: alwaer de gulde vaeten
 Vrous Hebes volle handt mit Nectar overghiet.
 Maer zulcke ghaven doch een weijnich staeken wilt,
 En met dit zoet gekus niet wezen al te mildt:
 Of van gelijcker macht met mij zyn wilt deelachtich,
 En werden een Goddin. der Goden disch ick haet,
 Als ick u derven moet; al wilde mij zijn staet
 Zelfs overdoen Iuppijn met hant, en mont opdrachtich.¹⁰

(Secundus 1930: 6)

The notion of renouncing one's pleasure for the person one loves was unmistakably inspired by the Christian concept of *caritas* and the ideal of redemption through suffering. This belief in the inherent nobility of being content with deprivation for the sake of a higher cause appears, for example, in several of Petrarch's sonnets from the *Canzoniere*. In Sonnet 174 the speaker declares it better to renounce earthly pleasures for the lady's sake than to partake of what life might hold in store for him:

Ma tu prendi a diletto i dolor miei;
 ella non già, perché non son più duri,
 e'l colpo è di saetta et non di spiedo.
 Pur mi consola che languir per lei
 meglio è che gioir d'altra, et tu mel giuri
 per l'orato tuo strale, et io tel credo.

(Petrarch 1996: 264)

Likewise, Petrarch's Sonnet 296 ends with the speaker declaring his readiness to accept the love that he feels for Laura by renouncing private happiness, and choosing to die contented though in pain:

Ché non fu d'allegrezza a'suoi di mai,
 di libertà, di vita, alma sì vaga
 che non cangiasse 'l suo natural modo,
 togliendo anzi per lei sempre trar guai
 che cantar per qualunque, et di tal piaga
 morir contento, et vivere in tal nodo.

(Petrarch 1996: 416)

¹⁰ For a translation of this poem, see p. 51.

This Petrarchan motif of amorous renunciation, where pleasure and pain only become meaningful in relation to the person one loves, appears to have contributed to Hooft's 'Waert dat Iuppijn ten hoof my in zijn hemel bade'. It also shaped a related set of insights conveyed in some of Hooft's other poems. The sonnet 'Jck morden op de min en op zijn heerschen smaelde' (not included in the *Emblemata amatoria*) expresses the speaker's reconciliation with love (here in the guise of an allegorical 'Min') by resorting to a similarly-phrased rationale: suffering in love is preferable to pleasure with another:

Den trouwen minnaer (seijd hij) sonder liefs genót
 En d' ontrouw die geniet, sijn eeven rijck van lôt,
 Dees slapt de zond sijn lust, hem deucht boet sijn verdrieten.
 Oock wildij slechter lief? ick loove' v nót terstont;
 Ach dreijcht niet Min jck heb gelastert sonder grondt,
 Hier lijde' jck liever dan jck elders wil genieten.

(Hooft 1994a: 111)

[The faithful lover (he said) without the pleasure of love / And the unfaithful one who enjoys, are equally rich; / The one finds that sin tempers his pleasure, the other pays the price of virtue in sorrow. / Or do you want a worse love? I praise your desire at once; / Ah, don't threaten me, Min, I've indicted you without reason, / I'd rather suffer here than have pleasure elsewhere]

Although the general import is indisputably related, the notions conveyed in Hooft's Iuppijn sonnet offer a different structure of renunciation from the one in 'Jck morden op de min en op zijn heerschen smaelde'. Emphasized here is not just a stark choice between solitary pleasures ('eensaem lusten') and sorrows ('verdrieten') which echoes the dichotomy of 'lijden' and 'genieten'. First and foremost, it is a passion which causes the lover to renounce his own luxuries for the satisfaction of witnessing the lady's joy and pleasure. Love is represented in 'Waert dat Iuppijn ten hoof my in zijn hemel bade' as a harmonious conjunction of giving and receiving with the aim of creating a space of pleasure and enjoyment, albeit in the hypothetical form of a conditional sentence. Crucially, this scene involves two persons, as opposed to the Petrarchan model, where the act of giving up pleasure for the pain and privilege of loving occurs essentially only within the psyche of a single participant, the speaker of the poem.

'Waert dat Iuppijn ten hoof my in zijn hemel bade' was praised by Dutch critics for its craftsmanship. Wim Vermeer called the final phrases of the poem a miniature masterpiece of corresponding sounds that prove

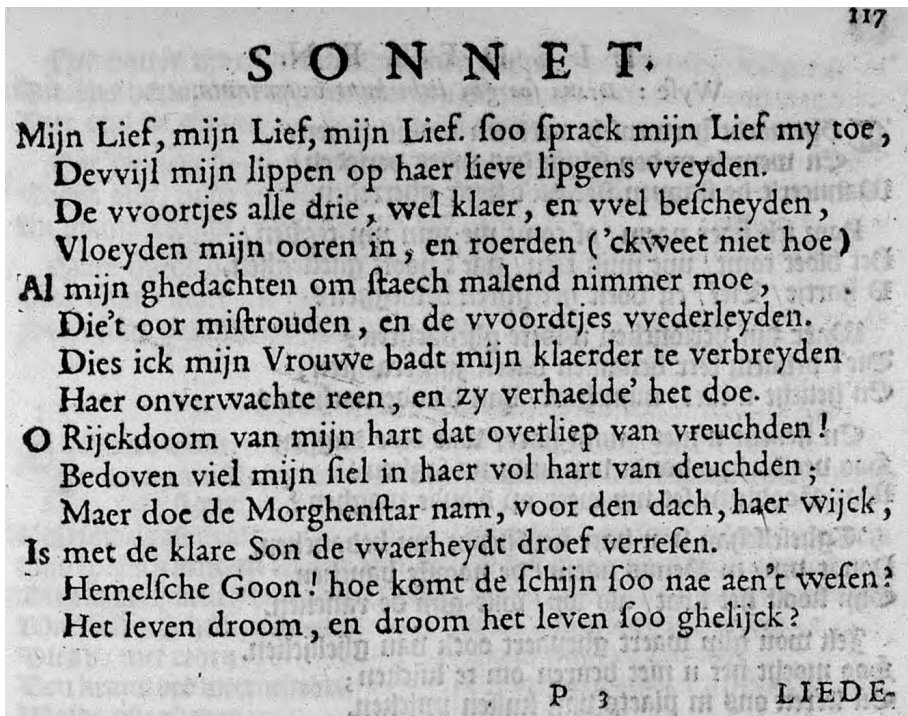
the poet's subtle command of assonance and repetition (Vermeer 1981: 49). The structural features of the final part of the sonnet include an *epanalepsis* in verse 13, an inner rhyme with the word 'vreucht' which echoing 'Geneucht' in verse 12, and finally repetitions, with 'soo' anaphorically opening two phrases in vs. 13. These poetic devices, repetitions and parallels are a key rhetorical constituent of the dialectic linking the solitary pleasures described in the octave and the true joy of renouncing enjoyment for the sake of the person that one loves. All these stylistic features demonstrate Hooft's increasingly conscious artistry. This sonnet, the first from the collection of verse which he wrote for his future wife Christina van Erp, ushers in what would prove to be one of the most prolific periods in his career as a lyric poet.

Bibliography (primary text):

- Hooft 1994a/b P.C. Hooft, *Lyrische poëzie*, ed. P. Tuynman, Athenaeum – Polak & Van Gennep (Amsterdam: 1994), Vol. 1, p. 172 [no. 102]; Vol. 2, p. 87.

Bibliography (secondary text):

- Vermeer 1981 Wim Vermeer, 'Dichttechnische aspecten van de sonnetten uit 1610' in: *Studies over Hooft. Uyt Liefde Geschreven*, ed. P.E.L. Verkuyt et al., Wolters Noordhoff (Groningen: 1981); pp. 41-56.



Mijn lief, mijn lief, mijn lief; soo sprack mijn lief mij toe

Mijn lief, mijn lief, mijn lief; soo sprack mijn lief mij toe,
 Dewijl mijn lippen op haer lieve lipjes weiden.
 De woordtjes alle drie wel claer en wel bescheiden
 Vloeiden mijn ooren in, en roerden ('ck weet niet hoe)
Al mijn gedachten om staech maelend nemmer moe;
 Die 't oor mistrouwden en de woordtjes wederleiden.
 Dies jck mijn vrouwe bad mij claerder te verbreiden
 Haer onverwachte reên; en sij verhaelde' het doe.
O rijckdoom van mijn hart dat over liep van vreuchden!
 Bedoven viel mijn Siel in haer vol hart van deuchden;
 Maer doe de Morgenstar nam voor den dach haer wijck,
Js, met de claere Son, de waerheit droef verresen.
 Hemelsche Goôn, hoe comt de Schijn soo naer aen 't Wesen,
 Het leven droom, en droom het leven soo gelijck?

Notes:

dewijl – ‘while’: ‘terwijl’ (*Parnas* 1997: 27)

wel bescheyden – ‘distinct, clearly audible’: ‘duidelijk hoorbaar’ (*Parnas* 1997: 27)

staech malend – ‘restlessly stirring, churning’ (refers to the effect that the words spoken by the girl have upon the speaker’s thoughts)

wederleyden – ‘countered, contradicted’: ‘Zonder dat er uitdrukkelijk sprake is van argumenten en bewijzen: de waarheid, de juistheid, ‘t bestaan van (iets) ontkennen, tegenspreken; loochenen’ (WNT 2003: ‘WEDERLEGGEN’ I) 2)). The meaning of the phrase ‘Die’t oor mistrouden, en de woordtjes wederleyden’ has been traditionally one of the more contentious points in the poem. Lode Roose, for instance, identified ‘mistrouwden’ and ‘wederleiden’ as singular forms with ‘oor’ as the subject of the sentence (Roose 1971: 31). Taking Roose’s interpretation, this passage should be taken to mean that the ‘ear’ (the speaker’s hearing and understanding) ‘mistrusted’ and ‘contradicted’ his thoughts. The editors of *Hollandsche Parnas: Nederlandse gedichten uit de zeventiende eeuw* opted for a different interpretation, defining ‘wederleiden’ as the third person plural form ‘tegenspraken’ (‘they contradicted’) (*Parnas* 1991: 27). The passage from Hooft’s sonnet might be therefore paraphrased as ‘[thoughts] that the ear mistrusted and [that] contradicted [the girl’s] words’. The *Parnas* solution resembles the one proposed by Oscar Dambre: ‘Zijn gedachten [dwz. die van de ik] mistrouwden zijn oor, hij kan m.a.w. zijn oren niet geloven en daarom probeert hij die woordjes naar haar terug te spelen, in de stille hoop dat zij ze op een niet mis te verstane manier zal herhalen’ (Dambre 1971: 65)). It must be noted, however, that Dambre diverges from other critics when he translates ‘wederleiden’ as ‘naar haar terugspeelden’ (‘returned the question [to her]’) (Dambre 1971: 66).

Dies – ‘for that reason’: ‘daarom’ (*Parnas* 1997: 27)

te verbreyden – ‘explain, expand on what she had said’: ‘uit te leggen’ (*Parnas* 1997: 27)

verhaelde – ‘repeated’: ‘herhaalde’

Bedoven – ‘submerged’: ‘helemaal opgenomen’ (*Parnas* 1991: 27). Other meanings may include ‘stunned, intoxicated’. Dambre paraphrases this passage as follows: ‘Ondergedompeld in de vreugde en hierdoor enigszins verdoofd en bedwelmd, viel de ziel van de minnaar in het hart van de geliefde, dat vol was van deugden’ (Dambre 1971: 73).

vol hart van – ‘heart full of...’: ‘hart vol van’ (Oversteegen 1966: 254).

nam ... haer wijck – ‘made way for daytime’: ‘plaats maakte voor de dag’ (*Parnas* 1991: 27).

hoe komt de schijn soo nae aen't wesen – 'why does illusion so closely resemble reality': '[waarom komt de schijn] zo dicht bij [de werkelijkheid]'.

Variants:

The *Emblemata amatoria* text (p. 117) follows the manuscript except for several typographic changes such as: 'mijn Lief' for 'mijn lief', 'my' for 'mij', 'lipgens' for 'lipjes', 'weyden' for 'weiden', 'woortjes' for 'woordtjes', etc. Hooft replaced the phrase 'woordtjes alle drie' in the 1636 edition of his poems, *Gedichten. Verzaemelt en uytgegeven door Iacob vander Burgh*, by the accurate 'woordtjes alle zes' (Dambre 1971: 68); (Tuyman 1994b: 87).

Commentary:

The very first words of 'Mijn Lief, mijn Lief, mijn Lief. soo sprack mijn Lief my toe' take the reader into a dialogue between lovers. The triple phrase 'my love, my love, my love' is revealed to represent what the lady had just said to the speaker while his 'enamoured lips grazed tenderly on hers' (Van Harmsel 1981: 85). On reaching the speaker's ears, the girl's 'three little words' vigorously and ceaselessly agitated his thoughts. From this point one thing quickly followed another. The intellect, mistrusting the ear, started questioning the sense of these words. Faced by doubt the speaker then asked the girl to repeat what she had said but clearer. She complied with his request, saying once again that 'unexpected phrase'. On hearing these words the speaker's heart burst out with feelings of unbounded joy while his soul, intoxicated by happiness, took a leap into her virtuous heart.

Then something unexpected happened. When the Morning Star (the planet Venus symbolizing erotic love) withdrew at daybreak, the speaker saw the 'bright Sun'. When he did, he knew at once the 'sad truth' that he had been dreaming. The speaker's exasperated voice conveys a sense of frustration and disappointment at the sudden exchange of this reality for another, much less pleasing one. Why is it, the speaker exclaims rhetorically, that illusion ('schijn') so closely resembles actual being ('wesen')? Why does a dream seem so much like life, and why is life then so much like a dream?

Probably no other poem by Hooft has received as much attention from scholars and commentators as 'Mijn Lief, mijn Lief, mijn Lief. soo sprack mijn Lief my toe'. Its attractive elaboration of the dream-motif has always made it an indispensable anthology piece. In the 1960s, a decade that saw the publication of new interpretative studies on Hooft's

sonnets, 'Mijn Lief, mijn Lief, mijn Lief. soo sprack mijn Lief my toe' became a testing-ground for analytical methods developed outside the Netherlands, such as New Criticism. The first New Critical reading of this poem was carried out by J.J. Oversteegen in the literary magazine *Merlyn* (Oversteegen 1966a: 259-275). Bringing 17th century poetry to the forefront of a vigorous critical debate on modern literature, Oversteegen's interpretation would prove as controversial as it was influential. Posing a challenge to the more conservative school of philological criticism, Oversteegen's findings were questioned by the critic F.L. Zwaan (Zwaan 1966: 489-493). The polemic ended with Oversteegen's reply to Zwaan, published in the same issue of *Merlyn* (Oversteegen 1966b: 494-501); yet only several years later Hooft's poem was investigated once more by other scholars: F. Dambre (Dambre 1971: 63-83) and L. Roose (Roose 1971a: 26-29). In the 1980s 'Mijn Lief, mijn Lief, mijn Lief. soo sprack mijn Lief my toe' was re-examined from a structural and biographical perspective by Wim Vermeer (Vermeer 1981: 51-52) and Leen Strenghtolt (Strenghtolt 1981a: 3-14). More recently, the sonnet was the subject of a cognitive-linguistic analysis by Loes Nas (Nas 1992: 89-95).

Although scholars and editors have been overwhelmingly committed to critical research on this sonnet, their concerns were inadequate considering some aspects of Hooft's text. Quite surprisingly, what seems not to have been explored in detail is the relation of this sonnet to the erotic dream vision lyric in European poetry. Lode Roose, who studied 'Mijn Lief, mijn Lief, mijn Lief. soo sprack mijn Lief my toe' from this angle, assumed that Hooft's text might have had a source in an Italian poem (Roose 1971a: 26-29). He did not, however, pursue this line any further despite having identified a passage which he considered related to Hooft's poem. These lines came from an undated sonnet by Maria Tesselschade Roemers Visscher (1594-1649), an accomplished young lady who belonged to Hooft's circle of friends:

t'Amo mia vita

Myn Lief ik min uw. Dus mijn lieve leve seyde,
 Mit dat mijn lippen van haer lieve lippe scheyde.
 Geen meerder soetigheyd ter voren inne quam:
 Dan als sy my dat gaf, het geen ick haer ontnam.
 Onthout die toontjes ey! ick bid uw Cupidootje
 Gy kleyne Sielen-vooght, gy machtigh wonder Goodtje!
 En steltse in mijn borst op sulken even maet,
 Dat daer op pols, en mild, hert, longh, en lever slaet.
 Gebied, hier door, mijn Siel aen 't Lichaem 't sijn te geven,
 En stadigh dat te voen met sulck een lieve leven;

En seggen dan: mijn lief ik min uw, liefste mijn:
Gy sult altoos, ô lief, mijn lieve leven sijn!

