Eyes Speak: A Case Study of the Communicative Meaning Behind Eye Contact in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Dutch Genre Prints.

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Master Thesis

Art History

Eyes Speak

A Case Study of the Communicative Meaning Behind Eye Contact in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Dutch Genre Prints.

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Abstract

This thesis delves into the captivating world of Dutch genre prints from the 16th and 17th centuries, focusing on the communicative meaning of eye contact made by the depicted figures with the contemporary viewer. Through several case studies, divided into the categories: “stereotypes”, “companies” and “couples”, it investigates how eye contact is used to capture attention, deliver commentary and prompt the contemporary beholder to reflection. The meaning behind the returned gaze aligns with the dual role of genre prints as sources of entertainment and moral instruction. This study affirms that “eyes speak”: conveying emotions and the complexities of 16th and 17th-century society. The conclusion highlights the need for further research on the gaze in different media.

Foreword

Writing my second master's thesis has been quite a rewarding journey for me. While my first master's, Museum Studies, focused primarily on the theoretical side of museology, this thesis allowed me to dive into captivating visual creations. Originally, my interest lay in the realm of paintings. However, I found a new interest, the world of prints, when I took the elective “Art on Paper” taught by Dr. Prof. Yvonne Bleyerveld. Her teaching and expertise opened my eyes to the world of prints, which is a field that still lacks scholarly attention.

In my search for a thesis subject, I encountered multiple prints where figures seemed to make eye contact with me. It came as a surprise to observe that this phenomenon was hardly discussed. Eagerly, I started my research and ended up analysing hundreds – if not thousands – of prints.

I am incredibly grateful to Prof. Dr. Yvonne Bleyerveld for her invaluable guidance and inspiration throughout my writing process. Although I have written a master's thesis before, her supervision has further encouraged my academic growth. I also want to thank my friends and family, whose support has been indispensable.

As you read this thesis, I hope you will find as much enjoyment and fascination in this topic as I have.

Maryse Dekker.

14-05-2024.

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Introduction

Musical instruments, cheerful toasting and a meal on the table: in Jan Steen's *Merry Company on a Terrace,* we witness a festive celebration (fig. 1). The viewer's attention is immediately drawn to the lady wearing a blue dress, placed at the centre of the painting. Besides, Steen's use of this primary colour to draw awareness towards her, the provocative look on her face also further lures the beholder into the scenery.[1] Another somewhat theatrical figure in the painting is staring at us: a relatively large man on the left wearing an apron leans back into his chair while he laughs at us, the spectators. [2] Underneath this jolly tavern owner, a third figure engages with us: a child holding a dog and a wooden toy. Steen, renowned for his storytelling paintings, must have had a reason for this way of enticing the viewer. Not only Steen uses this attention cue, in other examples of Dutch 16th and 17th-century artworks, one also gets the feeling of being observed. For instance, in *Soldier Scene* (fig. 2) a man is leaning on a table on which a pipe, tobacco, cards, and a bottle have been arranged. Between his legs, a trumpet or horn is held upright, suggestively. He stares at us with a piercing, mischievous gaze, probably alluding to the suggestive tableau behind him: a soldier kissing a lady, likely a prostitute.[3] Likewise, another figure in *Sleeping Venus Surprised by Satyrs*, this time a satyr, provocatively locks eyes with us (fig. 3).[4] The satyr is removing Venus' clothes so that she will be left completely naked. His finger on his lip instructs us to remain quiet about it, making us part of this illicit act.[5] The figure in Jan de Bray's *Chess Player* (fig. 4) is even more direct in instructing the viewer.[6] An empty chair with a cushion is placed in the foreground, which the Latin inscription eludes to: "Seat yourself at the noble chess board, The

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[1] H. P. Chapman, W. Kloek, A.K Wheelock, M. Bijl, G. Jansen, G., & J. Engelsman, *Jan Steen: schilder en verteller*, (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1996), 254.
[2] The man is Steen himself, a jesting topos of artists to portray themselves into the depicted figures. See: M. Westermann, *The Amusements of Jan Steen: Comic Painting in the Seventeenth Century,* (Zwolle: Waanders, (1997, 93.
Art historian H. Perry Chapman presumes the artwork was meant for a male viewer, as Steen tries to challenge the spectator with the young tempting lady. See: A., Tummers, E. Kolfin, J. Hillegers, A. Jager, N. Schiller, E.J. Sluijter, & M. Westermann, *Kunst van het lachen: humor in de Gouden Eeuw*. (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers. 2017), 20.
[3] It was common for artists to portray soldiers in brothels. See: W. Franits "Genre Painting," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Dutch Golden Age,* ed. H. Helmers, G. Janssen, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 277.
[4] Hollstein Dutch, vol. XXXII, no. 7.
[5] Nicholaes Maes' various paintings of the theme "The Listening Housewife" also include a (female) figure with the index finger positioned on the lips to communicate with the audience. See: Tummers et al. K*unst van het lachen,* 90.
[6] Hollstein Dutch, vol. III, no. 19.

contest gives a wreath of honour”.[7] Thus, the man’s gaze is inviting us to play.

Certainly, eye contact can hardly be overlooked, as our brain is trained for this powerful attention cue. Direct eye contact is interpreted as an important instrument of social communication. Despite the absence of explicit words, eyes can speak volumes, as the direction of attention, emotion and meaning can be conveyed through a gaze or glance.[8] For instance, a person across a room makes eye contact with you and gives you a warm gaze, accompanied by a smile. Non-verbally, the person’s eyes signal a sense of friendliness and invite you to start a conversation. Clearly, “eyes speak”, but how does this dynamic translate to a flat, two-dimensional image? As research suggests, the experience of being observed (mutual eye contact) comes significantly close to face-to-face communication.[9] Our imaginative dexterity plays a great role in this.[10] Exchanging eye contact has an impact as the observer needs to decode and interpret the “communicative intent” behind it.[11] This automatically happened in our analysis of *Merry Company on a Terrace.* The woman’s gaze is recognised and interpreted as tempting (fig. 5), and the male’s joyous laugh welcomes us into the festivities.

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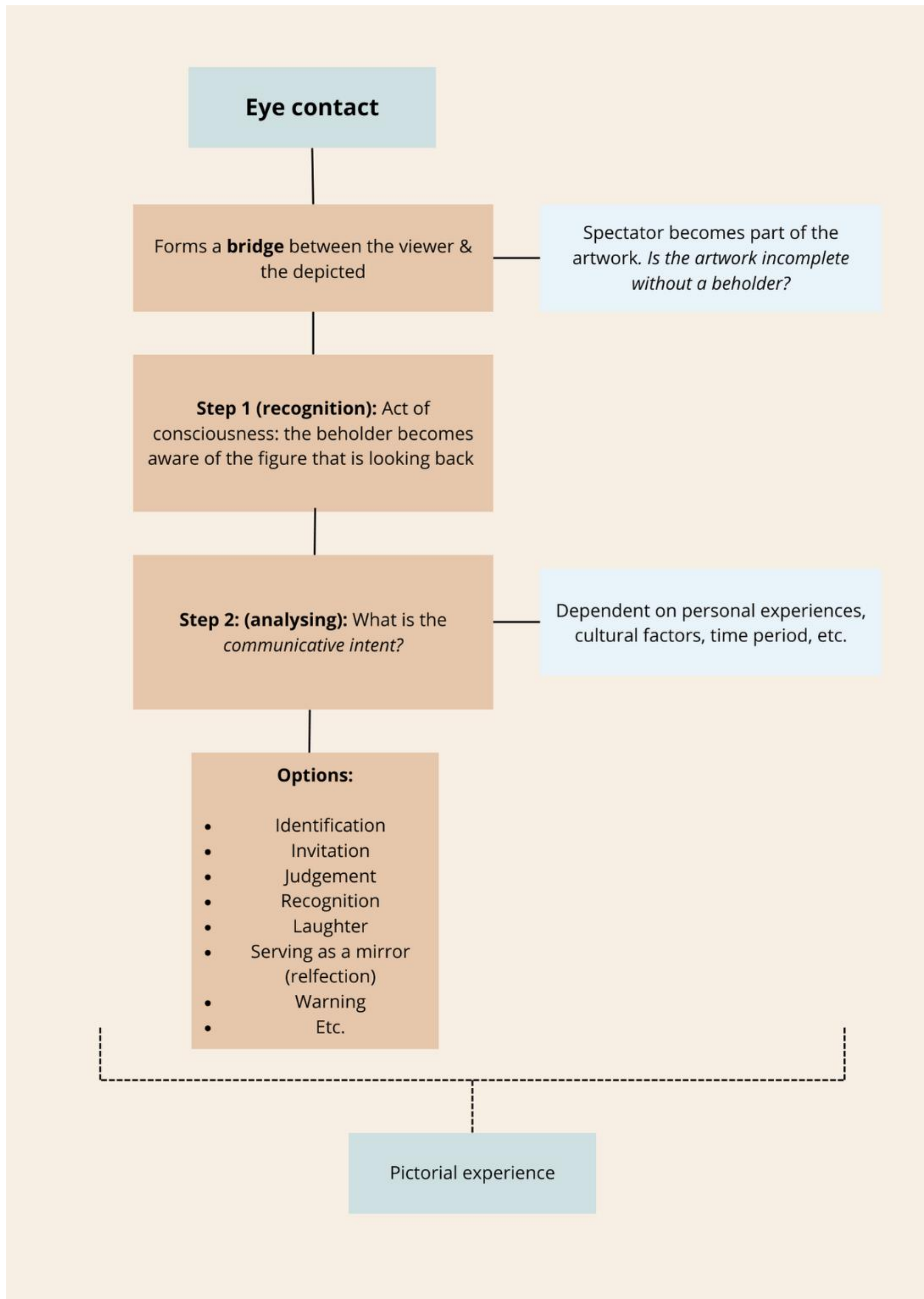
[7] E. De Jongh, G. de Luijten & M. Hoyle, *Mirror of Everyday Life: Genreprints in the Netherlands 1550-700,* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1997), 334.
[8] A. Frischen, A. P. Baylissand & S. P. Tipper, “Gaze Cueing of Attention: Visual Attention, Social Cognition, and Individual Differences”, *Psychological Bulletin* 133, (2007), 694–724, doi: 10.1037/ 0033-2909.133.4.694.
[9] L. Kesner, D. Grygarová, I. Fajnerová, et al. “Perception of Direct vs. Averted Gaze in Portrait Paintings: An fMRI and Eye-Tracking Study”, *Brain and Cognition.*125, (2018), 88-99, doi: 10.1016/j.bandc.2018.06.004.
[10] R. A Starr, J. A. Smith. "People are gazing” — An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Viewing Velázquez", *Art & Perception* 9, 3 (2021), 248.
[11] L. Kesner et al, “Perception of Direct vs. Averted gaze”, 97.



Maryse Dekker, *Two-Step Process when Encountering Eye Contact in Art,* 2024.

Thus, when confronted by the subject's gaze, the artwork's beholder undergoes a two-step process. For clarity, a systematic overview of this process is made, as seen above, which will be used throughout this thesis. Firstly, the stare-back is being recognised. The beholder is being confronted by the depicted subject, which immediately establishes a relationship with the artwork, as the viewer becomes part of the scene. Consequently, eye contact serves as a bridge between the pictorial and the real world. Secondly, the emotion behind the gaze is

interpreted; what does it implicate and how does it personally affect the viewer? [12] In the case of *Sleeping Venus Surprised by Satyrs* the gazing satyr makes a specific gesture towards the beholder, who may interpret it as a sign to remain quiet about his deed. This second step can be interpreted differently by each individual, as the beholder's "perceptual expectations and memories are projected onto and into an image."[13]

Besides personal influences, historical contexts play a crucial role: we presumably look differently now at such artworks than the contemporary viewer did. Consider, for example, Steen's *Merry Company on a Terrace,* which likely conveyed a different meaning to the contemporary viewer. Rather than merriment, the scene was possibly read as a scene of debauchery and lust, as in the 17th century Netherlands the word "merry" often held erotic connotations.[14] Furthermore, the painting contains all sorts of symbolism, recognisable for the contemporary viewer. For example, the fool[15] in the back, recognisable by his fool's staff, tries to seduce a lady.[16] Jesters serve as a symbol of folly. To truly grasp the artwork's meaning, it is imperative to place ourselves in the shoes of the 16th and 17th-century viewers. That is why the research question will be as follows:

How does the eye contact of the depicted figures in 16th and 17th-century Dutch genre prints established with the contemporary viewer influence the communicative intent of the print?

This thesis aims to contribute to the scholarly field by researching *why* and *how* Dutch 16th and 17th-century artists utilise eye contact. The literature on the perception of the gaze from an art historical perspective is sparse, as evidenced by the lack of consistent terminology to describe this phenomenon. Various terms used are for instance: "returning the gaze", "intimate reflection", "communicative liaison", "posing consciousness", "external coherence", and "mutual gaze". In the scarce literature available, all scholars focus exclusively on eye contact in paintings. For example, art historian Aloïs Riegl (1858-1905) discusses Dutch group portraits, and philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy (1940-2021) focuses generally on portraits, just as Professor of Literature and Art History Harry Berger.[17] Art

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[12] Starr & Smith, "People are Gazing", 249.
[13] A.K. Seth, "From Unconscious Inference to the Beholder's Share: Predictive Perception and Human Experience", *European Review,* 27(3), (2019), 4.
[14] M. Schapelhouman, P. van der Coelen & J. van der Waals, *Prints in the Golden Age: from Art to Shelf Paper*, Exhibition booklet, (Rotterdam: Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, 2006), 50.
[15] Chapter 2 discusses the fool more thoroughly.
[16] Chapman et al. *Jan Steen,* 20.
[17] A. Riegl, "Das Hollandische Gruppenporträt," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhbchsten Kaiserhauses,* (Vienna, 1902); 2nd ed., ed. K.M. Swoboda, (Vienna, 1931). See translation: A. Riegl and B. Binstock. "Excerpts from 'The Dutch Group Portrait.'" *October* 74, (1995): 3–35. https://doi.org/10.2307/778818.

historian Roy B. Sonnema specifically examines eye contact in musical paintings.[18] Even in publications that focus on a different period, such as Hanneke Grootenboer's book, paintings take overhand as well.[19] As these scholars are important sources for this thesis, some examples of paintings will inevitably be included.

However, this thesis will analyse various genre prints due to their overlooked significance in the art discourse.[20] The focus will specifically be on prints created in the Netherlands between 1550 and 1700, encompassing the Northern and Southern regions, with a main focus on the Northern area. Most of these prints belong to the collections of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam and the Prentenkabinet of Leiden University, due to the accessibility of their online databases. Some of these prints are made after paintings. Nevertheless, these will still be viewed as artworks on their own, due to their difference in production, distribution, and occasional alterations or additions, which can ultimately affect the original intent.

For the methodology, this thesis employs a combination of visual analysis, catalogues, primary sources, and secondary literature. The first step was analysing prints that use eye contact, and collecting qualitative and quantitative data. This analysis was primarily conducted through online databases, which allowed for detailed examination by using the zoom-in function, to help establish the relevance of the gaze. During this extensive research, three recurring subcategories emerged, which was a crucial step in tackling the patterns of the use of eye contact. As a result, this thesis will focus on the following three case studies: 1) Stereotypes, 2) Company Pieces, and 3) Couples. Stereotypes portrayed include jokesters, low-life individuals, temptresses, and children. This category will be discussed first,

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J. L. Nancy, S. Clift, S. Sparks, & J. S. Librett, J. S. "The Look of the Portrait". In *Portrait*. (Fordham University Press. 2018).
H. Berger, Fictions of the Pose: Facing the Gaze of Early Modern Portraiture." *Representations*, no. 46 (1994).

[18] R. B. Sonnema, *Representations of Music in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting*. (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. 1990).

[19] H. Grootenboer, *Treasuring the Gaze: Intimate Vision in Late Eighteenth-Century Eye Miniatures*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

[20] Various possible reasons for the scarcity of academic research come into play. The first could be that prints were seen as "lesser" art. Various scholars claimed a hierarchy in art, positioning paintings as the pinnacle of artistic achievement. Secondly, prints could be reproductive, demising the originality of the artworks and making them far cheaper and more accessible to the lower class. Thirdly, in the printing process, multiple artists could contribute to the print – the draughtsman, engraver or etcher, and printer – which ultimately affected the attribution to one singular artist. Fourthly, the diversity in subject and function – prints could serve as book illustrations, maps, scientific illustrations, pamphlets, decorations, artists' portfolios, collections of connoisseurs, etc. - contributes to the complexity of understanding the printmaking culture. See: A. Griffiths, *The print before photography : an introduction to European printmaking, 1550-1820*, (The British Museum Press, 2016).
J. van der Waals, & P. van der. Coelen, *Prenten in de Gouden Eeuw : van kunst tot kastpapier*. (Rotterdam: Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2006). and De Jongh, *Mirror of Everyday Life*.

considering these individuals often appear in the other categories as well. Company pieces depict gatherings such as families dining together, tavern scenes, musical depictions, and other forms of group dynamics. The last category, "Couples", sheds light on the intimate settings of man and woman and husband and wife. Portraiture is not considered in this research, otherwise the scope of this thesis would be too extensive.

