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**EVERY WOMAN'S FEAR: STORIES OF RAPE AND DUTCH
IDENTITY IN THE GOLDEN AGE**

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Every Woman's Fear: Stories of Rape and Dutch Identity

in the Golden Age

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This dissertation explores the ways literate members of the Dutch Republic deployed a discourse about rape to stimulate specific forms of Dutch national, religious, and social identification during the seventeenth century. In turn, it examines patriotic literature and art, Protestant advice, disciplinary and legal records, and Catholic guides for religious women. Understanding the centrality of the discourse of rape in the nascent Dutch Republic reveals the ways in which power is expressed in bodily terms. Through their depictions of rape, patriarchs asserted control over not only women, but also poorer men and minors, literary elites declared Dutch superiority over the Spanish, and Dutch Catholics and Protestants challenged each other's views of the ideal constitution of the new Dutch social body.

Depictions of rape serve distinctly different functions in the expression of religious tensions in the post-Reformation period, the assertion of patriarchal family structure, and state-building. Catholic priests used discussions of rape as the means through which they could empower certain religious women to fight to save Catholicism in the Netherlands, by leaving their homes and spreading its teachings. This highlights a

rare case in which Catholic women were not limited to institutional religious opportunities after the Council of Trent, but rather engaged in active roles outside cloister walls. Protestant patriarchs, on the other hand, denied the value of adult virginity and instead used discussions of rape to assert their power over young women and wives, implying that women of a certain age who are unprotected by fathers, husbands, and the walls of their homes were not only in great danger, but also responsible for rape should it occur. A wide variety of Protestant sources take this a step further: women are not only responsible for keeping themselves out of harm's way, but can actually be held accountable – even legally responsible – for raping or abducting men. In addition, it is through depictions of rape that members of the Dutch male elite asserted a national identification that downplays the importance of religious difference among the Dutch by constructing the Spanish as raping tyrants and Dutch citizens as fathers and husbands who protect women.

Dedication

For Mom and Dad, with love and endless gratitude

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Chapter one: Introduction

At the conclusion of his gripping retelling of the biblical story of the rape of Dinah from Genesis 34, seventeenth-century Dutch moralist Jacob Cats wrote that at the moment Shechem, the son of the local ruler, violates her, Dinah's naïve maidens "...do not see that fright which young women must fearfully await."¹ Although Dinah's maidens would have been too innocent to know it, Cats suggests that rape is something every woman must fear. Cats infuses the original biblical story, in which no maidens attend Dinah and there is no clear lesson for women, with early modern meaning. Despite the vast difference between the modern concern that rape infringes on personal freedoms and female sexual identity, versus the early modern tendency to view rape as a property crime perpetrated against fathers and husbands, Cats' sentiment unexpectedly echoes modern historians' and feminist theorists' works on rape. The modern consensus follows Ann Cahill's remark: "the threat of rape in contemporary U.S. society constitutes a persistent and pervasive element in women's lives."² Observers separated by four centuries believe that both seventeenth-century Dutch women and contemporary American women and live in a constant fear of rape.

Since the profound inspiration of Michael Foucault's work on the history of sexuality in the 1970's, many historians have attempted to restore sex to history. That is,

¹ "Haar maagden van gelijck zyn duyven sonder gal, Soo datse niet en sien het droevig ongeval...Noch wat te vreesen staat voor alle jonge vrouwen..." Jacob Cats, 'Lof-Sangh op het Geestelick Houwelick van Godes Soon' in *Alle de Wercken van den Heere Jacob Cats, Ridder, Oudt Raedtpensionaris van Hollandt &c.* de laatste druk; waar in het Twee-en-tachtig jaarig leeven des dichters beneffens desselfs Slaapeloose nachten, met printverbeeldingen sijn verrijkt: nooit voor deesen soo gedrukt (Utrecht: De Banier, 1976) facsimilie of the edition: (Amsterdam: Heekeren et al., 1712), v. II, 225. All translations are my own unless otherwise cited.