(Visscher 1994: 112)

Seeing that the poems by Hooft and Maria Tesselschade Roemers Visser somewhat resembled an amorous dream-vision sonnet written by one of their friends, the Amsterdam poet Gerbrandt Adriaanszoon Bredero (1585-1618) (cf. below), Lode Roose suggested that all three poems might have been written at the same social event, or as part of an informal poetic contest (Roose 1971a: 26). As Maria Tesselschade Roemers Visscher was about sixteen years old when 'Mijn Lief, mijn Lief, mijn Lief. soo sprack mijn Lief my toe' was written, such a hypothesis is plausible, though unlikely. The similar phrasing of her sonnet may be laid down to coincidence, or simply to the fact that she belonged to the same cultural networks in Amsterdam as did Hooft.

The other critic who decided to adopt a thematic approach to Hooft's sonnet was Leen Strenght, who emphasized what he saw as the uniqueness of Hooft's erotic dream-vision in relation to other European manifestations of this genre. Strenght recognized that the main differences between Hooft's poem and comparable French examples were primarily a result of the rhetorical structure of the Dutch text (Strenght 1981a: 13-14). Where French dream-poems opened with an invocation to 'Songe' or to Morpheus, explicitly alerting the reader to the convention of the genre, Hooft refrained from disclosing the dream-to-reality *debâcle* until the end of the octave, creating an effect of surprise that corresponds to the sonnet's *volta*. Devoid of the conventional markers that were such a prominent feature of French equivalents, Hooft's poem was in a class of its own: original and unique. Wim Vermeer implicitly endorsed Strenght's assessment by praising on a similar note the 'originality' of Hooft's rendition of the dream motif (Vermeer 1981: 51). Yet similarly to others, these critics also voiced general perceptions instead of establishing the uniqueness of the text explicitly in comparison to other dream-vision poems.

The question whether (and if so, then to what degree) 'Mijn Lief, mijn Lief, mijn Lief. soo sprack mijn Lief my toe' embodies the most characteristic features of the European erotic dream-lyric can be best answered by examining it as a unique textual entity. At the same time, one must keep in mind that on an abstract level its themes interact with a complex European tradition which was already well established by the time that the young men and women of Hooft's circle started writing poetry.

One of the best places to explore this lineage is France, which by the mid-16th century witnessed a veritable explosion of verse composed around this motif, a classical one going back to Ovid's *Elegy XIII 'Ad Auroram, de non properet'*. Ovid's poem, actually an *alba* or dawn song, already contains in its image of the lovers' parting at the first light of day the essential ingredient for the experience of later dreamers, which were narrated by Hooft and other Renaissance poets. It was Ovid who created this theme around its unique sense of fissure between the worlds of night and day, where the former is ruled by a fragile supratemporal love, while the latter, time-bound, tears asunder the intimate harmonies of passion.

Ovid's classical scene of lovers parting at dawn, along with variants by various other poets of antiquity and their Neo-Latin followers, allowed Ronsard and a number of other French poets of the mid-16th century to incorporate the motif of the love dream into classically-oriented poetry written in the vernacular. At the point where these traditions came together, French poets adapted the overall framework of the erotic dream vision to accommodate the influence of Petrarch and his followers. Yet as we speak of the Renaissance genesis of this theme we should not forget the significance of other classical sources such as the verse of Anacreon, the *Greek Anthology*, and the vernacular tradition coexisting with the Neo-latin one, where erotic dreams appeared in sources as varied as the poetry of the troubadours and the *Roman de la Rose* (Mathieu 1976: 148).

One of the Neo-Latin works exerting considerable influence on Ronsard's amorous dream-vision poetry was *Elegiae* 1.10 ('Somnium') by the brilliant Dutch humanist Janus (Johannes) Secundus (1511-1536). By arguing that the dream's power to deceive stands in direct proportion to the intensity of pleasure experienced by the speaker, Secundus' poem echoed the stance taken by the followers of Sannazar and Bembo, the Petrarchists who condemned its illusions even while appreciating the vicarious consolation it provided to the unhappy lover (Mathieu 1976: 148). Unlike the latter, though, Secundus radically embraced the sensuous psychological reality of the dream, refusing to condemn it as inferior to waking life and even suggesting that dreams and reality might be interchangeable, or in fact indistinguishable from one another.

While Secundus, studied and imitated by Ronsard, must be seen as contributing significantly to the development of the motif of the love-dream in France and elsewhere on the European continent, his *Elegiae* 1.10 is worth noting for yet another reason. Pursuing the same strategy as Hooft does in this sonnet, Secundus creates a lyrical voice whose words all but obliterate the distinction between the inner world of the

subconscious and the waking world of reality. The dream is represented by both poets as a reality providing a tangible (albeit only subjectively perceived) experience of amatory pleasures. Even more telling is that Secundus, using a method essentially similar to Hooft's, does not explicitly disclose the dream machinery as such. Before waking, the dreamer passes into a state of nebulous uncertainty, anticipating Hooft's mixed perceptions of the dream-reality interface expressed in 'hoe komt de schijn soo nae aen't wesen? / Het leven droom, en droom het leven soo ghelijck?'. Confused as to the reliability of sensory perception and acutely aware of the perplexing verisimilitude of a dream evoked by the intense workings of the subconscious, the speaker of Secundus' elegy exclaims:

Julia, te teneo, mea Lux, Lux mea, te teneo,
 Julia, te teneo: superi, teneatis Olympum.
 Quid loquor? an vere, Julia, te teneo?
 Dormione? an vigilo? vera haec? an somnia sunt haec?
 Somnia seu, seu sunt vera, fruamur, age!
 Somnia si sunt haec, ducrent hac somnia longum,
 Nec vigilem faciat me, precor, ulla dies.

(Endres 1981: 123-124)

Secundus's technique of combining a sense of the duplicity of dreams with a willing acceptance of illusion as an intrinsic part of the pleasure was later taken over by Ronsard who admitted to a similar regard for this enjoyable self-deception, for example in Sonnet XXIII from *Sonets pour Hélène*, ending with the ambiguously ironic words 'S'abuser en amour n'est pas mauvaise chose' (Mathieu 1976: 1948). By the last decennia of the 16th century the development of the love-dream motif proceeded along a number of different paths as poets sought to exploit the dualities displayed in the oneiric setting, striving to extract the poetic potential hidden in scenes of vicarious, yet for that matter no less powerful, sensual enjoyment:

(...) après Ronsard, certains voient dans le songe la douceur momentanée, l'apaisement qu'apportent au mal d'amour les images nocturnes; fidèles à la tradition pétrarquiste, illustrée par Sannazar et Bembo, ils sont chastes et retenus.

D'autres, à l'exemple de Ronsard, sont surtout sensibles à la déception du réveil: opposant le rêve et ses menteuses promesses à la dure réalité, ils ne voient dans le songe qu'agréable mensonge.

Pour certains d'entre eux, enfin, le thème donne lieu à des évocations qui trouvent leur fin en elles-mêmes: ils devient alors proprement érotique, pré-

texte à célébrer les délices amoureuses et l'extase sensuelle avec un minimum d'auto-censure...

(Mathieu 1976: 150)

Hooft positioned himself with some of these poets when writing 'Mijn Lief, mijn Lief, mijn Lief. soo sprack mijn Lief my toe'. Oscar Dambre, a Flemish critic who studied Hooft's sonnet, focussed on the speaker's astonishment at hearing the lady's 'unexpected words' ('onverwachte reën'). Her passionate confession, Dambre inferred, was most likely intended to evoke the suggestion that she had set aside her previous indifference and aloofness (Dambre 1971: 66). Hooft's strategy in this regard was parallel to those French poets who emphasized a similar contrast between the lady's rigorous daytime chastity and her considerably less strict behavior in the dream (Mathieu 1976: 153, 445). The tension between indifference by day and passion by night may be understood, at least in part, as a reaction against the firmly desexualized role imposed on the lady in the Petrarchan model of love. According to Gisele Mathieu the dream-vision motif might have functioned as a safety valve offering the poets of the 16th century an opportunity to transgress against 'le code imposé par une courtoisie devenue anachronique' (Mathieu 1976: 449).

Similarly to Secundus in *Elegiae* 1.10, the French poets, who took up the theme of the love dream in the last decennia of the 16th century, strove to define the turning-point separating the fulfilled wishes of the dream from the disagreeable pleasure-denying reality (Mathieu 1971: 435). In many instances, like the Neo-latinist, they called into doubt the very existence of this threshold – declaring with Hooft 'Het leven droom, en droom het leven soo ghelijck?', even though most abandoned the probing rhetorical question. Still others condemned the disappointing reality ('waerheydt droef') of daily existence, resorting to a dualism of fleeting oneiric pleasure and distressing daily existence. As Mathieu writes:

On choisit le rêve contre la réalité, les pays de nuit contre les terres du jour. Une autre modification: alors que le songe du petit matin se trouve brutalement rompu par l'irruption soudaine de la 'journalière flamme', et que l'amant perd la belle image obsédante au moment même où il allait jouir de la beauté de sa maîtresse, le songe nocturne l'apaise totalement, et il goûte, au sein des ténèbres, l'entier contentement. Ces deux motifs sont évidemment liés: c'est parce que, pour le poète baroque [...] 'le jour... est nuit' et que 'la nuit... est jour', que l'amant reconnaît au plaisirs nocturnes leur pleine efficacité.

(Mathieu 1976: 451)

As it dawned on some of the poets writing in the closing years of the 16th century that the passionate sexual love represented in dreams might be no less 'real' than the codified courtly love pursued in conventional everyday situations (Mathieu 1976: 454), the motif of the erotic dream vision in France set the stage for a different type of courtly poetry, the refined *poésie précieuse* which would dominate the literary scene for the next several decades that were to follow:

Les poètes de la fin du siècle, souffrant impatiemment les contraintes et les règles très précises issues de l'idéologie courtoise, désormais vides de sens, mais encore prisonniers dans l'enceinte du lyrisme amoureux, héritiers d'un siècle qui s'est cherché à travers l'influence italienne –, ont choisi, non d'abolir, mais de renverser la thématique léguée par leurs devanciers immédiats. Le songe amoureux – plus encore le songe érotique – leur a permis de garder apparemment intacte l'idéologie amoureuse à laquelle ils sacrifient volontiers, et de la nier plus d'une fois, en la pliant à l'expression d'un sentiment qui ne doit plus rien, en somme, à la courtoisie, ni au platonisme, ni au pétrarquisme, fidèle ou infidèle. D'eux naîtra le lyrisme galant de la première moitié du XVII^e s.

(Mathieu 1976: 455)

Closely related then, as we have seen, to Neo-Latin and French poetry of the 16th century, Hooft's poems show how widespread the theme of a love-dream was among the Dutch amorous lyricists of the early 1600s. Apart from 'Mijn Lief, mijn Lief, mijn Lief. soo sprack mijn Lief my toe' Hooft himself employed a modified version of this theme in no less than two other sonnets. The least typical of these, 'Wat storrem heeft v vlam (mijn Leven) wtgeblasen?', is a soliloquy of a frustrated and dispirited lover tormented by a vision of the door to his lady's house slamming shut in his face. Since the door can be read as symbolizing the authority of the parents or guardians¹¹ who prevent the speaker from communicating with his beloved, the dream can be interpreted as a form of psychological compensation. The vision is a non-erotic one, as the wish fulfilled in the dream is mainly of an ethical nature. When the door is unexpectedly moved to compassion, its generous act puts to shame the lady's guardians who had refused to admit him inside:

Wat storrem heeft v vlam (mijn Leven) wtgeblasen?
Daer jck in duchtens poel door v afwesen treur,

¹¹ In the Dutch of the poem these are 'Leidtslui': parents, masters, guardians. ('In toepassing op ouders tegenover hunne kinderen, leermeesters tegenover hunne leerlingen, mannen tegenover hunne vrouwen, en derg.' (WNT 2003: 'LEIDSMAN' 3))

Stelt brief en bood van V, mij hoop op hoop te leur
 Gedachten swaer mij 'sdaechs, en droomen 'snachts verbasen.
 Wanneer het gift des slaeps mijn leden door gaet grasen
 Soo dunckt mij dat jck coom waeren voorbij v deur,
 Die smijtmien mij voor 't hooft, in steed' vws aenschijns beur
 Jck traenen menichvout, en huijle door de glaesen.
 Maer d' eijcken deure wreet erbarmde' haer in mijn leijt,
 En t harde slot ontsprong door mededogentheit
 Eer sij wierden beweecht die tot mijn lijden stemmen.
 Die Leijden gaf sijn naem, voorseijden mijn verdriet,
 En 't leijde Leijden heeft sijn naem van leidtsluij niet,
 Maer van de leijden die mijn Leider hart beclennen.

(Hooft 1994: 109)

[What storm has extinguished your flame (my Life)? / As your absence makes me mourn in a pool of worry, / Your letters and messengers disappoint my hopes / Heavy thoughts surprise me by day, and dreams at night. / When the poison of sleep starts creeping through the veins / Methinks I came walking past your door / Which, instead of allowing me to see you, was slammed in my face, / Then the tears welled up and I cried through the glass. / But the malevolent oaken door took pity on my pain / And the hard lock opened, moved by compassion, / Before they could be moved who had made me suffer. / Those to whom Leiden gave its name, foretold my sorrow, and sorrowful Leiden does not take its name from leaders, / But from the lot who locked my Suffering heart]

Contrasted with this rather atypical dream of being accepted into the lady's house and her family, the other example of this motif among Hooft's sonnets is a humorous dialogue between Amor (Min) and the lover who exchange banter about taking part in an erotic encounter in a dream and in actual life:

Sijdijs van Minnaers smart een onversaedlijck vraetjen
 O Min? soo gaet het mij noch al voor wint voor stroom:
 Hoe nauw men waeckt mijn Lief met grendel, slot, en boom
 Jck stae met v noch niet int alderquaetste blaetien,
 Ghij comt en steeltse mij door 't aldernaeste gaetien,
 En buiten moeijten van mijn slapend lichaem loom
 Voerdijse lijflijck bij mijn in een soete droom;
 Ghij sijt, en wiltet wel weten, een wacker maetien.
 Tegen v treken gelt noch oude wijven raet,
 Noch ijverige wacht, dan gouden Minne, laet
 Het, bidd' jck, blijven niet bij dese clene gunsjens;
 Maer, dat ghij mijn in slaep jont, jont mijn opten dach,

Dat jck genaken, eens, Liefs waere lippen mach,
 Ghij cunt wanneer ghij wilt, schud wt v sack met kunsjens.

(Hooft 1994: 110)

Are you an unsatiable gourmet of lovers' sorrows / O Cupid? I still can get a break: / However closely they watch over my Love with latch, lock and bar, / With you I'm in quite a good position, / You come and steal her for me through the smallest [key]hole, / And without my faint body's intervention, / You carry her inside me in a sweet dream; / You are, I'll tell you that, a smart mate. / Against your tricks neither old wives' advice / Nor constant watch are of any avail, so golden Cupid, please / Don't keep yourself to these small gestures alone / But give me by day what you give me at night, / That I may once touch the true lips of Love, / You can do this whenever you want, so shake [this too out of] your bag of tricks.

This sonnet, composed in Leiden on December 3rd, 1606 (one month after 'Wat storrem heeft v vlam (mijn Leven) wtgeblasen?') might be regarded as a coda to the previous poem (quoted above). Min is shown here as a playful and mischievous thief who 'steals' the damsel through the 'narrowest opening' of a keyhole. From her home, in which the lady is held captive behind lock and key, Min conveys her 'bodily' into her lover's 'sweet dream'. This outrageous exploit is proof of Love's victory over old wives' talk and parental supervision. Encouraged by this feat the speaker implores his 'smart helpmate' Min to pull off an even bolder trick – and allow him to enjoy by day what he had experienced at night. However pleasing a dream might have been, the speaker argues, it decidedly falls short of an actual love tryst. As in an earlier phase of the evolution of the amorous dream-vision motif, love's 'small favors' – the consoling illusions of a dreaming mind – are unmistakably inferior to kissing real lips. This stands in vivid contrast to 'Mijn Lief, mijn Lief, mijn Lief. soo sprack mijn Lief my toe', where the dream is represented as an illusion, but one that owing to its tangible material nature is no different from reality.

The amorous dream vision in the Netherlands is not limited only to Hooft's poetry. In the early 1600s this theme can be found in a sonnet by Gerbrand Adriaenszoon Bredero (mentioned above):

Van dat *Aurora* vroeck den dach begint te kippen,
 En toomt haar Paarden woest, met teughel en ghebit,
 En viert haer Standaard uyt, van Rosen root en wit,
 De Torens schoon vernist, en schittert op de Clippen.
 Dan schijndy O mijn Lief! my crachtich te ontslippen,

Wanneer ick waande meest te raaken int besit
 Van Min, van lust, mijn Hart, mijn Troost, wel hoe, wat's dit?
 En cleefden ghy niet stracx u Lippen aen mijn Lippen.
 Laas 'tis gheswinde droom nu ick het wel bekijck,
 Wat doet de layder Dach de Nacht al onghelijck,
 Want ick en kon mijn vreucht ten vollen niet betoomen.
 Vervormt my soo de schim, van een vermeynde schijn?
 O Goon, hoe zoet souw dan, het eyghen wesen syn:
 Vergunt my dat *Iuppijn*, of laat my eeuwich droomen.

