

Art, Value, and Market Practices in the Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century

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Over the years, there has been a significant, if irregular, flow of studies attempting to situate Netherlands art within its socioeconomic frame.¹ Early efforts were of two sorts, both of which, however, tended to accentuate the view that art, whatever else it may be, is also a commodity like any other. Hanns Floerke pioneered the interpretation of previously gathered materials to help us understand the elements of what he supposed to be a broadly free and anonymous market: dealers, workshop practice, guild regulations, competition, speculation, and prices.² A second line of inquiry tried to come up with general accounts of Northern painting in terms of the material circumstances under which art was being made or bought. Recent contributors to this tradition retain an interest in context, though they have abandoned the grand, encompassing theories about "the art of the Netherlands" that invoked the material culture of the seventeenth century.³ A narrowed analytical focus has made the contexts more specific, while the issues, too, are being more precisely identified.

A casualty of this approach, however, has been the study of ideas and mentalities. Apart from some minor acknowledgments of taste and style, ideas and mentalities are frequently marginalized. They are seldom treated within the historical context, but almost as existing outside in an esoteric, parallel universe, quite separate from the day-to-day realities of the art market(s).⁴ The present study tries to reconnect ideas and mentalities with what men and women do in the marketplace. It is there, after all, that material and visual culture is negotiated and shaped. An obvious starting point is how people in the seventeenth century explained their behavior to themselves and others, thus revealing how they viewed their situation and rationalized their needs. This is not a common approach in art history. On the contrary, the behavior of artists, who are trying to make their way in an

uncertain world, or of merchants, who trade in paintings along with other goods, will sometimes seem at odds with theoretical writings or the traditional, broad-canvas "historical backgrounds" sketched as a context for art.

Art theorists cannot be expected to pay much attention to market realities, but occasional remarks by others who do are precious, precisely because they force our attention to the production, valuation, and uses of art. One such commentator was Bernard Mandeville (1670–1733). Mandeville, a Dutch-born physician who settled in England, is known for his numerous essays on socioeconomic subjects, but his observations on what makes a painting valuable in the marketplace have escaped scholarly attention. We discuss his views in the second section, together with a range of illustrative material that acquires an unexpected coherence within the framework of his ideas.

Just as there is no homogeneously schooled audience that viewed and understood paintings in the same, unequivocal manner, so there is no unambiguous perception of the market that was shared by all painters, even when they belonged to the same guild. The differences must be attended to if we are to refine our historical understanding of the painters' practices and their attitudes toward paintings, value, and the market. This concern has guided our discussion in the third section, where a new reading is offered of a conflict within the Haarlem Guild in the 1640s, for and against public sales of paintings. The episode illustrates how a painter's attitude toward the market depends on his or her particular economic circumstances.

Paintings themselves were approached differently in our period depending on those who were involved with them: *kenners* (connoisseurs), *liefhebbers* (lovers of art), serious collectors, dealers, or merchants. Some aspects of the tensions that

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1. An invaluable recent survey by J. M. Montias has criticized this literature mainly from the point of assessing testable hypotheses; we place the emphasis somewhat differently. See J. M. Montias, "Socio-Economic Aspects of Netherlandish Art from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Century: A Survey," *Art Bulletin*, LXXII, no. 3, 1990, 358–73. 2. Hanns Floerke, *Studien zur Niederländischen Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte: Die Formen des Kunsthandels, das Atelier, und die Sammler in den Niederlanden von 15.–18. Jahrhundert*, Munich and Leipzig, 1905.

3. While we still lack a comprehensive study of patronage (notwithstanding a useful introductory chapter in Bob Haak, *The Golden Age: Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century*, London, 1984), two recent papers have focused on paintings produced on commission: Marten Jan Bok and Gary Schwartz, "Schilderen in opdracht in Holland in de 17e eeuw," *Holland: Regionaal-historisch tijdschrift*, XXIII, September 1991, 183–95; and Bram Kempers, "Opdrachtgevers, verzamelaars en kopers. Visies op kunst in Holland tijdens de Republiek," *ibid.*, 196–209 (with summary bibliography on patrons, collectors, and buyers on p. 209). Equally, on the output of paintings, serious estimates are now being offered (see J. M. Montias, "Estimates of the Number of Dutch Master-Painters, Their Earnings and Their Output in 1650," *Leidschrift*, VI, no. 3, 1990, 59–74; and A. M. van der Woude, "De schilderijproductie in Holland tijdens de Repub-

liek. Een poging tot kwantificatie," in *Kunst-Zaken: Particulier initiatief en overheidsbeleid in de wereld van de beeldende kunst*, ed. J. C. Dagevos, P. G. van Druenen, P. Th. van de Laar, and P. R. A. Oeij, Kampen, 1991, 18–50). For a set of controversial measures of various aspects of "culture" for the whole of Europe, see W. Brulez, *Cultuur en getal: Aspecten van de relatie economie-maatschappij-cultuur in Europa tussen 1400 en 1800*, Cahiers Sociale Geschiedenis, no. 6, Amsterdam, 1986. See also Michael North, *Kunst und Kommerz im goldenen Zeitalter*, Cologne, 1992.

4. Notable exceptions to this separation of market practices from ideas are Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches*, New York, 1987; Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, Chicago, 1982; and idem, *Rembrandt's Enterprise: The Studio and the Market*, Chicago, 1988.

could result when these roles were mixed are explored in the fourth section.⁵

Market Behavior, Art, and Economic Theory

Our goal throughout this paper is to create and illustrate possibilities for reuniting ideas and practices. Practices often take the lead, simply because we give a lot of weight to merchants, and the written texts that stem from merchandizing activities usually did not rise to the level of theoretical analysis. Nevertheless, the study of economically conditioned practice is fully consistent with a long tradition within economic theory, the analysis of competitive market forces.

Economists think of economic subjects, or agents, as striving to pursue their interests—material, but by no means solely material—subject to various constraints. Income is a constraint for consumers, available techniques and resources are constraints for producers. The behaviors adopted by maximizing agents sometimes involve efforts to alter the constraints directly; invariably, hence more generally, they are moves to create some temporary differential advantage. The advantage typically is only temporary because, once it becomes known, others will try to exploit it too and the gains will be dissipated. Textbook versions of this perspective often concentrate on the end result of such processes, a competitive equilibrium, in which participants in any line of activity that once seemed advantageous have become so numerous that none of them any longer has the power to affect price (or profit) to their advantage. In the equilibrium, therefore, the agents are represented as both anonymous and passive. But this version is an idealization, attractive to economists for certain efficiency properties that competitive equilibria have been shown to possess. The fact remains that the processes that would lead to an equilibrium if they were left to run their course are always being modified by new creative moves.

The great Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter captured this when he wrote of the “perpetual innovative whirl” that is the market. Schumpeter also held that “the powerful lever that in the long run expands output and brings down prices is . . . made of other stuff” than just competition for market share based on offering lower prices directly.⁶ He pointed to new commodities, new technologies, new sources of supply, new types of organization, as “the kind of competition which counts.”⁷ Schumpeter’s theme was grand: what was the engine of capitalist growth? He spoke mainly of large organizations and their innovative role. But the same or similar ideas apply at the level of the single market, and to small players. For “the market” is not a fixed, static entity, defined by a single, undifferentiated product. Nor is it always

most usefully defined by structural characteristics such as absence of barriers to entry or reproducibility of the commodity. Markets are also forums for and the tentative results of experimental interactive behavior among many individuals and groups. They involve constantly modified products and strategies. Competitive markets, in particular, are those in which competitors repeatedly alter the basis on which they compete, along every dimension. This includes price, but ranges far beyond as well.

Applied to the Netherlandish art market, this understanding directs us to pay particular attention to the often neglected but numerous creative shifts in practice displayed by painters, dealers, and buyers. The art markets throughout the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries in the Netherlands contain numerous—and well-known—instances of creative differentiation. Artists, ranging from Jan van Eyck, Hieronymus Bosch, and the Bruegel dynasty to Jacob Jordaens, Pieter Paul Rubens, and Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn, each sought some particular advantage. It could be, for instance, the revolutionary application of the new oil-paint technique (van Eyck), the invention of phantasmagoric subject matter (Bosch), bucolic themes rooted in literary *topoi* well-known in humanistic milieus and repeated ad nauseam by his descendants (Bruegel), efficient, collaborative production processes (Jordaens and Rubens) as well as protection of paintings through copyright (Rubens), or creating artificial scarcity, or borrowing representational strategies from history painting for group portraits, among others (Rembrandt). In all these cases, the strategies are no personal quirks, but the innovative behavior of true competitors.

Michael Baxandall has discussed such differentiating behavior among German wood sculptors,⁸ and the examples just given for the Netherlands are relatively familiar. But deliberately looking at actual behavior linked to creating a differential advantage also opens up new areas of inquiry. To illustrate this contention, two topics that seem to warrant further investigation are auctions and prices, and the role of originals and copies.

Concerning auctions, several complaints registered with the authorities of the painters’ guild in Amsterdam in the early decades of the seventeenth century suggest that illegal sales (auctions) were a problem. In 1608, the officials of the guild complained that outsiders (foreigners) were holding public sales of paintings deriving from Antwerp and “andere des vyants quartierien.” This resulted in an ordinance forbidding the public sale by foreigners of paintings not produced by Amsterdam artists, without permission of the burgomas-

5. Much remains to be learned about the bases on which collections were, in fact, put together. Among the most inspiring studies are: Clara Bille, *De Tempel der kunst of het kabinet van den heer Braamcamp*, 2 vols., Amsterdam, 1961; A.-M. S. Logan, *The “Cabinet” of the Brothers Gerard and Jan Reynst*, Amsterdam/Oxford/New York, 1979; and C. W. Fock, “Kunstbezit in Leiden in de 17de eeuw,” in T. H. Lunsingh Scheurleer, ed. *Het Rapenburg: Geschiedenis van een Leidse gracht*, Leiden, 1990, 3–36. For a valuable analysis of *liefhebbers*, see Marten Jan Bok, “Liefhebbers, kunstbezit en het ontstaan van een kunstmarkt in de noordelijke

Nederlanden,” in *The Dawn of the Golden Age*, exh. cat., Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1993, 136–66.