² Ann J. Cahill, *Rethinking Rape* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), Sylvana Tomaselli and Roy Porter, eds. *Rape: an historical and social enquiry* (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989), Mary E. Hawkesworth, "Knowers, Knowing, Known: Feminist Theory and Claims of Truth," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 14: 3 (1989), 555.

they have attempted to show the ways in which attitudes toward sexuality have a history that has changed over time. Likewise, rape also has a history; what constitutes rape, what causes it, what impact it has, who is held responsible, and who sustains damage are all issues that change from one historical moment to another. Feminist theorists of the last three decades have also paved the way to help us understand the topic of rape. Since the ground-breaking work of American feminist Susan Brownmiller, many scholars have recognized that rape is not simply important at the individual level, but also has wider social implications that center on the restriction of women's behavior and movements. In other words, rape is not an aberrant act but performs culturally condoned social functions. The marked presence of rape in literature and art at the high marks of western civilizations indicates that these scholars are on the right track. By examining the Dutch Golden Age depictions of rape in a variety of media, this study hopes to follow in these theoretical footsteps by studying the specific history of sexual violence and by revealing the ways rape serves to stabilize political, social, and gender hierarchies.

This dissertation explores the ways in which the seventeenth-century Dutch deployed a discourse about rape to stimulate specific forms of national, religious, and social identification and how this discourse about rape affected the way they categorized acts of sexual coercion. To tell this story requires listening carefully to both Protestant and Catholic moralists, reading accounts of dramas enacted both on stage and in courtrooms, viewing paintings and iconography as well as print literature, and taking seriously the ways in which men and women used the language of rape. Understanding the centrality of the discourse of rape in the Dutch Republic reveals the ways in which

both the social control and the self-control of the female body was foundational to the creation of the nation and the shaping of the modern subject.

Rape in Literature and Art

Despite the fact that rape is a complex social problem, its continued existence has only very rarely been questioned in the last two and a half millennia. It is not that western European literature ignores or makes light of rape. On the contrary, in the history and literature of ancient Greece and Rome, raped women are foundational to the rise and demise of governments and peoples, such as Helen of Troy, the Sabine women, and Lucretia.³ A list of the authors who have re-written the story of Lucretia's rape reads like a history of great books. They include: Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*, Ovid's *Fasti*, Saint Augustine's *City of God*, Giovanni Boccaccio's *Concerning Famous Women*, Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Mandrake*, Shakespeare's "The Rape of Lucrece," Jean-Jacques Rousseau's "The Death of Lucrece," and Voltaire's *Brutus*. However, the enduring presence of rape in European literature and art, as well as its pervasiveness as a theme in American culture, reinforces the idea that rape is a necessary evil. Even when stories and images of rape attempt to convey its horrors, they function to perpetuate the idea that all women are potentially "rapable" and that rape, with all its horrors, is a fact of life for women.⁴

In the classical texts of western civilization, there are two often-imitated models of rape. Lucretia is the most popular of these and provides the basis for the narrative of

³ Froma Zeitlin, "Configurations of Rape in Greek Myth" and Norman Bryson, "Two Narratives of Rape in the Visual Arts: Lucretia and the Sabine Women" both in Tomaseli and Porter, 122-151 and 152-173.

⁴ Sharon Marcus, "Fighting Bodies, Fighting Words: A Theory and Politics of Rape Prevention" in Constance L. Mui and Julien S. Murphy eds., *Gender Struggles: Practical Approaches to Contemporary Feminism* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002), 168-9.

the rape of married women. Roman historian Livy produced the oldest surviving narrative of Lucretia, although it appears that her story derives from older, now fragmentary sources.⁵ According to this account, Sextus Tarquinius, the son of the last Roman king rapes the honorable wife of Collatinus, causing the latter to ally himself with Brutus in an indignant rebellion. These two allies overthrow the king and begin to rule as republican consuls.⁶ By violating a sexually unavailable woman in the sanctity of her husband's home, Lucretia's rapist's act is invariably considered reprehensible, while her avengers are heroic men, responsible for the restoration of social and political normalcy and a new powerful Roman Republic.