(Bredero 1975: 329)

[When Aurora early on begins to carve the day, / And reins in her wild Horses, with bridle and bit, / And brings out her Banner of Roses red and white, / Paints the Towers with her varnish fair, and shimmers on the Cliffs. / Just then, O my Love, you seem to slip from me, / When I most believed in possessing / Love, pleasure, my Heart, my Solace; how come, what's this? / Did not your lips just cling to mine? / Alas, it's a swift dream as I see it now, / Yet how much the miserable Day does injustice to the Night, / Because I could hardly constrain my joy. / Am I thus deceived by a ghost of a supposed illusion? / O Gods, how sweet then would be the real thing: / Grant me that, Jove, or let me dream forever]

Bredero's sonnet might have had nothing in common with Hooft's 'Mijn lief, mijn lief, mijn lief; soo sprack mijn lief mij toe' (Roose 1971a: 26-31), yet as Roose accurately points out, parallel passages can be found in both:

Bredero

Hooft

O mijn Lief! (verse 5)
 En cleefden ghy niet stracx
 u Lippen aen mijn Lippen
 (verse 8)

Mijn Lief (verse 1)
 Dewijl mijn lippen op haer lieve
 lipgens weyden
 (verse 2)

Want ick en kon mijn vreucht
 ten vollen niet betoomen.
 (verse 11)

Bedoven viel mijn siel in haer vol hart van
 deuchden
 (verse 10)

Vervormt my soo de schim,
 van een vermeynde schijn?
 O Goon, hoe zoet souw dan,
 het eyghen wesen syn:
 (verses 12-13)

Hemelsche Goon, hoe komt de schijn soo
 nae aen't wesen
 (verse 13)

The largest concentration of phrases that may be considered as semantically parallel to passages from Hooft's poem are found at the beginning and end of 'Van dat *Aurora* vroeck den dach begint te kippen'. An interesting overlapping of meaning is the opposition between 'schijn' and 'wesen'. Hooft's words, while phrased just as Bredero's in the form of a rhetorical question, are much more concise. Bredero needed an entire two verses to express the speaker's wonderment at being deceived by a semblance ('schijn'), while musing about how inconceivably better it must be to enjoy the 'real thing' ('het eyghen wesen').

The differences that Roose notes are mostly related to the love-dream convention. Unlike Hooft, who reserves the speaker's surprise until the final tercet, Bredero's poem opens with an image of daylight. The perspective is an adjustment to separation and loss. The speaker recounts his dream as a thing of the past. This unescapable sense of longing for lost pleasures pervades the entire poem, which leaves little space for a paradoxical conceit that would engage the intellect like the one offered by Hooft in the final lines of 'Mijn Lief, mijn Lief, mijn Lief. soo sprack mijn Lief my toe' (Roose 1971a: 30). Analyzing the poem, Roose affirms the traditional critical view of Bredero as a poet of nature rather than nurture, of passion and emotion as opposed to the cerebral Hooft:

Bredero wordt door zijn emotionele ervaring niet tot filosoferen aangezet. Hij neemt geen afstand van zijn emoties, maar blijft volledig in deze emoties gevangen. (...) De amoureuze dichter Bredero is zuivere hunkering, verlangen naar de liefdesvervulling die hem, met de regelmaat van de metronoom aangeboden en ontrukkt wordt, waardoor dit verlangen ook bestendig blijft.

(Roose 1971a: 30)

[Bredero is not moved by his emotional experience to philosophical contemplation. He does not distance himself from his emotions, but instead he remains entirely caught up in them. [...] Bredero as a poet of love is entirely given over to longing and desire for the fulfilment of a love which, with the regularity of a metronome, is offered to him and then snatched away, causing this longing to become permanent]

The final verses of Bredero's sonnet are the work of a poet expressing, in Roose's words, a passionate desire to experience all that life might have in store for him. Bredero's conclusion is no abstract question but an actual prayer, a wish to experience the pleasures of the erotic dream in reality, or at the very least in yet another nocturnal vision (Roose 1971a: 30). Yet Bredero is obviously working, very much like Hooft, within the same convention of erotic dream-vision poetry. His passionate devotion

to life, a label frequently attached to him, is filtered here through thematic schemes that poets had been already applying for decades, if not centuries.

While Bredero's invocation to Jupiter ('Iuppijn') is not as rhetorically self-conscious as Hooft's conceit on dream and reality, it too reveals its literary parentage. It shares a resemblance to French variations on the love-dream, especially in the form of the prayer and its position in the text. Other parallels are also in evidence. The final wish to relive the dream as reality or to retreat into a reality of eternal dreaming had by this time become ubiquitous among French poets. An invocation to dreams in Sonnet XLIV from *Les Amours de Diane* (Book One) by Philippe Desportes demonstrates the extent to which Bredero relied on stock imagery and ideas, transmuting them into a work that is uniquely his own:

O songe heureux et doux! Où fuis tu si soudain
 Laissant à ton départ mon ame desolée?
 O douce vision, las! où es tu volée,
 Me rendant de tristesse et d'angoisse si plein?
 Hélas! Somme trompeur, que tu m'est inhumain!
 Que n'as tu plus longtemps ma paupière sillée?
 Que n'avez vous encor', ô vous troupe estoilée,
 Empesché le soleil de commencer son train?
 O dieu! Permettez moy que toujours je sommeille,
 Si ie puis recevoir une autre nuit pareille,
 Sans qu'un triste réveil me debande les yeux!
 Certes on dit bien vray: Le bien que nous contente,
 Tousjours traine à sa queue un regret ennuieux:
 Et n'y a chose aucune en ce monde constante.

(Mathieu 1976: 150)

Desportes, like Bredero, argued that visions caused by sleep are an illusion – and a cruel one at that. Like many of their contemporaries, both poets turned to examining the evanescent quality of dreams, construing a virtually identical experience: 'Où fuis tu si soudain / Laissant à ton départ mon ame desolée?' and 'Laas 'tis gheswinde droom nu ick het wel bekijck'. Exclaiming 'O dieu! Permettez moy que toujours je sommeille', Desportes' speaker conveys a passionate desire to return once again to the tender realm of dreams, bringing to mind Bredero's 'Vergunt my dat Iuppijn, of laat my eeuwich droomen'.

Yet having said this, one should not blame Bredero for being unoriginal. Looking at Bredero's sonnet alongside 'Mijn lief, mijn lief, mijn lief; soo sprack mijn lief mij toe', and keeping in mind the conventions

of the love-dream, it strikes the reader as the more traditional of the two. This impression is not only related to how Bredero employs a triumphant 'Aurora' to alert the reader to the machinery of a dream-vision (as Leen Strengtholt noticed, this is a step that Hooft avoids), but also to a conventional preference given to the sense of sight and touch. Hooft's decision to let acoustic perception dominate throughout his poem represents by contrast an unquestionably more inventive choice. The uniqueness of Bredero's piece, just as in the case of Hooft's 'Mijn lief, mijn lief, mijn lief; soo sprack mijn lief mij toe', lies precisely in the way stock elements, arising out of a common tradition, were combined to produce a new rendering of a well-known theme, which once again proves that the total effect of any work of poetry is always more than simply a sum of its parts.

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S O N N E T.

Ghesvvinde Gryfaert, die op vvackre vviecken staech
 De dunne lucht doorsnijt en, sonder seyl te strijcken,
 Altijt vaert voor de vvint, en yder nae laet kijcken;
 Doodtvyandt van de rust, die woelt by nacht by daech;
 Onachterhaelbre Tijd, vviens heeten hongher graech
 Versloekt, verslint, verteert, al watter sterck mach lijcken;
 En keert, en vvendt, en stort Staten en Koninckrijcken;
 Voor yder een te snel hoe valdy my foo traech?
 Mijn Lief sint ick u mis verdryve' ick, met mishaghen,
 De schoorvoetighe tijdt, en tob de langhe daghen
 Met arbeydt avondtvaerts; uuv afzijn valt te bangh.
 En mijn verlanghen kan den Tijdgod niet bevveghen,
 Maer't schijnt verlanghen daer zijn naem af heeft ghekreghen,
 Dat ick de Tijd die ick vercorten vvil, verlangh.

S A N G.

Geswinde Grijsart die op wackre wiecken staech

Geswinde Grijsart die op wackre wiecken staech,
 De dunne lucht doorsnijt, en sonder seil te strijcken,
 Altijdt vaert voor de windt, en ijder nae laet kijcken,
 Doodtvijsant van de rust, die woelt bij nacht bij daech;
 Onachterhaelbre Tijdt, wiens heten hunger graech
 Versloekt, verslint, verteert al watter sterck mach lijcken
 En keert, en wendt, en stort Staeten en Coninckrijcken;
 Voor ijder een te snel, hoe valdij mij soo traech?
 Mijn lief sint ick v mis, verdrijve' jck met mishaghen
 De schoorvoetighe Tijdt, en tob de lange daeghen
 Met arbeitd avontwaerts; vw afzijn valt te bang.
 En mijn verlangen can den Tijdgod niet beweghen:
 Maer 't schijnt verlangen daer sijn naem af heeft gecreghen,
 Dat jck den Tijdt, die jck vercorten wil, verlang.

Notes:

wackre wiecken staech – ‘relentlessly, on tireless wings’. ‘Van lichaams-deelen, ‘t gemoed, gevoelens en m. betr. t. handelingen e.d.: blijk gevend van resp. gepaard gaand met levendigheid, vroolijkheid’ (WNT 2003: ‘WAKKER’ 5) b)). The word *staech* can be the adverbial qualifier of the predicate *doorsnijt* in the following verse (roughly translated as: ‘on tireless wings, relentlessly / slicing through thin air’), which implies an enjambed verse, cf. a syntactically parallel situation in v. 5.

graech – ‘voracious’. As *wackre wiecken staech* in v. 1, in this triad the last element can refer not only to the central noun but to the predicative constituent in the next verse.

hoe valdy my soo traech – ‘then why so slow for me?’ (Van Harmsel 1981: 88)

uw afzijn valt te bangh – ‘your absence is hard to bear’

verlanghen ... Dat – ‘the name of longing comes from this’ (Van Harmsel 1981: 88)

verlangh – ‘lengthen’

Variants:

The *Emblemata amatoria* text (p. 122) follows the manuscript except for several minor typographic changes such as: ‘Gheswinde Grysaert’ for ‘Geswinde Grijsart’, ‘seyl’ for ‘seil’, ‘Altijt’ for ‘Altijdt’, ‘wint’ for ‘windt’, ‘yder’ for ‘ijder’, etc.

Slightly revised punctuation, e.g., ‘...en, sonder seyl te strijcken’ for ‘...en sonder seil te strijcken’; ‘...verteert, al watter sterck mach lijcken’ for ‘verteert al watter sterck mach lijcken’.

Note under the manuscript text: ‘17 Feb. 1610 Woonsd. / Op huis te Muiden.’ and ‘Mithra Granida’.

Commentary:

Hooft’s ‘Gheswinde Grysaert, die op wackre wiecken staech’ invokes the figure of a ‘swift greybeard’ known in Renaissance iconology as Father Time – the patron of mutability and impermanence. This old man slices through thin air on vigorous wings. Sailing at a fair pace with the wind behind him, he breezes past everyone else. Neither day nor night can prevent this ‘mortal enemy of peace’ from spreading chaos and unrest. Images evoking the ‘fast-flying ancient’ (Vincent 1981: 20) in his swift progress through space are then replaced by a sequence showing a free-wheeling agent of earthly mutability. ‘Irretrievable Time’, spurred on by an eager burning hunger, devours all that seems enduring, and obliterates seemingly powerful states and empires (vs. 1-7).

A rhetorical question in the following verse shifts the focus from a generalized mythological vision of 'swift Time' to the personal experience of the speaker of the poem. While in common experience Time is too fast for everyone, Hooft's lyrical persona experiences its flight, paradoxically, as excruciatingly slow. Yet the reason for this is something that he finds hard to grasp. The verses that follow address the cause of this perplexing imbalance. With Father Time momentarily out of the picture, the speaker turns to 'mijn Lief' ('my love'), revealing what he has felt in her absence. Time, devoid of the speed and fury of the first part, appears to be hardly moving at all. The speaker whiles away each lengthy day with great effort until nightfall. However, since his passion is powerless to 'move' the deity ('En mijn verlanghen kan den Tijtgod niet beweghen'),¹² the paradox of the aged greybeard as one who is too fast and yet too slow evades a satisfactory resolution (vs. 9-11).

Even though the speaker is incapable of affecting the linear flow of time and thus 'moving' the winged deity, he is nevertheless acutely aware of how subjective experience determines one's perception of temporal relations. Powerless though we are in the face of Time, Hooft seems to be saying, the key to how we calibrate Time's passing lies mainly in personal emotion. 'Longing' ('verlanghen'), the speaker admits, must have therefore derived its name from the fact that, contrary to expectations, it in fact 'lengthens' the time of waiting for what one desires. The more one desires, in other words, the longer it takes to reach the wished-for effect. As readers, we sense the self-irony and exasperation pervading this paranomastic conceit (vs. 13-14).

As one of Hooft's best known and most frequently anthologized sonnets, 'Gheswinde Grysaert, die op wackre wiecken staech' has been commonly studied in relation to the canon of Dutch poetry. Yet although traditionally much praised by historians of literature, by the 1960s and 1970s Hooft's poem came to be regarded as a proverbially petrified work which was only read and studied because of their canonical status. One of the most vocal proponents of the need to reassess obsolete critical judgements and re-examine its value for Dutch literature was the historian J.A. van Dorsten (Van Dorsten 1981a/b). Van Dorsten's critical contribution had a strongly polemical character. His argument, however, was by no means new, as it was based on the conviction that Hooft's

¹² The word 'beweghen' in 17th century Dutch, just as the word 'move' in contemporary English, could mean a) to elicit sympathy with the aim of persuading somebody or b) to physically put someone or something in motion. Both of these meanings are applicable in this passage.

work should be evaluated through comparative research. Even though Van Dorsten did not carry out the proposed research himself, by putting his finger on a major oversight in the Hooftian studies of the time he convinced other critics to take to the pen. And while most nonetheless failed to take up this recommendation either, a number of new paths were explored. During the 1980s some of the more traditional verdicts that had been passed on Hooft's poetry and on this particular sonnet were consequently replaced by more accurate insights.

One of the leading articles written in response to Van Dorsten's critique of 'Gheswinde Grysaert, die op wackre wiecken staech' came from Leen Strengtholt (Strengtholt 1981b: 22-43) who focussed on the metrical and stylistic qualities of Hooft's sonnet. After Strengtholt, the critical discourse surrounding the poem avoided the previous 'biographical' mode of criticism, where the text was parsed for information about the poet's life. The results of these newer efforts aimed at bringing to light the complex internal geometry of the text can be found in the work of Wim Vermeer (Vermeer 1981: 29-49), Lieven Rens (Rens 1981: 273-277) and Lode Roose (Roose 1984: 336-344). In the 1990s both approaches, structural and biographic, were once more combined in a cognitive reading of the poem carried out by Loes Nas (Nas 1994: 89-95).

Surprisingly, although the motif of Father Time was widely represented in the European pictorial arts of the 16th and 17th century, it was not examined in greater detail by Dutch scholars with regard to Hooft's 'Gheswinde Grysaert, die op wackre wiecken staech'. An exception to this was the work of Henrietta van Harmsel (Van Harmsel 1981) and Lode Roose (Roose 1984), who both mentioned Chronos as the mythological figure alluded to in this poem. Tellingly, many Dutch critics seemed unaware of the conventional nature of this motif, which led some of them to misjudge the poem's qualities. J.A. van Dorsten, for example, considered the swift greybeard as a prime example of 'confused imagery' (Van Dorsten 1981a: 14), and blamed Hooft for succumbing (as he put it) to 'the malady of mixed metaphor' (Van Dorsten 1981b: 30). Yet in the light of Erwin Panofsky's research on Renaissance pictorial themes in *Studies in Iconology* (Panofsky 1967), the widespread depiction of Father Time is quite simply an incongruous combination of earlier iconographic motifs (see above, p. 125). The imagery of Hooft's sonnet does indeed proceed, as Van Dorsten noted, from images of Time as a swift old man to ones showing Time as a hungry destroyer, yet this seeming confusion is definitely not Hooft's doing.

Throughout its history the motif of Father Time assimilated elements of older figural imagery. Most of these already had a genealogy of their

own. Already present in Roman depictions of the Latin allegorical god of time, Chronos – shown as a naked fleet-footed young man – was the attribute of swiftness, symbolically represented in the form of Father Time's wings. Not all the figural 'components', however, were related to the concept of time. Another mythological being assimilated into the figure of Father Time was the Greek infant-swallowing Titan, Kronos. The depictions of Chronos and Kronos merged when medieval artists and scholars, erroneously finding homonymy where there was none, identified these two gods as being one and the same deity. Through Kronos the link was made to hunger, gnawing and devouring. Owing to the fact that Kronos corresponded in Roman mythology to Saturn, in the Middle Ages the figure of Father Time additionally acquired the astrological properties of this planet which was considered the source of various kinds of earthly misfortunes, misery and suffering. When all these iconographic traditions merged, the allegorical Time became the mirror image of the winged protagonist of Hooft's poem: an aged yet swift 'greybeard', consuming everything that might be susceptible to sublunar mutability and accompanied by illness and destruction (Panofsky 1967: 69-93).