6. R. Moulin, *The French Art Market*, New Brunswick, N.J., 1987, x; and J. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, 3rd ed., New York, 1950, 95.

7. Schumpeter (as in n. 6), 84.

8. Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany*, New Haven, 1980, 120–22.

9. F. D. O. Obreen, *Archief voor Nederlandsche Kunstgeschiedenis*, III, Rotterdam, 1880–81, 89–195, esp. 168–69; cf., for Haarlem, Miedema, 249–50, n. 140

(with full transcription of articles 3 and 5 of the *Gildebrief* of October 17, 1630).

10. Obreen (as in n. 9), III, 164–65, 168, 176.

11. Miedema, 196; also 143, 225, 360, 425, 493.

12. Some of the letters by Antoon and Pieter Goetkint as well as a number of those by Christostomus van Immerseel were published by Denucé. Following Denucé’s lead, we are currently preparing for publication some of the material in the Antwerp city archives dealing with this and related

ters. In 1613, another complaint was lodged, alleging that foreigners continued to import and sell paintings, now via the intermediation of Amsterdam citizens and in their name. This resulted in a sterner prohibition, apparently to little avail, since we may infer from an amplification of 1626 that officials of the Amsterdam city orphanage were facilitating and perhaps even conducting the undesired sales in their own homes. A full and explicit set of restrictions was registered in the *Gildebrief* of October 17, 1630.⁹

The number of these sales cannot be determined, but it is mentioned in one complaint that the so-called Dutch auction method, or method of descending price, was employed. From the guild's point of view, this meant that prices could go disturbingly low.¹⁰

When we turn to the records of the Haarlem guild published by Hessel Miedema, we find mention of both the English (ascending price) and Dutch methods being used in sales of paintings.¹¹ Now, under certain assumptions, these two methods should yield similar results, yet sometimes one method was preferred and sometimes the other. Unless this choice was random, which is unlikely, it becomes important to ask how it was determined.

Collusion, it is well known, is more difficult in the Dutch auction, and this might have been determinative if the crowd was expected to be small. The Dutch method, too, is well suited to moving large numbers of paintings quickly, where the work is of no particular distinction and the paintings can be grouped conveniently according to physical characteristics, such as size or overall quality.

These considerations suggest that it might be fruitful to think in terms of somewhat distinct markets, one for quality paintings and one for inferior paintings, each with its own clientele, sales techniques, and range of prices. Some crossing over between otherwise distinct markets must have occurred. If painters' guilds had an interest in preserving "quality" as a strategy to maintain respect for their craft and their members' income, it would follow that the guilds would favor the "quality" market alone and would also try to keep the two markets separate.

This hypothesis yields a possible explanation for the Amsterdam guild's resistance to public sales. The problem was not sales of its members' work but unrestricted sales in which large numbers of ordinary paintings, including poor copies, might be sold at low prices. The guild may have feared both a dilution of quality, here standing for respect for art, as well as the move by an indiscriminating public away from higher-priced works offered by its members.

As to copying, we here come up against a phenomenon that was important, but to which little attention has been

paid. One result of its relative neglect is that we cannot say with confidence just how quantitatively significant copying was, though, to just cite one source, the published letters from the Antwerp art dealers Pieter and Antoon Goetkint to their cousin Chrysostomus van Immerseel, and the unpublished business correspondence and letters between van Immerseel and his wife Marie de Fourmestraux, suggest that a significant number of paintings exported from Antwerp to Seville in the first half of the seventeenth century must have been copies.¹²

Quantity aside, it is also intriguing to ask what was the attitude toward originals and copies of merchants who traded in art. We might expect that copying on a large scale meant that the original was devalued, the copies contributing to a sort of reproducibility and thereby approximating the conditions of a competitive market. Alternatively, as modern experience would suggest, we might even expect that the price of an original would rise relative to that of copies, its uniqueness taking on added value as the number of copies mounted. Neither expectation, however, seems to hold as a generalization in the first half of the seventeenth century.

Just what the relationships were, both as to price and numbers, between originals and copies is currently being investigated. But there are already strong hints emerging from focused inquiry into the business of the Goetkints and of van Immerseel and his suppliers that the relative price of originals to copies approximated fixed ratios. To the extent that this is true, it seems likely that it reflected, in part at least, the very special control exercised over both original and copies by the merchants themselves. Both the Goetkints and van Immerseel viewed some originals they acquired as specific assets. These were not sold immediately, but retained in order to be copied selectively. They functioned in this way as a precious mold, or, as van Immerseel put it literally, like the shoemaker's last: "de principaelen moeten hier dienen als aen de schoenmaeckers haeren leest."¹³

There were many variables involved in the price ratios: the size, the subject, and the amount of detail in the original; just who "authored" both it and any copies that were made; the number and pretensions of those copies, and so on. Painters of originals were sometimes copyists as well, a routine that was firmly rooted in earlier workshop practices of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Yet merchants like van Immerseel also employed professional copyists such as Marten Pepyn. In 1634, for instance, the merchant grumbled to his wife about the death of one of his copyists, who replicated large paintings for export to Spain. Van Immerseel lamented

issues: ASA, IB 204, Correspondence from members of the van Immerseel family; IB 210-16, Business correspondence received by Chrysostomus van Immerseel; IB 217/1, Correspondence sent to Marie de Fourmestraux (1622-52), to Susanna van Immerseel, and to divers members of the van Immerseel family; IB 217/2, Correspondence sent to relatives and acquaintances of the van Immerseel family (1584-1649); copies of letters (1602-46); IB 218/1-2, Invoices of Chrysostomus van Immerseel (1608-54); IB 218/3, Invoices for others than members of the van Immerseel family

(1583-1636); and IB 218/4, Accounts current of Chrysostomus van Immerseel (1609-43) and invoices of Pauwels van Immerseel (1594-1619), among others.

13. ASA, IB 204, letter dated October 11, 1634, from Chrysostomus van Immerseel in Antwerp to his wife, Marie de Fourmestraux, in Seville. The original text on fol. 159, added in pencil, reads: "want syn treffelyck wel geschildert sal de principaele[n] hier bewaere[n] om dicmael te doen copieren"; and on fol. 159v: "ick sal de principaele[n] sinnen hier hauden want met 2 mael te coppieren is

genoch. want men mach daer geene principaele[n] senden dan sommige van licht werck en[de] cleenen prys de principaele[n] moeten hier diene[n] als aende schoenmaeckers haeren leest." This document (see n. 12 above for its forthcoming publication in full) is mentioned in E. Stols, *De Spaanse Brabanders of de Handelsbetrekkingen der Zuidelijke Nederlanden met de Iberische wereld (1598-1648)*, Verhandelingen Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie, Klasse der Letteren, xxxiii, 2 vols., Brussels, 1971, I 171, n. 23.

the loss, not because of the man's artistic or human qualities, but because he would not find another copyist so cheap as the deceased.¹⁴ At the same time, international merchants like van Immerseel were discreet about their sources and the availability of originals and copies of different qualities at any given time.

It should be clear that the study of marketing technique and the multiple relations between originals and copies represents possibilities for learning from practices then current. In both these illustrations "quality," however, plays a crucial role, suggesting that even if mentalities can often be inferred from practices alone, there is no avoiding concepts and ideas. In the next three sections we see ideas functioning in different ways: as an organizing framework for the discussion of the causal factors entering into market price; in the role of attitude toward the market itself; and in mental habits which, in turn, generate differences in the way paintings are approached.

Mandeville on the Valuation of Paintings

Bernard Mandeville shared the view of many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers, who, on reflection, concluded that (market) value was a relative notion and that it must be based on usefulness and scarcity. Mandeville is unusual, however, in applying these simple notions to art.

Mandeville was born in Rotterdam in 1670 and moved to London in the 1690s after completing his medical training at the University of Leiden. He remained in London for the rest of his life, practising as a physician with a special interest in the treatment of hypochondria. His *Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Diseases* (1730) first appeared in 1711 with a slightly different title, but Mandeville attracted attention mainly as the author of provocative essays on economic and social subjects, which were often read as attacks on conventional morality. He also inverted some traditional pieces of wisdom and economic maxims. He is best known for his work *The Fable of the Bees*, which first appeared in 1705 under the title *The Grumbling Hive*, and was issued thereafter in several expanded editions. The one of 1728 incorporated an essay entitled "A Search into the Nature of Society," as well as some dialogues ostensibly dealing with the subject of the *Fable*. These dialogues were in fact so wide-ranging that they included an interesting commentary on the pricing of art.¹⁵ This was not by chance. Mandeville stated in his introduction to the "Six Dialogues," which were published separately as part 2 of the *Fable*, that he wanted to say some

things about art. There are hints, too, in Mandeville's writings that he was familiar with Netherlandish art.¹⁶ He also had some knowledge of art criticism, for he quotes the French art theorist Charles Alphonse du Fresnoy, and du Fresnoy's *De Arte Graphica* figures in his dialogues. There is no evidence that Mandeville was a serious collector. Yet his comments in the "Six Dialogues" suggest that he may have been an amateur collector, a *liefhebber*. On the pricing of art, Mandeville had this to say:

Judges of Painting will never disagree in Opinion, when a fine Picture is compared to the dawbing of a Novice; but how strangely have they differ'd as to the Works of eminent Masters! There are Parties among Connoisseurs, and few of them agree in their Esteem as to Ages and Countries, and the best Pictures bear not always the best Prices: A noted Original will be ever worth more than any Copy that can be made of it by an unknown Hand, tho' it should be better. The Value that is set on Paintings depends not only on the Name of the Master and the Time of his Age he drew them in, but likewise in a great Measure on the Scarcity of his Works, and what is still more unreasonable, the Quality of the Persons in whose Possession they are as well as the length of Time they have been in great Families; and if the *Cartons* now at *Hampton-Court* were done by a less famous hand than that of *Raphael*, and had a private Person for their Owner, who would be forc'd to sell them, they would never yield the tenth part of the Money which with all their gross Faults they are now esteemed to be worth.¹⁷

We can extract from this passage a utility-plus-scarcity view of value, though with most emphasis on utility. Scarcity, in any case, was a relative term. It combined the quantity available with intensity of demand, including need and desire as well as means. As the seventeenth-century German scholar Samuel Pufendorf put it: "abundance of would-be purchasers and of money, and scarcity of wares raise the price."¹⁸ Mandeville, without explicitly mentioning either cost or utility, lists four factors on which the value "set on" paintings will depend: (i) the "Name of the Master"; (ii) the "Time of his Age," probably meaning the stage of the artist's development;¹⁹ (iii) the scarcity of the artist's works; and (iv) the "Quality"—that is, the rank—of those owning the works,

14. ASA, IB 204, fol. 163v, letter of December 9, 1634, from Chrisostomus van Immerseel (Antwerp) to Marie de Fournestraux (Seville). The original passage reads: "den man die de coppien vande groote laminas gemaect heeft te weten den broeder van henricq [ver]brucq(?) die de principae[n] schilderde is gestorve[n] ende en wete nu niemant sulcx soo goede[n] coop suade aen te werve[n]."