In the same way that Justinian I, Charlemagne, Louis XIV, and many other monarchs used symbols of the Roman Imperial period to enhance their claims to power, many republicans have found the rape of Lucretia a useful story to employ as their own foundation myth. Authors such as Machiavelli and Coluccio Salutati used the rape of Lucretia to bolster the Florentine Republic. Joost van den Vondel and P.C. Hooft did the same for the Dutch Republic, and so also Rousseau and Voltaire for the French Republic. The frequent use of the story of Lucretia's rape to initiate republics attests to the fact that it serves some useful function. Each time authors tell the story of Lucretia or create new versions of it, they seem merely to describe their republic's history, but their stories of rape actually help create that republic by justifying the violence enacted by the upstart republicans on both moral and political grounds.⁷

⁵ Ian Donaldson, *The Rapes of Lucretia: A Myth and its Transformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 5.

⁶ Livy, *Rome* Book I, 57-60. Translated by B. O. Foster (London: William Heinemann, 1919). Online at <http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/Rome/Rape.htm>.

⁷ Melissa M. Matthes, *The Rape of Lucretia and the Founding of Republics: Readings in Livy, Machiavelli and Rousseau* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 4-5.

The Dutch Republic, in particular, required considerable literary effort to help justify its existence and identify just who the Dutch people were and what characterized them. As the Dutch gained economic ascendancy in Europe just before the turn of the seventeenth century, there was no basis for secure Dutch identifications of any kind. Like many other countries during the turbulent second-half of the sixteenth century, their country was religiously heterogeneous. Unlike many other countries, theirs was brand new – a result of William the Silent’s rebellious response to Philip II’s violent retribution visited upon the Protestant iconoclasts. There was no historical basis for the Netherlands or for the Dutch people. In addition to their problematic religious and national identity, the Dutch also felt that they had to account for their unique republican government. Breaking away from the continental European trend toward absolutism and courtly society, politics in the Dutch Republic were characterized by extraordinary decentralization and lack of a traditional aristocracy. While their English neighbors also developed a form of constitutional monarchy, the English government remained far more centralized than the Dutch and their aristocracy better survived the rise of the merchant class. Throughout the long seventeenth-century, the Dutch struggled to identify and justify the existence of their political and social systems without a contemporary model, a historical basis, or religious homogeneity. Utilizing the story of the rape of Lucretia was one way they established a Dutch national character and justified their struggle for independence as a republic.

The second model of rape in European literature also survives in Livy’s history of Rome, in this case the rape of the Sabine women.⁸ In certain respects, the word rape is misleading in the context of this second topos. Livy explains that after Rome’s

⁸ Livy, Book I, 9–13.

neighboring peoples had rejected the Roman king Romulus' embassies asking for wives for his overwhelmingly male populace, he devised and sanctioned the abduction of the Sabine women during the celebration of an outdoor festival. Romulus ordered his men not to sleep with the women until after an assembly the following day where Romulus assigned each as a wife to the Roman men. Several years later the larger Sabine populace rose up against the Romans to avenge the rape, but the Sabine women interceded on behalf of their Roman husbands and children.⁹ Thus rape according to this model is not a sudden sexual crime, but a political strategy to guarantee the propagation of one's society through both progeny and alliances with hostile neighbors.

Classical mythology also provides many examples of this second topos of rape. Just as in the example of the Sabines, mythological rape focuses upon sexually available young women, is perpetrated outdoors, and produces remarkable children who have a lasting impact on their societies.¹⁰ The biblical story of the Benjamite rape of the women of Shiloh also fits this model.¹¹ This story closely echoes the story of the rape of the Sabines in a number of ways. Like the Romans, the Benjamites were a predominantly male tribe that had no means to procreate because the other Israelites had made a pact to refuse to offer their daughters in marriage to the Benjamites. Also like the Roman rape of the Sabines, the Benjamites abducted the unmarried women of Shiloh while the latter were outside celebrating a festival, the story does not mention any immediate forced sex, and the purpose of the abduction was to make the women legal wives thereby restoring

⁹ Norman Bryson, "Two Narratives of Rape in the Visual Arts: Lucretia and the Sabine Women" in Tomaselli and Porter, 152-173.