The artists of the Renaissance took over the composite figure of Chronos and Kronos/Saturn, employing it as a blueprint for various types of iconographic representations, such as the illustrations to 'Triumphus Temporis' ('Trionfo del Tempo' – The Triumph of Time) from Petrarch's *Trionfi*. The images accompanying Petrarch's poem were intended to match the text, yet the actual details of the composition were left to the imagination of individual artists and draughtsmen. The building blocks of the iconographic image of Father Time proved readily applicable for this task, successfully supplementing Petrarch's rather sparse description of the allegorical god's physical appearance. A prime example of this type of image in Netherlandish art is the etching 'Triomf van de Tijd' (1565) produced by Philips Galle to a design by Maarten van Heemskerck. Galle shows Time as a winged old man on crutches. The god is carried in procession, and his figure enthroned on a chariot is outlined against scenes of apocalyptic mayhem and destruction (fig. 3).

Emblem books offered abundant *sententiae* on mutability and the transitory nature of earthly things, and as such they provided another convenient route for transmitting the iconography of Father Time. A well-known example, equipped with all the attributes used by Hooft for his 'grysaert' as well as some additional ones, is the emblem 'Mens immota manet' (119) (fig. 4) reproduced in Otho Vaenius's *Amorum Emblemata* (Antverpiae 1608). Pre-dating Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria* by

three years, Vaenius's book is a source that Hooft was very likely to have consulted when preparing his own volume of emblems.

Although the imagery of 'Gheswinde Grysaert, die op wackre wiecken staech', owing to its tradition, is quite a mixed bag just as Van Dorsten noted, Hooft is in fact highly consistent in that he endows the figure of the 'Geswinde Grijsart' with nearly every aspect of the heterogeneous pictorial lineage of Father Time described by Panofsky (Panofsky 1967: 69-93). In fact, as the Dutch poet mirrors with a striking accuracy the incongruities already present in such possible iconographic sources as the etchings of Galle or Vaenius, this can be hardly taken as a sign of poetic confusion.

The artistic merits of Hooft's rendering of the motif of Father Time can only be judged against other literary variants of the same theme. In a sonnet that predates Hooft by over a decade, William Shakespeare works out a slightly different set of meanings from what is obviously the same storehouse of imagery:

Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws,
And make the earth devour her own sweet brood;
Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws,
And burn the long-lived phoenix in her blood;
Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleet'st,
And do whate'er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,
To the wide world and all her fading sweets,
But I forbid the one most heinous crime:
O carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow,
Nor draw no lines there with thy antique pen;
Him in thy course untainted do allow
For beauty's pattern to succeeding men.
Yet do thy worst, old Time: despite thy wrong,
My love shall in my verse ever live young.

(Shakespeare 1977: 1456)

Similarly to the Netherlandic 'grijsart', Shakespeare's 'old Time' is definitely no isolated flight of fancy. In both cases two very different poets are clearly adapting the same diffuse cultural resources to a conventional theme. In this respect, through its richness of visual detail and rhythmic qualities, Hooft's 'Gheswinde Grysaert, die op wackre wiecken staech' is by no means inferior to its English Elizabethan counterpart.

All commentators have unanimously praised Hooft's poem for its acoustic features and the 'organic' cohesion of metre and subject matter (Roose 1984: 340). Yet the swift-flying rhythm of the first part of

the sonnet, and the sounds evoking the brute force and speed of the 'Grysaert' (Van Dorsten 1981a: 14), are but a few of the devices that Hooft employs to achieve unity in what might have been otherwise a fragmented sequence of images. Structural coherence is provided by several interlinked sets of parallels and oppositions, including two pairs of 'triplets' ('tritsen') in the first and second quatrain. The first pair of these 'triplets' ('wackre wiecken staech' and 'heeten hongher graech') aligns Time's swiftness with his voraciousness, while the second one ('verslockt, verslint, verteert' and 'En keert, en wendt, en stort') punctuates the god's unrestrained hunger with the havoc he wreaks on earth (Roose 1984: 341). Counterbalancing the predominantly evocative character of the octave, the more epigrammatic sestet is rendered in a conversational tone that sets it off from the preceding parts (Roose 1984: 343). The surprise turn achieved in the final two verses, another structural feature, provides the poem with a double volta.

Hooft closes off the poem with a mock-etymological conceit on the word 'verlanghen'. Time, perceived by the speaker, is not only unmoved by desire ('En mijn verlanghen kan den Tijtgod niet bewegen'), but also perversely contrary to it: 'Maer 't schijnt verlanghen daer zijn naem af heeft gekreghe, / Dat ick de Tijt die ick vercoren wil, verlangh'. Receiving both praise and adverse criticism, this conceit has long been regarded by some Dutch critics as stylistically incompatible with the rest of the poem. In Wim Vermeer's view Hooft was unable to conclude the preceding poetically strong lines on an equally forceful note. To conceal his flagging inspiration the poet was therefore obliged to resort to a rather flippant linguistic device, compromising the artistic value of the text. Yet, Vermeer added, Hooft and his well-educated readers, surely fascinated as they were by the mystery of the origin of words and the relations between them, would have appreciated the conceit as a fortunate discovery that combined the required closure with a playful surprise (Vermeer 1981: 50).

These readers included the implied addressee of the manuscript text as well as the young audience ('leucht') envisaged in the 'Voorreden', the preface to *Emblemata amatoria*. Primarily, however, Vermeer pointed to Hooft's audience among the members of the Amsterdam chamber of rhetoric 'De Eglentier', where the poet contributed his work. Vermeer's conclusion that a conceit, and therefore the entire poem, would have been more readily appreciated by a fellow member of a chamber of rhetoric than by the lady to whom the poem was addressed in manuscript, is one that should not be discounted. The distinction between the public and private sides of Hooft's poetry was much less clear-cut than many

earlier Dutch critics of the 'biographic school' of the 1950s and 1960s (e.g. W.A.P. Smit) had assumed (Tuynman 1981: 19-26). As Vermeer noted further (Vermeer 1981: 50), the same type of etymological conceit, though with a toponomastic flavor, also appeared in an earlier love sonnet by Hooft, 'In Leiden' (1606) (see above, p. 160). The final tercet of this sonnet contains a multiple pun on 'Leijden' (the town of Leiden) as a homonym of the lover's suffering ('lijden'). Rejecting what appears to be a traditional etymology of the name of the city (ostensibly called so after 'leidtsluij', the 'leaders' who bring to mind the town's patriciate or intellectual-religious establishment), a personal one is set up in its place, in which 'Leiden' is called so after the individuals who 'oppress his suffering heart' ('die mijn Leider hart beclennen'), possibly a pointed reference to the parents or guardians of Brechje Spiegel, the young lady to whom the poem was addressed. The gravitas of the context strongly suggests that neither here nor in 'Gheswinde Grysaert, die op wackre wiecken staech' is such a conceit a stopgap to which Hooft resorted for want of a better thought. Instead, it must be regarded as a deliberately chosen poetic device which was most certainly employed with a particular audience in mind.

Instead of reading the final conceit in 'Gheswinde Grysaert, die op wackre wiecken staech' as a lapse of Hooft's poetic skill, one can regard it as answering – in an undeniably playful fashion – the single question that is most central to the poem itself: why is Time too fast for humanity in general, and yet too slow for a person in love? While the paradox of the two incompatible modes in which Time manifests itself can be neither entirely resolved nor simply brushed aside, yet in the sorrow and dejection that a lover might feel, the torment caused by a 'slow-footed' Time can be alleviated by a flash of wit, an irreverent witticism, which by its very nature makes the dilemmas posed by human emotion seem for an instant all too subjective – and somewhat easier to live with.

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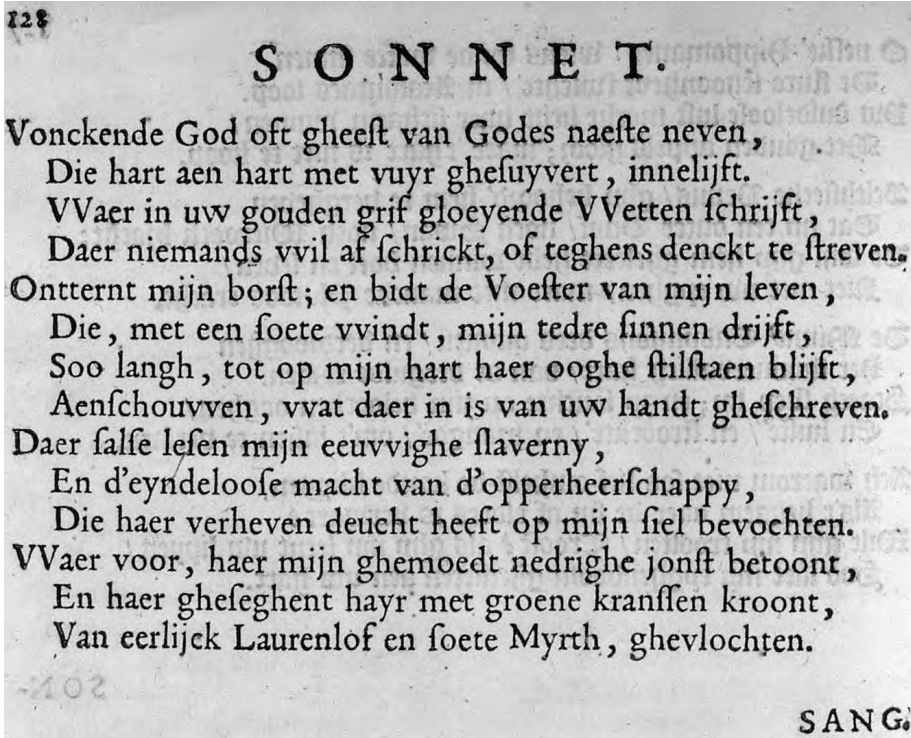
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Fig. 3. *Triumphus Temporis* (*De Triomf van de Tijd*), etching by Philips Galle to a design by Maarten van Heemskerck. Museum Boijmans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam.



Fig. 4. Father Time Clipping Cupid's Wings, 'Mens immota manet' (no. 119) from *Amorum Emblemata* by Otho Vaenius (Antverpiae 1608).



Vonckende God, of Geest van Godes naeste neven

Vonckende God, of Geest van Godes naeste neven;
 Die hart aen hart met vuyr gesuivert innelijft,
 Waerin vw gouden grif gloejende wetten schrijft,
 Daer niemands wil af schrickt, of tegens denckt te streven;
 Ontternt mijn borst, en bidt de voester van mijn leven,
 Die met een soete windt mijn tedre sinnen drijft,
 Soo lang tot op mijn hart haer ooghe stilstaen blijft,
 Aenschouwen wat daer in is van vw handt geschreven:
 Daer salse lesen mijn eeuwighe slavernij,
 En d' eindeloose macht van d' opperheerschappij
 Die haer verheven deuchdt heeft op mijn Siel bevochten;
 Waer voor haer mijn gemoedt nedrighe jonst betóont,
 En haer geseigent haijr met groene cranssen cróont
 Van eerlijck laurenlof en soete mijrth gevlochten.

Notes:

Vonckende God – possibly a reference to Anteros, a sibling of Eros, the god of reciprocated love (Hooft 2004: 142). In a dissenting reading of this poem, Kees Fens (Fens 1982: 54) suggested that ‘Vonckende god’ might be interpreted as referring to the sun.

gheest van Godes naeste neven – ‘the god’s kindred spirit, a related deity’

innelijft – ‘merges; unites’; ‘Iemand met een ander (of anderen) tot één, eenig en ondeelbaar geheel samenvoegen of verenigen’ (WNT 2003: ‘INLIJVEN’)

grif – ‘stylus’: ‘griffel’

Ontternt – ‘tear; rend’; cf. ‘Lostornen’ (WNT 2003: ‘ONTTERNEN’)

drijft – ‘moves’

bidt ... Soo langh – the phrase ‘soo lang’ refers to the predicate of the sentence (‘bidt’)

jonst – here: a pledge of the lover’s service demanded in the tradition of *amour courtois*

Variants:

The *Emblemata amatoria* text (p. 128) follows the manuscript except for several minor changes of a typographic nature such as: ‘oft’ for ‘of’, ‘gheest’ for ‘Geest’, ‘vuyr’ for ‘vuijr’, ‘ghesuyvert’ for ‘gesuivert’, ‘Waer in’ for ‘Waerin’, etc.

Slightly revised punctuation, e.g., ‘Vonckende God oft Gheest van Godes naeste neven’ for ‘Vonckende God, of Gheest van Godes naeste neven’; ‘...ghesuyvert, innelijft’ for ‘gesuivert innelijft’; a fullstop replaces the comma and semicolon at the end of verses two and four, etc.

Note under the manuscript text: ‘H.t. Muiden. / 9 Martio. 1610. dinxd.’ and ‘Mithra Granida.’

Commentary:

The opening verse of ‘Vonckende God oft gheest van Godes naeste neven’ invokes the presence of a ‘fiery God’ of love. This unnamed deity, possibly synonymous with Anteros, the brother of Eros and patron of happy mutual love, is redefined in the next phrase as ‘[the] God’s kindred spirit’ who unites human hearts which had been purified by fire. Inscribing lovers with the laws governing passion, this deity exerts an overwhelmingly positive influence, instilling emotions which do not provoke fear or arouse opposition. With this in mind, the speaker asks the god to assist him in revealing his passion to the lady who ‘nourishes his life’ and ravishes his senses with her sweet breath. He concludes this

supplication with the wish that the deity might convince her to read the message, which the hand of Love inscribed in his heart. The contents of this inscription are distinctly Petrarchan in tone. From there the girl will learn about the lover's 'eternal slavery' and the 'infinite power of dominance' which her lofty virtue had imposed on his soul. Finally, she will read that the speaker's feelings will respond to this amorous subjection with humble goodwill, crowning her 'blessed' hair with green wreaths of laurel and myrtle.

The images of light and themes of harmonious self-reconciled affection led critics to identify the deity of this sonnet as Anteros, the god of mutual love. The authors of the anthology P.C. Hooft, *Liederen en gedichten* (Hooft 2004), for example, state that Anteros, like Hooft's 'Vonkende God', set hearts alight with a burning torch, unlike Eros, whose instrument of choice was a bow and a quiver of arrows.¹³

The identity of the god referred to by Hooft, however, is a slightly less obvious than it would seem from the preceding brief description. If one were to judge by Karel van Mander's *Wtlegghingh op den Metamorphosis Pub. Ouidij Nasonis* (1604), a compendium of motifs from the pictorial arts (published along with his celebrated *Het Schilder-boeck*), the symbolic and allegorical meaning of the figure of Anteros had high significance for Renaissance iconography. Obviously, a thorough knowledge of its mythological background was considered essential for aspiring painters. However, unlike the modern edition referred to above (Hooft 2004: 142), Van Mander does not mention a torch as an attribute of Anteros, equipping him with a palm branch instead: '*Cupido* hadde eenen Palmtack, die Tegen-liefde oft *Anteros* hem pooghde uyt de handen te nemen' ['Cupid had a palm-branch, which Counter-Love, or Anteros, tried to take away from him' – transl. MP] (Van Mander 1969: [30v]). Gleaning Graeco-Roman mythology in search of allegorical meanings, Van Mander established that the god should not be regarded as a negative counterpart of Eros, but rather as a god who returned 'love for love' ('liefde voor liefde'), this indeed being very much the preferred activity of Hooft's 'Vonckende God [...] Die hart aen hart met vuyr ghesuyvert, innelijft':

Cartarius seght, dat *Anteros* was eenen Godt, den welcken straffinge oefende over een yeder, die niet en beminde oft lief en hadde yemant anders, die hem liefde toedroegh oft beminde, te weten, die de liefde van ander niet met ghelijcke liefde en betaelde: maer en was geen Godt die onliefde ver-

¹³ '[...] een liefdesgod voorzien van een fakkel (ter onderscheiding van Eros, de lichamelijke liefde, met zijn pijl en boog' (Hooft 2004: 142).

weckte, ghelijck sommige meenen: want men mach hem houden te wesen, vergeldt van liefde, oft weder-liefde, oft liefde voor liefde.

(Van Mander 1969: [30v])

Cartarius says that *Anteros* was a god who punished every person who did not love or loved another one than the person who loved or took to him, to wit, who did not repay another's love with similar love: however this was not a god who induced dispassion, as some believe: because one can consider him to be 'love repaid', or 'reciprocated love' or 'love for love'.

Erwin Panofsky, in his *Studies in Iconology*, confirms that the allegorical meaning of *Anteros* oscillated between two different interpretations:

The function of the classical *Anteros*, who was considered the son either of *Venus* or *Nemesis*, had been to assure reciprocity in amorous relations; but while this was clearly understood by scholarly antiquarians, moralists and humanists with Platonizing leanings were apt to interpret the preposition ἀντί as 'against' instead of 'in return', thus turning the God of Mutual Love into a personification of virtuous purity

(Panofsky 1967: 126)

Initially translating the name of *Anteros* as 'Tegen-liefde', or 'counter-love', Van Mander nonetheless rephrases it as 'weder-liefde, oft liefde voor liefde'. Clearly Van Mander belonged not to Panofsky's moralists but to the 'scholarly antiquarians' who understood this deity to be a patron of amorous reciprocity.