15. Mandeville.

16. See Mandeville's comments via his character Cleomenes in "The First Dialogue between Horatio, Cleomenes, and Fulvia," in Mandeville, II, 32–36. See also Bernard Mandeville, *Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Diseases* (1730), 62, where he discusses the connoisseurship problem of

knowing whether a head attributed to Anthony van Dyck is an original or a copy.

17. Mandeville, I, 326.

18. *De Officio Hominis et Civis Juxta Legem Naturalem Libri Duo*, trans. Frank Gardner Moore, in the series *Classics of International Law*, ed. James Brown Scott, II, New York, 1927, 73; quoted by W. L. Taylor, *Frances Hutcheson and David Hume as Predecessors of Adam Smith*, Durham, N.C., 1965, 64.

19. We are indebted to Gary Schwartz and Marten Jan Bok for this interpretation.

20. "Maer ghelijck ter Weerelt de teghenwoordighe en wel crijghlijcke dinghen veel tijts oft ghemeenlijck in cleen achtginghe zijn en de voorby ghevaren oft quaedcrijgsche seer ghewenschent en begheert worden: soo is het toeghegaen met de

constighe stucken van Beucklaer: want de dinghen die hy binnen zijn leven veel maecte en voor cleenen loon zijn nae zijn doot en teghenwoordigh in soo groot achten gheworden datse somtijts wel twaelfmael meer als syn ingecoht waren ghelden en geren betaelt worden" (Karel van Mander, *Het Schilder-boeck*, Haarlem, 1604, facsimile Soest: Davaco, 1969, fol. 238r). Also cited by Zirka Zarembo Filipczak, *Picturing Art in Antwerp, 1550–1700*, Princeton, N.J., 1987, 44.

21. "Wijders zoo is 't wel een noodzakelijke uitspanning liefhebbers aen te lokken, waer toe den handel van papierkunst geen kleine aenleyding plach te geven. Zeeker, het past een Konstenaar wel, dat hy de printen en teykeningen der voorgaende Meesters in eeren houd: want buiten dat hy de kunst in 't geheel in achtung blijft, zoo vind hy gestadich

and the length of time the works have been in the possession of "great Families." Factors (i), (ii), and (iv) all affect desirability, hence the strength of demand, while factor (iii), in the manner of Pufendorf, emphasizes supply in relation to demand. In each instance Mandeville is reflecting only what participants in the art market had long known. To take the factor of scarcity, Karel van Mander, in his *Schilder-boeck* of 1604, recounts that Joachim de Beuckelaer's death in 1575 dramatically increased the value of his paintings, up to twelve times the original value.²⁰ Not only paintings, but also prints by well-known, deceased masters could fetch inflated prices, as Samuel van Hoogstraten illustrates in his well-known anecdote of the eighty *Rijksdaalders* paid by Rembrandt for a print by Lucas van Leyden.²¹

Nor, obviously, was death the only contributor to scarcity. Active control over the supply would achieve the same end; for example, Rembrandt buying up his own prints, or the guilds restricting entry to the painters' corporation. Scarcity of paintings by leading deceased masters not only affected the pricing of their remaining works, but, under pressure of the demand, led to repetitive copying, at times even to forging on a large scale. Throughout the sixteenth century, Hieronymus Bosch's compositions were widely copied, varied, and occasionally forged. Felipe de Guevara, in his *Comentarios de la Pintura* of 1560, explains how he found countless paintings produced in the style of Bosch and falsely signed with his name.²² Guevara attributes this disturbing phenomenon to the demand in the market. Intriguingly, Guevara also points out that forgers routinely signed Bosch's name to augment the value of their paintings. Legislation was passed in Antwerp on October 3, 1575, prohibiting the forging of old paintings in the style of older masters.²³ Such drastic measures to control and curtail the supply side of the art market indicate that forging "old masters" in the Netherlands may have been more lucrative than producing original and less repetitive paintings. Such practices also reveal that there was a real demand from the citizenry for old-master paintings which either were unaffordable or no longer on the market.

Comparable pressures may have stimulated the descendants of Pieter Bruegel the Elder (?1520/25–1569), generation after generation, to copy their founding father's compositions well into the seventeenth century.²⁴ Pieter Brueghel II the Younger, or "Hell Brueghel" (1564/65–1637/38), for instance, who never enjoyed anything like his brother Jan's financial success, made at least 60 copies of Pieter the Elder's

1565 *Winter Landscape with Skaters and a Bird Trap* (Brussels, Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten, inv. no. 8724), 30 copies of the *Adoration of the Magi in the Snow* (Winterthur, Oskar Reinhart Collection), 25 copies of the *Preaching of John the Baptist* (Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum), 17 copies of the 1559 *Flemish Proverbs* (Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, inv. no. 1720), at least 15 copies of the *Census at Bethlehem* (Brussels, Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten, inv. no. 3637), and more than 12 versions of the *Massacre of the Innocents* (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. no. 1024). Pieter II ran a thriving atelier, and to judge from contemporary Antwerp inventories, such as those of the affluent Antwerp art-dealer family Forchondt, his paintings were in popular demand since they were recognized both as "Breugels" and as "authentifiable" copies of his father's most famous compositions²⁵—the ideal substitute without the price tag.

Perhaps the largest group at the lower end of the art market were the assistants and journeymen, and the copyists who worked for art dealers.²⁶ The practice of copying in Holland may not have differed from the practice in Flanders and Brabant.²⁷ There is indeed substantial, albeit scattered, archival evidence that the commissioning of copies occurred on a large scale.

Even Rubens was engaged in producing vast amounts of painted and printed copies of his own paintings. He sold copies that bore his name and kept the originals, thus securing a constant source of income while meeting the demand for his work.²⁸ Lesser-known painters were regularly commissioned to copy entire series of paintings owned by collectors or dealers. Such was the case, for instance, in two notarized agreements (November 17, and December 1, 1620) between Fernande Buysen and the Antwerp painter Lucas Flocquet; the latter promised to deliver a series of copies within three weeks under the quality supervision of yet another painter, Jan Deschamps.²⁹ An invoice of 1632 of Bernaert Vermeurs in Antwerp reveals that two crates of paintings shipped to Seville contained, besides six originals by Frans Francken, each valued at 9 ponds (Flemish), six copies at 3½ ponds (Flemish) apiece.³⁰

Mandeville's observation that the name (reputation) of the master must also be factored into the price is equally well attested to. By 1581, for instance, the name of Quentin Metsys was surrounded by such an aura of reverence, esteem, and value that the city of Antwerp even paid a substantial 1,500 guilders for his *Deposition* to prevent the English queen

eenige voorwerpen, die hem den geest wakkeren, en aen eenige nieuwe vindingen doen gedenken. Deze liefde tot papierkunst is in onze dagen zoo hoog gesteegeen geweest, dat ik voor een moezelmanneetje, gezegd Uilenspiegel, van Lukas van Leyden, by de tachtich rijksdaalders, door Rembrandt, heb zien geven: en de ronde passi van den zelve meester is noch voor ogelijk meerder prijs verkocht" (Hoogstraten, 212).

22. Gert Unverfehrt, *Hieronymus Bosch: Studien zur Rezeption seiner Kunst im frühen 16. Jahrhundert*, Berlin, 1980, 69.

23. Floerke (as in n. 2), 155; and Joachim Goll, *Kunstfälscher*, Leipzig, 1962, 98. Also cited in Filipczak (as in n. 20), 44.

24. On the Bruegel dynasty, see *Bruegel: Une Dynastie de peintres*, exh. cat., Palais voor Schone Kunsten,

Brussels, 1980 (with bibliography).

25. From 1588 to 1626, the Antwerp *Liggere* mention at least eight apprentices entering his workshop, including Frans Snyders (1579–1657) in 1593. In reality many more people must have been involved in the Brueghel enterprise, including assistants whose names were often not entered in the official records. We are very grateful to Gilberte de Gueldre, Archivist-in-Chief of the Antwerp City Archives, for clarifying in detail the new reading of the name Forchondt, previously read as "Forchoudt" by Denucé and others.

26. Schwartz and Bok ([as in n. 3], 193) speculate that at least 50 percent of the paintings produced in the Dutch republic may have been copies. This figure should be treated as strictly hypothetical, until more detailed evidence is available.

27. S. A. C. Dudok van Heel, "Het 'Schilderhuis' van Govert Flinck en de kunsthandel van Uylenburg aan de Lauriergracht te Amsterdam," *Jaarboek Amsterlodamum*, LXXIV, 1982, 70–90.

28. Jeffrey M. Muller, *Rubens: The Artist as Collector*, Princeton, N.J., 1989, 61.

29. Eric Duverger, *Antwerpse Kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw*, II [1618–26], Brussels, 1985, 145, 147–48, doc. nos. 364, 366.