¹⁰ Seduction that occurred in the home of the woman's husband or a male relative was perceived as a serious crime in Greek myth for which the woman's relatives would seek to kill the seducer according to Mary R. Lefkowitz, "Seduction and Rape in Greek Myth" in Angeliki E. Laiou, *Consent and Coercion to Sex and Marriage in Ancient and Medieval Societies* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1993), 19, 21.

¹¹ Judges 21. See the New International Version at <http://www.biblegateway.com/>.

the alliance between the Benjamites and the other tribes of Israel and mutually reassuring the propagation and survival of these tribes.

As evidenced by these two models, sometimes stories about rape portray it as a horrific crime and others times as an acceptable expression of political alliance. Those who rape married women in their husband's homes, following the model of Lucretia are generally seen as reprehensible, immoral tyrants who deserve punishment and death. However, authors and artists depict the Romans, classical gods, and Benjamites who raped sexually available women when the latter were out of doors as heroes of European civilization.¹² The latter form a group who do not violate patriarchal rights over certain women or the sanctity of the home, but rather restore lawful procreation by marrying their captives and make strong alliances with other powerful groups, which assures the success of their societies. The Dutch authors who frequently make use of these classical and biblical models use these two topoi as foundations for their conceptualizations of rape. The availability of women and their location are important in determining men's guilt in cases of rape.

Rape and the Law

Dutch legal sources also share this ambiguity as to whether rape was a horrific crime or a means for men to obtain wives. In addition to whether a woman was available or married and whether she was found inside or outside of the home, the level of violence, whether the female was a virgin, and her age also play an important role in determining the guilt or innocence of an accused rapist. According to a seventeenth-

¹² Diane Wolfthal, *Images of Rape: The "Heroic" Tradition and Its Alternatives* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 26.

century normative legal text by Simon van Leeuwen, in certain cases rape is a serious crime “punished with the Neck or with the Sword... and the one who is Dishonored has Right to compensation according to the circumstances... If the rape is hindered or prevented, he is still whipped and banned, to the extent that he did violence to someone.” He also describes rape as a violent act that is “done against a woman’s will.”¹³ However, immediately following the statement that rape is a violent act, he clarifies: “Other sexual intercourse or deflowering without violence is very nearly unpunishable by us,” meaning that it is necessary to prove that violence existed for there to be any consideration of punishment. While Van Leeuwen stresses that violent sex against the woman’s will is a crime, he makes it clear that the proof of violence and lack of consent is required without giving any suggestions for what that may entail.

Van Leeuwen gives two exceptions to the violence and consent criteria, both related to the alleged rape of sexually inexperienced young women. He explains that when a young woman is deflowered, “the Violater must marry her, or compensate the loss of virginity with money.” He also states if a young and innocent girl is “grossly misled” by a “Guardian, or another person responsible for her chastity and care,” that “this is punishable with whipping, banishment, and the confiscation of goods.”¹⁴ In the

¹³ Simon van Leeuwen, *Het Rooms-Hollands-Regt, waar in de Roomse wetten, met het huydendaagse Neerlands regt, in alles dat tot de dagelijkse onderhouding kan dienen, met een bysondre korthheit, so wel in de vaste regts-stoffen, als in de manier van regts-vordering over een gebragt werden : met allerhande ordonnantien, placcaten, hand-vesten, keuren, gewoonten, ende gevvijdsen deser ende omleggende landen bevestigt / van nieuws beschreven, hersteld, ende vermeerderd* (Leyden: R.G. by Hackens, 1664), 428.

¹⁴ “Vrowe-kragt werd met den Hals of met den Swaarde gestraft... ende heeft de Onteerde Regt tot vergoedinge naar gelegenheit... De verkratinge belet ofte beschut zijnde, werd hy evenwel gegeesselt ende gebannen, die tot sulken eynde jemand geweld aandoet... Andre beslapinge ofte onteeringe sonder geweld, is by ons by na onstrafbaar... Alleen dat een jonge Dogter ontmaagd zijnde, den Schender haar moet trouwen, of voor de ontmaagding betering doen in geld, naar beyder gelegenheid... Ten waar dat een al te jonge Dogter in onnoselheid groflijk misleid was, of een Vogd, of ander Persoon in wiens tugt ende voorsorg deselve bevolen was, deselve had beslapen, is met geesselen, bannen, ende verbeurte van goederen strafbaar...” Van Leeuwen, 425.

case of very young women, it is not necessary to prove that the perpetrator acted violently. His guilt is assumed.