The other note on *Anteros* in the *Wtlegghingh* is even more specific than the previous one, and it confirms this interpretation. Paraphrasing an account by *Porphyrius*, Van Mander states that *Aphrodite* bore this god in order to let her older son *Eros*, literally, 'grow in love' towards his younger brother. When *Anteros* is born, *Eros* – who had been suffering from stunted physical growth – regains strength and vigor because his love has been answered. Extracting from the mythological narrative its allegorical significance, Van Mander turns the latter into a *sententium*: 'Dus wast de liefde in den persoon, die ghelijcke liefde ghedregen wordt: want den gheliefden moet den liegenden lieven', or in translation, 'he who responds to love proportionally to how he is loved, grows in love, since he who is loved must in turn love the one who bestows love on him' (van Mander 1969: [30v]).

Although the overall image of *Anteros* in the *Wtlegghingh* roughly corresponds (with the exception of the torch / palm-branch) to the traits assigned to the god in the first two quatrains of Hooft's sonnet, Van Mander's text alone does not give sufficient grounds for accepting the

assumption that Hooft's use of the imagery of fire indeed refers to this particular figure. In order to shed more light on this dilemma it may be useful to shift the focus for a moment to Anteros's more famous sibling, the love-god Eros, whom Erwin Panofsky tellingly described as 'nude, boyish or even childlike, winged, armed with bow and arrows' and, of particular interest to Hooft's poem, 'less frequently with a torch' (Panofsky 1967: 121). Hooft's 'vonckende' could therefore just as well refer to a torch-bearing Cupid. In the Neoplatonic tradition, as a matter of fact, there were two Cupids, each representing carnal or divine love, whose nature matched the duality of the earthly and spiritual:

Plato noemt Cupido den geluckichsten, besten, en schoonsten der Goden: Hy beschrijft oock twee Cupidons den eenen Hemelsch, en den anderen den gemeenen.

(Van Mander 1969: [7v])

[*Plato calls Cupid the luckiest, best and fairest of the gods: he also describes the two Cupids, one heavenly and the other a common one*]

The character of Cupid's mother, Venus, matches the duality of her son. Cherishing a 'fiery love', the mother of Cupid, in her sacred incarnation, is described by Van Mander as appearing to those who seek her in the form of a divine radiance (it. mine – M.P.):

Plato in't Bancket seght, datter zijn twee Venus, en twee Cupidons: want Venus is niet sonder Cupido. D'een Venus, seght hy, is ouder als d'ander, en is sonder Moeder, dochter des Hemels, die wy noemen Hemelsche, reyne en kuyssche, niet anders soeckende als een *lichtende blinckentheyt* in der Godtheyt: oft door een seer vyerige liefde die sy in ons baert, onse Sielen te vereenigen met t'Godlijcke wesen, als die t'beeldt en teecken des selven is. D'ander is de jongste dochter van Iuppiter en Dione, dese wort ghenoeemt volcksche, vleeschlijcke, wellustige...

(Van Mander 1969: [30r])

[*Plato in the Symposium says that there are two Venuses and two Cupids: because Venus is never without Cupid. The one Venus, he says, is older than the other, and without his mother, the daughter of the Heavens, whom we call Heavenly, pure and chaste, she seeks nothing other than a bright radiance in the divinity: or through the fiery love that she bears in us, to unite our souls with the divine being, as if they were the image and sign of the same. The other is the youngest daughter of Jupiter and Dione, who is called the vulgar, carnal, voluptuous...*]

The child of the divine Venus, the heavenly Cupid or Amor, is depicted in a number of emblematic images standing with a bow and arrow and a sparkling halo around his head. A good example of this is 'Amor divinis' from Otho Vaenius's *Amoris Divini Emblemata*. Vaenius' images, notwithstanding their religious character, may be regarded as typical of the Neo-Platonic Amor/Cupid in Renaissance iconography. As the references to fire in 'Vonckende God oft gheest van Godes naeste neven' are quite overt, it is probable that Hooft combined both interpretations, deriving the visual aspects of his glowing deity from a heavenly Amor (possibly equipped with a flaming halo) such as the one pictured in Vaenius's emblems. The philosophical rationale would have been most probably carried over from what Panofsky called the classical 'antiquarian' variant of the Eros and Anteros theme. Hooft's 'flaming god' of love is nothing less than the old Anteros disguised. Despite the flames which resemble the chaste Neo-Platonic Anteros/Cupid of divine love, this deity is actually much closer in character to Van Mander's god of 'wederliefde', standing as it does unabashedly for mutual erotic love.

The burning god of the poem is urged to help the lover to reveal his passion before the lady's eyes. The speaker's cry of 'Ontternt my borst', where he urges Love to tear open his breast and expose the message that love inscribed in his heart, follows on a textual tradition that arose from a passage from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (cf. 'Cond ick u 't binnenst van mijn hart MeVrouwe tooghen', pp. 103). Petrarch alerts Laura to a similarly placed inscription in Sonnet 5 from the *Canzoniere*, 'Quando io movo i sospiri a chiamar voi':

Quando io movo i sospiri a chiamar voi
e 'l nome che nel cor mi scrisse Amore,
LAU-dando s'incomincia udir di fore
il suon de' primi dolci accenti suoi...

(Petrarch 1996: 6)

In the French poetry of the 16th century, this passage provided inspiration to Clement Marot, who imitated it in Elegie III ('Puisque le jour...'):

Vous y verriez vostre nom engravé
Avec le deuil qui me tient aggravé...

(Mathieu 1976: 333)

Reworked by two of Marot's successors, Philippe Desportes and Agrippa D'Aubigné, the motif of the exposed heart evolved into realistic representations of a bleeding and eviscerated organ that quite literally laid bare the unhappy lover's suffering before the lady's gaze. In this respect Hooft's last sonnet in the *Emblemata amatoria*, 'Mijn Sorch wanneer ick peyns dat u soo seer behaghe', evoking the speaker's body as it is being torn apart by suffering and exhibited before the lady's eye, adds yet another dimension to this theme, taking it up precisely where earlier poets had left off:

Mijn tedre Troost, naer u ghenoecht, is my te moe.
Vw lieve vriendschap swaeyt mijn hart ick weet niet hoe.
Vw treurich ooghe scheurt my't inghewant moordadich.

(Hooft 1611: 136 / Hooft 1994a: 182)

[My tender Solace, to your feelings I incline. / Your dear friendship sways my heart I don't know how. / Your sorrowful eye painfully rends my entrails]

While Hooft's rendering of the 'heart laid bare' resembles its Petrarchan antecedent in that it shows a message being written, and a reader is present in the figure of the lady who should be permitted to decipher this text. A somewhat similar theme of reading appears in Hooft's early sonnet 'De Stralen mijns ghesichts, die'r mengden in de stralen' (see above, p. 79). Here, however, the process is reversed with the lady's fair features becoming a sign where the speaker reads spiritual virtues invisible to the naked eye:

De Stralen mijns ghesichts, die'r mengden in de stralen
Van uwe schoonheys glans, en van u ooghen claer,
Weerkeerende tot my, soo brachten zy met haer
De waere Beeltenis, dies' onvoorsichtich stalen,
Van t aerdichst, dat Natuyr deed' in u voorhoofd malen,
En t'waerdichst van u gheest, datmen mach lesen daer.

(Hooft 1611: 77 / Hooft 1994a: 20)

[The rays of my sight, which mingled with the rays / Of your beauty's radiance, and of your clear eyes, / Returning to me, they brought along with them / The true Image, which they had unexpectedly stolen, / Of the nicest things that Nature painted on your forehead, / And the worthiest of your spirit, which one can read there]

In the closing verses of 'Vonckende God oft gheest van Godes naeste neven' the speaker, eager to prove the impact of love on his person, ac-

knowledges his lack of self-sufficiency and rewards his mistress with a wreath woven of 'sweet myrtle' and 'honorable laurel'. While laurel leaves were reserved for the brows of emperors and poets, the myrtle was traditionally related to Venus. Brides in ancient Greece wore a crown made of myrtle on their wedding day, and the plant was also considered, since antiquity, as having the properties of an aphrodisiac. Keeping this in mind the Dutch writer Dirck Pieterszoon Pers noted in his translation of Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (published in 1644 as *Iconologia of Uytbeeldinghen des Verstants*) that the myrtle, which 'resembles Venus by its smell', provokes amorous desire and stokes erotic lust:

De Roosen en Myrthen zijn dese Goddinne [Venus] toegeheylight, door de gelijkheyt, die dese reucken met Venus hebben, en door de aenstoockingen en kracht, die de Mirth aen de geylheydt doet. Waer over de Comedyschrijver *Futurius*, terwijl hy *Digon* de hoere afschildert, seyt datse hem de Mirth sullen brengen, die hem krachtiger totte Minnelusten soudē opstoocken.

(Pers 1971: 271)

[The Rose and Myrtle are consecrated to this Goddess [Venus] owing to the similarity that these smells have to Venus, and to how Myrtle stokes and increases lasciviousness. On this the comedy writer *Futurius*, while describing the whore *Digon*, says that they should bring him the Myrtle which will increase his lustful passion]

In the figure of 'Academia', in the opening part of *Iconologia* ('Academia, *Oeffen-plaets der Geleertheyt*, van den Heere *Giov. Zaratino Castellini*'), Cesare Ripa, and after him Pers, prove that the amorous symbolism of the myrtle was not limited to lasciviousness but that it also conveyed a range of other symbolic meanings (fig. 7). The allegorical 'Academia' is described as a woman holding a wreath woven of laurel, ivy and myrtle, with two pomegranates attached to it:

Een vrouwe in weerschijn gekleet, bedaeghd van opsicht en van jaren, met goud gekroont, hebbende in de rechter hant een vijle, al waer boven op 't handvatsel geschreven staet, *detrahit atque polit*, dat is, *zy neemt af en maect glad*: hebbende in de slincker hand een krans, te samen gevlochten van laurier, klimop en mirten, waer aen twee granaet-appels hangen.

(Pers 1971: 1)

[A lady clad in reflection, aged in countenance and years, crowned with gold, in the right hand holding a file, on the handle of which is writted *detrahit atque polit*, which means *she removes and polishes*: in the left hand

she holds a wreath, woven of laurel, ivy and myrtle, with two pomegranates attached]

The plants woven into this garland derive their significance from the types of poetry manifested in Academia. The myrtle stands for the work of the 'honey-sweet poet of love' since it is an emblem of entertainment and pleasure. Both Virgil and Ovid linked this plant to Venus, while the latter called for a myrtle wreath, which he placed on his head, so as to be better able to compose amorous verse:

De krans is met *Lauwer*, *Klimop*, en *Mirthe* omvlochten, om dat dese drie planten de Poeten worden toegevoeght, en dat door de verscheyden manieren van Poesie die in de Academie bloeyen. Oversulx behoort de *Mirth* aen een honighsoet Minnedichter, die met soeticheyte en bevalligheyt zijne minnesangen queelt: want de *Mirth* is een beeld van 't vermaeck en de aengenaemheyt, en *Venus* is moeder van de Liefde. Oock seyt *Nicander*, dat *Venus* tegenwoordigh zijnde, terwijl het oordeel van *Paris* wierde uytgesproken, gekroont was met *Mirth*, om datse haer soo aengenaem was. Waer over *Virgilius* singt,

*Aen Bacchus past de druyl, de Mirth is Venus çier:
En Phoebus wort omkrant met frissche Lauwerier.*

En *Ovidius*, willende het feest van *Aprilis* singen, roept *Venus* aen, dat zy zijne hoofdslapen mette *Mirth* wilde aenraecken, ten einde hy te beter de Minne deuntjes, die haer pasten, soude kunnen singen.

(Pers 1971: 2)

[The wreath is woven around with *Laurel*, *Ivy* and *Myrtle* since these are the three plants dedicated to the poets, which correspond to the various types of poetry that flourish in the Academy. Among these the *Myrtle* belongs to the honey-sweet Poet of Love, who sings his love songs with sweetness and gladness: because the *Myrtle* is an image of diversion and pleasure, and *Venus* is the mother of Love. *Nicander* also says that *Venus*, present at the judgement of *Paris*, was crowned with myrtle because she found the verdict so pleasing. About which *Virgil* sings:

To Bacchus give the grape, the Myrtle adorns Venus.
And Phoebus is crowned with fresh Laurel.

And *Ovid*, wishing to sing about the feast of *Aprilis*, calls on *Venus* to adorn his temples with *Myrtle* so that he would better sing the songs of love that befitted her]

Hoofl lets the speaker place the wreath of laurel and myrtle on the lady's head – suggesting not only her victory in love, but also her learn-

ing and her role as the one who inspires him to write. Like the allegorical Academia, the lady stands for the practice of poetry. This is the 'official' sense of Hooft's sonnet. Apart from all erotic associations, by which the myrtle suggests an awaited nuptial ceremony and sexual passion, what is being constructed here is an allegory of allegiance, in which the poet recognizes, that he has succeeded in his (literary) endeavors only owing to the lady being present as the main actor of the discourse.

This of course helps to explain the sense of the poet's overtly expressed gratitude. Hooft's 'Vonckende God oft gheest van Godes naeste neven' concludes with a scene communicating the lover's subservience and devotion in love. A related theme, in which the lover conveys in slightly similar gestures his obedience to the woman that he is courting, may be found in 'Cond ick u 't binnenst van mijn hart MeVrouwe tooghen' (see above, p. 103). This is incidentally yet another of Hooft's sonnets where the speaker reveals his heart to the lady:

Misdunckens steurnis wolck soud uyt u aenschijn vlien,
 Als ghy sulck een Godin in sulck een Kerck zout sien,
 En seer ootmoedelijck voor haer gheknielt, daer inne,
 Slaefbaere danckbaerheyt, en overgeven jonst,
 Ghevlochten in elckaer, door heussche schoonheys const,
 Met eeuwich heete liefd, en met de Blicxem minne.

(Hooft 1994a: 81)

[The angry cloud of displeasure would vanish from your countenance /
 Were you to see such a Goddess in such a Church, / And very humbly
 kneeling there before her / Slavish thankfulness and devoted service, / Wo-
 ven in one by glad beauty's art / With eternally warm love and the Light-
 ning 'minne']

In both the heart is opened up to reveal a unity of two parts. The allegorical entities woven together in harmonious oneness are in 'Vonckende God oft gheest van Godes naeste neven', the symbols of the lady's amorous victory and, in 'Cond ick u 't binnenst van mijn hart MeVrouwe tooghen', the personalized emotions of the speaker. The lover's subjection is represented in each by a metaphor of 'slavery' ('eeuwighe slavernij'; 'Slaefbaere danckbaerheit'). Emotions are alluded to using a metaphor derived from giving a love token, which can also be read as referring to the service of *amour courtois* ('overgeven jonst'; 'nedrighe jonst'). At least where the vocabulary of amorous servitude is concerned, therefore, both texts employ a similar strategy, perpetuating and adapting the traditional roles and gestures of *amour courtois* to the requirements of 17th century Netherlandic upper middle-class society.

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Fig. 5. Eros and Anteros playing tug of war with a palm branch.
 Anteros is shown here '(...) in the genuine classical sense (...) as a personification of Mutual Love' (Panofsky 1968: 126).
 'Grata belli caussa' [6] in the *Amorum Emblemata* by Otho Vaenius (Antverpiae 1608).



Fig. 6. A man defending himself against a torch-bearing Eros.
 'Amor facilius excluditur, quam expellitur' [53] in the *Amorum Emblemata*
 by Otho Vaenius (Antverpiae 1608).



Fig. 7. The allegorical figure of Academia, shown holding in her left hand a wreath made of laurel, ivy and myrtle with two pomegranates.
 Dirck Pieterszoon Pers, *Iconologia, of Beeldespraec: zijnde Afbeeldingen des Verstands: Van den Edelen en hoogheleerden Romeinschen Ridder Cesare Ripa, en Andere* ('Academia, Oeffen-plaets der Geleertheyt, van den Heere Giov. Zaratino Castellini')

132

S O N N E T.

VVanneer de Vorst des Lichts slaet aen de gulden toomen
 Zijn handt, en beurt om hooch, aensienlijck, uyter Zee,
 Zijn uytghespreyde pruyck, van levend goudt, vvaermee
 Hy naere' anxtvallicheyt, en vaeck, en kreple droomen,
 Van 's menschen lichaem strijckt, en berch, en bos, en boomen,
 En steeden vollickrijck, en velden met het Vee,
 In duyfsteris verdvvaelt, ons levert op haer stee,
 Verheucht hy, met den dach, het Aerdrijck en de stroomen.
 Maer d'andre starren, als nae yvrich van zijn licht,
 Begraeft hy met zijn glans in duyfsterissen dicht,
 En van d'ontelbre schaer, mach't niemant by hem houwen.
 Al eveneens, vvanneer uvv ghêeft de myne roert,
 VVord' ick ghevvaer, dat ghy, in't haylich aenschijn, voert
 Voor my den dach, mijn Son, de nacht voor d'andre vrouwen.