30. ASA, IB 721. Published by Denucé, 78–79, doc. no. 37. At present, this document can be retrieved from IB 224, titled "Documenten uitgegeven door J. Denucé, Brieven en documenten betreffende Jan Bruegel I en II (Bronnen voor de geschiedenis van de Vlaamse Kunst, deel III), Antwerp, 1934."

from buying it.³¹ And when, in 1632, Jan II Bruegel wrote to the art dealer van Immerseel about the excessively high prices his father's paintings fetched ("den prys soo excessif groot"), he proposed to copy several for him ("salder ettelijce voor Ul gaen copieren").³² He added that the fl. 1,600 his father once received from a Polish prince for a *Fruit Garland*, the figures of which were painted by Rubens, indicated that this was his finest work ("het fraijste en meeste werc dat vader syn leven gedaen heeft"). Probably realizing that this was an exorbitant price, he swiftly added that he could make van Immerseel a copy for less than a third (fl. 500) of the original price, and boasted that only experts ("goede kenders") would be able to distinguish it from the original. The same copy by his journeymen ("gasten") would cost fl. 250.³³ He further specified that a *Vanitas* from his hand would cost fl. 200, a copy by his journeyman again half the price, or fl. 100.

An equally telling, albeit cynical acknowledgment of the prominence that might be given to the artist's name (and high price) over the quality of painting is the confrontation between Gerrit van Honthorst and Adriaen van Linschoten.³⁴ The latter complained that the quality of van Honthorst's painting had deteriorated sharply, though he still knew how to extract a high price for it (a willingness which van Hoogstraten dryly ascribes to "the lure of profit or women"). Van Honthorst responded that he would show his rival something he was incapable of doing. He threw a handful of ducats on the table, thus dramatically illustrating a mercantile principle that success was measured in terms of money and profit, not necessarily of quality.³⁵ This confrontation also brings to the surface a possible opposition between the intrinsic worth of art, or its fitness, reflecting some art-theoretical criteria, versus market value. This tension is further addressed in the final section, below. Yet the interaction between van Linschoten and van Honthorst clearly shows that market value reflected reputation.

The reputation of the master, then as now, also influenced the price by strengthening the demand for attributed (or attributable) paintings. Since there was a physical limit to the number of works any leading master could personally paint, he turned to his assistants and journeymen to augment the production and to keep pace with demand. Frequently, the master touched up atelier products and passed these off as originals. In fact, the distinction between original, "single-handed" creations and "multi-handed" ones was deliberately, and repeatedly, blurred by the masters themselves, a

practice that probably dates back as far as the fifteenth century. The rationale for this is self-evident: authenticated paintings by well-known masters fetched higher prices than copies.

The widespread practice of "converting" copies into originals, especially in large ateliers with intensive division of labor, explains why every so often leading masters were embroiled in legal proceedings with their clients and collectors concerning the authenticity of their paintings. Hardly exceptional is Adriaen Brouwer's sworn deposition of March 4, 1632, before notary P. van Breudeghem in Antwerp, stating that a painting shown to him by the merchant and well-known collector Jacomo de Cachopin was indeed an authentic painting by his own hand.³⁶ And when, on April 21, 1648, Johan-Philip Silvercroon, agent of the Swedish queen Christina, commissioned Jacob Jordaens to produce a series of thirty-five paintings, the master stated that the paintings would be partly painted by himself, partly by others.³⁷ Jordaens further specified that he would retouch those painted by others in such a fashion that they could pass for his own work.³⁸ That not everyone condoned such production practices is shown by the legal action taken by Martinus van Langenhoven against Jordaens for passing off copies as originals.³⁹

Rubens found himself in a similar quandary, when he agreed to exchange Sir Dudley Carleton's collection of 142 pieces (including antique heads, busts, large statues, torsos, urns, and bas-reliefs), for eight paintings worth fl. 4,000, some tapestries worth fl. 2,000, and fl. 2,000 in cash. The quality of the works Rubens offered in exchange soon came into question, for Carleton wanted only those done completely by the master himself. Rubens remarked: "Your excellency must not think that the others are mere copies, for they are so well retouched by my hand that they are hardly to be distinguished from originals."⁴⁰ The practice of retouching paintings made by assistants and selling these as originals may have been cost-effective and name-promoting, but such connoisseurs as Roger de Piles scorned it with passion. Speaking of works by Rubens's assistants that the artist had retouched, he felt that "there is a vast deal of difference between these pieces, and those that were all of his own drawing, the former are an injury to the reputation of the latter, for they are generally ill-designed, and lightly painted."⁴¹

Even if Mandeville's "Time of his Age," the second of his

31. Filipczak (as in n. 20), 78.

32. ASA, IB 640. Published by Denucé, 80–81, doc. no. 39. At present, this document can be retrieved from IB 224 (see n. 30).

33. "Wat belandt de stucken van mijn vader saliger, die sijn alles op bert oft pineel gedaen, ooc den prys soo excessif groot dat meyne Ul daer niet gelycen sauden, maer salder ettelijce voor Ul gaen copieren, te weten den grooten Girlande van vruchten, de beelden van Rubens, het fraijste ent meeste werc dat vader syn leven gedaen heeft gelyc Ul can considereren aen den prys twelchert verkocht is, te weten, voor 1600 gul. aen den prins van Polen, en meyne als tselfde salgedaen hebben dat goede kenders soudent moeten wesen die sulx sauden uyt origineel kennen (dit saude moeten 500 gul. co-

sten, van mijn gasten gedaen op de helft)" (Denucé, 81).

34. We are very grateful to J. M. Montias for identifying the van Linschoten in this story (see below, n. 35) as Adriaen Cornelisz (van) Linschoten, a painter who worked in Delft and The Hague and who had studied in Naples with Ribera. In a letter dated July 3, 1992, Montias also mentions that he has found many of Linschoten's paintings cited in Delft inventories, often at very high prices (as much as 100 guilders), unusual for Delft painters. None of van Linschoten's paintings has been identified.

35. "Honthorst gelukkig Haegs hofschilder had in zijn bloeiende tijd een wakker pinseel gevoert; maer, 't zy om de juffers te behaegen, of dat hem de winst in slaep wiegde, hy verviel tot een stijve

gladdicheyt: waer over hem Linschoten, die gewoon was zijn werk dapper aen te raken, beschimpte, zeggende: dat hy Honthorst tans niet een brave streek meer toonen kon. Ik doe nochtans dagelijcs beter streeken dan gy, hernam den ander, en zal u een toonen, die gy my niet kunt naedoen: dit zeggende, haelde hy een hand vol dukaten uit zijn beurs, en de selve op een tafel geschoten hebbende, streek ze teffens nae zich, willende te kennen geven, dat hy met zijn schilderen, het waer dan hoe't wilde, wel gelt wist te winnen, daer Linschooten met zijn groot penseel maer een armen bloet bleef" (Hoogstraten, 234).

36. Eric Duverger, *Antwerpse Kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw*, III [1627–35], Brussels, 1987, 268–69, doc. no. 76 ("een origineel ende pripael

factors influencing the price of a painting, refers primarily to the stage in the individual artist's career, in a more general sense it also has to do with fashion, which has an obvious effect on demand. Mandeville's own view was that "modes and fashions" alter over time and "tastes and humours" vary across individuals. Therefore "faults and beauties" will be differently evaluated as the composition of tastes in a population shifts over time.⁴² What was fashionable at the time of painting is only one element in the equation. Since fashions change, it is the original fashion relative to current fashion that is important. Montias's demonstration that history and Mannerist paintings declined in importance and in price over the seventeenth century, relative to still lifes, landscapes, and so on, makes this point clear.⁴³

Fashion could range from a collective predilection for a particular subject matter, style, and technique to the name of the master. Such self-promoting activities as circulating prints of new and fashionable paintings was a well-known marketing strategy among leading artists. Rubens employed a number of engravers explicitly for this purpose. Lucas Vorsterman, it is well known, published engravings after original paintings and even Rubens's copies after other artists. He also engraved after paintings, sculptures, and carved gems in Rubens's collection.⁴⁴ Rembrandt, on the other hand, repeatedly reworked his etchings and created a demand for his "work in progress," leading Svetlana Alpers to suggest that "it was through the sale and the wide distribution of his etchings that Rembrandt's European reputation was made in his lifetime."⁴⁵ Perhaps van Hoogstraten had masters like Rubens in mind when, in his chapter on "How to Make One's Art Public" ("Zijn Kunst Openbaar maken," book 5, chapter 7), he advised aspiring artists to make prints after their paintings and use these as marketing tools to promote their name and recognition of their work.⁴⁶

Mandeville's fourth factor—the "Quality of the Persons" owning the work and "the length of Time" the work has been in the possession of "great Families"—implies that paintings from famous collections enjoy increased demand by acquiring a reputation of their own. This, too, is a well-known marketing strategy still used by auction houses today. The effect is to add to market value in a way comparable to the goodwill of a particular business earned through loyal service to customers, the pricing potential of a brand name, or the endorsements of products by famous persons.

Mandeville's preoccupation with the quality of both collec-

tor and artist is visually corroborated by the so-called gallery paintings. These paintings invariably reflect and propagate particular interests in what was fashionably collectible, and purposely encode the name of the collector.⁴⁷ Some gallery paintings were self-promoting, such as David II Teniers's *Self-portrait in a Painting Gallery*, filled with his own paintings.⁴⁸ Others depicted galleries of art dealers, such as Hieronymus II Francken's *Shop of the Painter and Art Dealer Jan Snellinck (?)*.⁴⁹ Yet by depicting only a fraction of Snellinck's collection of over 400 paintings, Francken made a quantitative and qualitative selection, thus visually encoding which artists were worth collecting and which not. Still others depicted real or partly fictive collections of very famous persons to illustrate the standards of pictorial fashion, value, and taste. This is particularly true of David II Teniers's Italian Collection of Archduke Leopold-Wilhelm which forms the core of the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.⁵⁰ In his painting, Teniers shows the most beautiful Italian paintings Leopold Wilhelm acquired from the Hamilton collection after 1651 as well as paintings from the royal collection of King Charles I (executed in 1649). Teniers even went a step further and published the *Theatrum Pictorum* in Brussels in 1660.⁵¹ This book contains 243 engravings of the archducal collection and can be considered one of the first illustrated painting catalogues. For the contemporary who bought Teniers's *Theatrum Pictorum* or a gallery painting of a celebrated collection, the act could also simulate acquiring part of a famous person's collection (whether real or fictive) and the benefit of the collector's taste and name without the initial cost. There are sometimes conflicts between what was considered good taste and what good painting. But in cases of conflict between art theories and economic value, the market usually dominates. Fashion, we might say, resolves the issue.