The standards concerning violence and consent can in part explain why there are so few cases in which men are sentenced for the rape of women in the Dutch legal records. Historians Herman Roodenburg and Sjoerd Faber, who studied accusations of rape, have shown that this crime is not often reported. Roodenburg, for example, found only nine cases of rape that came before the Amsterdam Reformed Church disciplinary council between 1578 and 1700. None of which these cases were decided in favor of the women who asserted that rape was the cause of their out-of-wedlock pregnancies. Similarly, Sjoerd Faber found only eight cases of accused rape in the 12,689 cases he studied from the Amsterdam criminal punishments for the period between 1680 and 1811. Roodenburg explains that it is likely that women rarely reported rape “because the presentation of evidence, when it came to trial, was extraordinarily difficult, and ...the honor of the women was quickly brought into doubt.”¹⁵ However the assumption that rape occurred more frequently than is evidenced by court records presupposes that rape is in fact a necessary occurrence and that it is in fact an ahistorical event. Dutch theorist Mieke Bal reminds us that rape is as an obscuring term – a term that does not just replace another term, but one that takes the place of an entire narrative.¹⁶ When we keep in mind that the term rape stands in for a story shaped by culture-specific ideas of responsibility, it is not obvious that more men should be charged with rape. In fact, in the seventeenth-

¹⁵ Herman Roodenburg, *Onder Censuur: De kerkelijke tucht in de gereformeerde gemeente van Amsterdam, 1578-1700* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1990) 302.

¹⁶ Mieke Bal, “Scared to Death” in Mieke Bal and Inge E. Boer eds. *The Point of Theory: Practices of Cultural Analysis* (New York: Continuum, 1994) 38-39.

century Netherlands, a wide range of sources agree that women were much more frequently guilty of raping men.

Rape and Power

The fluidity of the term rape makes it an integral tool in maintaining gender as well as other social hierarchies. Feminist theorist, Brownmiller, in particular, proposed that rape did not arise out of a sexual need, but was a violent act of power men perpetrated to dominate women.¹⁷ Rape was not simply the violation of an individual woman's sexual choice, but a protection racket – a political crime that allows all men to keep all women subordinated.¹⁸ Problematically, Brownmiller claims that from prehistoric times to the present, patriarchal systems have utilized rape to consciously intimidate women. It is true in the Dutch Republic that patriarchs, who were primarily wealthy merchants, controlled the government and exercised moral control as the heads of large families that included spouses, all unmarried children, and servants. The discourse on rape was certainly one way that these patriarchs enforced restrictive behavioral models upon less wealthy men, their male and female children, and their wives.

The early modern historian of sexuality and medicine, Roy Porter, adds nuance to Brownmiller's argument by pointing out that rape only becomes a crucial method of intimidating women and perpetuating male dominion when gender relations are destabilized. He explains that the prevalence of rape in contemporary America is due to the instability of gender roles resulting from the rapid success of the woman's movement

¹⁷ Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Ballantine Publishing Group, 1975) 15.

¹⁸ Ian Blair, *Investigating Rape: A New Approach for Police* (London: Police Foundation, 1985).

and residual idealization of glamorized women and macho men. However, Porter makes the mistake of believing that in early modern Europe, male dominance was secure enough that it had no need of asserting control.¹⁹ A fundamental characteristic of the early modern period is in fact the increasing amount of criticism and resistance to the gender hierarchy that ignited a controversy about women, their proper roles, and capacities.²⁰ Even Jacob Cats' attempt to teach women to recognize the danger of rape with which I initiated this chapter and which forms the basis of the title of this dissertation signals his desire to shore up unstable gender roles.