Chapter 1 provides important background information on the printing industry to contextualise the selected prints. Questions such as "Who was the "average print-viewer"? are critical to further decipher the communicative intent behind the eye contact. For instance, a depicted peasant looking back at another "low-life" person, would have a significant other meaning than if the figure's gaze is met by an elite looking at the print. Additionally, chapter 1 dives into the psychological and philosophical understanding of eye contact. Although the primary approach of this thesis is art historical, these philosophical insights are essential in understanding the meaning behind eye contact. For example, Riegl calls group portrait paintings "a type of painting that exists solely for the viewing subject".[21] Does he suggest that artworks remain incomplete without a viewer? This question will be further explored in the paragraph "The Beholder's Role". By discussing various scholarly perspectives, this thesis tries to enrich our understanding of the complexities of artistic experience.

In chapters 2, 3 and 4, the case studies are explored, where this theoretical framework is applied. Each chapter focuses on the discovered categories, i.e. Stereotypes, Company Pieces and Couples. The scope of this thesis brings automatic limitations to this research, which must be acknowledged to understand both the context and applicability of this research. A lack of documentation on how Dutch 17th-century civilians looked at art, makes it incredibly difficult to truly understand their manner of analysing prints.[22] Additionally, art historian and iconographer Eddy de Jongh in his publication *Tot lering en vermaak* notes the various interpretations depending on who was watching (step 2).[23] Contemporary viewers were not occupied with the intended meaning of the artist, but trying to unravel what it meant specifically to the beholder.[24] However, as some symbolic meanings and certain proverbs were commonly known, we can partially reconstruct how the average print-viewer looked at

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[21] "Das nur für das vorstellende Subjekt existiert", translation in: M. Iversen, *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory,* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), 125.
[22] K. Hazelzet. *Verkeerde werelden : exempla contraria in de Nederlandse beeldende kunst*. (Leiden: Primavera. 2007), 49.
[23] More on "poly-interpretability", see: De Jongh, *Tot lering en vermaak,* 25.
[24] Hazelzet, *Vekeerde werelden,* 178-179.

prints selected for this thesis. At the end, a conclusion will summarise the findings to establish which communicative intents occurred the most in prints were “eyes speak”.

Chapter 1: The Dutch 16th and 17th-Century Genre Print Industry

The Purpose of Dutch Art: Laughter and Lessons

In our current art discourse, Dutch 16th and 17th-century artworks are often categorised into various genres such as historical, mythological and allegorical scenes, landscapes, still lives, portraits and genre pieces. However, the term "genre" did not exist in these centuries. Instead, art pieces were identified by descriptive terms such as "geselschap" (company) and "soldaets kroegje" (soldier's tavern).[25] The categorisation of genre pieces as we understand it today has its roots in the 19th century.[26] Genre pieces are perceived as true-to-life situations. However, less is true, as these scenes are constructed by the artist in their workshop (*schijnrealisme*).[27] Painter Samuel van Hoogstraeten (1627-1678) described this deception as follows: "[…] een volmaekte Schildery is al seen spiegel van de Natuer, die de dingen, die niet en zijn, doet schijnen te zijn, en op een geoorlofde vermakelijke en prijslijke wijze bedriegt" (A perfect painting is like a mirror of Nature, which makes things that are not there, appear to be, and deceives in a permissible, entertaining, and praiseworthy manner).[28] Genre pieces served a purpose beyond mere deception: poet Jacob Cats (1577-1660) noted that seemingly ordinary scenes from daily life could conceal deeper thought. [29] Artists frequently used their illustrations to convey a thought or deliver a lesson on morality.[30]

Besides education, also entertainment was an important component of genre imagery. Often, these purposes would go hand in hand, captured in the expression "tot leeringh ende vermaack" (for instruction and delight), which stems from the Latin verse *miscere utile dulci* (uniting the useful with the pleasurable).[31] Humour played a pivotal role in Dutch 16th and 17th society. Joking could address what is taboo, cultural differences of social classes, and an awareness of self-reflection.[32] This method of *ridendo dicere verum* (telling the truth by laughing) contributed to the popularity of genre imagery as a vehicle for both amusement and enlightenment.[33] *Merry Company on a Terrace* (fig. 2) by Jan Steen, a seemingly enjoyable

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[25] E. de Jongh & J. B. Bedaux, *Tot lering en vermaak: betekenissen van Hollandse genrevoorstellingen uit de zeventiende eeuw,* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, 1976), 14.
[26] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life,* 11.
[27] De Jongh & Bedaux, *Tot lering en vermaak*, 14.
[28] S. van Hoogstraeten, *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst,* (Rotterdam, 1678), 25. As citated by De Jongh & Bedaux, in: *Tot lering en vermaak*, 14.
[29] E. Buijsen, L. P., Grijp, W. Jan Hoogsteder, & N. Gatehouse, *The Hoogsteder Exhibition of: Music & Painting in the Golden Age*. (Hoogsteder & Hoogsteder, 1994), 37.
[30] De Jongh & Bedaux, *Tot lering en vermaak,* 16.
[31] "Vraag en antwoord", *Onze Taal,* jaargang 69, (2000), 337, Accessed April 12, 2024, https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_taa014200001_01/_taa014200001_01_0214.php
[32] Tummers et al., *Kunst van het lachen,* 24.
[33] De Jongh & Bedaux, *Tot lering en vermaak,* 27.

company, is riddled with moralistic meaning. Subtle techniques to convey hidden messages are referred to as *claves interpretandi*[34] and include symbolism, emblems, painting-in-painting phenomena, inscriptions[35], and more. By reading these clues, viewers can uncover the "true meaning" if such a thing exists. "The deciphered meaning is consistent when multiple motifs reinforce each other ", art historian Heidi de Mare points out.[36] Some symbols, however, could carry various interpretations, complicating the process of decoding the artwork. Emblem books could contain multiple layers of both *sinne* (reason) and *minne* (love).[37] For instance, a dog could be a symbol of loyalty, but also an indicator of sinful behaviour.[38] Or, the lemon repeatedly seen in still-life depictions, associated with wealth and luxury, could also symbolise the fleeting nature of life and bitterness of earthly pleasures (as the fruit has a sour, bitter taste).[39]

An important critical note is necessary here. Although symbolism and moralistic meaning are documented in emblem books and contemporary texts, we do not know how commonly known these sources were, due to a lack of circulation figures. However, we are certain that emblem books of Jacob Cats were loved by a broad spectrum of social classes.[40]

Artistic Mirrors: Reflective and Commentary Art

Ambiguous symbols, such as those as mentioned above, created a *conversatiestuk* (conversation piece)[41], providing considerable food for thought. How one interprets the iconography of an artwork is for each viewer different: beholders could construct various narratives and different sets of meanings.[42] Especially when an artwork evokes self-reflection.

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[34] A Latin phrase that translates to "keys of interpretation".
[35] Inscriptions, however, could be added later. If the inscriptions are original these could also complicate the meaning of the artwork. Some could juxtapose the scenes depicted. See more on this: De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life,* "Word and Image", 32-41.
[36] H de Mare, "De verbeelding onder vuur", *Theoretische Geschiedenis,* 24(2), (1997), 3.
[37] Buijsen et al. *The Hoogsteder Exhibition,* 37.
[38] J. Hall, T. Veenhof, & I. M. Veldman, *Hall's iconografisch handboek : onderwerpen, symbolen en motieven in de beeldende kunst*, (Primavera Pers. (1996), 145.
[39] A. Barr, "Appealingly Unpeeled: The Layered Lemons In Dutch Golden Age And Contemporary Art", *Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers*, (2021), 2.
[40] De Jongh, *Tot lering en vermaak,* 22.
[41] Conversation pieces are artworks of a dynamic group of people engaging in social interaction and leisure activities such as music-making, drinking, reading or playing games. Artists known for such illustrations are Jan Steen, Pieter de Hooch, Gerard Ter Borch, Adriaen van Ostade, etc. The settings in which these types of activities take place are domestic interiors, gardens or other outdoor landscapes. The artist usually creates a scenery reflecting the "everyday life", intending to spark conversation among the spectators, as they discuss the meaning of the artwork. See more: R. Edwards, *Early Conversation Pictures from the Middle Ages to About 1730: a Study in Origins,* (Country Life, 1954). and C.J. Chen, 'From Genre to Portrait: The Etymology of the 'Conversation Piece' ', *The British Art Journal* Vol. 13, No. 2 (2012), 82-85.
[42] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life,* 11.

Poet Constantijn Huygens (1596-1687) remarked in 1623 that moralistically intended artworks could act as a mirror: "een Spiegel-ruyt die elck sijn selven toont" (a mirror pane that shows each their selves).[43] He suggests that art has the power to reveal truths about individuals by reflecting their inner selves.[44] As a consequence, the viewer contemplates his or her behaviour.

The eyes themselves also revealed "sijn selven", as eyes were assumed closest to the soul and human spirit ("windows of the soul").[45] Sight (*visus*) was "viewed" as ambiguous as well, adding to the multi-interpretable aspect. According to the Aristotelian hierarchy model of the senses, sight was seen as the highest of senses, a perception adopted in medieval and early modern times. Visuality became even more powerful due to "the rise of print culture and the advent of scientific and technological instruments" in the modern period.[46] However, the senses were often linked with sin, although the eye was regarded as more truthful, powerful and beautiful than the other senses.[47] Historian Stuart Clark stresses the negative perception in his publication of 2007, highlighting the inherent vanity of the eyes, prompting doubts about the fallibility as a moral guide.[48] While Ilja Veldman does not discuss the hierarchy of the five senses, she does mentions the duality of the senses in 16th-century literature, in which they are called "God-given gifts" that should be used properly and not for carnal desires.[49] Thus, the eye could carry admonitory tones, but also positive ones, praising God's creation. The sense of sight, and perhaps eye contact inherently, often provokes deeper contemplation and reflection.

Another method to evoke contemplation is through the theme of *exampla contraria*, discussed by Korine Hazelzet in her book "Verkeerde Werelden". She notes that in Dutch genre art, similarly to medieval times, the viewer is frequently confronted by negative behaviour, as a way of educating.[50] Prostitutes, drunken peasants, lustful monks, quacks, and beggars are all examples of how you should not behave, ultimately linked to the theme of the Seven Sins. Why does it seem that 16th and 17th-century artists prefer negative examples above positive ones? Various arguments come into play. The most important argument is

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[43] S. Groenveld, "Huygens-herdenking", *Jaarboek van de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde,* (1987), 194, Accessed March 23, 2024, https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_jaa003198701_01/_jaa003198701_01_0023.php
[44] Hazelzet, *Verkeerde Werelden*, 49.
[45] S. Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 11.
[46] M. M. Smith, *Sensing the Past: Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, and Touching in History*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 20.
[47] Smith, S*ensing the Past,* 28.
[48] Clark, *Vanities of the Eye*, 25.
[49] Veldman, *Images for the Eyes and Soul,* 216.
[50] Hazelzet, *Verkeerde Werelden*, 15.

proposed by in history specialised psychologist Dresen-Coenders: negative artworks are seen as "less boring".[51] A comical depiction of vice makes art easily readable and creates more opportunities for creativity than virtues. For instance, Hieronymus Bosch's hellish creatures come in all shapes and sizes, making it enjoyable to look at. Vices speak more to the fantasies of the viewer, according to art historian Ilja Veldman.[52] Furthermore, the Ten Commandments focus primarily on what people should not do, instead of what they should (Thou shalt not…).[53] As the Bible served as a foundational framework for behaviour during the medieval and early modern periods, it is logical that people would emphasise the negative. The last argument Hazelzet uses is the theory of "negative self-definition"; it is easier to define what one is not (or what one believes or wishes not to be) than what one is.[54] That is why stereotypes are dominant: identities are constructed in opposition to marginalised subjects. The chapter on "Stereotypes" will come back to this issue.

What function does the motif of establishing eye contact with the viewer have in the genre imagery? Hazelzet uses the term *commentaarfiguur* (commentary figure) to describe the figure making eye contact, standing out by directly engaging the viewer with a certain expression or gesture, thereby invoking curiosity.[55] By providing commentary on the actions of other pictorial figures, they invite the beholder to interpret and reflect on the depicted narrative. The main function of these figures is to create a sense of dialogue, making the viewer an active participant. This motif originates from theatre, where characters address the public directly, offering explicit commentary on certain events of the play, and creating a more interactive experience. As is the case in the theatre piece *Elckerlijc* (Everyman), which emerged at the end of the 15th century, where the main character Elckerlijc addresses the audience directly, guiding them through the moral lessons of the play.[56] It is not clear when commentary figures first appeared in the visual arts. However, in 15th-century engravings, the fool regularly appears giving commentary (see chapter Stereotypes).[57] Another early example of a figure directly engaging with us is *The Dentist*[58] (fig. 6) by renowned printmaker Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533), showing how a supposedly skilled dentist extracts a tooth from a

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[51] Hazelzet, *Verkeerde Werelden*, 26.
[52] I. Veldman, *Leerrijke reeksen van Maarten van Heemskerck,* (Sdu Uitgevers, 1986), 17.
[53] Hazelzet, *Verkeerde Werelden*, 27.
More on the Ten Commandments as moral code: Veldman, *Images for the Eyes and Soul,* 126-142.
[54] Hazelzet, *Verkeerde Werelden*, 28.
[55] Hazelzet, *Verkeerde Werelden,* 143.
[56] R. A. Ladd, "My Condition is Mannes Soule To Kill"— Everyman's Mercantile Salvation", *Comparative Drama,* Volume 41, Number 1, (2007), 60.
[57] P. van der Coelen & F. Lammertse, *De ontdekking van het dagelijks leven: van Bosch tot Bruegel,* (Rotterdam: Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, 2015), 99.
[58] New Hollstein Dutch, Lucas van Leyden, Vol. I, No. 157.

naive patient.[59] At the same time, the quack's assistant is stealing his purse. The patient looks in pain at us and serves as a commentary figure, reflecting on both the narrative of the deceiving quack, while creating laughter with his comical expression. Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627-1678) criticised this theatrical trick in his 1678 publication *Inleyding tot de Hooge Schole der Schilderkonst.*[60] He believed that such figures disrupted the illusion of reality, which he deemed the ultimate aim of art.[61]

Who looked? An Overview of the Print Purchasers

But who is the viewer at the other end of the paper? This thesis will not focus on which individuals acquired prints and why, but it is useful to have some sense of the buyer and spectator. By the late 16th century, the printing business flourished and the epicentre of the printing industry shifted from Antwerp to Amsterdam. As the market for utilitarian prints grew, including the amount of money people possessed, more people bought prints.[62] It is hard to match groups of consumers to specific types of prints, according to art historian Anthony Griffiths.[63] This is because of the scarcity of information on the early buyers or collectors of prints.[64] Purchases were not well documented and records that did exist may not have survived the test of time. Even the few surviving documents, such as travel journeys, are not always reliable. The journals showcase the surprise that foreigners experienced that *everyone* decorated their houses with paintings.[65] However, as pointed out by art historian Mariët Westerman: labourers and small peasants likely could not afford more than only a few mediocre prints.[66] The very wealthy class would likely buy prints of higher quality as they could afford more luxurious objects, like *fijnschilders* paintings, but they also acquired simple prints.[67] Only the rich would hang their prints differently: on silk, in a special frame, whereas others who could not afford such luxury would stick or prick their prints directly on

[59] C. J. Fresia, *Quacksalvers And Barber-Surgeons: Images of Medical Practitioners in 17th-Century Dutch Genre Painting*, (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1991), 50.
[60] Hazelzet, *Verkeerde Werelden*, 127.
[61] However, Hoogstraten states that figures reacting to the viewer as if you were a bystander constitutes a hallmark of a "good painting": "A good history piece "makes the viewer, as if he were a bystander, delighted, startled by a sudden event, or happy by seeing something cheerful; fills him with pity through some injustice or makes him satisfied with something just.", cited in: Tummers et al. *Kunst van het lachen*, 37.
[62] Veldman, *Images for the Eyes and Soul,* 44.
[63] Griffiths, *The Print before Photography,* 394-395.
[64] Veldman, *Images for the Eyes and Soul,* 30.
[65] E.J. Sluijter, "All Striving to adorne their houses with costly peeces", in: M. Westermann (ed.), *Art & Home. Dutch Interiors in the Golden Age*, (Zwolle/Denver: The Denver Art Museum/Waanders Publishers, 2001), 104.
[66] M. Westermann, *A Worldly Art: The Dutch Republic, 1585–1718*, (New Haven and New York: Yale University Press, 1966), 33.
[67] Veldman, *Images for the Eyes and Soul,* 30.

the wall.[68] This difference in presentation is a reason for the nearly vanished print culture. Not a lot of prints have survived due to preservation, or the lack of it. Famous prints of Rembrandt, Goltzius, and Van Ostade, were seen as *const* (art) and thus safely collected in albums.[69] Other etchings and engravings were used as simple ornaments: for example to cover cabinets to hide poor carpentry or to protect against dirt.[70] Ultimately, these graphics had an extremely low retention rate. Besides scarcity, the diverse functions of prints contribute to the complexity of matching prints to specific groups. The same print might be acquired by a different type of buyer who would utilise it differently.[71] Apart from artistic motifs, prints were used as a form of visual communication (for instance religious messages), passing on morals and specific ideas, as well as (scientific) knowledge about the visual world.[72] Artists also could buy other artists' prints for education and inspiration.