Since an observer of the art market such as Mandeville probably had no serious economic stake in the prices fetched by paintings, he was able to play the "empiric." "Tis Observation, plain Observation, without descanting or reasoning upon it, that makes the Art," Mandeville said of his chosen profession, medicine.⁵² His position with respect to art was similar. He might have said, with the conviction of a seventeenth-century writer about disinterested observation, that he had no theory of value but relied on his observation of market practices and of how prices seemed to behave.

Direct participants, however, will tend not only to have a perspective on value that probably reflects their circum-

schilderycken dwelck hy attestant selve van syn eygen hant eertyts geschildert heeft gehad").

37. ASA, Not. 3399 (Notaris H. van Cantelbeck, 1647–48), cited in R.-A. d'Hulst, *Jacob Jordaens*, Antwerp, 1982, 30.

38. "... well ende curieuslijck ten deele zeffs te schilderen ende ten deele door andere, sooals het bequaemst door hem Jordaens goet gevonden sal worden. Ende tgene door andere geschildert sal wesen blijft bij gehouden zoo te overschilderen, dat het voor zijn Signors Jordaens eygen werck gehouden sal worden ende oversulckx zijnen naem ende teekeninge daer onder stellen" (d'Hulst [as in n. 37], 30).

39. Ibid., 31.

40. Ruth S. Magurn, *The Letters of Peter Paul Rubens*, Cambridge, Mass., 1955, 61.

41. Roger de Piles, *Abrégé de la vie des peintres, avec de réflexions sur leurs ouvrages, et un traité du peintre parfait*, Paris, 1715, 253.

42. Mandeville, I, 326.

43. J. M. Montias, "Cost and Value in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art," *Art History*, x, 1987, 455–66.

44. Muller (as in n. 28), 60.

45. Alpers, 1988 (as in n. 4), 100–1.

46. "Waneer gy nu uwe vindingen in ordening hebt uitgevoerd, en gy het oordeel van vriend en vyand derft uitwachten, laet dan vry uwe werken in print uitkomen, zoo zal uwen naem ze spoediger al de werelt over vlieden" (Hoogstraten, 195).

47. S. Speth-Holterhoff, *Les Peintres flamands des cabinets d'amateur au XVIIe siècle*, Brussels, 1957, passim.

48. Private collection. See Margret Klinge, *David Teniers de Jonge: Schilderijen. Tekeningen*, exh. cat., Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp, 1991, 50–51.

49. Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, inv. no. 669. See P. Vandenbroeck, *Catalogus schilderkunst oude meesters: Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten*, Antwerp, 1988, 152.

50. Brussels, Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van België, inv. no. 2569. See *Inventaris-catalogo van de oude schilderkunst: Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van België*, Brussels, 1984, 288.

51. Klinge (as in n. 48), 298–99, nos. 104–8.

52. Mandeville, 1730, (as in n. 16), 38.

stances, but also different attitudes toward the market itself. Established painters of some reputation will feel more at ease in treating the market as an experimental forum to try out new ideas and products than will those just beginning or those lacking a very distinctive ability. For them the market may well seem like a set of unalterable constraints, at times even threatening. In reaction, they may seek and adopt measures to protect their position. The same may be true of a painters' corporation or guild, which traditionally has seen itself as having to defend both quality painting and the income of members against market interlopers peddling cheap and inferior works.

The Haarlem Guild and Public Sales

The archives of the Guild of Saint Luke in Haarlem record an incident that allows a new reading in such terms. The guild, in common with the artists' guilds in other towns, sought in its charter of February 22, 1590, to exclude nonmembers, which meant also noncitizens, from selling their works in Haarlem.⁵³ This, we know, was a common position and extended also to reticence about public sales of art in general. Unusually, however, we find at a certain point a conflict breaking out within the guild for and against public sales of paintings. In a document of November 6, 1642 (with an apostille of November 21, 1642), signed by Frans Pietersz de Grebber, Pieter de Molijn, Cornelis van Kittensteyn, Salomon van Ruysdael, and Frans Hals, a strong case is made against the prohibition of public sales of paintings in Haarlem. The signatories were responding to a request to ban all forms of public sale, which a majority of guild members had submitted to the mayors through the dean and *Vinders* (guild officials) in July 1642.⁵⁴ De Grebber and his colleagues emphasized that the previous, prohibitive request had been filed by a minority of painters. They further alleged that those who signed it did not know its content, but were merely following the advice of the *Vinders*. To buttress their argument in favor of free sales, de Grebber, de Molijn, van Kittensteyn, van Ruysdael, and Hals pointed out that public sales were allowed in Dordrecht for a number of days and in Delft and Rotterdam all the time, and they were not prohibited in The Hague. Amsterdam was "a merchant's city," they noted, and therefore would be left out of the discussion. The possible subtext is that regulations generally did not prevent merchants from buying and selling what, where, and how they chose.

The argument of the "liberal" de Grebber-Hals faction is complex and intriguing, and worth paraphrasing at some length. One strand rested on the precariousness of the position of young artists. The protesters argued that, without free sales, *liefhebbers* would not be created and the market based on existing demand would be too limited to support new artists ("aenkomende konstenaren"). Young artists,

then, would have to sell their paintings personally, and a "half price," which would deny them a living wage. Eventually, they would have to resort to different employment.

Many *liefhebbers* were, however, "born" at public sales. For people bought paintings at a sale who otherwise never would. Moreover, from the moment one bought one's first painting, the urge was implanted to own more, by the same master or by others. The proposed prohibition, by limiting the availability of paintings, might well cause buyers to purchase ordinary paintings or paintings they did not particularly like. Again, by contrast, if ordinary citizens as well as artists were allowed to sell their paintings more freely in public sales, buyers would have more choice and could rise and trade up, acquiring something better from excellent painters with their profits. In this way, artists of all levels would benefit: the ordinary ("gemene schilders") and the experienced and especially talented ("extraordinaire meesters").

The chief beneficiaries of a prohibition of public sale according to de Grebber and his allies, would be the dealers, whom they portrayed quite negatively ("van die geene die men winkeliers, ofte konstverkoopers noemt die oversulcx hier van oock de eerste ende meeste Belhame sijn"). Why so negative a picture? Dealers, the protesters alleged, routinely doubled or tripled their prices, which partly explained why many people's enthusiasm for art was tempered ("maeckende alsoo dat daer door in veelen een genegentheijt tot de konst wert uytgeblust"). To avoid dealers and their artificial prices, moreover, members of the public bought ordinary paintings at the annual free market and this not only militated against the demand for quality work but also funneled the profit to strangers and damaged young Haarlem artists.

To the "extraordinary masters," we are told, none of this mattered all that much, since their work was being bought anyway from their own houses. That affectation of indifference does not ring quite true. De Grebber and Hals, after all, were those with the largest workshops in Haarlem, hence in need of an extensive demand, while van Kittensteyn and Grebber were both actively engaged in organizing illegal lotteries.⁵⁵ It seems likely that there were different attitudes to the market in play here, depending on whether one was an established artist, or an artist of ordinary talent, in Haarlem.

The magistrates did not accept the arguments of the liberal faction in favor of free sales. On August 3, 1644, a ordinance was issued restricting public sales of paintings ("venditien, venduwen, openbare verkoopinghe ofte venduwen within their jurisdiction.⁵⁶ Paintings could no longer be sold publicly, except for those belonging to a deceased individual, a retiring painter, or an art dealer who had gone out of business. This injunction, with its accompanying details

53. Miedema, 57–61, doc. no. A14. New and expanded guild regulations were drafted on May 22, 1631, but never ratified by the city. The regulations of 1590 remained in effect until 1751 (see *ibid.*, 91–135, doc. no. A42, and esp. 19–24, art. 5, concerning controls on sales).

54. See Miedema, 232 and 246–53, doc. no. A120. Cornelis Vroom was also signatory, but he had

bailed out and left the guild since "hem al de rasernij van 't gilt niet aen en stont".

55. Some relevant events can be summarized as follows: July 10, 1607, civic prohibition of private lotteries of paintings; September 27, 1630, request for prohibition of auctions and lotteries; April 4, 1634, lottery involving Cornelis van Kittensteyn; June 3, 1634, renewed prohibition of lotteries of

paintings (lost; mentioned in A81); 1636, lot involving Frans Pietersz de Grebber; November 1636, de Grebber on trial for organizing a lottery; April 30, 1642, renewed prohibition of lotteries of paintings; April 26, 1696, renewed prohibition of lotteries of paintings (see *ibid.*, doc. nos. A40, A81, A87, A88, A115, A156).

restrictions, was similar to the limitations prevailing in Amsterdam. Any painting thus sold, for example, could not be auctioned off again; and lists of paintings scheduled for auction had to be filed with the dean and *Vinders* of the painters' guild as well as with the city magistrates a day before the auction was to take place. Stiff fines were imposed on any who did not follow these regulations or who filed a fraudulent list. Painters or art dealers going out of business or leaving the city could auction off paintings in the manner outlined above; but if they started up a business again, paintings could only be auctioned when a spouse had died. Strangers were prohibited from selling paintings or other artworks in the streets, except at the free yearly markets. To insure that officially sanctioned sales would be conducted without fraud, the dean and *Vinders* of the painters' guild were authorized to have their employee visit the auction to check the declared list.