A close reading of seventeenth-century sources also suggests that a wide range of people beyond a well-to-do patriarchal elite subordinated women in subtle ways. Not only patriarchs and magistrates, but also neighbors and family, including both men and women, ensured social control of the body. Early modern women's historian, Laura Gowing has reminded us that women's legal, economic and social subordination was enforced through "a much less clearly articulated set of beliefs and behaviors, the wider structures of patriarchal power within which women and men made sense of the world."²¹ Many less powerful men and women used their ideas of licit and illicit sexuality as the linguistic tools to assert moral authority over women's bodies and to control women's behavior. In addition to women's complicity in asserting social control over others, women were also complicit in controlling their own bodies. The language of rape contains the logic not only for the social control of women by men, but also for women's self-control of their female bodies.

¹⁹ Roy Porter, "Rape – Does it have a Historical Meaning" in Tomaselli and Porter, 216-236.

²⁰ See for example Helen Ostovich and Elizabeth Sauer, eds. *Reading Early Modern Women: An Anthology of Texts in Manuscript and Print, 1550-1700* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), chapter 2.

²¹ Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch, and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 10.

Plan of the Dissertation

While this chapter demonstrates that the seventeenth-century understanding of rape is predicated on Roman models, chapters two, three, and four examine specifically how wealthy Dutch merchants and magistrates employed stories of rape to bolster the nascent Dutch state and their position as its leaders. Chapter two focuses on how prominent Dutch authors of patriotic works, including contemporary historians and playwrights, Joost van den Vondel, P.C. Hooft, and others, used stories of rape as anti-Spanish propaganda to galvanize animosity against Spain and establish a model of the Dutch male character. While the symbol of a beautiful, vulnerable woman who embodies the state is frequently employed to engender new republican structures, the Dutch patriotic authors' willingness to efface the difference between Dutch Catholics and Protestants and between Dutch and native American women is exceptional. These authors propose a Dutch national identification that transcends religious allegiance and likens the Spanish violence enacted upon female bodies in the New World with that which occurred in the Netherlands.

Chapter three demonstrates the methods by which the exceedingly popular Dutch Calvinist moralist, Jacob Cats, transformed a specific group of rapists into pitiful supplicants for marriage, thereby advocating and buttressing patriarchal privilege to sexually control young, unmarried women through his stories of rape. This chapter also explores the ways in which Cats extended this patriarchal control over the lower classes and all minors by exonerating only those rapists of certain economic means and who have reached majority. He empowers young men of means and justifies their lenient treatment

by asserting that rape is an expression of natural male sexual aggression hardly distinguishable from wooing women in more acceptable ways.

Chapter four challenges the traditional view that Protestantism encouraged companionate marriages. By scrutinizing Cats' moralizing works, Reformed Church council records, Vondel's plays and municipal court documents, we see a wide range of Protestant sources use rape as a tool to control women's bodies and minds. These diverse sources agree that there is no positive expression of female will. Once women express their desires they are transformed into rapists, abductors, and murderers. Surprisingly, the Dutch jurists and Church councilmen did not understand women's potential to rape and abduct as figurative. They claimed that women could actually be held legally responsible for abducting men and they emphasized women's collaboration in cases of violent sex.

Chapter five shows how rape discourse can disrupt desired identifications as well as secure them. Catholic priests writing for religious women used stories of rape to challenge the Dutch Calvinist patriarchy. This chapter reveals that Catholics' continued belief in a female spiritual elite who could maintain sexual purity motivated priests to write stories in which these 'spiritual virgins' led active, even heroic lives, atoning for the sexual sin of others and violently fighting off would-be rapists. Catholic priests further empowered these women by claiming that if they suffered rape they could even stand to benefit from their suffering so long as they did not consent to the act. On the downside, Catholic priests also wrote that because women were able to avoid rape, it was ultimately their responsibility to do so. Thus, a woman who succumbs to sexual attack is to blame for her own rape.