SANG.

Wanneer de Vorst des lights slaet aen de gulden tóómen

Wanneer de Vorst des lights slaet aen de gulden tóómen
 Sijn handt, en beurt om hooch aensienlijck wter Zee
 Sijn wtgespreide pruick van levend goudt, waermee
 Hij naere anxtvallicheit, en vaeck, en creple dróómen
 Van 's menschen lichaem strijckt, en berch, en bos, en bóómen,
 En steeden vollickrijck, en velden met het vee
 In duisternis verdwaelt, ons levert op haer stee,
 Verheucht hij, met den dach, het Aerdtrijck en de stroomen:
 Maer d' andre starren als naeijvrich van sijn licht,
 Begraeft hij, met sijn glans, in duisternissen dicht,
 En van d' ontelbre schaer, mach 't niemand bij hem houwen.
 Al eveneens, wanneer vw Geest de mijne roert,
 Word jck gewaer dat ghij in 't haijlich aenschijn voert
 Voor mij den dach, mijn Son, de nacht voor d' andre vrouwen.

Notes:

Vorst des Lichts – Phoebus/Helios, the god of the sun

beurt om hooch – ‘raises, elevates’: ‘Tillen, opheffen, verheffen’ (WNT 2003: ‘BEUREN’ I) A))

pruyck – ‘the hair on one’s head’: ‘Menschelijk hoofdhaar. In dezen alg. zin thans verouderd (...) Vaak gebezigd in allegorische en mythologische voorstellingen (...) Inzonderheid m. betr. t. Apollo, den zonnegod’ (this passage quoted as illustration) (WNT 2003: ‘PRUIK’ 1) a)).

*naere’ anxtvallichey*t – ‘stifling fear’

vaeck – ‘sleep, drowsiness’: ‘Neiging tot slapen, behoefte aan slaap’ (WNT 2003: ‘VAAK’ I) 1))

kreple – ‘grotesque, crippled’

ons ... stee – ‘giving us instead’

mach’t niemant by hem houwen – ‘none can face up to [the sun]’

Variants:

The *Emblemata amatoria* text (p. 132) follows the manuscript except for several minor changes of a typographic nature such as: ‘Lichts’ for ‘lichts’, ‘toomen’ for ‘tóómen’, ‘Zijn’ for ‘Sijn’, ‘uyter’ for ‘wter’, ‘uytghespreyde’ for ‘wtgespreide’, etc.

Slightly revised punctuation, e.g., ‘...en beurt om hooch, aensienlijck, uytter Zee,’ for ‘...en beurt om hooch aensienlijck wter Zee;’ ‘...pruyck, van levend goudt’ for ‘...pruick van levend goudt’.

Note under the manuscript text: ‘H. t. Muiden. 1610. / 28 Martio. Sondach.’ and ‘MITHRA GRANIDA.’

Commentary:

Opening with a subtle contrast of day and night, light and darkness, ‘Wanneer de Vorst des Lichts slaet aen de gulden toomen’ is one of Hooft’s most intricate exercises in solar symbolism applied to an amorous sonnet. Phoebus, the lord of light, holding in his hands the golden reins of his solar chariot, lifts up from the sea his profuse ‘locks of living gold’ (Van Harmsel 1981: 90). As he rises, he brushes away humanity’s fear and nightmares and sheds his light on sights which until then had been ‘lost in darkness’: mountains and woodland, populous cities and pastures full of livestock. Yet while Earth and its waters rejoice in the daylight given by the sun-god, this cannot be said of ‘other stars’. These, as they are jealous of his glow, Phoebus buries with his rays in thick obscurity. Such is the power of Phoebus’ radiance that no star among the entire ‘uncounted throng’ dares to stand up to him.

Telescoping from the cosmic perspective of the preceding parts of the sonnet to the realm of human passions, the opposition of light and shadow is transferred onto the experience of love. Turning to his beloved, the speaker addresses her as his 'Sun', confessing that whenever her spirit moves his soul, her radiant face rewards him with the light of day, whereas other women are consigned to the realm of night.

The masterful ease with which the unfolding image of the harbinger of dawn, the solar deity Phoebus, is compressed into a single sentence, as well as the poem's steady and assured rhythm, won it universal praise from critics, e.g. Wim Vermeer, who wrote: 'If there is a single sonnet in which Hooft reveals his mastery over this verse form, then it is definitely "Wanneer de Vorst des lichts slaet aen de gulden tóómen"'¹⁴.

Solar imagery belongs to Hooft's most preferred and most widespread symbols from the *Emblemata amatoria* sonnets. While the actual examples are quite varied, there are several main types in his pre-1611 sonnet poetry. In one of these early sonnets, 'Voor 't droevige gemoedt gesmoedt in hooploos leidt' (see above, p. 40), Hooft described the sun personified and in style invoking a classical epic. Similarly as Phoebus in 'Wanneer de Vorst des Lichts slaet aen de gulden toomen', this 'triumphant sun' too reveals a passage from darkness to daylight:

Voor't droevighe ghemoedt ghesmoort in hooploos leydt,
Is niet soo soet het licht, als, nae bedompte weecken,
De triumphante Son comt door de wolcken breecken,
En praelt alleen in't velt, 't welck hy met gloor bespreyt...

(Hooft 1611: 110 / Hooft 1994a: 143)

[For the sorrowful heart smothered in hopeless pain, / Nothing is as sweet as the light, when after overcast weeks, / The triumphant Sun comes breaking through the clouds, and struts alone in the field, on which he spreads his dazzling glory]

A different image of the sun contrasted with the darkness of the night can be found in 'Mijn Lief, mijn Lief, mijn Lief, soo sprack mijn Lief my toe'. Here, by disturbing the lover's dream, the sun becomes a messenger of the 'sad truth' of waking life: 'Maer doe de Morghenstar nam, voor den dach, haer wijck, / Is met de klare Son de waerheyt droef verresen' (Hooft 1611: 117 / Hooft 1994a: 173).

¹⁴ 'Als er één sonnet is waarin Hooft zijn meesterschap in het hanteren van de dichtvorm bewijst, dan is het "Wanneer de Vorst des lichts slaet aen de gulden tóómen"' (Vermeer 1981: 50)

Linked to these images of the sun are similes, more often than not in the form of apostrophes, in which the girl's eyes are compared to the fiery star. One may come across such imagery in Hooft's Petrarchan imitation 'Indien mijn leven sich soo langhe kan verweeren' ('Wt Petrarcha. Gevolcht. *Se la mia vita da l' aspro tormento*'), where we have 'de Songhelijcke glans / Vrouw, van u ooghen schoon...' (Hooft 1611: 106; Hooft 1994a: 65). In the sonnet 'Schoon ooghen die vermeucht te nemen en te gheven' an apostrophe to the radiant light issuing from a woman's eyes is transformed into a solar metonymy similar to the one in 'Wanneer de Vorst des Lichts slaet aen de gulden toomen':

Ach in wat dampe moet mijn siel onseecker sweven
Door wrevle nydicheyt en't ongheval vol schrick,
Met haer verbolghen storm, en swarte wolcken dick,
Sint datse tusschen mijn en u mijn Sonne dreven!

(Hooft 1611: 92 / Hooft 1994a: 82)

[O in what vapours must my soul uncertain float / Due to cruel envy and fearful misfortune / And their angry storm and thick black clouds / Ever since these have come between me, and you, my Sun!]

The sequence of solar imagery in 'Wanneer de Vorst des Lichts slaet aen de gulden toomen' combines two distinct units: an extended allegory in the octave, and a metonymy in the sestet. Similar units are scattered across other poems, and many of them are a starting point for a conceit. The latter is the case here, where the descriptive part (corresponding to the octave) accumulates a momentum which is subsequently released in the closing metonymy.

Hooft's image of the sun emerging at dawn from the sea with a canopy of flaming hair can be read alongside a somewhat parallel description which Ronsard gives of the early hours of the morning in the opening lines of Sonnet LXXVII from *Les Amours* (1552):

De ses cheveux la rousoyante Aurore
Eparsement les Indes remplissoyt,
Et ja le ciel à longz traitz rougissoyt
De meint esmail qui le matin decore,
Quand elle veit la Nympe que j'adore
Tresser son chef, don't l'or, qui jaunissoit,
Le cresp honneur du sien esblouissoit...

(Ronsard 1992: 79)

The main point of difference here is, obviously, the female figure of 'Aurore', whose tresses Ronsard compares later on to the aureate hair of his mistress, as opposed to the male presence of Hooft's Phoebus. The extended description, however, with its syntactically-conditioned sense that the scene of daybreak is gradually unfolding before the reader's eyes, appears to anticipate the way Hooft handles the opening lines of 'Wanneer de Vorst des Lichts slaet aen de gulden toomen'.

Arguing in the final conceit that the lady's face is like the sun which renders other stars (and other women) irrelevant, Hooft proves himself indirectly indebted to two poems from Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, Sonnets 218 and 219 (Ypes 1934: 103). While both of these are likely to have provided him with a blueprint of the general design, Sonnet 218 too operates with an astronomical simile:

Tra quantunque leggiadre donne et belle
giunga costei ch' al mondo non à pare,
col suo bel viso suol dell'altre fare
quel che fa 'l di de le minori stelle.
Amor par ch' a l'orecchie mi favelle,
dicendo: 'Quanto questa in terra appare
fia 'l viver bello; et poi 'l vedrem turbare,
perir vertuti e 'l mio regno con elle.
'Come Natura al ciel la luna e 'l sole,
a l'aere I venti, a la terra erbe et fronde,
a l'uomo et l'intelletto et le parole,
'et al mar ritollesse I pesci et l'onde:
tanto et più fien le cose oscure et sole
se Morte li occhi suoi chiude et asconde.'

(Petrarch 1996: 318)

Even though the final lines of 'Wanneer de Vorst des Lichts slaet aen de gulden toomen' are undeniably an oblique paraphrase of the passage from Petrarch's Sonnet 218, other texts may also be called to reflect on Hooft's conceit here. The Petrarchan motif of the lady as a sun whose light puts other heavenly bodies to shame is the theme of the emblem 'Entre toutes une parfaite' from the volume *Délie. Object de plus haulte vertue* by Maurice Scève (fig. 8). Coupled to this emblem, Scève's Distich XV explores the motif of Délie's perfection, praising her virtue as unique amongst the ills and falsehoods of a fallen universe:

Toy seule as fait, que ce vil Siecle avare
Et aveuglé de tout sans iugement,
Contre l'utile ardamment se prepare

Pour l'esbranler à meilleur changement:
Et plus ne hait l'honneste estrangement,
Commençant ià à cherir la vertu.

Aussi par toy ce grand Monstre abatu,
Qui l'Univers de son odeur infecte,
T'adorera soubz tes piedz combatu,
Comme qui es entre toutes parfaicte.

(Scève 1564: 6v)

Similarly to Hooft's beloved from 'Wanneer de Vorst des Lichts slaet aen de gulden toomen', Délie is addressed as the speaker's 'sun', e.g. in Distich XII, a eulogy of the lover's suffering:

Ce lyen d'or, raiz de toy *mon Soleil*,
Qui par le bras t'asseruit Ame, et Vie,
Detient si fort avec le veuë l'oeil,
Que ma pensee il t'a toute ravie,
Me demonstrant, certes, quil me convie
A me stiller tout soubz ton habitude...

(Scève 1564: 5v)

The central theme of the device which Scève conceived for his *dizaine*, 'Entre toutes une parfaite', surfaces in Daniel Heinsius's series of emblem books, *Quaeris quid sit Amor?* (1601) and *Emblemata amatoria* (1608) (fig. 9). Under a sententium from Horace's Ode 1.12, 'Inter omnes', originally a reference to the Julian dynasty, whose glory surpasses that of all other houses in the same way as the moon eclipses the stars, Heinsius compared the beautiful face of the lady to the sun, whose brightness makes all other stars seem 'blind' by comparison:

Twee saecken boven al met glans den prijs behaelen
Mijn liefs seer claer ghesicht / en Phoebus gulden straelen.
De sterren by de Son gheleken zijn toch blendt
End' in haer schoonigheyt en vind' ick oock geen endt.

(Heinsius 1608: D3v)

[Two things above all else brilliantly gain the prize / My love's clear countenance, and Phoebus's golden rays. / The stars beside the Sun seem merely blind, / But to her beauty I too can find no end]

Seamlessly integrating two motifs – the first, a heroic Phoebus dispelling darkness, and the second, the sun as a lesser light compared to the lady's eyes – Hooft's sonnet has been considered as uniting two thematic

types that were essential to this form in the Netherlands at the turn of the 16th and 17th century. These were classified by Wim Vermeer as the ‘melodious’ descriptive sonnet (most often in the tradition of the Pleiade poets) and a ‘rationalizing’ epigrammatic one descended from the Latin and Netherlandic devices and blasons of the mid-16th century (Vermeer 1981: 42). These unique features of ‘Wanneer de Vorst des Lichts slaet aen de gulden toomen’ – including a solar image subverted in the final verses by an unexpected conceit – contributed to making this sonnet one of Hooft’s most artistically refined exercises in the love lyric.

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D E L I E.

XIIII.

Elle me tient par ces cheueulx lié,
 Et ie la tien par ceulx là mesmes prise.
 Amour subtil au noud s'est allié
 Pour se deuaincre vne si ferme prise:
 Combien qu'ailleurs tendist son entreprise,
 Que de vouloir deux d'un feu tourmenter.
 Car (& vray est) pour experimenter
 Dedans la fosse a mys & Loup, & Chicure
 Sans se pouoir l'un l'autre contenter,
 Sinon respondre à mutuelle fiebure.

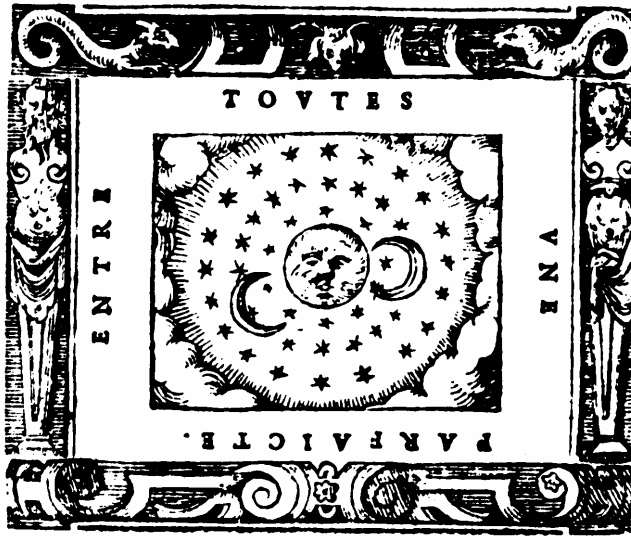


Fig. 8. The emblem 'Entre toutes une parfaite' from Maurice Scève's *Délie, object de plus haulte vertu* (Paris, N. Du Chemin, 1564) [5r] <BnF>



Fig. 9. Scève's emblem in an amorous context.

My lady, like Phoebus eclipses the stars with her beauty.

'Inter omnes' [10] from Daniel Heinsius's *Emblemata amatoria* (Amstelredam 1608).