The de Grebber-Hals faction protested the ordinance, as they had the request leading to it. They predicted that all these restrictions on public sales of paintings would have the reverse effect, inducing organizers to hold sales outside the jurisdiction of the Haarlem magistrates ("buyten venduwen"). In a later but undated letter to the city magistrates of Haarlem, Salomon Ruysdael and Pieter de Molijn both asserted this. They reiterated the by then familiar arguments in support of public sales of paintings, including those claiming that public sales would help young artists. They also maintained that "masters who have come to perfection are not inconvenienced by public sales, since their own work is seldom made for such sales . . . which usually comprise ordinary works [*slechte schilderijen*] bought by people who otherwise do not buy paintings or would not visit the artist's shop [*schilderswinkel*] or an art dealer, and were it not for these sales they would never buy paintings, but please themselves with maps and other junk [*vodderijen*]." They concluded by saying that, since "these sales are in the interest of the ordinary painters [*gemeene schilders*], and do not disadvantage the extraordinary painters [*extraordinaire meesters*, like the signers themselves], they can only contribute to the flowering of painting in Haarlem."⁵⁷

On August 23, 1664, the magistrates eased a little, agreeing to two extra yearly public sales in Haarlem, following the example of Leiden, The Hague, and Dordrecht ("volgens het Exempel van andere onse naburige Steden als Leijden, Hage, Dort"). The first sale was to be held in the Prinsenhof on the first Tuesday after Easter, and the second in August ("dingsdachs naar Hartgens"). In addition, public sales of paintings were allowed after an owner's death, with the proviso that "geen schilderije van andere personen sullen mogen ondergesteecken werden, omme deselve aldaar to vercoopen."⁵⁸ This suggests, as Amsterdam ordinances ear-

lier had implied, that it was a common practice to add "foreign" paintings to posthumous inventories.

Whether these city ordinances regulating the sale of paintings were literally followed and enforced is doubtful. There are indeed strong hints to the contrary. Thus, on August 8, 1671, Lambert Hendricksz requested permission from the city magistrates to hold an auction of a sizable quantity of paintings ("notabele quantiteit schilderkunst") to pay off his creditors. He remarked that these ordinances were daily and indirectly infringed, while many received exemptions from the magistrates ("deselve keure dagelijcks per indirectum geinfringeert ende veel daer van bij Uw Edel achtbare omme redenen gedispenseert werden").⁵⁹ There are many factors that may have shaped this dispute. One reading, however, has been suggested earlier, namely that the market was experienced differently according to the different economic status and security of the participants. In line with this, the faction in favor of prohibiting public sales (including the dean and *Vinders*) may be seen as adopting the perspective of a merchant who feels vulnerable to competition and views the market as a place of struggle against potential interlopers. On this view, the dean and *Vinders*, whatever other aims they may have had, were protecting the income of those among their members who had no special competitive advantage in the market. They thought that spending on paintings was limited, and did not want to share the market.

The group of more established painters read the situation differently. Accepting that demand in Haarlem was simply too limited to yield a living for all would-be artists, they focused on enlarging the demand. If *liefhebbers* were indeed born through exposure to paintings, and if the taste, once implanted, became something of an addiction, then demand could actually be created through holding more public sales. Under the most favorable scenario, the total revenue for distribution among the guild's members would be thereby increased and the average income raised. Questions of motivation apart, this was an innovative strategy, and it involved some risks; but the protesters emphasized only the positive side, reflecting perhaps their confidence in their own market position.

Our reading gives rise to a question that at this stage cannot be answered: if to become an "extraordinaire meester" required special talent, was it also the case that there was a certain relation between success and willingness to assume risk? The question is almost certainly ill formulated. It is unlikely that artists, even successful ones, were more risk-loving than merchants, who in general were averse to risk and took steps to minimize their exposure to it. Possibly, then, what we are loosely calling risk is actually another name for creative moves to secure some (temporary) differential advantage. Read that way, the question becomes: were]

56. Ibid., 253-55, doc. no. A122.

57. "... geeft voordeel aande gemeene schilders ende hare dissipulen, die met een weynig winste te vreden syn ende aangelokt werden in haer begonnen konste te continueren, daer sy anders met al haar dingen beset blyvende, dickmaal de walgvande const crygen . . . meesters tot Perfectie geko-

men synde, daer geen hinder by lyden blyckt dat men byna nergens eenige stukken van haar eygen werk, op de koop vint gemaakt staan. . . . de venduwen sich gemeenlyk strekt op slechte schilderijen, ende sodanige luyden, die anders geen schilderijen souden kopen, ende ook haer leven op geen schilderswinkel, ofte tot een konstverkoper komen . . . ende ten waer de gelegendheyt vande vendu-

wen, ook nimmermeer eenige schilderyen souden kopen, maar met kaarten en andere vodderijen haar behelpen. . . . tot voordeel van de gemene schilders, ende nimmermeer tot nadeel van extraordinare meesters, de schilderkonst alhier sal doen floreren" (ibid., 280-81, doc. no. A130a).

58. Ibid., 289-90, doc. no. A138.

59. Ibid., 296, doc. no. A142a.

successful artists those who, in addition to having talent, had a sophisticated, positive understanding of the market as a forum for experimentation, rather than seeing it as a threatening place, and who acted creatively and aggressively in their own interests? The entrepreneurial activities of de Grebber and van Kittensteyn certainly suggest this.

Excellence versus Saleability

Connoisseurs and economists often experience difficulty in appreciating each other's approach to valuing art. Similar frictions were no doubt experienced and certainly sometimes articulated in the seventeenth century by *kenners* and art theorists, on the one hand, and merchants on the other. It is, therefore, important to understand the difference between the *kenner's* technique of valuation and the routine followed by a merchant. They have, however, much in common.

To help bring this home, think of the connoisseur trying to assess a particular history painting and the merchant who must compare different kinds of cochineal. Both, inevitably, think in terms of relative values: the quality of one is relative to the quality of others in the same categories. Both merchant and *kenner* will try to apply a ranking order in terms of quality. They can both do this on the basis of extensive experience and knowledge of alternatives belonging to the same general class (cochineal or history paintings), and using criteria that are known to apply to each (in the case of cochineal, whether vegetable or insect; in the case of history paintings, appropriateness of the subject compared to similar representations, quality of drawing and brushstroke, use of light, etc.). The only difference is at the point where numbers have to be allocated. The merchant is obliged to make a commitment and cannot therefore avoid attaching numbers to his list. These numbers will generally be ruling market prices or at least based on them, with deviations determined by the merchant's special knowledge of likely future supplies, available shipping, and so on. The connoisseur may but need not attach numbers and can refrain altogether from talking about price. The connoisseur's ordering may nonetheless be transitive, as when it is said that A is superior to B and B to C, hence A ranks ahead of C. This ordering may even be invested with a certain air of absoluteness.

Karel van Mander, following Vasari, was one *kenner* who felt some resistance to market valuation. He specified that honor and immortal fame were more important than mon-

etary gain.⁶⁰ When he mentioned price and payment, it was within that context; he even judged painting for pure profit to be a character flaw.⁶¹ Market prices, therefore, in van Mander's universe, do not capture "value."

If we confine ourselves for illustrative purposes to the correct choice of a subject in painting, it is clear that there was a range extending from the highly desirable to the merely acceptable but scarcely worthy.⁶² Samuel van Hoogstraten, it is well known, codified a hierarchy, comprising three major categories.⁶³ Like his predecessors, he places history painting in the first rank, with a kaleidoscopic variety of cabinet pieces ("Kabinetstukken van allerley aert"), including scenes of everyday life, in the second.⁶⁴ Belonging to the lowest category are flower paintings and still lifes, whose creators are, as the often-mentioned quote contends, "ordinary soldiers in the army of the arts."⁶⁵

Such rankings by art-theoretical values may or may not translate into the order espoused by the market. For there to be a ready correspondence, the market in art would have to be based solely on subject matter. Moreover, theorists, artists, and buyers would all have to share the same notions of propriety governing the choice of subject. Van Hoogstraten himself clearly doubted that this was the case, since he stated that many people paid attention only to the worst paintings.⁶⁶ There were, however, artists who lived up to van Hoogstraten's order in their choice of subject and style. Prices, within restricted buying groups, conformed to the rank determined by the idea of "correct" choice of subject. This is perhaps most true of history painters, whose aspiration to produce superior art, it is well known, was often linked to social prestige, status, and admission to select milieus, frequently aristocratic. But the translation of "correct" choice of subject into prices simply does not work with any regularity. This is corroborated by the recently published average prices of paintings grouped according to subject matter (landscape, biblical, history, portrait, genre, still life, architectural, and others) in twenty-five-year intervals from 1600 to 1700. In the period 1600–25, for instance, history painting fetched the highest average price of fl. 47.60, while a genre painting was fourth at fl. 27.79. For the period 1675–1700, however, genre painting was priced highest at fl. 88.23, while history painting came second with an average of fl. 65.29.⁶⁷ Not too much should be made to turn on these numbers, which serve only to illustrate the point that, as one would expect, it was the exception rather than the rule for

60. Hessel Miedema, *Karel van Mander's Leven der moderne, oft dees-tijtsche doorluchtige italiaesche schilders en hun bron. Een vergelijking tussen Van Mander en Vasari*, Alphen a/d Rijn, 1964, 43–66, 116.

61. *Ibid.*, 116.

62. See the excellent introduction by Beatrijs Breninkmeyer-de Rooij in Haak (as in n. 3), 60–70.

63. Hoogstraten, 76 (bk. 3, chap. 3: "Van de dryderley graden der konst," or "The Three Levels of Art").

64. "De tweede bende komt met duizenderley verzieringen te voorschijn, en speelt met Kabinetstukken van allerley aert. Sommige brengen Satyrs, Bosgoden, en Thessalische Harders in het lustige Tempe, of voeren d'Arkadische Tityr en Laura ten bosch uit, streelen 't oog met een lustich gezicht,

laten de wandelweegen deurschieten, of bouwen een weelich paradijs, daer allerley aert van Dieren langs de heuvelen grazen in de Zonneschijn. Andere komen met nachten, en branden, vastenavonden, en mommerien hervor: ofmet bambootserytjes, of kluchten van Jan hagel, of met Barbiers en Schoemakers winkels, en verdienen de naem van *Rhyparographi* [in the margin translated as 'Schilders van kleine beuzelingen']" (Hoogstraten, 77).

65. "Maer dese konsteners moeten weten dat zy maer gemeene Soldaeten in het veltleger van de konst zijn" (*ibid.*, 75).