This dissertation explores the language of rape in patriotic literature and art, Protestant advice, disciplinary and legal records, and Catholic guides for religious women in turn. Depictions of rape serve distinctly different functions in the expression of religious tensions in the post-Reformation period, the assertion of patriarchal family structure, and state-building. Dutch Catholics and Protestants played out their religious tensions in part through the language of rape. Catholic priests used discussions of rape as the means through which they could empower certain religious women to fight to save Catholicism in the Netherlands, by leaving their homes and spreading its teachings. This illuminates the fact that Catholic women were not all limited to institutional religious opportunities after the Council of Trent, but rather engaged in active roles outside of cloister walls in the Netherlands. Protestant patriarchs on the other hand denied the value of adult virgin women and instead used discussions of rape to assert their power over young women and wives, implying that women of a certain age who are unprotected by fathers, husbands, and the walls of their homes were not only in great danger, but also responsible for rape should it occur. In addition, it is through depictions of rape that members of the Dutch male elite asserted a national identification that downplays the importance of religious difference based on their construction of the Spanish as raping tyrants and themselves as a pure and justified people who protect women.

Chapter 2: Plays, Rape, and National Identity

On January 3, 1637, the beautiful, baroque Amsterdam Theater, which the Dutch called the *Schouwburg*, opened with the tragedy *Gijsbrecht van Aemstel*. It was a long-awaited inauguration. Some of the city's Calvinist ministers, who disapproved of the play's seemingly Catholic content, delayed its opening for over a week. When it finally did play, the audience of about a thousand people sat in tiered sections according to their position in the social hierarchy and filled the middle standing room only section.¹

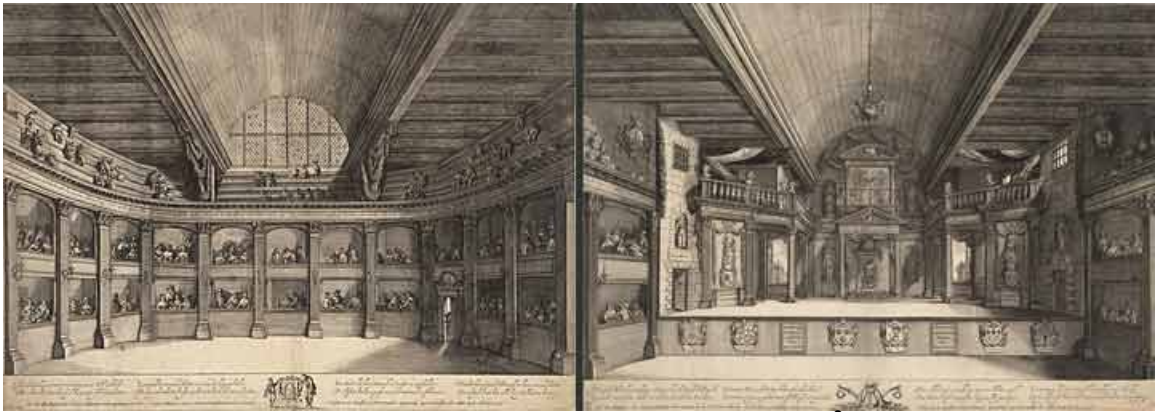


Figure 1: Amsterdam Schouwburg. Left: Audience. Right: Stage.²

On the long, narrow stage before them paraded gorgeous, contemporary costumes despite the medieval setting of the play. Trumpets and war drums sounded and banners waved. The wooden interior, painted to look like marble, provided excellent acoustics. Mute and motionless actors created intricate *tableaux vivants* to accompany the many long monologues. It was as if by some spell the audience witnessed illusory and transitory paintings in which dark figures were illuminated by shafts of light reminiscent of

¹ B. Albach, 'De Schouwburg van Jacob van Campen' in *Oud Holland* 85 (1970), 85-109.

² S. Savry, *De Schouwburg van Jacob van Campen*, Gravure, 1658 in Marije de Nood, "Gysbrecht op de planken: Theatervormgeving 1638-1988" cf. hum.uva.nl/bookmaster/gysbrecht/toneel.htm. Theater Instituut Nederland, inv. nr. g000894.000 and inv. nr. g000860.000.