We can never reconstruct the print market completely. A few written sources, such as inventories of publishers, framers and auction catalogues, give us some insight into the nearly vanished culture.[73] For instance, inventories of printing publishers tell us more about the copperplates they kept in their shop and which prints they sold.[74] They give an indication of which categories were popular, such as the "bloempot" (flower still life).[75] However, not even one unframed example of such a print remained.[76] Luckily, a few utilitarian printed illustrations that were hung in city halls, admiralties, hospitals, and other institutions have survived. Also, other visual references, such as paintings and doll houses, show prints hanging on the wall, helping us better understand the world of printing. [77]

The prints discussed in this thesis were likely used by the bourgeoisie, elite and middle class. The first argument is the most logical one: their survival over time. As we have seen, most surviving prints were well stored in print albums and portfolios. Moreover, most high-quality prints illustrate a perfect execution of craftsmanship, suggesting they were likely purchased by affluent individuals, such as the engraving *Old Fool with a Cat* (fig. 15). The adorning framework and the manipulation of light and shadow shown in the drapery indicate a high level of skill. Additional evidence supporting this statement is provided by Eddy de

[68] Van der Waals, *Prenten in de Gouden Eeuw*, 7.
[69] Van der Waals, *Prenten in de Gouden Eeuw*, 11.
[70] Van der Waals, *Prenten in de Gouden Eeuw*, 17.
[71] Griffiths, *The print before photography,* 395.
[72] Veldman, *Function and meaning*. 9.
[73] Van der Waals, *Prenten in de Gouden Eeuw*, 19.
[74] Van der Waals, *Prenten in de Gouden Eeuw*, 11.
[75] Van der Waals, *Prenten in de Gouden Eeuw*, 12.
[76] Van der Waals, *Prenten in de Gouden Eeuw*, 20.
[77] Van der Waals, *Prenten in de Gouden Eeuw*, 20.

Jongh who notes a few other details. For instance, the inclusion of Latin inscriptions on a print indicated that the artist aimed at buyers who had been well-educated.[78] Besides erudite scenes, Latin texts accompanied low-life scenes as well, a genre well appreciated by the middle class. However, most genre prints do not contain inscriptions, perhaps the intention was to add the viewer's commentary.[79] Negative stereotypical prints functioned as a product of urban collective consciousness and were designed to validate the superiority of the higher classes.[80] The class-based characterisation was likely done to create comic distance.[81] It was not about a realistic depiction of one's reality, but rather an exaggerated fabricated world, in which these civilised classes could distance themselves by laughing at it.[82] Low-life depictions thus served to amuse the "cultivated burgher".[83] In the following chapter, Stereotypes, this phenomenon will be explained more thoroughly.

The Beholder's Role: Completion of the Artwork?

Now that there is an idea of the 16th and 17th-century viewers, the issue of whether this spectator completes the print can be addressed. This philosophical discussion delves into the nature and purpose of art. As this discussion is quite complex, this thesis narrows it down solely to the scholars who discussed specifically the eye contact aspect.

Art historian Aloïs Riegl suggested in 1931 that Dutch art is dependent on the beholder's involvement. [84] Riegl was the first to argue that figures in "Das Holländische Gruppenporträt" form eye contact to create an interactive relationship with the spectator through the "look of recollection". Expressions of the figures demand the participatory attention of the observer.[85] What does he mean by that? In Riegl's analysis of *The Nightwatch* (fig. 7), he claims the ultimate objective of the artist (in this case Rembrandt) is to visualise and guide the psychological attention (of the viewer).[86] He makes a demarcation between internal and external unity. The internal is described as "the subordination of the figures

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[78] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life,* 34.
[79] Coelen et al. *De ontdekking van het dagelijks leven,* 51.
[80] A. Kelly, *Functions of the Comic in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art,* ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. (2008), 50.
[81] W. Franits, "René van Stipriaan's Concept of the Ludic in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Farces and its Application to Contemporary Dutch painting", *De Zeventiende Eeuw,* jaargang 15, (1999), 27.
[82] Coelen et al. *De ontdekking van het dagelijks leven,* 52.
[83] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life,* 34.
[84] Riegl & Binstock. "The Dutch Group Portrait", 3.
For a broader analysis of Riegl's theory, see: M. Olin, "Forms of Respect: Alois Riegl's Concept of Attentiveness". *The Art Bulletin,* vol LXXI, nr. 2, (1989), 285-299.
[85] Riegl & Binstock, "The Dutch Group Portrait", 26.
[86] Riegl & Binstock, "The Dutch Group Portrait", 18.

within the picture".[87] Riegl means the dynamic play of gazes of the depicted figures, to create a narrative. He points to the captain in the foreground of the painting, who demands attention with his striking confident pose. The lieutenant gazes obediently to the captain, making it clear who is in command.

This is also evident in the print *The Enema Syringe* (fig. 8). A young woman appears eager for our attention. With her directed gaze, she creates an external unity. The right group subordinates to the man at the centre, while looking and gesturing towards him, creating internal unity. With the dynamic use of gazes, an intriguing narrative is being told.[88]

Riegl described the mutual gaze as a connection of the "soul" of the depicted figure and the spectator are connected. The term "soul" emphasises the realistic purpose of Dutch artworks, as the gaze asks the beholder to interact with the image as though it were a person.[89] Riegl also compares in his extract Rembrandt's and Thomas de Keyser's paintings of the theme "Anatomy Lesson" (fig. 9 & 10). Riegl notes the fact that Rembrandt only incorporates two figures establishing eye contact with the viewer, in comparison with De Keyser's work where almost all figures look back. Consequently, Rembrandt manifests and subordinates the beholder's attention more strongly than De Keyser does.[90]

Riegl's statement about psychological attention points to the argument that the beholder is needed to complete the artwork. Ernst Gombrich elaborates on Riegl's theory, suggesting that the viewer plays a crucial role in completing the meaning of the artwork through their perceptual and cognitive engagement (psychology of reception). The

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[87] Riegl & Binstock, "The Dutch Group Portrait", 3.

[88] Most of the time, a doctor visiting a sick girl shows either the theme of an unwanted pregnancy or the case of *minnekoorts* (love fever). The latter is the case of *Enema Syringe.* Minnekoorts, was seen as an intense emotional state, afflicted by intense romantic or sexual desire (hysteria). As a consequence, an afflicted uterus became linked with unsatisfied "love". In the contemporary medical context, the scene is easily read as sexual intercourse as an antidote to uterine furies, various erotic elements are seen confirming this message. For instance her posture: she is leaning on her right arm, her breasts are revealed, and her hand is placed provocatively on her groin. Furthermore, the open curtain, the little dog, the slippers, the chamber pot, the open trousers and the enema syringe allude to the sexual act that is about to take place. The enema syringe symbolises the male genitalia. The gaze of the laughing lady in bed evokes laughter.
See: De Jongh'& Bedaux, *Tot lering en vermaak,* 233 and 241 and L. S. Dixon, "Some penetrating insights: The Imagery of Enemas in Art", *Art Journal,* vol. 52, No. 3, Scatological Art (1993), 30.

[89] In psychologists Rachel Starr's and Jonathan A. Smiths's analysis of the encounter of Diego Velázquez' *Las Meninas* and its viewers, they also note the act of consciousness: both the viewer and the depicted figure are aware of one another, both have the role of observer and observee. Consequently, the returning gaze adds a human aspect; perceiving the characters as alive. "[…] the gaze seemingly breathes subjectivity into both character and viewer. It brings fictional characters to life, according them with active minds, which in turn may locate the viewer in the viewing experience". See: R. A Starr, J. A. Smith. "People are gazing" — An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Viewing Velázquez", *Art & Perception* 9, 3 (2021), 241-259.

[90] Riegl & Binstock, "The Dutch Group Portrait", 7.

significance of art can only reveal itself in through the mind of the beholder.[91] This is what we have discovered in step 2: each individual interprets a gaze differently through personal experience. Gombrich states that active interpretation of the viewer "draws [the beholder] into the magic circle of creation and allows him to experience something of the thrill of 'making' which had once been the privilege of the artist".[92] The use of eye contact falls under the category of "guided projection"[93], pushing the viewer in a particular way while maintaining enough ambiguity in the artwork for a personal, active experience.[94] *The Virgin with the Child* exemplifies this as the interpretation of the gaze of Maria and Jesus is up to us, as there are no symbolic clues on how to read the glances (fig.11).[95] It could be read as an affectionate look, showing the viewer how true the love between mother and child is. However, since it is a religious theme, maybe the gaze encouraged devotion.

Philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy (1940-2021) seems to agree with Riegl's and Gombrich's ideas. Nancy states that initially, an artwork is looking at nothing. Only through the recognition of the look, the subject is carried forward and a world is opened.[96] For example, in the case of the previously mentioned *Chess Player* (fig. 4), the man recognises our presence and we feel an immediate connection. A world where we are friends, playing a game of chess, is opened. Nancy claims that art is not solely the product of the art artist's intention or the qualities of the artwork itself, but it is a co-creation between artwork and viewer.[97] Art historian Roy B. Sonnema describes the gaze not as an opening of another world, but as a bridge between ours and the artwork.[98] In Sonnema's analysis of Johannes Vermeer's *Lady Seated at a Virginal* (fig. 12), he states that "the whole painting is designed for its effect on the spectator".[99] Johannes Vermeer expert Albert Blankerts asserts that the lady seems to welcome us to the musical scenery: a cello is even waiting for us. "Yet we may wonder if she is sufficiently respectable for us".[100] Blankerts points to the painting of a brothel scene above her, leaving the viewer to wonder if the painting is reflecting her thoughts. Thus, these

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[91] E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation,* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960), 191.
[92] Gombrich, *Art and Illusion,* 202.
[93] Gombrich explains the word "projection" with the example of clouds, whose shape seems to remind us of familiar shapes, such as a car. Our minds file an impression and "project" certain things. See: Gombrich, *Art and Illusion,* 105.
[94] A. K. Seth, "From unconscious inference to the beholder's share: Predictive perception and human experience", *European Review*, (2019), 3-4.
[95] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. II, No. 22.
[96] Nancy, et al, "The Look of the Portrait", 7.
[97] Nancy, et al, "The Look of the Portrait", 5-7.
[98] Sonnema, *Representations of Music,* 151.
[99] Sonnema, *Representations of Music,* 151.
[100] A. Blankert, *Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675),* (New York: Overlook Press, 2007), 158.

elements are tools to navigate psychological attention. Art historian student Maggie Finnegan agrees with the notion that seemingly realistic art was meant for contemporary viewing and claims eye contact was purposely added to establish a better connection. [101] She takes as an example the famous painter Pieter de Hooch. By adding the act of looking in his genre imagery, "[…] De Hooch emphasised the evolving status and value of painting as an art object in the Dutch Republic".[102] This illustrates – although once more the emphasis is on paintings – that eye contact was meant to be returned to establish a connection and stimulate purchase, which is evidently an important aspect of the Dutch art market.

Professor of Literature and Art History Harry Berger posits a different viewpoint, as he does not see the artwork as incomplete without a beholder, but rather as different.[103] Berger claims that the artwork changes when you look, think, or talk about it. Our interpretation of the gaze is only a part of it. He takes for example portraits, which serve both as representations of the sitter's and the painter's self-representation. For instance, *Portrait of Anna Maria van Schurman* (fig. 13) shows a beautiful engraving of the female artist Anna Maria van Schurman (1607-1678) made by Cornelis van Dalen II.[104] Van Schurman's pose and attire can say something about her; that she is a sophisticated young lady. Additionally, the way the artist uses Renaissance influences, such as the addition of puttis, around the oval says something about how he wants to position himself. These representations are already there, without us looking. The gaze is a form of "fiction", a constructed narrative, that influences how we read the portrayed individual's "inner being". However, this is by no means objective, as Berger states that this is dependent on our archival data (what we know about the lives, behaviour, and practices of the sitter and painter).[105] Although Berger does not share the belief that the viewer is necessary for the completion of the artwork, he agrees with the notion that eye contact creates psychological tension between the depicted and the person on the other side of the picture plane, sparking conversation, as eye contact is subjective.

In conclusion, the majority of the scholars point to the notion that the inclusion of eye contact is meant for interaction with the viewer. The returned gaze is a psychological tool to guide the attention of the beholder. Without the beholder, the collaborative process between artwork and viewer cannot take place. If there is no (subjective) emotional involvement in the

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[101] M. Finnegan, "Pieter de Hooch and the Classicizing Phenomenon in Dutch 17th-century Genre Painting", *Athanor,* Vol. 36, (2018), 46.
[102] Finnegan, "Pieter de Hooch", 50.
[103] H. Berger, "Fictions of the Pose: Facing the Gaze of Early Modern Portraiture." *Representations*, no. 46 (1994), 87.
[104] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. V. No. 153.
[105] Berger, "Fictions of the Pose", 88.

artwork, the artwork remains incomplete.

Chapter 1 explored the Dutch 16th and 17th-century genre print industry, establishing that genre imagery was often used to both educate and entertain, incorporating moral lessons and humour. The use of symbolism and direct eye contact created interactive and reflective experiences for contemporary viewers (in our case, the middle and high classes). Scholars demonstrated that the engagement of the beholder (through the gaze) completes the artwork. Eye contact is certainly meaningful, but what is this “meaning”. In the next chapters we will unravel the communicative significance behind the mutual gaze.

Chapter 2: Stereotypes

Now that we have established the importance of eye contact, we can begin examining its communicative meaning. The first chapter will discuss stereotypes. In art, stereotypes refer to oversimplified and exaggerated representations of people, based on assumptions or generalisation of individuals within a certain group.[106] Due to the abundance of stereotypes represented in the print culture and the constrained word count for this thesis, the focus will be on the following themes: 1) the fool, 2) the low-life, 3) children, 4) and the temptress.