66. See his remark in the margin: "Dewijl 't volk veeltijts op slechte dingen meest acht geeft." He continues in the main text: "Zeker de kunst is tot zulk een misfortuin gekomen, datmen in de beroemste kunstkabinetten het meestendeel stukken vind, die niet anders, dan voor een lust of als in

spel van een goet Meester behoorden gemaekt te worden, als hier een Wijntros, een Pekelharing, of een Hagedis, of daer een Patrijs, een Weytas, of dat noch minder is. Welke dingen, schoone ook hare aerdicheden hebben, alleen maer als uitspanningen van de kunst zijn" (*ibid.*, 76).

67. Alan Chong, "The Market for Landscape Painting," in Peter C. Sutton, *Masters of the 17th-Century Dutch Landscape Painting*, exh. cat., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1987, 104–20, esp. 116, table 1; and North (as in n. 3), 120–21. As with the Schwartz and Bok (as in n. 26) estimates, these figures are not derived from a systematic sample, and the focus is on subject, without regard to other attributes such as size.

68. Michael Baxandall (*Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*, Oxford, 1972) developed the point that artists in fifteenth-century Italy had been

prices in the marketplace to mirror the art theorist's valuation according to subject matter.

Where merchant thinking goes beyond qualitative rankings is in attaching a set of numbers (prices) to the ranks and, perhaps even more fundamentally, in going through the routine of reducing one item or quality to its equivalents. One might even say that equivalence calculation was the very stuff of mercantile transactions in the seventeenth century (and, of course, earlier).⁶⁸ Consider, for instance, the need to reduce one currency to another, to reduce distinct qualities of a commodity to prices, or to translate one volume measure at the local currency into another elsewhere at the currency prevailing there.⁶⁹

The first step in passing from the mental routine of the *kenner* or art theorist to that of the merchant, then, involves accepting that reduction is unavoidable and must be made at known ratios or at chosen prices, typically determined by market prices. It is perhaps worth stressing that taking this step departs from qualitative ranking only in that it renders the same process quantitative, and insofar as it makes quantitative ranking routine, almost automatic. Emphasizing the sameness of the basic valuation processes followed by both *kenner* and merchant allows us to say that the friction between connoisseur and economist is more a matter of style and purpose. Yet if we focus on the difference, there is indeed a mental shift involved in going from one to the other. The shift is summed up in the ready acceptance of the notion that qualities translate into numbers, and that the market is the guide for what those numbers should be.

Merchants themselves must have experienced a certain tension over this. They had to think especially of the particular commodity or commodities they traded in and they were, of course, concerned to cover their costs. While, therefore, merchants routinely reduced one item or one quality to its equivalents, allowing themselves to be guided by fixed rules or market prices, they must have had difficulty in rising above the individuality of some goods—"their" goods—and the particular market conditions affecting their prices and costs.

But to fill well certain merchant roles, notably the role of the opportunistic trader or go-between who cares only about the quick disposal of a particular load of wares and is not bound by reputation effects or by a network of agency relations and credit relations, there is a further mental step to be taken. The opportunistic trader does not care about the

particularities of the goods, since there is no ongoing commitment to this or that particular line of trade. They are merely so much stuff or generalized potential for turning a profit. The pure trader's mentality, compared with the merchant's, is thus at a further remove from that of the *kenner* and *liefhebber*.

A perfect illustration of the trader's way of thinking is to be found in a letter of January 21, 1623, concerning a shipment of assorted paintings sent from Antwerp by the art-dealer brothers Goetkint to their cousin, correspondent, and distributor in Seville, Chrysostomus van Immerseel.⁷⁰ Pieter and Antoon Goetkint advise their less-experienced cousin to "price the paintings to cover expenses and adapt the profit margin to the local market, because," they add, "we have to comply with it [the market]. . . . Thus, on the pieces you have, add a margin of 30, 40, or 50 percent."⁷¹ To capture fully the spirit of their advice, a second passage is quoted at length:

In short, you are dealing in items of pleasure and must extol the product; but if the paintings [we sent] are not up to the expected quality or are priced too high, the thing to do is not push too hard; we will send fewer. I am amazed at the excise duties there; they drive up the prices so. We should wait to send you more secular histories. In any case, watch out for what is wanted there and sellable. And if you find something falls short of what is expected, sell it anyway, if necessary at a loss. One item will have to carry the other until we see what is desired and profitable. This is all just testing the market. And if it proves impossible to turn a profit on paintings, we will simply put the money into another line of business.⁷²

The Goetkint brothers, it is clear from their correspondence, knew paintings and could appreciate them as *kenners*, yet here they treat them simply as merchandise. In another letter of July 27, 1624, they further exemplify this attitude. The discussion is about a series of paintings by Sebastiaen Vranckx. The price of fl. 200 was high, and they were convinced that the "Spanish would not pay such a high price."⁷³ By implication, where the end was profit, individual paintings were not valued according to their inherent qualities, but according to what the market would bear. And in this, one painting was just a means, substitutable in principle for any other.

schooled, like their clients, in geometry and the rules of proportion (including the "rule of three"), and not surprisingly played with methods of reduction to equivalents in their paintings.

69. Lucas Jansen gives an example from the 1744 edition of the *Koophandel van Amsterdam* (1694), which involves both volume measures and exchange rates. *Boomolie* (nowadays, table oil) in Hamburg was sold by weight, a "pipe" of 820 lb., and was priced there in Reichsthalers "Banco"; in Amsterdam it was sold by volume, a vat of 717 *mingelen* being priced there in pounds Flemish (Pond Vlaams). From experience, a rule-of-thumb translation was devised: one Amsterdam *mingele* = 2¼ lb. in Hamburg, and 100 Reichsthalers Hamburg Banco = 87½ pounds Flemish in Amsterdam (100 minus [100 divided by 8]). See Lucas

Jansen, *De Koophandel van Amsterdam: Een kritische studie over het koopmanshandboek van Jacques Le Moine de l'Espine en Isaac le Long*, Amsterdam, 1946, 360.

70. First published by Denucé, 34–36, doc. no. 12, where it is mentioned as classified under ASA, IB 660. At present, this document can be retrieved from IB 224 (see n. 30).

71. "U sal weten dat mijne meininge is dat Ul aldaer de schilderyen soudt verdienen met de onkosten, die er op loopen en daerenboven stellen de winninge op die stucken naer de mert aldaer is, want daer naer moeten wij ons voegen . . . daeromme behoort Ul de stucken aldaer te sergeren oft verhhogen met winninge van 30, 40, 50 ten hondert" (Denucé, 35).

72. ". . . somme, op het plaisantste goet moet de lovinghe oploopen, ende het goet daer niet bequaem oft dat te dier is—lichten de handt ende

geen meer seinden. Ick ben verwondert aldaer soo hoeghe tollen op loopen, dat verdiert seer het goet. Moeten ons wachten van meer stucken van profane historien te seinden. Daeromme segge, let op hetgene daer begeert en ventelyck is. Ende dat Ul onbequaem vint moet vercoopen, ist niet met winninge soe moeten die vercocht worden tot verlies. Het ein sal het andere helpen dragen totdat wy sien wat daer begeirt wort omme profit aen te doen, want dit alles ois maer tot proeve, Ende ingevalle daer gheen meerder profit op de schilderie en loopt soo sellen ditto penningen in andere coopmanschap besteden" (*ibid.*, 35–36).

73. ASA, IB 660. Published by Denucé, 44–45, doc. no. 17. Our thanks to Joost vander Auwera for his expert advice in this and other related matters.

We have been stressing the distance between the pure trader and the connoisseur. This distance allows misunderstandings to arise and creates a potential for internal tension within any single individual who feels drawn to the market and yet has the inclination of a *kenner* or *liefhebber*. Mandeville, who writes at times like a *liefhebber*, seems to have experienced the conflicting pressures. He may have been an amateur collector yet, as we have seen, for him supply and demand was all there was to putting a price on value. The tension that inevitably results carries over into some of his remarks about art.

Thus, in his essay "A Search into the Nature of Society," he asks the eternal question whether there is not a standard of "intrinsic worth" for determining the "real Worth and Excellency in things." Such a standard would imply a scale of values, not necessarily quantified, but absolute and invariant—like van Hoogstraten's ranking—so that "the same Judgment is pass'd upon [things] in all Countries and all Ages." After examining the matter he concludes that it is not to be found: "It is manifest then that the hunting after this Pulchrum & Honestum—is not much better than a Wild-Goose-Chace that is but little to be depended upon."⁷⁴ But he had held out to himself the possibility that, if not in morals or architecture or dress or preferences among flower varieties, yet perhaps in art, there is a standard that "might become of universal Certainty"; or, if not quite universal and fixed, is "at least less alterable and precarious than almost anything else." The possible basis for this fond hope is predictable: painting is an imitation of nature, a "copying of things which Men have everywhere before them."⁷⁵

Nature, according to this view, resists the artist and is not open to any and every sort of representation. But there is a basic problem with that line of reasoning. Even the most faithful imitation of nature involves a "happy deceit." The deception has to do with the artist's trick of using perspective to project space and distance onto a flat surface. That was hardly new when Mandeville wrote, but he added a twist. In the natural state, he seems to say, we do not know perspective. The judgment of space and distance is not natural, but learned. A person who looks through a hole in a wall, when all that is visible through the hole is blue sky, sees just a flat sheet of color. So too, a blind person, suddenly given sight, would not immediately be able to judge distance.

Thus our ability to discern depth is something imposed upon nature, like the market price "set on" a painting (his words). In this sense perspective is almost a "Defect, in our sense of Seeing . . . [in that it] makes us liable to be impressed upon."⁷⁶ When an artist exploits perspective, the effect fully

accords with what we have taught our senses to find normal, hence it pleases us. But we must not be misled; the pleasing effect involves no more than a happy conjunction between the imperfection of our senses (our distorted, learned facility for judging space and distance) and the artist's contrivance. Art, then, is a product of an unnatural, acquired sense of seeing; it is not an imitation of nature.⁷⁷

In this way Mandeville ends up undermining his own wistful inquiry into the possible existence of a standard of intrinsic worth. But in his "Dialogue" discussion of paintings, in which he has his protagonist (Cleomenes) lead a visitor through some rooms in a house (his own?), when a "Dutch piece of the Nativity" is contrasted with a Nativity in the Italian manner, Mandeville is ambivalent.⁷⁸ He seems to pour scorn on the "perfection" of nature encouraged in the Italian art-theoretical tradition. It sits badly with his pragmatic medical practitioner's preference for "plain observation," and his rejection of the efforts of the believers in a medical mechanics to "embellish it [observation] with the Fruits of their Brain."⁷⁹ But was this just because he found the practice of *chiaroscuro* and the other rules governing proper rendering excessive, rather than because the very notion of correctness à la van Hoogstraten seemed mistaken or unattainable? It is unclear.