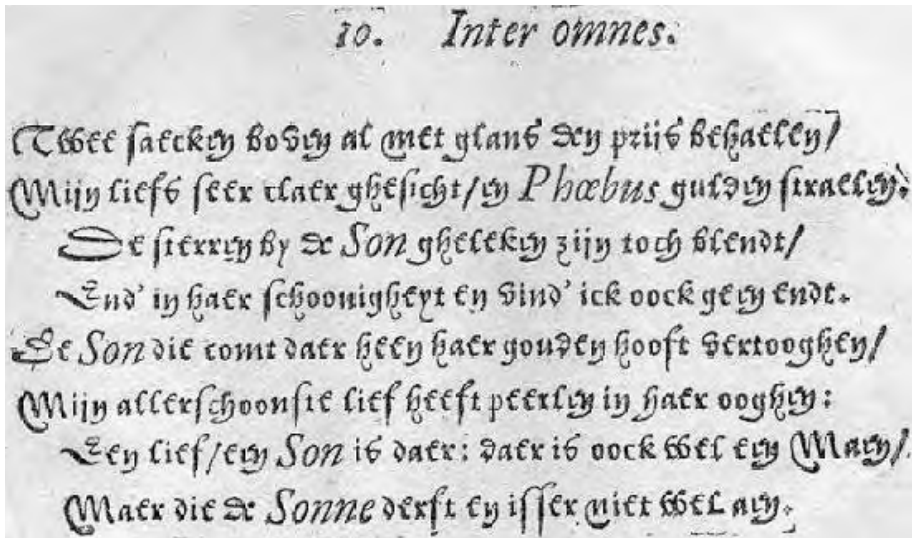


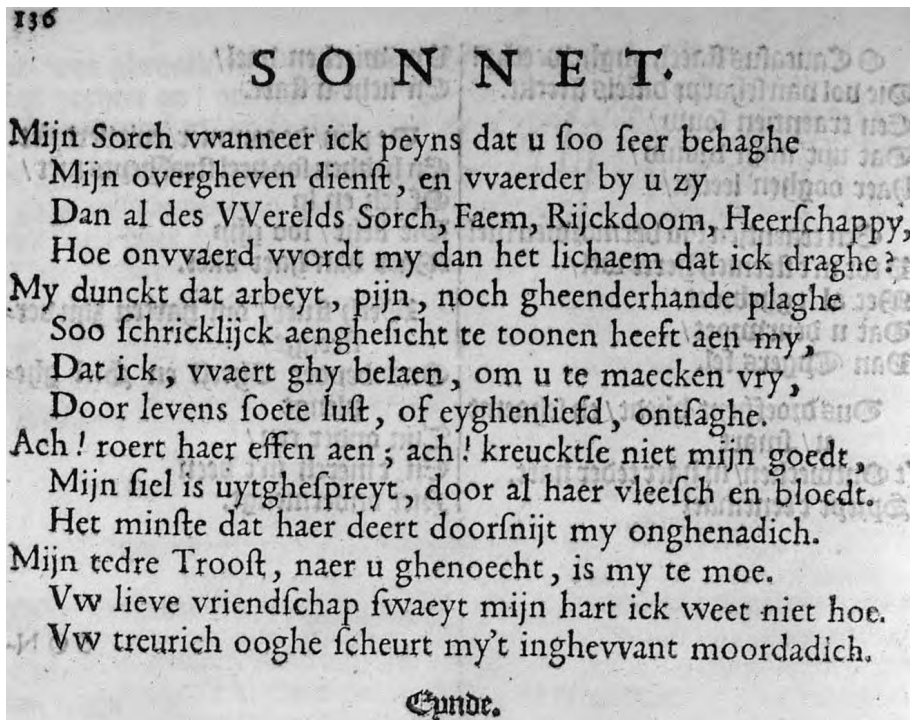
Fig. X. The Latin text on the circumference of the *pictura* of Heinsius's emblem:

Obtenebrat stellas Phoebe: tu sola puellas:
 Pulcræ eßent aliæ, tu nisi, pulcra, fores

The Dutch *subscriptio* for this emblem:

Twee saecken boven al met glans den prijs behaelen/
 Mijn liefs seer claer ghesicht/en *Phæbus* gulden straelen.
 De sterren by de *Son* gheleken zijn toch blendt/
 End' in haer schoonigheyt en vind' ick oock geen endt.
 De *Son* die comt daer heen haer gouden hooft vertooghen/
 Mijn allerschoonste lief heeft peerlen in haer ooghen:
 Een lief/en *Son* is daer: daer is oock wel een *Maen*.
 Maer die de *Sonne* derft en isser niet wel aen.

(Emblem Project Utrecht)



Mijn Sorch, wanneer jck peins dat v soo seer behaeghe

Mijn Sorch, wanneer jck peins dat v soo seer behaeghe
 Mijn overgeven dienst, en waerder bij v zij
 Dan al des werelds Sorch, Faem, Rijckdoom, Heerschappij;
 Hoe onwaerd wort mij dan het lichaem dat jck draeghe?
 Mij dunckt dat arbeit, pijn, noch geenderhande plaeghe
 Soo schrieklijck aengesicht te toonen heeft aen mij,
 Dat jck, waert ghij belaeën, om v te maecken vrij,
 Door levens soete lust of eigenliefd, ontsaeghe.
 Ach roert haer effen aen: Ach crenctse niet mijn Goet
 Mijn Siel is wtgespreit door al haer vleesch en bloet
 Het minste dat haer deert doorsnijt mij ongenaedich.
 Mijn tedre Troost, naer v genoecht is mij te moe,
 Vw lieve vriendschap swaeyt mijn hart, jck weet niet hoe,
 Vw treurich ooghe scheurt mij 't ingewant moorddadich.

Notes:

mijn Sorch – here: ‘my dear, my beloved’: ‘Persoon die iem. is toegewijd, soms zelfs zooveel als geliefde’ (WNT 2003: ‘ZORG’ I) I) 13) b))

des Werelds Sorch – here: ‘pursuit of worldly ambition’: ‘Het streven en de pogingen die men aanwendt voor het tot stand brengen en in stand houden van financiën, welvaart, verzekeringen’ (WNT 2003: ‘ZORG’ I) I) 6) b))

belaen – ‘burdened, weighed down [with unhappiness, sorrow, etc.]’: ‘bedroefd, bezorgd’

ontsaghe – ‘fear, be terrified’: ‘Vreezen, duchten’ (WNT 2003: ‘ONTZIEN’ I) A) 1))

roert haer effen aan – ‘touch her lightly’

te moe – ‘being of a given disposition’: ‘zóó gestemd, gezind als eene bepaling aanduidt’ (WNT 2003: ‘MOED’ A)). The passage ‘naer u ghenoecht, is my te moe’ might be roughly paraphrased as ‘my feelings depend on your approval’.

Variants:

The *Emblemata amatoria* text (p. 136) closely follows the manuscript except for several minor changes of a typographic nature such as: ‘ick’ for ‘jck’, ‘peyns’ for ‘peins’, ‘behaghe’ for ‘behaeghe’, ‘Overgheven’ for ‘Overgeven’, ‘by’ for ‘bij’, etc.

Slightly altered punctuation, e.g., ‘Mijn Sorch wanneer’ for ‘Mijn Sorch, wanneer’; a comma instead of a semicolon after ‘Heerschappy’ in the third verse, etc.

Note under the manuscript text: ‘24 April. Saterd. / Amsterdam 1610.’ and ‘MITHRA GRANIDA’. Under the poem in the 1611 edition the word ‘Eynde’ in fractura.

Commentary:

The poem that Hooft placed at the very end of the lyrical part of *Emblemata amatoria*, ‘Mijn Sorch wanneer ick peyns dat u soo seer behaghe’, articulates a confident message of the lover’s devotion to the woman who has finally consented to his service. Enraptured, the speaker of the sonnet announces that she is pleased to accept his devoted service which means more to her than worldly ambition, fame, riches and power. In exchange for her acceptance of his courtship, the speaker proclaims his readiness to renounce his ‘unworthy body’ for her sake, avowing his willingness to serve her regardless of the cost. Neither physical pain, nor any other torment, were it ever so terrible, will ever prevent him, he

declares, whether through love of life or selfishness, from taking up her burdens as his own.

In the first tercet, an aside possibly addressed to God or Love (Min, Amor), the speaker begs that this unnamed deity might ‘touch’ the girl (or most probably: her heart) gently and in such a way as not to harm her. Since his soul is intermingled with her flesh and blood, the smallest thing that might bring her suffering would cause him to experience infinitely greater pain. In the final tercet the speaker resumes the apostrophic address of the octave, offering the girl yet another symbolic vision of a unity of human hearts. His emotions are coupled to her wishes while her ‘friendship’ moves his heart in mysterious ways. Conversely, when the lady is sad, her sorrowful eye cuts through his ‘innards’.

Following the tradition of *amour courtois*, “Mijn Sorch wanneer ick peyns dat u soo seer behaghe” articulates a dichotomous vision of love structured around such conventional pairs as power and disempowerment, domination and subjection, mastery and servitude. Yet far from being confined to these opposites alone, the relationship relies (or so the reader is led to believe) on a mutual awareness and recognition of each other’s feelings. This awareness proceeds from the signs communicated by the woman, which hint at a rather atypical appreciation of the speaker’s dedicated service. Knowledge of the lady’s gratitude convinces the speaker, inspired by an even stronger sense of responsibility, to renew his pledge. Yet even though ‘Mijn Sorch wanneer ick peyns dat u soo seer behaghe’, written in 1610 immediately before the marriage to Christina van Erp, belongs to what has been called the mature period of Hooft’s poetry, the model of courtship conveyed in it recalls much earlier works. In ‘Aerdsche goddin alleen besitster van mijn hert’, a sonnet from the play *Achilles en Polyxena* (ca. 1600), Hooft employs a similar set of concepts to oppose the dejection of the lover whose mistress treats him with indifference to the good fortune of one whose lady accepts his faithful service:

Aerdsche goddin alleen besitster van mijn hert,
 En ziele van mijn ziel, meestersche der ghedachten,
 Wiens schoonheys klaren glans, en heushey my verkrachten,
 Als in den blonden strick mijn her ghevangen wert.
 Soo ghy niet aensien wilt de wreedtheyt van mijn smert,
 En stoppen v ghehoor voor mijn bedruckte clachten,
 Van my hebby dan niet als droeffheyte te verwachten
 En afghesloofde doot, daer in ick blijf verwart.
 Maer gaedy tot genae u goedertieren wennen,
 En wilt de trouwe Min vws dienaers recht bekennen,

Dan sal ick zijn verlost van droeffheijt sorch en pijn,
 Mijn hert dat stadelijck en altoos sou verteeren
 En sal dan nimmermeer in assche konnen keeren,
 Maer in een soeten brandt altoos onsterffelijck sijn.

(Hooft 1994a: 20)

[Earthly goddess, the only to possess my heart, / And soul of my soul,
 mistress of thoughts, / Whose beauty's clarity and gladness ravishes me /
 When my heart gets entangled in the blonde nets. / If you do not pause to
 notice the cruelty of my torment, / And refuse to listen to my suppressed
 complaints, / You have nothing to expect from me but sorrow / And weary
 death, where I shall find my end. / But as soon as you turn your heart
 to gentleness, / And truly acknowledge your servant's faithful Love / Then
 I will be released from sorrow, woe and pain, / My heart that constantly
 would pine away / Will then never be reduced to ashes / But in a sweet fire
 it will remain forever immortal]

What the speaker of 'Mijn Sorch wanneer ick peyns dat u soo seer behaghe' regards as a fact – that is to say, the lady's satisfaction with the attention she receives – was only one of the two choices that the 'mistress of his thoughts' was presented with.

Other themes too, such as the respective value of love and earthly things and the empathy induced by love, are related to *loci communes* in Hooft's early oeuvre. In the last, epigrammatic tercet of the sonnet 'Waert dat Iuppijn ten hoof my in zijn hemel bade', Hooft's speaker declines to take the place of honour at a feast hosted by Jupiter so that the lady might enjoy this pleasure instead:

(...) Maer waer Iuppijn te vreen, dat hy u in mijn stee,
 Mijn Vrouw in zynen stoel ter tafel sitten dee,
 En jonde dat ick stondt en sach u lust ghenieten,
 Wel waerder waer miin vreucht dan, als gheneucht en rust;
 Soo lief waer my u lief, soo lust my anders lust;
 En eensaem lusten ziin my meer nauw als verdrieten.

(Hooft 1611: 113 / Hooft 1994a: 172)

[(...) But were Jupiter content that you instead of me / My lady, took place
 at the table in his chair, / And were he to let me watch you pleased by this
 / My joy would then be greater than pleasure or peace; / So enjoyable to me
 would be your enjoyment, so pleasant the pleasure of others; / And solitary
 pleasures I find worse than sorrow]

The sense of empathy projected in the penultimate verse of this poem – 'Soo lief waer my u lief, soo lust my anders lust' – interlocks with the

significance of the words 'naer u ghenoecht is my te moe' from 'Mijn Sorch wanneer ick peyns dat u soo seer behaghe', both phrases intimating the power of the beloved person to tinge the speaker's mind with pleasure or sorrow.

Around the year 1625, which is well over a decade after 'Mijn Sorch wanneer ick peyns dat u soo seer behaghe', Hooft returned to the same theme, reflecting in the sonnet 'Fantazij' on the steadfast and uncompromising devotion which should be expected of an ideal lover:

Ghij minnaers, dien, door brandt, het waetrend' ooghe ziet,
 Die steen in traenen weekt, die balken bujght met klaeghen,
 En doet liefs wederzin, den naem van wreetheit draeghen;
 Indien ghij dingt nae loon, wt liefd' en dient ghij niet.
 Met ander scherp, de God, dien jck ten doel stae, schiet;
 Zijn vlamme blust mij 't vier van eighen welbehaeghen.
 De zinlijkheên van haer, wier lust mijn lusten jaeghen
 Zijn deughden in mijn' zin; en wee, dien deughd verdriet.
 O Mannelijke Min, die voor genae de neenen
 Zoo wel neemt als de jaen; ghij loopt geen blaeuwe schenen,
 'T moet wezen vw meestres haer wil al eer ghij vrijt.
 Me vrouw en belgh 's v niet, dat jck het smeeken schuwe,
 Jck wacht slechts op geboôn. Zoo dappr een schoon als 't vwe
 Met kraftelooser liefd als dees', zich niet en lijdt.

(Hooft 1994a: 385)

[O lovers, whose watery eyes are seen as caused by fire / Who by their tears soften a stone, who bend balks with their complaining, / And who give to love's disdain the name of cruelty; / If you serve desiring reward, you do not serve out of love. / The God, whose target I am, shoots with a different arrow; / His flame puts out the flame of my own self-satisfaction / The whims of her, whose pleasure my pleasures seek / Are virtues in my eye; and woe to him, who by virtue is displeased. / O Manly Love, who generously takes the 'ayes' as well as the 'nays': you will not be disappointed in love, / You must give your mistress her will before you court her. / My Lady, do not let it deceive you that I avoid pleading, / I'm merely waiting on your commands. As great a beauty as yours / Should not take compassion on as powerless a love as this]

Rejecting a conventional pose of a self-centered and obsessively reward-oriented lover ('indien ghij dingt nae loon, wt liefd' en dient ghij niet'), who harps with the tearful eyes of Petrarchan cliché on the cruelty of his unwilling mistress, Hooft presents his own vision of a self-possessed 'manly Love' ('Mannelijke Min'), which accepts a 'yes' as well as a 'no' for an answer. The love imaged in 'Fantazij' has been radically purged

of any hint of selfishness, and still, as in the earlier poems, the central concept of an amorous 'dienst' is preserved in unaltered shape. As one Dutch critic put it, 'the speaker has silenced his own wishes and desires. Her desires are his only point of reference'.¹⁵

The highly physical imagery in this sonnet combined with the immediacy of the vision of the lover's physical suffering gave occasion for Dutch critics to examine the text in the context of 17th century scientific thought in Dutch visual culture (Kusters 1997: 46-61). Noting that the psychological state of the speaking persona is expressed in terms of a suffering body, and that this body is also 'dissected' or 'disemboweled' ('scheurt my't inghewant'), the critic Wiel Kusters argued for interpreting this poem through emblematic representations of *vanitas* inspired by a *Theatrum anatomicum*. Such a theatre, where the public could observe lectures on human anatomy, operated in Leiden in Hooft's student days.

Images of anatomical theatres, such as etchings, superimposed the groundbreaking notion of a public (and publicized) scientific study of the body onto an existing tradition of allegorical interpretation. The outcome, according to Kusters, was effectively a hybrid system of meaning, in which realistic imagery based on observation competed for primacy with traditional allegorical symbolism. A readiness on the part of artists and poets to assimilate objectivized imagery of physicality into traditional allegorical frameworks of meaning ultimately caused that the images as a whole, in Kusters' view, dissolved into abstraction, which is exactly what in his opinion went wrong with Hooft's poem. Once a pre-existing allegorical meaning is projected referents onto the physical body, its primary significance is lost, and the whole disintegrates into a futile self-serving exercise which is essentially solipsistic:

Hoewel de dichter niet wil dat iets of iemand de ander onzacht aanraakt of krenkt, reduceert hij haar gestalte ten slotte tot niet meer dan een oog: een oog dat niet zorgt of koestert, maar pijnigt en doodt. Daarmee voert hij de allegoriserende van de geliefde in feite zo ver door, dat zij tot het *allegorische principe zelf* vervluchtigt. Zij *wordt* de allegorische blik, losgelaten, Kusters maintains, op zijn lijfelijkheid

(Kusters 1997: 57)

[Although the poet does not want anyone or anything to hurt the other [the addressee of the poem], he reduces her figure, in the end, to nothing more than an eye: an eye that does not bring care or devotion, but pain and death. In this way he extends the allegory so far that his beloved dis-

¹⁵ 'Zijn eigen verlangens heeft hij het zwijgen opgelegd. Háár verlangens zijn zijn enige oriëntatiepunt' (Strengholt 1980: 27).

solves in the *allegorical principle as such*. She *becomes* the allegorical gaze, released onto his physical body]

Regardless of the inspiration that Hooft may have derived from the *Theatrum Anatomicum* at the university of Leiden, the motif of the lover's body 'disemboweled' by the lady's gaze may also be interpreted as a *topos* of 16th century poetry. Its literary antecedents may be traced back to Petrarch's Canzone 23, where the speaker describes Laura's actions in the following terms:

Questa che col mirar gli animi fura
m'aperse il petto el' cor prese con mano,
dicendo a me: 'Di ciò non far parola.'

(Petrarch 1996: 28)

While the lady in Petrarch's poem removes the speaker's heart from his chest in what appears to be a stylized figurative gesture, at the hands of later imitators this theme became increasingly endowed with an intense 'coloration sadique' of a realistic kind not found in the initial variant (Mathieu 1976: 327). This later concreteness, paired with a tendency to emphasize the physicality of the suffering inflicted upon the lover, manifests itself in the poetry of Joachim Du Bellay, who wrote in the *Vers lyriques*, in Ode XI 'A une Dame cruelle et inexorable':

Pourquoi arraches-tu le coeur
Dont Amour par toy feut vainqueur?
Pourquoy fais-tu, ainsi que deux tenailles,
Sentir tes mains en ,mes vives entrailles?