The Fool

In the late 15th century a "jester genre", known as the *sot,* developed in the decorative arts, graphics and painting.[107] Fools were seen as the ultimate jesters, skilled in exaggerating and ridiculing people's everyday actions. As a result, they became the symbol of folly themselves. Around the 16th century, simultaneously with the rise of the popularity of the fool in the literary field, the buffoon gets a rich pictorial iconography.[108] Laughter was their trademark, characterised by a wide grin showing teeth, while directly staring the viewer into the eyes.[109] However, the jester also makes other silly expressions, such as an early example of Philips Galle of a fool biting his lip (fig. 14).[110] He – the fool is typically depicted as male - is easily identifiable by his attributes such as the fool's staff, glasses, and the fool's cap.[111] Additionally, the fool is often accompanied by various animals, for instance, a cat, a monkey, an owl and a donkey.[112] The fool adopted various gestures or other common motifs, such as placement in a frame or behind bars as if they were looking inside. Both elements are present as illustrated perfectly in Alexander Voet's *Old Fool with a Cat* (fig. 15).[113]

We observe a buffoon, dressed in stereotypical attire - for example, the hat adorned with bells - grinning at us. A Latin description *fatvo ridemvr in vno* (We all laugh through this one fool) emphasises the comical aspect. The Dutch version (fig. 16) offers a slightly different

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[106] Stereotypes often emerge in relation to the concept of the "Other". Art historian Paul Vandenbroeck discusses the stereotypes: "savages", "fools", "peasants", and "beggars" and how they are related to each other by the idea of the "Other". See more: P. Vandenbroeck, *Beeld van de andere, vertoog over het zelf: over wilden en narren, boeren en bedelaars,* (Antwerpen: Ministerie van de Vaamse Gemeenschap, 1987).
[107] Vandenbroeck, *Beeld van de andere*, 40.
[108] Vandenbroeck, *Beeld van de andere*, 45.
[109] B. Cornelis, F. Lammertse, J. R. Kan & J. v.d. Veen, *Frans Hals,* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2024), 163.
[110] New Hollstein, Philips Galle, Vol. IV, No. 563.
The biting of his lip is interpreted as regretting one's life (reflection on foolish actions). See: Tummers et al., *Kunst van het lachen*, 68.
[111] Vandenbroeck, *Beeld van de andere,* 45.
[112] Vandenbroeck, *Beeld van de andere,* 159.
[113] Hollstein Dutch, Vol XLII. No. 12.

translation “Tis om te lachen” (it is to laugh about), but also underscores the humorous association of the fool. The cat in the fool’s right hand is staring angrily at us. A cat could symbolise lust, but when combined with the fool, emphasises folly.[114] The jester and cat are placed in an open window. Around its frame, richly decorative motifs of mostly animals are seen. At the bottom, we see an owl with its wings spread, associated with foolish or vulgar behaviour.[115] Notably, a few masks are illustrated, on the left side they seem to be smiling, whereas the right side depicts frowny figures. This dual mask, of both comedy and tragedy, probably marks the duality and unpredictability of the jester.[116] At the bottom, a French verse with a Dutch translation is placed on the right.[117] This appears to be a playful and cryptic verse, expressing amusement and wisdom (laugh at the wise of the world). Wisdom and reason are contradictory to folly, automatically linking these concepts.[118]

But what is the connection between the fool and the spectator? Is he laughing with or at the beholder? Hazelnet claims it is a way of laughing at us, mocking the viewer, and prompting us to “know thyself”.[119] As sin was equated with folly, it came naturally to the contemporary viewer to become self-aware by a laughing fool. “The fool who turns to the viewer with a laugh is therefore not a laughable figure, but a figure who speaks the truth with laughter, who does not embody foolishness but rather addresses it”, states Hazelnet.[120] Thus, the Latin verse mentioned earlier, *ridendo dicere verum*, is applicable. De Jongh agrees that traditionally in the visual arts, the jester has the function of revealing the truth.[121] Usually, this is done in a “colloquial”, often “sardonic” way: confronting the viewer that no one is free of human frailties.[122] However, sometimes the fool is seen as the personification of madness or evil.[123] In representations of misbehaviour, the buffoon could take the place of the devil and the sanction for wrongdoing.[124]

The pointed index finger motif is also highly noticeable in Crispijn de Passe’s print

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[114] Vandenbroeck, *Beeld van de andere,* 53.
[115] “Malle Babbe”, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Accessed May 4, 2024, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436628
[116] This motif originates from ancient Greek theatre, symbolising the two key genres: comedy and tradegy, the two extremes of the human psyche.
[117] “Ick pronck met veer en klinck met bel. My kittelt thieve minne spel. Hup zen vrolyck laet aent grijsen. Lach ick vuijt al s’Weirelts wijsen”.
[118] Vandenbroeck, *Beeld van de andere,* 40.
[119] Hazelnet, *Vekeerde werelden,* 51.
[120] Hazelnet, *Vekeerde werelden,* 51.
[121] De Jongh & Bedaux, *Tot lering en vermaak,* 259.
[122] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life*, 23.
[123] Vandenbroeck, *Beeld van de andere,* 41.
[124] Hazelnet, *Vekeerde werelden,* 23.

after Hendrick Goltzius (fig. 17).[125] A jester, named Jannot, is looking at us from the side with a wide smile. He is pointing at the woman, Margot, next to him, who is occupied with filling an intestine to make a sausage. His hand bears similarity to Goltzius' crippled hand in his famous drawing *Goltzius's Right Hand*.[126] The inscription in German and French at the bottom shows a dialogue between the two characters, making it clear the fool is laughing about the small cap on her nose preventing her nose from dripping on the sausage.[127] Jannot also notes the unhygienic basket. The swine in the background emphasises the unsanitary conditions of the place, asserting that the fool is telling the truth: exposing foolish behaviour. Hence, his gaze is once again interpreted as uncovering the truth through laughter. The beholder identifies the fool as a moral compass, but can also joke with him. The combination of fools with sausages can also be seen as an erotic joke, illustrating diverse interpretations possible in genre prints.[128]

In two other prints, the pointing gesture is prominently featured (fig. 18 & 19).[129] In both prints, the sole figure depicted is the fool. Alongside their sulky glance directed at us, both *Laughing Fool with a Staff* and *Laughing Fool* include the buffoon pointing towards another fool laughing, their marotte. It is a scene of one fool recognising another. Jan Pietersz. Saenredam's print also bears the inscription "Tis om te lachen", leaving no doubt about the intended message. Van den Valckert's print also includes a phrase, suggesting that one "can hardly be kept without laughing" when encountering a jester hiding up one's sleeve. [130] The fool's antics are inherently associated with hilarity, whether concealed or overt.

Another common gesture frequently depicted is the buffoon looking through his fingers, as seen in *Fool Looking Through his Fingers* (fig 20). Spread fingers in front of his eyes illustrate the Dutch proverb "door zijn vingers zien" (turn a blind eye). It conveys a willingness to overlook an offence or foolish behaviour while recognising its absurdity, hinting at the stereotypical lax immorality of the jester. An emblem in Roemer Visscher's *Sinnepoppen* (fig. 21) shows a fool spreading his finger with the caption "Qaueso" (I pray thee).[131] The fool requests the beholder to pay attention to his (foolish) actions. In *A Fool with*

[125] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. XV, No. 645.
[126] Y. Bleyerveld, I.M. Veldman, M. Plomp & B. Schepers, *The Netherlandish Drawings of the 16th Century in Teylers Museum,* (Leiden: Primavera Pers, 2016), 92-94.
[127] New Hollstein Dutch XV, nr. 645, I. Veldman, "Crispijn de Passe and his progeny (1564-1670): a century of print production", 144.
[128] Tummers et al. *Kunst van het lachen,* 131.
[129] Fig. 18: Hollstein Dutch , Vol. XXIII, No. 123.
Fig 19: Hollstein Dutch, Vol. XXXII, No. 13.
[130] "Daer den geck inde mou is alsoet mach blicken, can hem qualicken houden sonder vol te hichen".
[131] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life*, 24.

a Richly Dressed Girl by Werner van den Valckert (fig. 22), the lady is looking through her fingers, while a fool is fondling her breast.[132] Underneath the frolicsome illustration, a verse, declaring she does not want his friendship, but at the same time allows him to touch her breasts.[133] Thus, the theme of the print is foolish behaviour.[134] The implied eye contact emphasises the foolish behaviour, which prompts the contemporary viewers to reflect on themselves.

In *Wine is a Mocker* of Hendrick de Bary after Frans Mieris (fig. 23), another woman and a fool are depicted together.[135] The lady is resting her head on one arm. Evidently, her state is due to alcohol consumption, since a spilt wine glass is visible on the table beside her. Her posture exposes her bosom, and her legs are spread in an "unladylike" manner. The fool towering above her is ridiculing her: he places a chamber pot on her head, while jokingly sticking his tongue out. De Jongh marks that this visualisation captures the Dutch 17th-century whimsical expression: "crowning her with a piss-pot".[136] The viewer is invited into the joke, as he gazes at us with a grin. Although the fool is seen as the mocker, the title points to alcohol as the foundation of this mockery. It references the proverb 20:1[137], stating that whoever is led astray by the strong drink is not wise, and even the most civilised person could turn into a fool.[138] An etiquette book from 1623 also cautions against the effects of alcohol describing them as: "sotte, malle ende narrachtighe geckerien" (silly, foolish antics).[139] The owl on the door further alludes to this message, as it was often associated with drunkenness, a form of foolishness. This is for example evidenced by sayings such as "zo zat als een uil" (drunk as an owl).[140] Thus, the look of the fool points to the truth, with the element of satirical laughter.

Given the fool's complex and rich pictorial tradition, the accompanying gaze of the fool has multiple interpretations. Most of the time, the buffoon's look adverts the viewer to foolish behaviour. Inevitably, the gaze acts as a mirror. However, since the fool often wears a

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[132] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. XXXII, No. 11.
[133] "Ianneken mijn lief sou mijn vrientschap worden geschijen / neen hansken maer door schamte sal ick door de vijnger syen". (Janneken, my love, shall I make our friendship known? / No, Hansken, for through shame, I will be seen through the finger)
[134] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life*, 154.
[135] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. I, No. 11.
[136] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life*, 338.
[137] "Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise. A king's wrath strikes terror like the roar of a lion; those who anger him forfeit their lives. It is to one's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel. Sluggards do not plow in season; so at harvest time they look but find nothing." (Proverbs 20:2-4, New International Version)
[138] Cornelis, et all, *Frans Hals*, 170.
[139] As cited in Cornelis, et al. *Frans Hals*, 170.
[140] De Jongh & Bedaux, *Tot lering en vermaak*, 247.

big grin, one of the communicative meanings could also convey "laughter", as his smile tends to be contagious.

The Low-life

Scenes showing peasants misbehaving remained the most favoured theme of genre prints well into the 17th century.[141] A possible explanation could be that the burgher class had only recently separated itself from the peasantry and was eager to affirm the "difference" (superiority) between these newly established classes.[142] Cheerful laughter evoked by stereotypical depictions was used as a rejection of the ugly, foolish, deviant, and bad.[143] Thus, comedy and didacticism cannot be separated from peasant scenery.[144] Peasants and other commoners consequently fall under the category *exempla contraria.* Paul Vandenbroeck, Professor in Art Sciences, mentions that the concepts of wildness, insanity, incivility and antisociality, are historically intertwined, rather than treated as distinct entities, from anthropological and social points of view.[145] Consequently, low-life stereotypes bear many similarities, which is why they will be addressed collectively in this paragraph, as they represent the antithesis of "civil" and "culture".

Traditionally, these stereotypes are almost always depicted together as moralising groups, which accounts for the scarcity of prints featuring singular stereotypical figures, especially those directly engaging with the viewer. For instance, the theme of dancing peasants was exceedingly popular in the 16th and 17th centuries (fig. 24).[146] Albrecht Dürer's *Peasant Couple Dancing* served as an important prototype for these illustrations (fig. 25).[147] Notably, the woman is making eye contact with the beholder. Hazelzet regards Dürer's print as a pivotal moment marking a shift towards realism, departing from the exaggerated caricatural prevalent before that time.[148] However, some stereotypical features, such as the attributes, and attire, are still present, and as de Jongh remarks: they engage in an act (dancing) seen as heathen and atheistic.[149]

The few prints with a singular low-life figure engaging with the viewer show other acts considered typically "low-life", such as drinking and smoking. Although everyone drank

[141] Kelly, *Functions of the Comic*, 77.
[142] Kelly, *Functions of the Comic,* 49.
[143] Vandenbroeck, *Beeld van de andere*, 83.
[144] Vandenbroeck, *Beeld van de andere*,, 83.
[145] Vandenbroeck, *Beeld van de andere*, 132.
[146] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life*, 115-116.
Hollstein Dutch, Vol. XIV, No. 61.
[147] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. VII, No. 88.
[148] Hazelnet, *Verkeerde Werelden,* 108.
[149] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life*, 116.

alcohol in this period, due to the pollution of drinking water, overconsumption was considered dangerous and therefore highly criticised. Nevertheless, alcohol held an important place in contemporary social culture, such as toasting at weddings, parties of the *rederijkers* and other festive occasions, shining light on the positive perspective of drinking.[150] Given the ambiguous perception of alcohol, the use of eye contact in the prints discussed in this paragraph likely has multiple interpretations.

Adriaen van Ostade of Haarlem was renowned for depicting peasant life in print culture. In *Smoking Farmer with Arm over a Chair* (fig. 26), Van Ostade portrays a relatively large farmer recognisable by his simple appearance smoking a pipe.[151] While the farmer smiles amiably at us while raising his pipe, the second pipe on the table conveys the message of excessiveness. As mentioned before, for the (civilised) viewer, it was immediately clear that these low-class manners were far away from the norms of the bourgeoisie.[152] The same applies to drinking, as smoking and drinking were perceived as almost interchangeable vices, with both habits associated with vanity.[153]

In *Farmer with a Pipe and Jug* by Jonas Suyderhoef (fig. 27), we witness a low-born man holding a pipe and a drinking vessel, indulging in both pleasures simultaneously.[154] Unlike the overt cheerfulness in Jan van de Velde's *Man, Glass and Pipe,* this farmer's smile carries a more reserved demeanour, yet likely has a similar meaning (fig. 28).[155] Van de Velde's print is part of the series *Spiegel of IJdelheid* (Mirror of Vanity). The man is depicted raising his glass, seemingly toasting to the viewer, and almost offering his pipe to him or her.[156] His adorned headwear features a large feather, which could either signify frivolity or foolishness.[157] Underneath the image, the inscription emphasises the man's need and love for drinking and smoking with a preference for "the jug".[158] The motif of merry or jolly drinkers highlights the social aspect of drinking.[159] In Cornelis Bloemaert's *Farmer with Chicken*

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[150] Cornelis, et al. *Frans Hals*, 170.
[151] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. XV. No. B.6.
New Hollstein, Adiaen van Ostade, Vol. II, No. 41(I-VI).
[152] Cornelis, et al. *Frans Hals*, 170.
[153] J. Bikker, "Judith Leyster, A Fool Holding a Jug, known as 'The Jolly Drinker, 1629", in J. Bikker (ed.), *Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century in the Rijksmuseum*, (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2022), Accessed May 1, 2024, https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/SK-A-1685/catalogus-entry?pdfView=False
[154] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. XXVIII, No 17.
[155] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. XXXIV, No. 120.
[156] "Man glas en pijp", *Rijksmuseum*, Accessed May 1, 2024, https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-P-OB-67.293
[157] Bikker, "Judith Leyster, A Fool Holding a Jug". For more information on the feather representing foolish behaviour see: De Jongh & Bedaux, *Tot lering en vermaak,* 59.
[158] "De smook is al myn lust en'tbier is al myn leven: Noch sou ik om de kan de pijp wel overgeven. Ik ben een stinckend kreng, ik ben een dronkeslet. Ik mag te lijdig smook en't lieve mout noch bet".
[159] Cornelis, et al., *Frans Hals*, 170.

alcohol is not explicitly depicted (fig. 29).[160] However, the inscription at the bottom unmistakably suggests that the farmer, stereotypically illustrated with a chicken, needs a drink for his dry throat.[161] The confrontational gaze with a subtle smile, evokes laughter and contemplation among viewers.

In Jan Matham's *Farmer with Eggs in a Basket* (fig. 30) it is not a chicken that is stereotypically used, but its eggs.[162] A farmer, recognisable by his attire, hat, and rural setting, laughingly points to the basket of eggs. After reading the inscription, the contemporary viewer would immediately know why his gaze is so bawdy.[163] Because of the eggs, he can satisfy his woman again.[164]

It is not only individuals from the lower social strata that were portrayed engaging in drinking, also the middle class, such as the one in *Merry Drinker* by Cornelis Danckerts, were depicted as jolly drinkers (fig. 31).[165] This likely stemmed from the notion that everyone drinks, and could succumb to the dangers of intoxication, as encountered in *Wine is a Mocker* (fig. 23). Danckert's print emphasises excessive drinking, as the inscription mentions the empty jug needs refilling.[166] The man is pointing at the fallen jug with his index finger, a gesture that can be erotically charged, especially when paired with an open jug, often symbolising female genitals.[167] Paradoxically, the man is holding the glass at the stem, showing an awareness of etiquette, which emphasises the comical aspect.[168]

The aforementioned series by Jan van de Velde, also portrays merchants engaging in worldly pleasures, such as the lute player in *Richly Dressed Lute Player* (fig. 32).[169] The musician gazes at the viewer with a silly, confrontational expression. The inscription bears: "ik ben een rijkmans kind; soo soek ik tijd-verdrijf" (I am a rich-man's child, I seek pastime). Although he claims to be rich, his choice of instrument is interesting, as the lute, similar to the bagpipe, and violin, was seen as a low-life instrument.[170] Possibly, the print could have an erotic message as music-making could be a metaphor for intercourse. A more overtly sexual

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[160] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. II, No. 290.
[161] "Siet hoe den ouden voelt het koen, een droge queen wil oock wat doen."
[162] New Hollstein Dutch, Adriaen, Jan & Theodoor Matham, Vol. I, No. R15.
[163] "Wanneer ick't heb verkerft en Trijn begint te schreijen/ Neem duske pillen in, dan kan ick haer weer peijen".
[164] De Jongh & Bedaux, *Tot lering en vermaak,* 252.
[165] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. V, No. 78-a.
[166] "T'Kannetjes is uyt Gooris tap t'het weer vol Joris".
[167] See: P. J. Vinken, "Some Observations on the Symbolism of The Broken Pot in Art and Literature." *American Imago* 15, no. 2 (1958), 149–74.
[168] Chapman et al. *Jan Steen,* 61.
[169] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. XXXIV, No. 112.
[170] I. F. Finlay, Musical Instruments in 17th-Century Dutch Paintings." *The Galpin Society Journal* 6 (1953), 59.

message is conveyed in *Violin Player* by Adriaen Matham (fig. 33).[171] An elderly man with a violin and a bagpipe slung over his back looks at us seductively. Both these instruments had a rather shabby reputation and were associated with inns and folk entertainment.[172] The accompanying verse explicitly alludes to sexual gratification: although the man may be old, he does not fail to please his wife.[173] According to art historian Jasper Hilligers, this print was humorously viewed.[174]

In short, low-life types were portrayed as the opposite of "civil" and were therefore used by the higher classes as a negative self-definition. As we have seen, humour evoked by direct eye contact is crucial in these kinds of depictions. Through laughter, the civilised could distance themselves from these stereotypes. Simultaneously, the confronting gaze prints prompt the viewer to reflect on themselves: if you behave like a low-life you are not conducting yourself properly.