In any event, an ambivalent position would not have been out of line with that of the average merchant. It was possible to accept that market prices were all they had and at the same time to be a *liefhebber* with some hankering after "real Worth and Excellency in things." Mandeville purveyed cures for hypochondria and he certainly did not believe that most others were as good as, or "equivalent," to his. Chrisostomus van Immerseel, too, happily grew into the role of *kenner* as his trade in art matured, and he is better described not as an opportunistic trader, but as a *merchant-kenner*. Here, parenthetically, is an instance of the need for new terms that can arise from the study of practices.

Among art theorists, a position more plainly in line with that of the *merchant-kenner* was the one adopted by the Leiden dean of the painters' guild, Philips Angel. Of the Dutch art theorists of the seventeenth century, Angel was probably the one most at home within a mercantile framework.⁸⁰ Merchant language infuses his by-then mandatory paraphrase of Plutarch's popular adage that painting is mute poetry, poetry is a speaking painting.⁸¹ Angel invokes the revered Jacob Cats to buttress his argument that painting is superior to poetry, not in the context of some preconceived art-theoretical ranking, but in strict pecuniary terms. Both

74. Mandeville, I, 325, 331.

75. *Ibid.*, 326.

76. *Ibid.*, 326–27.

77. Mandeville's ultimate position could be a direct reflection of Descartes's well-known arguments about the senses. But that is another subject.

78. For the "tour" through Mandeville's real or imagined gallery, see Mandeville, II, 32–36.

79. Mandeville, 1730 (as in n. 16), 38.

80. See Angel for the public speech he delivered in Leiden on Saint Luke's day, 1641, and dedicated to the collector Johan Overbeeck. This was originally

printed by Willem Christiaens in Leiden on February 26, 1642.

81. Angel, 26–27. For a comprehensive and historical introduction to the vast literature and various interpretations, see Hans C. Buch, *Ut Pictura Poesis: Die beschreibungsliteratur und ihre Kritiker von Lessing bis Lukacs*, Munich, 1972.

82. Also see the excellent analysis of Angel's speech by Eric J. Sluyter, "Didactic and Disguised Meanings?" in *Art in History, History in Art: Studies in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Culture*, ed. David Freed-

berg and Jan de Vries, Santa Monica, Calif., 1991, 175–207 (with extensive references).

83. Cats's original reads: "men leeft niet vande Wint, of vande schrale lucht / Men kan geen hoofse Maecht, men kan geen schoone vrouwen / met eer, met loff-getuyt, met dichten onderhouden: / De waerde Schilder-Konst verdient al groeter loff, / Want boven haer vermaeck soo komt er voordeel off. / Ick winne machtich gelt, ick maecke groote stucken, / Oock weet ick op de Plaet de Vorsten uyt te drucken: / Hier drijf ich handel meed', en vry mer groot ghewin, / En dat's een dienstich werck

Angel and Cats use straightforward mercantile arguments to justify their position.⁸² Angel, in fact, quotes extensively, albeit selectively, from Jacob Cats's widely read *Trouw-Ring* to prove that painting is far more profitable and useful ("profijtelicker en nutter") than poetry.⁸³ In this long poem, Cats laments that one cannot make a living from poetry.⁸⁴ The painter, however, can trade in prints and make good money for himself and his family.⁸⁵ Moreover, while the merchant risks losing all he owns at sea, the painter's most valued asset is his craft, which cannot be taken away in this manner.⁸⁶ In light of his obvious approval of mercantile thinking, it is perhaps not surprising to find Angel later working in Batavia in the service of the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie and as "opperkoopman" under the company's representative in Persia.⁸⁷

Only in one respect did a quality ranker like van Hoogstraten display the sort of thinking that we have identified as characteristic of the true trader. In a brief discussion of perspective in his *Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst*, as Alpers has pointed out, he illustrates the principle by examples of works in which painting after nature is transformed to mean representation by multiple aspects.⁸⁸ In his chapter heading he employs the Dutch term "Deurzigkunde," or the art of transparency, for perspective. To imitate nature in a perspective painting was thus to render it transparent, open it up, unfold its several aspects. Van Hoogstraten refers for illustration to "de wonderlijke perspectyfkas" (the wonder-evoking peep box). The wonder is twofold. A finger-length figure, for example, is perceived as life-sized. But, more significantly, as can be seen in van Hoogstraten's own peep box (now in the National Gallery, London), the "nature" of a simple interior can literally be opened up and rendered as a sequence of aspects. The interior is not one but multiple, a virtual cascade of views, from room to room and into and beyond rooms, even, through windows, to the outside. In the same vein, he invokes a lost nude by Giorgione, which is, however, known by description, and a print of Venus after Goltzius. Both the nude and the Venus introduce multiple aspects of the figure, with the help of mirrors and (in the Venus) by the addition of a painter in the scene itself, depicting yet another aspect. This is all beautifully described by Alpers. What we can add now is that the representation of the subject as multiple aspects is an exact parallel to what is accomplished in the market circuit of exchange: subject and value appear every where and nowhere in particular, though the implication almost certainly escaped van Hoogstraten himself.

voor huys en huysghesin. / Ick hebbe lest mijn Kunst den Coninck toe ghesonden, / Dies kreech ick grooten danck, en meer dan duysent ponden" (Angel, 28–29).

84. Cats's statement, quoted by Angel, is part of the so-called *Paragone* debate that was particularly flamboyant in Italy. For a good introduction, see Claire J. Farago, *Leonardo da Vinci's Paragone: A Critical Interpretation with a New Edition of the Text in the Codex Urbinas*, Leiden, 1992 (with reference to older literature and sources). See also Peter Hecht,

"The Paragone Debate: Ten Illustrations and a Comment," *Simiolus*, xiv, 1984, 125–36, also quoted in Sluyter (as in n. 83), 180, 197, n. 28.

85. Angel, 26–27.

86. Cats's original reads: "Soo ghy een Coopman lieft, Ick kan oock handel drijven, En kan noch door de Konst mijn saecken beter stijven; Want sooder eens een Schip van eenich Koopman blijft, Soo dat sijn Kraem versuypt en op de Baren drijft, Al is de goede man niet inde Zee ghestorven, Hy is des niet te min om sijn verlies bedorven; Want als een Handelaer gheraect in dit verdriet, Soo is sijn

Conclusion

What clearly emerges from this discussion is that Netherlandish art theorists such as van Mander or van Hoogstraten seem to have been somewhat detached from the mercantile reality around them. An operational set of criteria for valuing paintings in the seventeenth century is to be found not in their tracts but in the writings of Bernard Mandeville. His four factors affecting market price (name of the artist, the stage of his/her development, the scarcity of the works, and the social rank of those owning the works coupled with the length of time the works have been in the possession of great families) reflect what various participants both in the northern and southern Netherlandish art markets clearly understood. Archival evidence has substantiated Mandeville's observations and has brought us closer to contemporary notions and practices influencing what art was made, how it was produced and marketed, and how collecting was viewed.

Traders in art, more fully even than merchants, understood that what mattered were market prices and substitution at those rates between different qualities and sorts of goods. The art trader habitually subordinated the uniqueness of each work to the reductionist demands of the marketplace, as shown in the correspondence of the Antwerp art dealers Pieter and Antoon Goetkint. On the other hand, art theorists clearly, and *liefhebbers* more ambivalently, if we may claim Mandeville as a *liefhebber*, thought in terms of artistic worth and prices as separate categories, not easily reconcilable. Collectors are an even more problematic group than *liefhebbers*: were they primarily consumers, investors, or connoisseurs? They have been addressed only incidentally in our treatment. How best to understand their role(s) is still an open question that requires further study. The same is true of the host of mixed categories of participants: merchant-collectors, merchant-dealers, artist-collectors, artist-entrepreneurs, and possibly other combinations.

Gaps notwithstanding, a start has been made on exploring the implications of the assumption that, if one wants a more refined understanding about art in its socioeconomic context in the Netherlands, it will be necessary to inquire into the distinct economic circumstances, attitudes, and practices of the various participants in market transactions. Once we leave the precision of the idealized competitive model of economic theory behind, there is little alternative but to focus on actual behavior. The result will be an admittedly fragmented, yet more nuanced appreciation of various mercantile realities in the Netherlands, including those relating to art. Our interpretation of the archival evidence from

luyster uyt, en syn ghelooft te niet. Maar schoon mijn dit gheval, misschien mocht overkomen Soo ware my nochtans maer weynich af ghenomen; Want als ick slechts het lijff mach brengen aen de Ree, Soo blijft mijn beste schat behouden van de zee. De Kunst, dat edel ding, en sal my niet verlaten" (*ibid.*, 30).

87. P. C. Molhuysen and P. J. Blok, *Nieuw Nederlandsch biografisch woordenboek*, 1, Leiden, 1911, 145–47.

88. See Hoogstraten, 273–76; and Alpers's intriguing discussion in Alpers, 1982 (as in n. 4), 58–64.

Haarlem underscores the importance of trying to understand constraint-bending as well as conforming behaviors in local communities and among different groups of artists. And an adequate portrayal of Chrisostomus van Immerseel, whom we are currently studying, seems likely to require the sort of dynamic that will allow us to trace his evolution from trader to merchant-commissioner of paintings to merchant-*kenner*. We expect that future research will benefit from approaching players in the art market through categories adapted naturally to their economic situations, as a complement to behavioral hypotheses generated by transposing idealized models of the market from economic theory. The present study is largely interpretative and prospective, but it is hoped that it will encourage a new readiness to inquire directly into the degree to which economic goals, roles, and perspectives may have affected such things as marketing strategies (including the size of paintings, the choice of subject matter, copying, and even forging), as well as trading and workshop practices.

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