(Mathieu 1976: 327)

This starkly accentuated portrayal of the speaker's torment, together with a vivid depiction of his 'living entrails' (Du Bellay: 'vives entrailles'), became even more pronounced in the case of a poet such as Agrippa d'Aubigné (1552-1630) (Mathieu 1976: 328). Revelling in the physical metaphors of his predecessors, D'Aubigné brought the theme of bodily dismemberment to new heights of lurid detail and graphic precision:

Quand du sort inhumain les tentailles flambantes
Du milieu de mon corps tirent cruellement
Mon coeur qui bat encor' et pousse obstinément
Abandonnant les corps, ses plaintes impuissantes,
Que je sen des douleurs, de peines violentes!

Mon corps demeure sec, abbatu de tourment,
 Et le coeur qu'on m'arrache est de mon sentiment,
 Ces partz meurent en moy, l'une de l'autre absentes,
 Tous mes sens esperduz souffrent de ses rigueurs,
 Et tous esgalement portent de ses malheurs
 L'infiny qu'on ne peut pour despartir estreindre...

(Mathieu 1976: 328)

Describing the lady's pain and sorrowful gaze in almost surgical terms as the dissection of the speaker's flesh, Hooft stays in noticable proximity to the 'reseau significatif', which Du Bellay, D'Aubigné, and other 16th century French poets created several decades earlier out of this Petrarchan 'image-mère' (Mathieu 1976: 329). However, instead of aligning this theme with the representation of a fair 'Cruelle', as can be seen in the poem by Du Bellay, and without taking such an aesthetic delight in pictures of torment in the way D'Aubigné does, Hooft integrates his version into an entirely different narrative – not one of cruelty but one of empathy, as his speaker aims to prove just how far he is prepared to go to serve his lady.

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Chapter 4

TEACHING ABOUT LOVE FROM KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCES. P.C. HOOFT'S POETRY AND ITS EUROPEAN LINEAGE

Readers of P.C. Hooft's poetry are often confronted with the assumption, suggested by some Dutch critics, that the author of the *Emblemata amatoria* was an intensely private poet who wrote almost without exception for the women whom he courted and whom we know under their pseudonyms: Charife, Diana, Chariclea and others. In the light of this assumption, it may strike us as unusual to think of Hooft's poetry as being read during his lifetime by a much wider public than just this fairly narrow group of friends. Unlike the impression given by some critics, the members of this public in all likelihood did not consider themselves eavesdropping on Hooft's private confessions, but took to his poems as entertaining and informative specimens of general knowledge on the subject of love. Yet when one reads the poems as individual pieces, isolated from one another, or as transcriptions from Hooft's private manuscripts (which were studied from the 19th century onwards as a basic source of information on his poetry), it is not easy to challenge the implicit assumption. We still tend to think that Hooft's poetry should be primarily read in the context of its immediate origins, together with the private biography of the poet. A very different image, however, arises when we read these poems in the context where they belonged in Hooft's time, in the song-books and emblem books that found their way to wealthy, young, well-educated, mostly city-dwelling readers in the Netherlands.

The belief that Hooft wrote primarily for a narrow circle of intimate acquaintances implies that he went about publishing his work more or less accidentally and that the act of publication, therefore, does not shed much light on the poems themselves. This conclusion can be revised when one looks to a volume like the *Emblemata amatoria*, the first published edition of Hooft's poetry. It is there that the sonnets, along with the rest of Hooft's lyrical output, are placed in a setting that is significantly different from the one that most 20th century critics in the Neth-

erlands have hitherto been examining. For one, this setting is no longer undividedly textual, as words go hand-in-hand with images. Moreover, it is a setting which as an 'emblematic' mosaic of texts and subtexts invites us to reach beyond particular poems to re-connect them to a wider network of literature both within and outside the Low Countries. Gradually, as we read Hooft's lyrical poetry in these surroundings, we become aware of how – far from functioning on their own – it becomes part of the mechanisms and logic of the emblem. Offsetting the first half of the volume, the *emblemata*, by a second half containing lyrical poetry, Hooft as it were turns the symmetrical structure of the *Emblemata amatoria* into an emblem in its own right, in which the texts of the latter act as a *subscriptio* to the *picturae* of the former.

By becoming part of the emblematic apparatus, the sonnets, along with all the other poetry, become subject to the *Emblemata amatoria*'s overarching program of teaching the ways of love through the pleasure of looking at, reading, decoding and (re-)connecting hidden meanings. This program is laid out in the form of the author-narrator's dialogue with Cupid in the rhymed preface to *Emblemata amatoria*, 'Voorreden tot de leucht'. It was there that the 17th century reader learned of the purpose of the images and texts that he (or she) has before him/her. The signs were to explain Cupid's ways to men and women who in their ignorance failed in love and as a result, disdained or abused it. To help them overcome their resentment (and any other prejudice), Cupid would narrate his maneuvers to an earthly lover, who in turn would re-tell them to his (implied) audience. Although this introductory dream-vision only hints at a re-collection of a narrative, the contents are decidedly presented as truthful, trustworthy and inherently useful. By gleaning the accounts of Cupid recounted by the poet-narrator, the lovers reading them will become more knowledgeable themselves. Far from being surprised or overwhelmed by passion, they will be able to make good use of their love at the right time and in the right surroundings. Also, it is implied, this knowledge will help them to gain self-awareness. Through this they will reap the fruits of love instead of struggling with its power.

The implicit programme of the 'Voorreden' suggests that love is a skill that can be learned, a discipline that takes passion and refines it to create a cultural network of knowledge and proper ways of deportment. This doctrine can be extended from the *emblemata* to all texts from the *Emblemata amatoria*, including sonnets. No longer the self-contained fourteen-line capsules of thought and emotion that so much 20th century criticism made them out to be, Hooft's sonnets become immediately more open to acknowledging their functional interplay with other texts

and images, and their interpretations, both previous and currently established, can be placed in a different light. Calling in question old certainties and revealing new points of view, the reader who agrees to take this course in love is guided – just as Hooft's first Netherlandic readers were – to engage with texts from the *Emblemata amatoria* and other sources, as she or he researches them for the learning that they contain.

As critics we can ask ourselves where this learning came from, and it is then that we can follow this new non-linear, extroverted and pragmatic knowledge-oriented reading with greater awareness. Owing to the historical context of Hooft's activities in the Chambers of Rhetoric, it no surprise that he wrote poetry for a learned audience that could appreciate such erudition. The '*kamerbroeders*' were also an audience who were very likely to call for a didactic policy to match the public-oriented profile of the Chambers. This intertextual reading places the spotlight on literary networks and the genre structures fostered within them that thrived in the Netherlands of Hooft's time.

The *Emblemata amatoria* are an edition at the crossroads. As an emblem book and a collection of poems, it is a publication that crosses generic boundaries, and one through which the histories of these genres and the literary institutions in which they were maintained, pass and converge. Yet this is doubly so – the same goes for the genre selected as the focus of this research. The sonnet acts as a prism through which, refracted by institutional structures and individual poetics, we see the spectrum of literary life in the early 17th century Netherlands.

Without losing sight of these factors, which set in motion a specific power-play, we can search for and locate the intertexts that Hooft's sonnets activate. The intertexts promoting the goals of the didactic policy of the *Voorreden* (i.e. studying love with a view towards profitable investment and long-term yields) are found scattered among several distinct categories of literary texts, all of which share the same defining characteristic. They were seen by Hooft and his Renaissance contemporaries as a source of knowledge that could be accessed by those who – just as when reading an emblem – had the acuity to reach beyond the overt surface towards a symbolic or allegorical dimension.

Hooft's thinking about literature, revealed through his sonnets, makes him an heir to a wide poetic tradition and opens a window on the practices and functionalities of *imitatio* in 17th century Dutch poetry. The comparative method applied in this reading of the sonnets from *Emblemata amatoria* provides tangible evidence of the ways in which Hooft adapts individual motifs within his poetic discourse.

Consistently following a strategy of creating poetic texts which would function as universal illustrations of love for readers seeking instruction, Hooft resorts time and time again to what may be termed 'scientific' motifs. Particularly with regard to sonnets capturing the instant of falling in love, and those dissecting the painful phenomenon of erotic melancholy, poetic discourse representing these aspects of love had to be reinforced by references to authoritative knowledge and practice. 'De Stralen mijns ghesichts, die'r mengden in de stralen' offers an intertextual paraphrase of a description of *innamoramento* which mirrors a homologous motif found in Castiglione's *Libro del Corteggiano*. Yet the same poem also provides examples of how Hooft merges this with other culturally meaningful intertexts, expressing the workings of love by means of images of torchlight and fire similar to what we can find in poems by Jean de Sponde and Olivier de Magny.

The philosophy of Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert forms another significant resource of authoritative knowledge related to passion, especially where the relation of erotic love (Min) to spiritual love (Liefde) comes into play. In 'Mijn Vrouw de Min en Ick hebben een harde strijt' and 'Cond ick u 't binnenst van mijn hart MeVrouwe tooghen' Hooft appears to be dialectically contesting Coornhert's philosophical discourse. Although he takes over Coornhert's basic terms, Hooft modifies them by giving to his 'liefde' and 'min' a significantly more complementary meaning, arguing for a negotiable compromise between what the philosopher saw as irreconcilable realizations of human affection.

In the quest for authoritative texts that could be adapted as instructive illustrations of love, Hooft resorts to the fund of scientific knowledge conveyed in Galen's theories of medicine. Hooft's practice can be examined in the sonnet 'Wech soete sotterny, flux segg' ick wilt verreyesen'. Here his description of the causes and symptoms of amorous melancholy takes the form of a close paraphrase of some specific notions derived from Galen's writings on this subject. Galen's texts, still very influential in the 16th and 17th century, were read by authors of medical treatises throughout Europe. They became a source of authoritative scientific discourse for such authors as the Frenchman Jacques Ferrand, whose *Traité de l' essence et guérison de l'amour* (1610 and 1623) can be confronted with the ideas transmitted in Hooft's sonnet.

Sometimes a specific motif owed its illustrative and exemplary function to its origins in classical poetry. This general category can be understood in the early 17th century Netherlands as comprising not only Latin and some Greek poetry, but also the most highly accomplished work of moderns such as Petrarch. The sonnets 'Cond ick u 't binnenst van mijn

hart MeVrouwe tooghen' and 'Vonckende God oft gheest van Godes naeste neven' are structured around Hooft's reworking of the Ovidian motif of the lover opening his heart to communicate its contents to his beloved. In both of these a paraphrase of a well-known classical metaphor can be interpreted as Hooft's response to the work of two significant 16th century poets, Clement Marot and Philippe Desportes. This response signaled not only the intrinsic cultural value attached at the onset of the 17th century to poetry which marked a new aesthetic horizon in the Netherlands, it was also a sign of the awareness that such poetry, precisely owing to its status, could be applied to create the social norms of elegant courtship, which were much sought after by Hooft's readers.

Another author of high renown regarded as comparable to the classics was the Dutch Neolatin poet Janus Secundus. One of his *Basia* poems ('Basion IV') is an intertext for Hooft as 'Waert dat Iuppijn ten hoof my in zijn hemel bade'. Secundus's poem was imitated by other European poets, e.g. Remy Belleau; indeed Hooft clearly refers to Belleau's version of Secundus's text where the French poet emphasizes the speaker's renunciation of self-interest. Such a rejection of a self-centered stance in favor of an ethic of altruistic generosity pervades Hooft's sonnets and forms a significant part of the values to be inculcated as part of the didactic program of the *Emblemata*.

Also on a classical theme, Hooft's 'Mijn lief, mijn Lief, mijn Lief. soo sprack mijn Lief my toe' draws on an intertext from a peripheral passage from Secundus's Elegy 1.10 ("Somnium") to transform a dream vision (tapping in turn on one of Ovid's elegies) into a conceit expressing the speaker's astonishment at the all too deceptive resemblance of erotic dreams to reality. This was yet another lesson in the management of the psyche that could be deemed useful to Hooft's readers setting out on the pathways of courtship.

As the poetry of Petrarch had a standing nearly equal to that of Latin texts as a discourse on love, it is no surprise that Hooft built on some of the Italian poet's verse for the benefit of Dutch readers. One of these imitations is the *Emblemata amatoria* sonnet beginning with the lines "Indien mijn leven sich soo langhe kan verweeren" (sometimes better known under its manuscript title "Wt Petrarcha. Gevolcht. *Se la mia vita da l'aspro tormento*"). Here the original Petrarchan theme of passive resignation is transformed into a forceful (and even somewhat brusque) argument with a disdainful lady. The tone of legal debate which informs the poem is perhaps a vestige of Hooft's days as a student of law in Leiden. It too can be seen, in the light of the 'Voorreden', as yet another authenticating practice which served to augment the educational function of the poems as objec-

tive images of love. The changes Hooft carries out here can be contrasted with a different paraphrase of Petrarch's poem, Ronsard's famous Sonnet XLIII from *Le second livre de sonnets pour Hélène*, 'Quand vous serez bien vieille, au soir, à la chandelle'.

Hooft's sonnets feature a significant category of motifs which refer to the tradition of Petrarchan poetry. In one example, from the sonnet 'Voor't droevighe ghemoedt ghesmoort in hooploos leydt', the speaker's powerful joy at seeing his beloved is given iconic form through Petrarch's image of a stag from the *Canzoniere* (Song 270). The motif of the lady as a worshipped 'idol', occurring for example in 'Schoon ooghen die vermeucht te nemen en te gheven', references a tradition which includes a passage from Petrarch's Canzone 30 'Giovene donna sotto un verde lauro'. Other Petrarchan motifs are related to solar symbolism, either with regard to the 'sun-like' eyes of the lady or her entire person. The latter motif appears in the sonnet 'Wanneer de Vorst des Lichts slaet aen de gulden toomen'. Hooft's poem ends with a conceit comparing the lady to the sun whose rays leave other stars (i.e. other women) in darkness. It is a simile paraphrasing a passage from Petrarch's Sonnet 218, which was later emblemized by Maurice Scève in *Délie*, and subsequently reapplied, also as an emblem, by Daniel Heinsius in *Quaeris quid sit Amor*. This motif receives a key structural function in Hooft's poem, illustrating and summarizing, as it does, its main themes: a description of Phoebus bringing light to the world, and a confession of the exclusive feelings which the lover discovers in his heart. This occurs as the poems from the latter part, true to the program of the *Voorreden*, gradually accentuate the meanings and sensibilities involved in stable marital love.

The motif of the sun and stars from 'Wanneer de Vorst des Lichts slaet aen de gulden toomen' is not the only example of Hooft's decision to resort to a poetic image related to an emblematic tradition. Two significant sonnets from *Emblemata amatoria*, in which this also occurs, are 'Nydighe Tijd waerom ist dat ghy u versnelt' and 'Gheswinde grysaert, die op wackre wiecken staech'. Both illustrate the swift or slow passage of time by means of the allegorical figure of Father Time, reconstructing many of the peculiarities (and inconsistencies) of how this winged old man is represented in pictorial sources, e.g. etchings from Otto Vaenius's *Amorum Emblemata* or the series of 'Triomfi' by Philips Galle.

The 'new poetry' of the 16th and 17th century taught Hooft and the Dutch readers of *Emblemata amatoria* how to discourse about love. Like elsewhere, Hooft's primary working practice here was *imitatio*. The description of what happens to the world when the speaker is deprived of the light shining from his lady's eyes in 'Leydtsterren van mijn hoop, Planeten van

mijn ieucht' paraphrases some of the main concepts of one of Joachim du Bellay's sonnets from *l'Olive*. Another lesson, in the sonnet 'Mijn Vrouw de Min en Ick hebben een harde strijt', this time related to narcissism and indifference, can be compared to a similar motif of a damsel's self-love in a sonnet by Philippe Desportes.

As Leonard Forster wrote, '[...] Petrarchism [was] supported and reinforced by the great figures of the baroque, Shakespeare, Donne, Sponde, Hooft, Gryphius, Fleming, Marino, Góngora'¹. Indeed, Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria* sonnets are an outstanding specimen of poetic craftsmanship, but they also show how Petrarchism, along with the other discourses of early modern European literature mentioned above, was put to serve an implicit program of moral instruction that was typical of the social aspirations of the early 17th century Netherlands. As we reveal the literary fabric of Hooft's poems, we see how he employed techniques of imitation and emulation to create a series of pleasing and instructive 'images of love'. We see how these 'images' were co-created by the institutions of Hooft's time, the chambers of rhetoric, which as the narrative of the history of the sonnet tells us, were the proving-ground for new forms of literature.

Mediating across various European literatures, Hooft's sonnets achieve their poetic and pragmatic aim primarily by listening to the voices of representatives of authoritative poetic traditions. Taking Hooft's volume into our hands, not only do we see that the maker of the emblems had 'a skilled hand' ('gheleerder handt') – we are also led to recognize that the one who wrote the poems consulted the most learned sources.

¹ Forster 1969: 83.

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