Children

Children and young adolescents frequently feature in moralistic prints, likely because of their impressionable nature, which is useful for didactic lessons.[175] Children tend to copy good and bad behaviour represented by their parents, contributing to the moral ambiguity in these prints.[176] The well- known proverb "Soo d'oude songen soo piepen de jonge" (as the old ones sang, so do the young ones chirp) exemplifies this. Since the Dutch culture prefers negative examples, most scenes show children mimicking the foolish behaviour of their elders. Furthermore, children could see the world of adults in their own way, a role usually reserved for jesters.[177] In short, children serve as a mirror for behaviour.

Boy with a Rumbling-Pot by Cornelis Bloemaert (II) after his father Abraham Bloemaert (fig. 34) shows a homemade lowly instrument, made of a stretched pig bladder over a jug, known as a *rommelpot.*[178] It creates loud buzzing sounds, which not everyone

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[171] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. XI, No. 6.
New Hollstein, Adiaen, Jan & Theodoor Matham, Vol. I, No. 6.
[172] Tummers et al. *Kunst van het Lachen,* 71.
[173] A.P. de Mirimonde, *Musique et symbolisme chez Jan-Davidszoon de Heem*, *Cornelis-Janszoon et Jan II Janszoon de Heem*, in *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen*, (Antwerpen: 1970), 255,
https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_gul005197501_01/_gul005197501_01_0016.php#373
[174] Tummers, *Kunst van het lachen,* 71.
[175] Cornelis, et al. *Frans Hals*, 174.
[176] H. Enders, "The Role of Children in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Paintings: Social Distinction and National Identity", *Senior Independent Study Thesis,* (2018), 2.
[177] Cornelis, et al. *Frans Hals*, 175.
[178] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. II, No. 287.

appreciated. Poet Jan van der Veen (1578-1659) dedicated an emblem to the instrument, labelling it a symbol of folly: “The Foolish chatter, ranting and raving, Is Fruitless, yet it feeds and fattens the fools”.[179] The young boy depicted in this print also exhibits a foolish appearance which is no coincidence, the inscription compares the child to a “vastel-avonts sot” (Carnival fool). He is dressed in a carnival-like outfit, and is staring joyfully at us.[180] His hat is adorned with a ladle, cards, and feathers. Around his neck, he wears a chain of sausages. The rommelpot is an instrument that frequently appeared in Dutch 16th and 17th print culture, sometimes with an erotic connotation, as is the case in *Rumbling-pot player* (fig. 35).[181] Another sole figure, a man, is playing this folk instrument. While the child’s expression appears innocent, the man’s look is bawdy, mirrored in the provocative manner in which he holds the rommelpot. The gaze supports the erotic punning.

In *Laughing Boy with a Glass* made by Jan Matham (fig. 36), an adolescent boy confronts the beholder. Despite his apparent higher class – evident from his headgear, merchant-like attire, and the way he holds his glass showing awareness of drinking etiquette - the boy’s glint is somewhat mischievous as if he is aware of his sinful behaviour. A lit candle behind his glass serves as yet another symbol alluding to the vanity of his actions. [182] In the category “temptress” the use of candlesticks will be explored further.

More prints featuring children contain inscriptions prompting contemplation. *Boy with an Owl* (fig. 37) is part of a quartet of children depicted with animals by Cornelis Bloemaert (the others being a bird's nest, birdcage and a cat).[183] De Jongh discusses these “light-hearted” artworks in his book *Mirror of Everyday Life.* The boy holding up the owl, the symbol of folly, makes fun of the viewer. The inscription bears: “I hold the owl for my pleasure, if you are looking for you brother you see him here”. [184] The eye contact implies that we, the viewers, are the relatives of the (stupid) owl, placing this print firmly within the realm of comedy.[185] A more serious version of this joke by Bloemaert is *Human Desire* (fig. 38).[186] An

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[179] Tummers et al. *Kunst van het lachen,* 76.
“De malle kallery het tieren ende raesen, Is vruchteloos, nochtans het voedt en mest de dwaesen”
[180] “Rommelpot-speler”, *Rijksmuseum*, Accessed May 10, 2024, https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search/objects?q=rommelpot&f=1&p=1&ps=12&st=Objects&ii=1#/RP-P-BI-1444,1
[181] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. VI, No. 2.
[182] S. Schama, “Wives and Wantons: Versions of Womanhood in 17th Century Dutch Art”, *The Oxford Art Journal* 3, (1980), 5.
[183] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. II, No. 296.
[184] “Boy with an Owl”, *Museum Boijmans van Beuningen*, Accessed May 10, 2024, https://www.boijmans.nl/en/collection/artworks/25842/boy-with-an-owl
[185] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life*, 187.
[186] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. II, No. 299.

old woman looks up, meeting our eyes directly. It appears as if she is interrupted by us, while busy counting her money with the aid of spectacles by candlelight. The money bags and jewellery emphasise the theme of *Avaritia*, one of the deadly sins, inscribed above the woman. As De Jongh points out, the glasses and candlelight refer to the stupidity of the owl.[187] The contemporary moralistic saying "What good are a candle and glasses if the owl simply refuses to see?", underscores the theme of foolishness.[188] Sometimes the owl is used in the context of religion: "The owl as the image of human folly, for it too sees nothing in the light, is as stupid as a man who refuses to be helped by the word of God.[189] As demonstrated, both the gaze of the elderly woman and the child carry a moralistic note due to the presence of the owl. However, the woman is imbued with a more serious tone compared to the innocent laughter of the boy.

In conclusion, as children were deemed impressionable, they served as ideal moralistic tools, making the gaze a reflection of adult life. However, children's expressions were more playful and endearing compared to the adult versions of the same message.

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[187] De Jongh, *Mirror of Everyday Life,* 192.
[188] "Wat baten kaars en bril als de uit niet zien en wil".
[189] P. Hecht, "Candlelight and Dirty Fingers, or Royal Virtue in Disguise: Some Thoughts on Weyerman and Godfried Schalken." *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 11, no. 1 (1980), 29. https://doi.org/10.2307/3780511 .

The Temptress

Woman in Nighttime Attire Holding a Candle depicts a lady dressed in her low-cut nightgown, revealing a hint of bosom, holding a candlestick (fig. 39). Nicolaas Verkolje's mastery of the *chiaroscuro* further dramatises the somewhat romantic scene. The lady seems to be greeting us with a sly smile as if we are the potential suitor she has been waiting for. Although a lit candle in Jacob Cat's emblem book is a sign of love (fig. 40) - as it can easily be re-lit - it appears the scene is loaded with sexual tension.[190] For instance, the open curtains, the chamber pot (*piespot*) placed on the chair next to her, and the phallic shape of the candlestick. Verkolje made various prints after Godfried Schalcken's popular niche painting depicting romantic candlelight scenes.[191]

Young Woman with a Fan by Jacob Gole (fig. 41), is also made after one of Schalcken's paintings.[192] With one pinkie raised, a lady is waving her fan before her face while seductively glancing at us. She is wrapping a piece of clothing around her body, subtly resting her hands on her breasts, drawing the viewer into her psychological state. [193] The scene unfolds in an idyllic setting, revealed by the open curtain. On a table, a rose is prominently placed, meant to catch the viewer's eye. While flowers could serve as emblems of the brevity of life (a *momento mori*), the rose, in particular, could symbolise beauty, love and female sexuality.[194] The rose is positioned so that the viewer can look straight into the rosebud, which could have various interpretations: female love, or her genitals.[195] The ambiguity of the symbolism used in this print leaves the woman's gaze up to interpretation, alluding to the mystery of the scene.

Jan Verkolje's *Woman with a Parrot in a Window* (fig. 42) undoubtedly would have amused its viewers with its ambiguity. A woman is holding her coat similarly to the lady in the previously discussed print, hinting at her slightly exposed breast. Her arm extends from the window frame, creating an optical illusion. On her finger rests a bird, a parrot, that seems to be removed from the birdcage, lingering in the background. This motif held significant symbolic weight. Jacob Cat's emblem "Reperire, perire est" (to find is to perish), portrays a young woman freeing a bird from a casket, accompanied by a poem, stating that the fleeing

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[190] "Vlam eerst geweken, haest weer ontsteken – Eens gebrant, haest gevlamt"
[191] More on imitation: J. Aono. "In the Glow of Candlelight: A Study of Nicolaas Verkolje's Approach to the Art of Godefridus Schalcken", *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 77 (2016), 251–64.
[192] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. VII, No. 210.
[193] N. E. Cook, *Godefridus Schalcken (1643-1706): Desire And Intimate Display,* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2016), 125.
[194] Hall et al, *Hall's Iconografisch Hanboek,* 49.
[195] This is a medieval motif, discussed in: J. Luft, Unfixing The Rosebud In The Romance Of The Rose, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2004), 2.

bird symbolises the loss of her virginity and innocence. [196] The word "bird" would be synonymous with "penis", and "to bird" (*vogelen*) was a euphemism for sexual intercourse.[197] Depictions of birds with an erotic message were often regarded as *gheestig* (witty). Yet, beneath the humorous facade, these artworks could serve as cautionary tales, warning against carnal desires.[198] The choice of a parrot cannot be accidental, adding another layer of ambiguity to the depiction. Parrots were shipped from overseas and therefore associated with luxury, exotism and prestige.[199] Another emblem of Jacob Cats shows a parrot in a cage, captioned with "Dwanck, leert sanck" (discipline teaches speech), alluding to the bird's learning capacity. In the context of *Woman with a Parrot in a Window, t*he parrot could serve as a metaphor for the need for discipline and restraint, since the bird is on the brink of flight. These ambiguous symbols add layers of complexity to the woman's gaze, either it adds to the erotic joke or encourages discipline.

Summarily, the temptress' gaze invites various interpretations as these scenes are ridden with ambiguous symbols. This duplicity suggest both a playful engagement with romantic and sexual themes and a deeper commentary on virtue and restraint. Erotic reading could also evoke laughter.

Conclusion

The gaze in stereotypical depictions serves as a multifaceted tool, rich with communicative meaning. Without the returned look, the print's impact would diminish significantly. Across the various stereotypes discussed – the fool, the low-life, the child and the temptress – the gaze acts as a mirror and moral compass. The fool's role is revealing uncomfortable truths through humour and satire, making his gaze both moralistic and humoristic (figure, p. 6). Similarly, the eye contact in low-life depictions blends comedy with didacticism, using laughter as a means of distancing the viewer. Children's gazes are playful and endearing but reflect simultaneously on societal norms and expectations. Lastly, the temptress's seductive glance can be seen as an invitation or a reminder of the moral pitfalls associated with carnal desires.

Overall, the gaze in stereotypes serves as a powerful means of communication,

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[196] Cook, *Godefridus Schalcken,* 83-84.

[197] E. de Jongh, "Erotica in vogelperspectief. De dubbelzinnigheid van een reeks zeventiende-eeuwse genrevoorstellingen", *Simiolus,* 3(1), 27.

[198] D. Surh, "Young Woman in a Niche with a Parrot and Cage", *The Leiden Collection*, (2017), Accessed May 14, 2024, https://www.theleidencollection.com/artwork/a-young-woman-in-a-niche-with-a-parrot-and-cage-2/

[199] Surh, "Young Woman in a Niche with a Parrot and Cage".

transcending mere visual engagement to invoke deeper reflection on the contemporary viewer (and its society). Thus, the gaze not only captures the attention of the beholder, but also actively engages him or her in the visual representation.

Chapter 3: Companies

This chapter will discuss “companies”, prints illustrating groups of people, specifically focused on music-making, drinking and tobacco use, important elements we have encountered in our previous chapter.

Musical companies

“Eye contact by at least one figure in any musical scene is the rule rather than the exception” states art historian Roy Sonnema.[200] This is also the case in the prints selected for this chapter. Sonnema distinguishes two types of encounters: the look of recognition (1), and that of identification (2).[201] The first type, Sonnema explains, functions as an invitation, making the viewer a member of the musical company. The second, the look of identification, is when the gaze functions as “a psychological pivot for the entire scene”, meaning that the spectator identifies with the person portrayed, serving as a protagonist acting on our behalf.[202] Sonnema contends that the latter type of gaze is most common in “early” genre paintings, where only one or two figures encounter the viewer amidst numerous other figures who continue to entertain themselves.[203] This is similar to the portrait paintings as pointed out by Aloïs Riegl. Once more, the communicative intent is to lure the viewer into the artwork and stimulate self-reflection. Sonnema also warns us about the differences in subjectivity, each viewer could interpret the illustration differently.[204]

This applies for example to Gerard Hoet’s *Musical Company* (fig. 43). Three figures are depicted in a rural landscape. Two women establish eye contact. The woman playing the tambourine gazes at us with her mouth slightly open, indicating that she might be singing. Meanwhile, the man playing the flute seductively glances at the woman, or perhaps her exposed breasts, underneath him. The other female raises both hands, possibly suggesting enjoyment of the music or beating in time. She looks at us as if we are interrupting. At the bottom right, a dog is carefully watching. Notably, in the background, a sculpture depicts two figures intertwined, but the nature of their interaction—whether dancing or wrestling—remains ambiguous. The sculpture is possibly inspired by an existing statue, possibly the Abduction of

[200] Sonnema, *Representations of Music*, 150.
[201] An important sidenote is made in his analysis: “[…] the two types are by no means mutually exclusive”. Sonnema, *Representations of Music*, 151.
[202] Sonnema does not specify which period exactly, but assuming from his examples, he means the early decades of the 17th century, before 1650s. Sonnema, *Representations of Music*, 153.
[203] Sonnema, *Representations of Music*, 152.
[204] Sonnema, *Representations of Music*, 164.

Prosperina.[205] At first glance, this musical depictions showcase a harmonious scene of people gathered together as if it is a snapshot of daily life. Sonnema proposes that the focus of such musical images lies on the illusion of reality, instead of the symbolic function. For instance, the motif of someone singing or beating the time does not always have an iconological interpretation but is simply a functional part of the ensemble. By illustrating interaction with the viewer, the artwork emphasises the role of "sociability" in daily life; music making is a manner of social intercourse of mainly young people.[206] The viewer could join in and envision the type of music formed in the artwork.[207] However, as the scene takes place in an idyllic garden, not a domestic space, it is likely not meant to be interpreted as a copy of everyday life.

In most cases, genre scenes have a double meaning. Musical gatherings can stand as symbols of unity and joy, aligning with themes of happiness and love prevalent in 16th and 17th-century culture. Love and music went often hand in hand, since in both the goal was to achieve harmony.[208] Especially the lute represented civic and political unity.[209] However, musical depictions could be negatively viewed, as an earthy pleasure, and thus closely linked to the theme of *vanitas*.[210] Musical instruments, such as the violin and the bagpipe, were seen as phallic metaphors or the playing of instruments was associated with sex. As we have seen in *Violin Player* by Adriaen Matham (fig. 33). The tambourine in Hoet's print was not perceived as an erotic instrument, whereas the flute - one of the more popular instruments in visual imagery – was considered a phallic symbol because of its appearance.[211] In certain contexts, the instrument could contribute to the broader theme of leisure. The portrayal of the women portrayed in revealing garments, and the directed gaze of the man (internal unity), could emphasize the meaning of sensuality. Art historian Edwin Buijsen points out that the risqué

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[205] The statue could represent the Abduction of Proserpina, a tale of abduction, love, and changing seasons. Struck by Cupid's arrows, Pluto, God of the Underworld, forcibly abducts Proserpine, daughter of the agricultural Goddess Ceres. He takes her to the Underworld, where he makes her his queen. Ceres searches the world in vain, and therefore neglects her agricultural duties, causing crops to die. The story stands as a metaphor for the cycle of life, death and rebirth, and the changing of the seasons. See: E. Fantham, *Ovid's Metamorphoses*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023). 16, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780195154092.001.0001.
In the context of this print, the statue could therefore add an extra layer to the romantic narrative.

[206] Buijsen, *The Hoogsteder Exhibition*, 113.

[207] Buijsen, *The Hoogsteder Exhibition*, 119.

[208] Buijsen, *The Hoogsteder Exhibition*, 235. For example, Jacob Cats (1577–1660), in his *Sinne- en Minnebeelden* of 1618, wrote a poem accompanying an illustration of a man tuning his lute (fig 1) that describes this activity as symbolic of two hearts "that vibrate to the same tune.", https://www.theleidencollection.com/artwork/man-tuning-a-violin/ Or: "liefde doet singen" (love makes one sing). See: De Jongh & Bedaux, *Tot lering en vermaak,* 60.

[209] De Jongh & Bedaux, *Tot lering en vermaak,* 105.

[210] The negative connotation roots back to the Middle Ages when all music that did not serve God was condemned. This created an antithesis between sacred and profane music.

[211] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life,* 173.

busts are hardly coincidental.[212] Plunging necklines are also often seen in brothel scenes, or the popular theme *koppelaarster* (procuress)[213] such as the painting of Dirck van Baburen featuring a low-cut neckline of the prostitute (fig. 44). The inclusion of the lute in this painting served as a symbol of unchastity or the female genitalia. The 17th-century expression: "met hoeren en met snaren" (with whores and with strings) shows the disrespectful erotic tone of such paintings.[214] Thus, the mutual gaze in *Musical Company* invites the contemporary beholder to contemplate music, temptation and desire. The inclusion of the dog, when looked upon negatively, could be a warning of sinful behaviour. However, since dogs could also signify loyalty[215], the interpretation is up to the viewer. According to Buijsen, with these types of works, it is difficult to determine the margins between the constructed, reality, emblematic and moralising significance. "It is probably best to consider these works as containing a combination of different interpretations, from which the observer can freely choose".[216] In many cases, the message can be ambiguous, but we should not simply guess as we aim to reconstruct the mindset of the contemporary spectator. However, in the case of Hoet's *Musical Company, t*he communicative liaison could be read negatively as a warning, or positively as an invitation to the social activity crucial to Dutch 17th-century society. One thing is clear, Hoet uses the gaze as a powerful tool in enticing the viewer.

Other prints also feature only one or two figures noticing our presence. Unlike Hoet's print, which depicts some objects that could have a symbolic meaning, the prints titled *Musical Companies* by Pieter Schenk (I) and Johannes Gronsveld in figures 45 and 46 give little clue as to how to read the figures' gazes. At the centre of the mezzotint by Pieter Schenk after a painting by Gerard Pietersz. van Zijl (fig .45), is a woman staring at us from her side.[217] She is the only figure who notices our presence, the other three figures are preoccupied. The man is looking down on the lady with the music book (*liedboek*), while the other woman accompanies the singing with a guitar.[218] If it were not for the gaze the lady gives us, a distance between us and the company was created. Now, she bridges that gap, without making clear whether we are welcome or not.

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[212] Buijsen, *The Hoogsteder Exhibition*, 286.
[213] L. C. van der Pol, "The Whore, the Bawd, and the Artist: The Reality and Imagery of Seventeenth-Century Dutch Prostitution", *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art,* vol. 2.1-2, jnha.org, Accessed April 2, 2024, https://jhna.org/articles/whore-bawd-artist-reality-imagery-seventeenth-century-dutch-prostitution/
[214] De Jongh & Bedaux, *Tot lering en vermaak,* 60-61.
[215] Buijsen, *The Hoogsteder Exhibition*, 48. Specifically loyalty in marriage. The dog is often in paintings placed at the feet of the lady. A sleeping dog is a sign of peace and fidelity.
[216] Buijsen, *The Hoogsteder Exhibition,* 54.
[217] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. XXV, No. 414.
[218] The guitar was perceived as an instrument with low connotations. See: Chapman et al. *Jan Steen,* 259.

In Johannes Gronsveld's *Musical Company* after an unknown painting by Titian (fig. 46) similarly only two figures notice our presence, while the rest continue singing.[219] The man on the left and the lady on the right tilt their heads when looking at us. The lady rests her hand on her male neighbour. Their gazes are hard to interpret, an intriguing trick to spark conversation. Are they looking seductively at us? It could be that both prints are about love and seduction. Alternatively, viewed in a positive light, the scene could demonstrate harmony in the family. Johannes Gronsveld's print depicts figures from different ages, making the latter interpretation likely. However, in Schenk's print, the figures seem to be around the same age, possibly indicating a narrative centred around love pursuit.

The woman's gaze in *Girls Singing* by Pieter van den Berge is more explicit, as she is startled by our presence, but also welcomes us with a friendly smile (fig. 47). She clutches the music sheet tightly against her body in an attempt to retain her modesty, without success: her breast is partially visible, enhancing the sensuality of the scene. The woman positioned behind her is instructing her with one hand, while the other hand is holding a stringed instrument, an instrument with often erotic connotations. The two ladies seem to jump out of the oval-shaped frame, adding a touch of humour. Similarly, Adriaen van Ostade's etching *The Singers* (fig. 48) utilises an illusionist element, this time a window.[220] We see a chiaroscuro depiction of four figures: a woman is singing from a sheet, and the man next to her is holding a candle to shine light onto the paper. The man behind them is chuckling at onlookers. In the background, a third man is seen. Curator Mark Stocker interprets the window as a way of dividing the figures, and perhaps even a subtle sense of comedy.[221] Stocker probably refers to *trompe-l'oeuil* (trick of the eye), a humorous visual deception.[222] While the facial expressions of the figures gazing at us are quite different between *Girls Singing* and *The Singers*, the shared detail of visual deception points to a more whimsical reading of the eye contact.

Musical instruments

Not all figures actively engage in making music in various prints, yet the musical instruments take centre stage. The bagpipe (*lullepijp*), commonly known as the instrument of choice of the lowest social classes, including peasants, beggars, and shepherds, is depicted in several prints, such as fig. 49 and 50.[223] Sometimes this instrument had a sexual innuendo, symbolising male

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[219] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. VIII, No. 43.
[220] New Hollstein, Adriaen van Ostade, Vol. II, No. 36(I-VI).
[221] "The Singers at the Window"*, Museum of New Zealand,* Accessed April 3, 2024, https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/41733
[222] Tummers et al. *Kunst van het lachen*, 23.
[223] Buijsen, *The Hoogsteder Exhibition* 246.

genitals, or alluding to drunkenness.[224] In Pieter Balten's *Evening of the Bride* (fig. 49) the erotic message is very on the nose.[225] A woman, surrounded by men holding musical instruments, is crying. The inscription notes that she is a bride, crying now, but expects that once she is in bed she will be laughing, referring to consummation.[226] The bagpipe, the titled open chamber jug in front of her genitals, and other phallic-shaped objects such as the candlestick, emphasise the sexual act that will take place. The man holding the bagpipe is looking at us with an open mouth. His stupid expression, the blunt symbolism, and the verse make it clear this illustration was meant to be laughed at.

In *Vuijl Sause* (fig. 50) a richly detailed, chaotic scene in a domestic interior is taking place.[227] We are immediately drawn to the figure in the middle, a young man making eye contact while blowing a bagpipe. As we now know, the bagpipe was seen as a rather vulgar instrument, which makes us interpret the gaze as possibly a moral, or funny one. However, we should not jump to conclusions, before reading the print as a whole. Starting from the left, at the top a woman is holding a jug. Underneath her, a man drinks from a cup, known as a *noppenbeker*.[228] The child on the floor has his hands in a bowl of batter, which he seems to share with a pig. Next to the child, a woman is breastfeeding a child while simultaneously making a dish on her lap. Above her, a man is also occupied with a culinary task. Besides the breastfeeding lady, another man is making *poffertjes* while pinching his nose, indicating the room smells. Concealed beneath his pan is a cat. Next to the man with the bagpipe, a glimpse through a doorway (*doorkijkje*) reveals a couple. The last figure, with next to him the inscription *Lippe Loer,* strikes a dramatic pose while looking at the others. From a small window, a two-headed fool peaks inside, as we have seen in the chapter on stereotypes, this is a recurring motif. The inscription at the bottom emphasises the dirty household, stating that everyone depicted is dirty, and no one is neat.[229] Furthermore, it warns about the dangers of dirt, as it makes one fat. It seems that the bagpipe player is the orator of this verse, by the sentence "to pipe a little song, I have set myself here". This could contribute to his confronting gaze. Portraying untidy and unkempt domestic settings served as an *exempla*

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[224] Buijsen, *The Hoogsteder Exhibition*, 204.
[225] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. I, No. 4.
[226] "Nu schreyt de bruy nochtans ick wedde, sy sal weder lachen als sy is te bedde". Coelen et al. *De ontdekking van het dagelijkse leven,* 241.
[227] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. XXXV, No. 2.
[228] "Vuijl sause"*, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen,* Accessed April 11, 2024, https://www.boijmans.nl/collectie/kunstwerken/31033/vuijl-sause
[229] "Soo vuylsause soo wilt die aeyeren plansen. In ouwen pels. Mackt vuijl mackt vet. Lippen loer sal va[n] blijscap over het aey eens dansen. O[m] ee[n] liedeke[n] te pijpe[n] hebbick mij hier geset. daerse al vuijl sij[n] en is nijmant net".

contraria: how your household should not look like. This notion is closely linked to the proverb: “een huishouden van Jan Steen” (a household of Jan Steen), noting a chaotic household.[230] Besides the visual narrative that clearly portrays the dirtiness, such as the child’s hands in the batter, scattered food on the ground, and the nose pinching, the image includes various symbolism emphasising the household’s negative connotations. For instance, as we now know the jester is the personification of folly. The cat was symbolic of danger or misconduct.[231] Thus, the eye contact of the bagpipe player and the two-headed fool could be interpreted as moralistic. They ask the viewer to reflect on their household and do the opposite of *Vuijl Sause*.

Alcohol and tobacco

Since music was perceived as a worldly pleasure, representations of musical scenes frequently incorporate additional symbols of earthly indulgences, such as alcoholic beverages.[232] Drunkenness was even referred to as the national sin of the 17th century Holland.[233]

Merry Company of Three Boys with a Violin published and printed by Jacob Gole (fig. 51) shows a musical company having a good time, not solely due to the enjoyment of music. A young man is playing the violin while sitting at a table with a pipe. As mentioned before, the violin was a dubious instrument. Poet Jan van den Veen described the instrument as follows in 1659: “De “The fiddle or violin is also used more in the service of vanity than in the praise and glory of God.”![234] Next to him is another man placing his hand on his friend’s shoulder. Behind him, a third man with a broad hat on his head, a glass in his hand and a finger pointing towards his nose, is seen. This man is directly looking at us. To interpret his smirking look at us, we must understand his gesture towards us. With the inclusion of gestures, they (the gesturers) make us complicit in what the painter has staged.[235] *The World Feeds Many Fools* (fig. 52) shows a Flemish example with a similar gesture. The phrase “De wereld voedt veel zotten” (the world feeds many fools), is a moralistic commentary on human folly.[236] Tapping one’s nose with your index finger likely signifies secrecy; making the viewer privy to this confidential scene. This gesture is closely linked to the metaphor

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[230] W. Th Kloek, *Een huishouden van Jan Steen*. (Verloren B.V, 1998). 7.
[231] De Jongh & Bedaux, *Tot lering en Vermaak,* 149.
[232] G.S. Keyes, *Esaias van den Velde 1587-1630,* (Doornspijk: Davaco, 1984), 83.
[233] De Jongh & Bedaux, *Tot lering en vermaak,* 248.
[234] J. van der Veen, *Zinne-Beelden oft Adams Appel,* (Amsterdam, 1659), 32nd riddle. Cited in: Buijsen, *The Hoogsteder exhibition*, 292.
[235] Tummers et al. *Kunst van het lachen,* 46.
[236] D. Brenninkmeyer, *Netherlandish School, 16th Century,* (November 10, 2020), Accessed April 9, 2024, https://www.dorotheum.com/en/l/6937654/

"sniffling out trouble", signalling knowledge or an inside joke. Rembrandt's painting *A Peddler Selling Spectacles* (fig. 53) portrays a man pointing towards his nose, symbolising the Dutch proverb "iemand de bril opzetten", signifying the act of deceiving or ridiculing someone.[237] Adriaen de Brouwer's painting *The Smokers* might be an even more interesting example as almost all the figures make eye contact, with the man behind the smoker tapping his nose towards the beholder (fig. 54). In the specific context of *Merry Company of Three Boys with a Violin* the gesture could also be interpreted as making us aware of the foolish behaviour that is taking place, inviting us to participate. The contemporary viewer should recognise this as an example of bad behaviour. Therefore this artwork falls in line with the comic-serious ethos of contemporary prints: confronting the viewer with laughter.

In Willem Buytewech's *A Flute-Player and a Man with a Swan* (fig. 55) also a humorous message of a so-called *kannenkijker* (someone who is addicted to alcohol) is depicted.[238] The flute player is watching us. In front of him, a man is holding a jug with his right hand, while the left hand seems to grasp a swan. The inscription around the description notes to a popular beer garden outside Rotterdam, suggesting the man is a regular customer.[239] The swan stands, since classical antiquity, a symbol for gluttony, one of the seven sins.[240]

Also in various prints showing tavern scenes the dangers of intoxication are emphasised (fig. 56 & 57). However, the gaze is quite different: some are smiling with or at us, and in *Pipesmoking Man in a Tavern* by Quirin Boel (fig. 56) the man has a more woozy gaze as he has just taken a puff from his pipe.[241] First, we must visually analyse the prints better. Gerrit Lucasz van Schagen's *Peasant Interior* (fig. 57) illustrates a company in a tavern indulging in alcohol and tobacco.[242] One man struggles to sit straight in his chair while holding both a pipe and a jug. The only woman in this depiction is staring at us with a big grin on her face. On the ground are several objects scattered, emphasising the follies and vices of humanity. For example, playing cards carries the allegory of vanity: as the cards are used in games involving risk and the pursuit of pleasure.[243] However, playing cards also symbolises camaraderie as it is a social activity. The open door could also point to a double reading: either the symbol of the passage of time or an invitation to the viewer to participate in the

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[237] Tummers et al. *Kunst van het lachen,* 38.
[238] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. IV, No. 18.
[239] "Ick hou my by t Swaenenhals en bij t Goet bier/ Als die kan vol is soo maeck ick goet cier".
"The Flute-Player"*, Nicolaas Teeuwisse*, Accessed on June 12th, 2024,
https://www.teeuwisse.de/catalogues/willem-pietersz-buytewech-the-flute-player
[240] Tummers et al. *Kunst van het lachen,* 111.
[241] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. III, No. 36.
[242] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. XXIV, No. 3.
[243] Hall et al. *Hall's iconografisch handdboek,* 320.

scene. Thus, the gaze and the open door could serve as an invitation or a warning. Furthermore, the laughter signifies a comical perception of the print, as seeing laughter makes one laugh as well.[244] The inscription of *Interior of a Tavern with Drinking and Smoking Gentlemen* (fig. 58) spells out how such sceneries should be interpreted: because of tobacco, the portrayed men can live a carefree life. In the last verse, the viewer is encouraged to tag along. The man who looks at us raises his glass profoundly, making us aware that he is cheering with or for us. Clearly, the eye contact is an invitation to enjoy a drink together. However, like the other prints, moralistic objects throughout the scene, warn us about the dangers of sinful behaviour: the cards on the ground, the dog, the smoke[245], the bagpipe and even the suggestive illustration on the wall (including a funny Dutch rhyme: "billie bom van achterom"). Hazelzet points to the "painting inside a painting" phenomenon as an instrument of commentary to strengthen, or clarify the message.[246] As the main character in *Pipesmoking Man in a Tavern* (fig. 56) is not laughing, his eye contact is seen as less comical and more likely to be interpreted as a warning.

In *Love Scene* by Jacob Gole also an illustration in an illustration is seen (fig. 59).[247] Behind the kissing couple, the artwork possibly shows two lovers engaging in a sexual act, indicated by the presence of a bed, emphasising the consequences of excessive drinking and smoking. The inscription notes drinking wine together, until [the lady] falls from her chair.[248] The other woman is jokingly looking at us. Clearly, this form of intimacy was not for public display. With the use of humour, Dutch civilians could learn behaviour lessons.

In *When Your Purse Is Empty, You Eat Bones Not Bacon* (fig. 60) the aspect of insanity is highlighted by the figure in the background with her hands in her hair and a deranged expression on her face. She is confronting us, by staring directly at us. Her gaze can be interpreted as a warning, due to the various elements. The inscription tells us the figures are facing financial hardship, due to their alcohol consumption and laziness.[249] They regret

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[244] Cornelis, et al. *Frans Hals*, 184.
[245] The transcience of tobacco smoke was linked to the variety of life, as illustrated by Psalmist's axiom: "my days are consumed like smoke. See S. Schama, *the Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*, (New York: Random House, 1997), 195, and De Jongh & Bedaux, *Tot lering en vermaak,* 56.
[246] Hazelzet, *Verkeerde Werelden,* 144.
[247] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. VII, No. 176.
[248] "Wat dat schoone klaar met droge Sander: het wynthe lurken met malkander, Moy niesje ssoo met Eelhart malt. Dat sy plat achter overvalt."
[249] "When our jaws were first covered with down, that vital age loved triennial Bacchus banquets. Now we regret, ah, the disadvantage of the purse being empty and complain about the time spent on useless small talk."
Translations by Jan Bloemendal in: K. van Mander & M. Leesberger, *The New Hollstein Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts, 1450-1700,* Rotterdam: Sound & Vision Interactive, (1999), 76-77.

their actions, as an empty purse makes a sorry heart. The empty purse, jug and broken shoe emphasise their current poverty. On the left, a woman driven by despair gnaws on a bone while her child attempts to get a scrap as well.[250] The barking dog indicates alertness of danger, serving as a reminder of the consequences of negligence. Thus, the gazing lady indicates insanity caused by poverty, serving as a lesson: be cautious of your spending.

Cat Concert by Jacob Gole (fig. 61) shows a witty depiction of a cat instead of a dog.[251] A man is holding a cat who is farting at the victim nearby. This lady reacts in horror, as she is holding her hand for her face. The figure on the left is laughingly pointing at the dramatic depiction, emphasising the source of amusement. Clearly, he serves as a commentary figure. The eye contact by the man in the centre with a smirk on his face, suggests that viewers should adopt a similar amused perspective when viewing the illustration. However, Gale also added some elements of worldly pleasures, such as the wine glass, the jug, the pipe, and what the man seems to be holding is a music sheet. These additions suggest that the depicted shenanigan may occur in the context of drunkenness.

Conclusion

At the heart of each company print discussed in this chapter, lies the mutual gaze, prompting the beholder to contemplation, temptation, and laughter (figure, p. 6). Yet, sometimes eye contact is hard to interpret due to the complex interplay between societal norms, symbolism, personal interpretation and artistic representation. Within group settings, deciphering the significance of the eye contact becomes more difficult due to the dynamics of the figures and the ambiguous nature of the symbolism. Especially in musical companies, the symbolism can be multi-interpretable, leaving the communicative meaning up to the viewer. Amidst themes of harmony, love and subtle sexual desire, the choice of instrument, use of gestures, surroundings, and inscriptions assume significance. In contrast, companies depicting alcohol and tobacco use, offer a more direct tale, serving as *exempla contraria*. Eye contact is used as a tool for moralistic commentary, often interwoven with comedy.

[250] Karel van Mander's drawing of this theme is discussed in: Y. Bleyerveld et al. *The Netherlandish Drawings,* 197.
[251] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. VII, No. 236.

Chapter 4: Couples

The final chapter focuses on couples, which generally refers to two individuals who are romantically or intimately involved with each other. Previous case studies delved into numerous prints increasing the likelihood of encountering familiar motifs and symbolism. It is interesting to see if direct eye contact has a similar meaning within this context.

Unequal Love

"Unequal love" or "ill-matched couples", depicts scenes of age disparity, or one partner motivated by financial gain, not love. This subject traces its roots back to classical times and was embraced by printmakers of the 16th and 17th centuries for its satirical and moralistic tone.[252] *Old Man Offering a Young Woman Money* by Jacob Goltzius (fig. 62), depicts an old man hunching towards a young woman, ready to plant a kiss on a young woman, who seems to push him away from her.[253] This is done in a similar manner as Lucas van Leyden's *The Fool and the Young Woman* (fig. 63), which possibly served as an example.[254] In both prints, the man (or the fool) appears to persuade the young woman with money. Jacob Goltzius' version adds a suggestive touch by depiction the man grabbing money from a bag stationed between his legs.[255] The inscription clarifies that she asks the man to leave her in peace, and puts him in his place. The verse is roughly translated as: "You seek what is young, So I do too".[256] While the theme is moralistic, highlighting the serious problem of older individuals entering the marriage market and pursuing young partners, the print also includes humoristic elements.[257] For example, the suggestive placement of the money purse, the lustful expression of the man, and the playful gaze of the woman. The latter serves as a tool to create laughter among the viewers.

Unequal Love by Andries Jacobsz. Stock (fig. 64) portrays a comparable scenario. A young, richly dressed woman rejects the older man with a purse, which curiously resembles a phallic shape. She turns to the young man behind her, whose hands are wrapped around her waist. Death, dressed in a fool's cap, directly engages with the viewer. He makes a cheeky gesture with his right hand, while his left is carrying an hourglass, an emblem of the passage of time. The inscription translates as: "You fool, leave these young ones in peace, your time is

[252] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life*, 81.
[253] New Hollstein Dutch, Hendrick Goltzius, Vol. IV, No. 717.
[254] New Hollstein Dutch, Lucas van Leyden, No. 150.
[255] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life*, 82.
[256] "Ay loop gheck loop laet myn in vrede, Gy soecky wat ionkcs soo doe ie mede".
[257] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life*, 81.

nearly up, your money cannot buy her love".[258] It seems as if, especially due to the fool's attire, that death is the commentary figure of the foolish actions illustrated.

Worldly Couples

Comparably to the chapter on companies, prints depicting couples explore themes of worldly pleasures. We will discuss motifs such as playing games, music-making, drinking, and other activities.

At first sight, *Archer and Milkmaid* after a design by Jacques de Gheyn, seems romantic (fig. 65).[259] We witness a man holding a crossbow targeted at the viewer, while a milkmaid, assists his aim. He appears ready to shoot, symbolising the inescapable arrow of love: *Amor vincit omnia* (Love conquers all).[260] In this light, the gaze has a romantic, positive meaning. However, when looking more carefully, the print has a clear sexual undertone. The man's prominent codpiece and the fact that the lady is wearing his head, which suggests loose behaviour, breathe an air of sensuality into the print.[261] In the back of the print, in the landscape, we find the couple intimately embraced (the bow on the ground indicates that it is the same couple).[262] Besides, the print alludes to the slang expressions "shooting your bolt" (reaching a climax) and "milking".[263] The Latin and Dutch verses further elaborate on the sexual imagery of the scene.[264] The obvious sexual innuendo places this print in the realm of (erotic) comedy, making the gaze a witty one.

In *Tric-Trac Players* by Jacob Matham (fig. 66), part of a series of four, named "The Consequences of Drunkenness", a similar phallic-shaped purse to the one in *Unequal Love* by Andries Jacobsz. Stock.[265] Positioned amidst the couple engaged in the popular game tric-trac,

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[258] "Unequal Love", *Rijksmuseum,* Accessed May, 20, 2024, https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search/objects?q=ongelijke%20liefde&p=1&ps=12&st=Objects&ii=10#/RP-P-1978-50,7
Dutch version: "Ey verdwaelden geck laet de Jeucht met vreucht saem paren u tyt (by nae) is om, t'gelt u niet helpt, laet varen".
[259] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. VII, No. 108.
[260] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life,* 129.
[261] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life,* 130.
[262] "The Archer and the Milkmaid', *The Metropolitan Museum of Arts*, Accessed May 16, 2024, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/387968
[263] "Milking" the cow stood as a metaphor for masturbation. Furthermore, milkmaids had a (stereotypical) sexual reputation. See: De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life,* 260-263, and R. Ganev. "Milkmaids, ploughmen, and sex in eighteenth-century Britain." *Journal of the History of Sexuality,* vol. 16, no. 1, (Gale Academic OneFile, Jan. 2007, Accessed 29 May, 2024. https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=AONE&u=anon~11b84e29&id=GALE|A169176309&v=2.1&it=r&sid=googleScholar&asid=247e8000
[264] W. Robinson & S. Anderson, *Drawings from the Age of Bruegel, Rubens, and Rembrandt: Highlights from the Collection of the Harvard Art Museums,* (Harvard: Harvard Art Museums, 2016), Accessed online May 19, 2024, https://harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/297353
[265] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. XI, No. 314.

another man is shown holding a wine glass. He engages with us, possibly playing the role of a commentary figure. The game had a bad reputation, as it was seen as a "misuse of valuable time", a way of losing one's money and often linked with sexuality.[266] The image is accompanied by an inscription in both Latin and Dutch, underscoring that drinking not only indicates a lack of self-control but also leads to folly and discord against all benefits.[267] Thus, tric-trac symbolises sinful behaviour. The figure in the middle appears to emphasise this moral. His gaze in combination with the inscription, seems to be confrontational.

Another print in this series, *Drinking Couple in a Tavern Garden,* depicts a couple in a tavern enjoying some beverages (fig. 67).[268] This time, a woman locks eyes with us. The lady in the back marking the glasses consumed and the man drinking from two glasses simultaneously highlight the excessive drinking. This dual-glass motif seems inspired by Roemer Visscher's emblem called *Pessima placent pluribus* (fig. 68), which alongside the verse, states that the worst things (such as drinking, gambling, and other morally low activities) are pleasing to most people.[269] The lady directly looking at us, seems to toast as she is raising her glass. Her gaze could also be interpreted as confrontational, as she is not smiling at us.

All these earthly activities are mere "tyverdrijff" (pastime) as the inscription in *Young Dandy and Lady Seated at a Table* clarifies (fig. 69).[270] Although De Jongh claims we should interpret this word rather as wasting time, instead of indulging in pastime, the attributes (pipes, jugs, etc) around the man and a woman beg to differ.[271] The couple stares at us while enjoying a smoke and a drink. The man's expression particularly captures our attention. It seems he just turned towards us as if we had just entered the room. His fixed look prompts many questions: what does he mean? Are we intruding on the scene? The critical inscription and confronting gaze make us reflect on whether we also spend our pastime for earthly pleasures.

In *Musical Couple* by Jan van Somer, we witness yet another confrontational commentary figure (fig. 70).[272] Here, an older woman peeks at us from an open doorway. She

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[266] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life*, 206.
[267] "Niet gheeft des drancks onmaet alleen oncuysschen zin / Maer teghen alle baet brenght spel en tuyschen in".
[268] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. XI, No. 312.
[269] "De meeste menschen zijn soo ghesint, datse eerlijcke Konsten, goede Ambachten, niet doen dan ghedwonghen van de behoeftigheydt: maer dobbelen, droncken drincken, dat noemen zy Recreatie, en een lustigh vrolijck leven; ende zy koopen een kranck hooft en lamme leden wel dier om gelt. Dit is soo klaer, dat het vorder uytlegginghe niet en behoeft." R. Visscher, *Sinnepoppen*, (1614), 148.
[270] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. XXIV, No. 95.
[271] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life*, 234.
[272] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. XXVII, No 109.

appears to give commentary on the couple playing the lute, and the flute, as previously discussed both instruments with an erotic undertone. The male's dirty gaze at the lady, in combination with jugs and glasses on the table, and the scattered pipes on the floor, indicates their improper behaviour. The eye contact serves as a warning of how not to behave, prompting the viewer to self-reflection.

Although *Young Couple with Oysters* by Jacob Gole (fig. 71) also has an erotic tone, eye contact is employed differently.[273] Oysters, due to their soft fleshy interior and their reputation as an aphrodisiac, symbolised eroticism and sexual desire.[274] In genre art oysters could underscore a cautionary message on earthy pleasures. However, the amusing gaze, funny gestures, and the clear sexual symbolism of the oysters make clear that the print is meant for laughter.

Contrary to the above-mentioned prints, *Man Playing a Violin and a Woman Singing* after a painting by Gabriël Metsu is one of the few prints, where the meaning of eye contact is ambiguous (fig. 72).[275] A woman holding a music sheet on her lap, while her hand is raised signalling time, looks at us intriguingly. Her eyes seem dreamy and mysterious, leaving us questioning why she is staring at us. The man holding the violin, possibly musically accompanying her singing, fixates his look on her. The print was made at the end of the 17th century when the violin lost its vulgar reputation.[276] The combination of voice and violin was less common, suggesting a more informal setting. The beating gesture of the woman's hand could allude to the virtue of moderation.[277]

Lastly, it is noteworthy to mention that during this research, couples were regularly used in depictions of the five senses. For instance, the sense of touch in Cornelis Dusart's print *The Touch* (fig. 73) incorporates a man and a woman.[278] Although this is an allegory, the print depicts a domestic setting and incorporates a moralistic message. One of the most prominent symbols we have encountered repeatedly is the owl, a symbol of folly. Indeed, foolish behaviour is taking place, as the man explicitly touches the woman's face and breasts. She seems to resist, grabbing his arm. On the table other symbols are seen: glasses, a pipe, coins, and something that seems to be either spectacles or a *krakeling* (pretzel). Spectacles in combination with the owl, emphasise the theme of folly, as we have seen in the chapter on

[273] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. VII, No. 229.
[274] De Jongh & Bedaux, *Tot lering en vermaak*, 203.
[275] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. VII, No. 195.
[276] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life,* 366.
[277] De Jongh et al. *Mirror of Everyday Life,* 366.
[278] Hollstein Dutch, Vol. VI, No. 52.

stereotypes. The pretzel has a well-known symbolic meaning.”Het trekken aan de krakeling” (pulling the pretzel) was a phrase used to show human conflict between good and evil.[279] The fragility of the cookie (metaphor fot life) would fall in line with the sense of touch.

Conclusion

In “couples” the eye contact reflects a range of moral and erotic undertones. In both the categories “unequal love” and “worldly couples”, the gazes of the depicted figures act as a direct commentary on the viewer’s own potential for similar excesses, urging self-reflection. Couple prints are often also laden with erotic symbolism, therefore carrying both humorous and confrontational tones. Thus, “serving as a mirror” and “laughter” are key functions (figure, p. 6).

[279] De Jongh & Bedaux. *Tot lering en vermaak,* 69-70.

5. Conclusion

In this thesis, we have explored the vibrant world of Dutch genre prints of the 16th and 17th centuries, guided by the "language of the eyes". Beginning with the instructing and inviting gazes in *Sleeping Venus Surprised by Satyrs* and *Chess Player*, we discovered a genre printing industry full of different meaningful glances and gazes. This thesis tried to capture the message behind eye contact through the research question: *How is the eye contact of the depicted figures in 16th and 17th-century Dutch genre prints established with the contemporary viewer used in the communicative intent of the print?* Structured into four chapters, this thesis used an art historical lens, complemented by psychology, and philosophy, to answer this question.

As made clear at the beginning, two-dimensional eye contact comes close to face-to-face communication. Eye contact is a powerful way of creating a sense of reality, as the returned gaze establishes a human connection. The figure on page 6 functioned as a backbone for our understanding of eye contact as a communicative tool and a bridge between art and viewer. Step 2 showcases that personal experiences play an incredible part in the understanding of an artwork, which is also dependent on the period. Chapter 1 aimed to understand the contemporary viewer and the purpose and function of the selected genre prints, which were likely purchased by the middle and higher classes. The constructed "daily life" of genre prints underscores the dual role as sources of entertainment and moral instructions.

Furthermore, chapter 1 approached the aspect of eye connection as a bridge between viewer and artwork via a more philosophical lens. "Is art complete without a beholder?" was the question central in this part. Scholars such as Aloïs Riegl and Ernst Gombrich proposed that the viewer plays a crucial part in the completion of artworks, through active engagement, as direct eye contact is answered. In this way, static depictions, become dynamic encounters that evoke personal meaning. Without a beholder, no emotional connections take place.

Throughout the analysis of many genre prints, divided into the categories "Stereotypes", "Companies" and "Couples", several similarities in communicative meaning were found. Whether inviting participation, offering commentary, eliciting laughter, or other functions captured in the figure on page 6, the gaze is used to prompt self-reflection. The contemporary viewer compares or identifies him- or herself with the staring figure, and thus serves as a mirror. In the cases of humoristic prints, the smiling gaze is contagious and therefore mirrored by the beholder. "Identification", "Invitation", "Warning" etcetera, all fall in line with the true purpose of genre prints established in Chapter 1: *lering en vermaack*

(education and entertainment). The gaze cannot be easily placed in either function, as these two frequently go hand-in-hand. Humour is regularly used, as the contemporary viewer could learn better through laughter. Sometimes the artist would purposely leave the interpretation of the eye contact up to the viewer, through the ambiguous symbolism and hard-to-decipher gaze. Ultimately, the mutual exchange between viewer and subject creates a rich pictorial experience.

In the end, as this thesis title suggests, we can conclude that “eyes speak”. This silent form of communication not only conveys the intended emotion of the depicted narrative but also the complexities of 16th and 17th-century society: its behaviour, norms and moral values, a world deserving of additional research. As this thesis started with paintings, further investigation could analyse if there is a difference in the communicative liaison between these paintings and prints. Furthermore, the rich tradition of eye contact in portraiture remains an intriguing area for future study. May we continue to gaze into the eyes of the past, and discover the world of their time.

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7. Images

Introduction

Fig. 1. Jan Steen, *Merry Company on a Terrace,* c. 1665-1675, Oil on canvas, 141 cm x 131.4 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 58.89.

Fig. 2. Carel de Moor (II) (attributed to), *Soldier Scene,* c. 1680-1738, Oil on panel, 30.5 cm x 24,5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, SK-A-3028.

Fig. 3. Werner Jacobsz. van den Valckert, *Sleeping Venus Surprised by Satyrs,* 1612, Etching, 29.3 cm x 37.1 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-15.641.

Fig. 4. Jan de Bray, *The Chess Player,* Etching, c. 1650-1675, 161 mm x 130 mm, Boijmans van Beuningen, Bdh 15033 (PK).

Fig. 5. Detail of *Merry Company on a Terrace.*

Chapter 1

Fig. 6. Lucas van Leyden, *The Dentist,* 1523, Engraving, 117 mm x 75 mm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 60.607.

Fig. 7. Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Nightwatch,* 1641, Oil on canvas, 379.5 cm x 453.5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, SK-C-5.

Fig. 8. Abraham de Blois, after Jan Steen, *The Enema Syringe,* Mezzotint, 346 mm x 290 mm Prentenkabinet Leiden, PK-P-130.232.

Fig. 9. Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp,* Oil on canvas, 1632, 169. cm x 216.5 cm, Mauritshuis, Den Haag.

Fig. 10. Thomas de Keyser, *The Osteology Lesson of Dr. Sebastiaen Egbertsz.* Oil on canvas, 1619, 135 cm x 186 cm, Amsterdam Museum, Amsterdam, SA 7352.

Fig. 11. Cornelis Bloemaert (II), after Titian, *Sitting Madonna,* Engraving, c. 1633-1684, 326 mm x 262 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-BI-1257B.

Fig. 12. Johannes Vermeer, *Lady Seated at a Virginal*, c. 1670-1672, Oil on canvas, 51.5 cm × 45.5 cm, National Gallery, London.

Fig. 13. Cornelis van Dalen (II), *Portrait of Anna Maria van Schurman (1607-1678),* Engraving, c. 1652-1660, 304 mm x 238 mm, Centraal Museum Utrecht, 6643 b.

Chapter 2: Stereotypes

Fig. 14. Philips Galle, *Head of a Jester,* c. 1560, Engraving, 370 mm x 293 mm, Teylers Museum, Haarlem.

Fig. 15. Alexander Voet (II), after Jacques Jordaens, *Old Fool with Cat,* Engraving, c. 1662-1693, 436 mm × 330 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-61.758.

Fig. 16. Anonymous, after Alexander Voet (II), *Old Fool with Cat*, Engraving, c. 1662-1674, 245 mm × 145 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-61.759.

Fig. 17. Crispijn de Passe (I), after Hendrik Goltzius, *Satire on Hygiene, "Margot and Jannot",* c. 1574-1637, Engraving, 223 mm x 257 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1900-A-21960.

Fig. 18. Jan Pietersz. Saenredam, after design by Hendrick Goltzius, *Laughing Fool with Staff,* Engraving, c. 1590-1600, 257 mm x 178 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1882-A-6203.

Fig. 19. Werner van den Valckert, *Laughing Fool,* c. 1612, Etching and engraving, 218 mm x 163 mm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011.511.

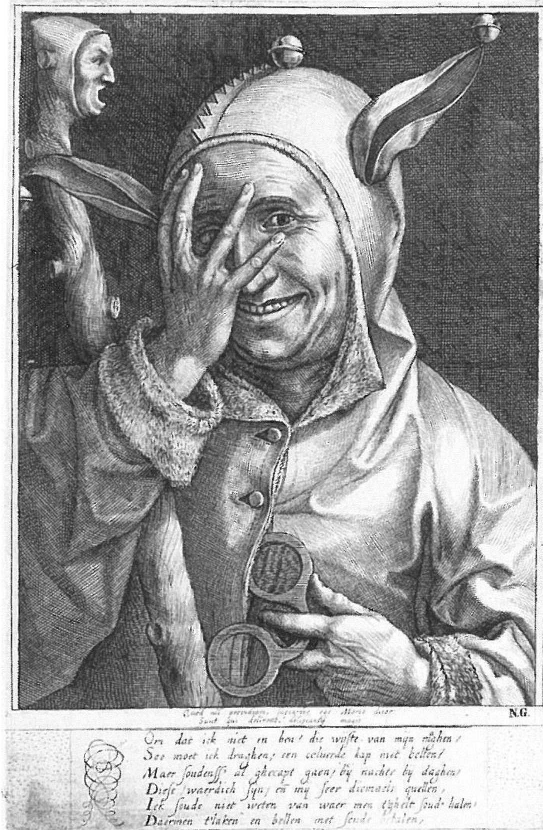

Fig. 20. Anonymous, *Fool Looking Through his Fingers,* c. 17th century, Engraving, 333 mm x 220 mm, Leiden, Prentenkabinet der Rijksuniversiteit.

Fig. 21. Claes Jansz Visscher, *Quaeso,* Emblem from Roemer Visscher, *Sinnepoppen,* 1614, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Library.

Fig. 22. Werner van den Valckert, *Fool with Richly Dressed Girl,* Etching, 1595 - 1645 and/or 1688 – 1699, 215 mm x 158 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-15.639.

Fig. 23. Hendrik Bary, after design by Frans van Mieris, *Wine is a Mocker*, Engraving, in or before 1670, 235 mm x 196 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1886-A-10301.

Fig. 24. Pieter van der Heyden, after Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Peasant Wedding Dance,* Engraving, after 1570, 380 mm x 433 mm, The Metropolitan Museum, New York, 33.52.29.

Fig. 25. Albrecht Dürer, *Peasant Couple Dancing,* Engraving, 1514, 118 mm × 75 mm, The Metropolitan Museum, New York, 33.79.1.

Fig. 26. Adriaen van Ostade, *Smoking Farmer with an Arm over a Chair,* Etching, 1650-1654, 106 mm x 91 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam RP-P-OB.12.646.

Fig. 27. Jonas Suyderhoef, after Adriaen van Ostade, *Farmer with Pipe and Jug in hand at a table,* Engraving, c. 1623 – 1686, 221 mm x 179 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-60.666.

Fig. 28. Jan van de Velde (II), *Man, Glass and Pipe,* Etching, 1633, 170 mm x 117 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-67.293.

Fig. 29. Cornelis Bloemaert (II), after Hendrick Bloemaert, *Farmer with Chicken,* Engraving, 1627-1630, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-BI-1434.

Fig. 30. Jan Matham, *Farmer with Eggs in a Basket,* 1628-1648, Engraving and Etching, 249 mm x 190 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-23.187.

Fig. 31. Cornelis Danckerts, after D. Waerden, *Merry Drinker,* Engraving, 1613-1656, 149 mm x 107 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-BI-6771.

Fig. 32. Jan van de Velde (II), *Richly Dressed Lute Player,* Engraving and Etching, 1633, 170 mm x 117 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-15.256

Fig. 33. Adriaen Matham, *The Violin Player*, c. 1620-1660, Engraving, 210 mm x 170 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1883-A-7212.

Fig. 34. Cornelis Bloemaert, after Abraham Bloemaert, *Rumbling-pot Player,* Engraving, c. 1625, 316 mm x 239 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-BI-1444.

Fig. 35. J. Dubois, after Jacob Matham, *Rumbling-pot Player,* Engraving, 1645-1655, 247 mm x 190 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-BI-1959.

Fig. 36. Jan Matham, *Laughing Boy with a Glass in his Hand,* Etching, 1628-1664, 171 mm x 143 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1883-A-7258.

Fig. 37. Cornelis Bloemaert (II), *Boy with an Owl,* Engraving, c. 1625, 171 mm x 122 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-BI-1432.

Fig. 38. Cornelis Bloemaert (II), after Abraham Bloemaert, *Avaritia,* Engraving, 1625, 185 mm x 135 mm, Centraal Museum. Utrecht. 6689.

Fig. 39. Nicolaas Verkolje, after Godfried Schalcken, *Woman in Nighttire,* 1683-1726, 280 mm x 226 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-17.577.

Fig. 40. Adriaen van de Venne, *Flamma fumo proxima* in “Sinne- en minnebeelden” by Jacob Cats, Engraving, 1627.

Fig. 41. Jacob Gole, after Godfried Schalcken, *Young Woman with a Fan,* Engraving, 1670-1724, 250 mm x 180 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-17.110.

Fig. 42. Jan Verkolje (I), *Woman with a Parrot in a Window,* 1683-1755, Mezzotint, 278 mm x 248 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-17.553.

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Fig. 43. Gerard Hoet (I), *Musical Company,* c. 1658-1733, print, 377 mm × width 291 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1906-3427.

Fig. 44. Dirck van Baburen, *The Procuress,* Oil on canvas, c. 1622, 101,6 cm x 107.6 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Fig. 45. Pieter Schenk (I) after Gerard Pietersz. Van Zijl, *Musical Company,* c. 1670-1713, Engraving, 248 mm × 335 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1927-88.

Fig. 46. Johannes Gronsveld, after Titiaan, *Musical Company,* 1679-1728, Etching, 197 mm x 256 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1894-A-18247.

Fig. 47. Pieter van den Berge, *Girls Singing,* Mezzotint, 1686-1737, 357 mm x 258 mm, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, RP-P-BI-1097.

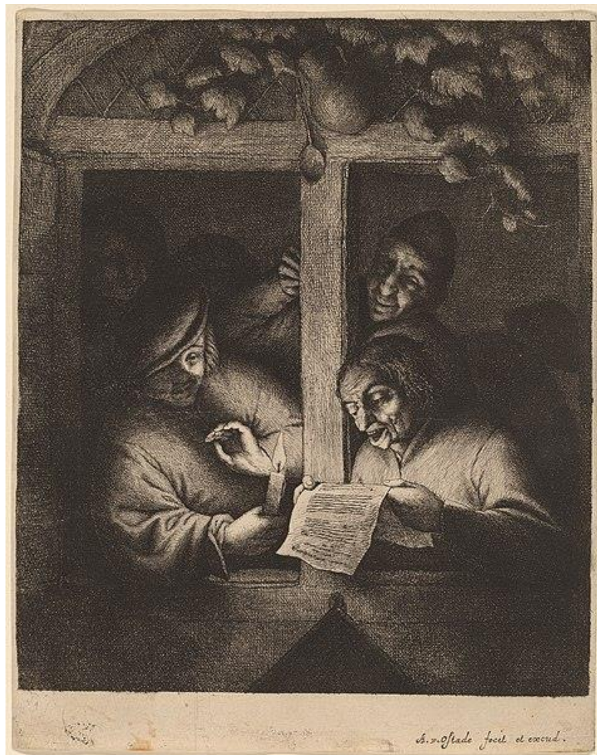

Fig. 48. Adriaen van Ostade, *The Singers,* Etching, c. 1667, 238 mm x 189 mm, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC.

Fig. 49. Pieter Baltens, *Evening of the Wedding,* c. 1578-1618, Engraving, 169 mm x 228 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1980-113.

Fig. 50. Joannes of Lucas van Doetecum after Jan Verbeeck (attributed to), *The Eaters of Sausages and Fat (Vuijl Sause),* c. 1560, Engraving and etching, 196 mm x 290 mm, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

Fig. 51. Jacob Gole, *Merry Company of Three Boys with a Violin,* c. 1670-1724, 248 mm x 190 mm, Engraving, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-2001-40.

Fig. 52. Anonymous, *The World Feeds Many Fools,* De werelt voet veel sotten (title on object), after a painting by Jan Massijs, c. 1650, 345 mm x 455m, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-81.670. Engraving, 345 mm × width 455 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-81.670.

Fig. 53. Rembrandt van Rijn, *A Peddler Selling Spectacles (The Allegory of Sight)*, c. 1624, Oil on oak panel, 21 x 18 cm, Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden.

Fig. 54. Adriaen Brouwer, *The Smokers,* c. 1636, Oil on panel, 46.4 cm x 36.8 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 32.100.21.

Fig. 55. Willem Pietersz. Buytewech, *A Flute-Player and a Man with a Swan,* Engraving, 1606, 143 mm. (diameter), S. 152 x 156 mm, Rijkmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1933-291.

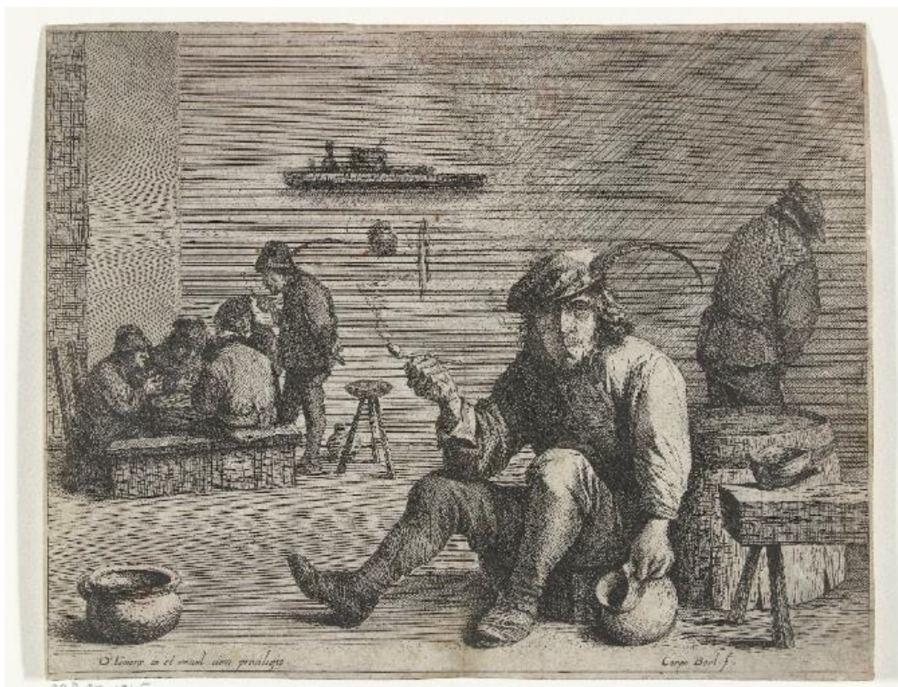

Fig. 56. Quirin Boel, after David Teniers (II), *Pipesmoking Man in a Tavern*, Etching, c. 1635 – 1668193mm × 248mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-BI-1945.

Fig. 57. Gerrit Lucasz. van Schagen, after: Jan de Visscher. Designer: Adriaen van Ostade, *Peasant Interior,* Etching, c. 1680-1690, 183 mm x 235 mm, Bojimans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, OB 5438.

Fig. 58. Marinus Robyn van der Goes, after Hendrick Martensz. Sorgh, *Interior of a tavern with drinking and smoking gentlemen*, c. 1609 -1639, Engraving, 354 mm x 308 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-65.735.

Fig. 59. Jacob Gole, after Richard Brakenburg, *Love Scene,* Mezzotint, c. 1670-1724, 239 mm x 187 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-17.093.

Fig. 60. Workshop of Hendrick Goltzius, after Karel van Mander I, *When Your Purse Is Empty, You Eat Bones Not Bacon,* c. 1592, Engraving on laid paper, 397 mm x 247 mm, National Gallery of Art, London.

Fig. 61. Jacob Gole, *Cat Concert,* Mezzotint, c. 1670-1724, 149 mm x 186 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1906-3203, Hollstein Dutch 236.

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Fig. 62. Jacob Goltzius (II), after Hendrick Goltzius, *Unequal Love,* Engraving, 1548-1630, 142 mm x 185 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-52.947.

Fig. 63. Lucas van Leyden, *The Fool and the Young Woman,* Etching, 1520, 105 mm x 74 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-1738.

Fig. 64. Andries Jacobsz. Stock after Jacques de Gheyn (II), *Unequal Love,* Engraving, 1608-1612, 123 mm x 141 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1882-A-6274.

Fig. 65. Anonymus, after Jacques de Gheyn, *Archer and Milkmaid,* c. 1608, Engraving, 121 mm x 85 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-2002-188.

Fig. 66. Jacob Matham, *Couple Playing Tric-Trac,* c. 1621, Engraving, 179 mm x 200 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-24.054.

Fig. 67. Jacob Matham, *Drinking Couple in a Tavern Garden,* Engraving, 1619-1623, 170 mm x 195 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-27.052.

Fig. 68. Claes Jansz. Visscher (II), in Roemer Visscher's "Sinnenpoppen", *Pessima placent pluribus,* 1614, Engraving, 95 mm x 60 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, BI-1893-3539-154.

Fig. 69. Salamon Savery, *Young Dandy and Lady Seated at a Table,* Etching and Engraving, c. 1630-1655, 276 mm x 183 mm, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, OB 5430 (PK).

Fig. 70. Jan van Somer after David Teniers (II), *Musical Couple,* 1655-1700*,* Mezzotint, 267 mm x 216 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1887-A-11955.

Fig. 71. Jacob Gole, *Young Couple with Oysters,* Mezzotint and Engraving, 1670-1724, 250 mm x 182 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1906-3201.

Fig. 72. Jacob Gole, after Gabriël Metsu, *Man Playing a Violin and a Woman Singing,* Mezzotint and Engraving, 271 mm x 188 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1906-3190

Fig. 73. Cornelis Dusart, *The Touch,* of the series "The Five Senses", Mezzotint and Engraving, 1670-1704, 250 mm x 178 mm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1906-3111.