Rembrandt's "Nightwatch" (1642); many in fact conjecture that his viewing of the *Gijsbrecht* inspired this famous painting.³

The climactic scene of this spectacle arrived in the fifth act. In a horrific bloodbath, the antagonist, Haamstee van Witte, rapes and murders Claris van Velzen, a noblewoman, nun, and Gijsbrecht's niece on the corpse of her uncle, the bishop. A messenger describes her rape and murder:

...she swoons. But before she comes to, Haamstee throws her on her uncle's lifeless body, Defiles her, satisfies his sacrilegious lust. She comes to at last, aware of this heinous act, And cries: "My Spouse, look down, and see my suffering, And how I've been abused. Oh pure Virgin Mary! Oh Clara, do you see? Machteld, behold your child!" That pitiless man ignores her laments, her tears – Neither does the buzzard heed the harmless dove that squeaks/ When in mid-flight he digs his claws in its soft flesh. "Away," he growls, "weep out your heart to your mother." He kicks her belly, tramples on her suffering heart, Until her nose and mouth release a spurt of blood. With a final gasp, she closes her starry eyes, Expiring as if asleep in the bishop's open arms.⁴

As if this was not appalling enough, Claris' uncle's murder and her own rape and murder take place in the midst of an array of slain nuns large enough to encircle the pair.

Far from dooming this play to failure, the *Gijsbrecht* with its dramatic scenes of rape and murder was incredibly well received and is still the most famous of all Dutch plays. It enjoyed a continuous run since its opening day in 1637 until 1969, playing every Christmas season because its content of death and the promise of rebirth was meant to echo the life of Jesus. Its author, Joost van den Vondel, an immigrant from the southern Low Countries, is unarguably the foremost Dutch playwright and one of the greatest Dutch poets of all time. He was the most important contributor of material for this

³ See Joost van den Vondel's *Gijsbrecht van Amstel*, trans. Kristiaan Aerccke (Ottawa, Canada: Dovehouse, Inc., 1991), 9-10. See also H. van de Waal, *Rembrandt at Vondel's Tragedy Gijsbreght van Aemstel*, (Miscellanea J.Q. van Regteren Altena, Amsterdam 1969) 145-149.

⁴ Aerccke, 107.

preeminent venue during its early years. He also worked closely with the theater by training actors. Yet, despite his fame and dedication, neither of these roles provided him with fortune. He was not a paid writer. There were none as of yet in the Netherlands. Vondel owned a silk and fabric shop where he sold hose and stockings to support himself throughout his literary career. Rather late in life, when he spent his life's savings to bail his son out of debtor's prison, the city of Amsterdam stepped in to save him from poverty. As reward for his service as their greatest poet, the city put the seventy-year old Vondel to work as a full-time clerk-accountant at the Loan Bank.⁵

The *Gijsbrecht* is not the only play to feature the rape of a van Velzen. Another distinguished playwright and poet, P.C. Hooft, centered a play on the rape of Claris' mother, Machteld. His *Geeraerd van Velzen*, to which Vondel's *Gijsbrecht* is a kind of sequel, begins with Machteld's emotional and moving account of her rape. In Hooft's work of the latter, Machteld weeps, wrings her hands, pulls out her hair, scratches her breast, rips her gown apart, sprinkles herself with dust, wails, and curses her attacker. Hooft's Machteld is also very visibly emotional: "...Then with greater violence [my] Sorrow bursts out in inconsolable lamentations/ In very deep sighs, in tears that are hot/ Then I sink in once and for all, and melt in my pain."⁶ Hooft gives Machteld 136 lines to describe her own reactions and ensuing despair. After her initial outburst of cries, sighs, and tears, she describes her longing for death reminiscent of the deep, internal sorrow legible in the face of Rembrandt's 1666 *Lucretia* now in The Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Hooft describes Machteld's similar sentiment. However, unlike *Lucretia*, she

⁵ See Aercke's Introduction 9-16.

⁶ P.C. Hooft, *Geeraerd van Velsen, Treurspel* (Zutphen: B.V.W.J. Thieme & Cie, 1976) lines 85-88. See <http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/hooft001geer01/>.

implicitly recognizes the unacceptability of suicide for Christians. This, however, does not stop her from wanting to die:

And seeing that it is not your godly will/ That I arise or raise up this
burdened head/ And lift it through this heartache; Allow death to hereafter
take me down, And close with her chilling hand these wailing eyes; And
dig a way in the earth through which I can flee/ This life's hateful light of
the much too bright day, And all the difficulties that I cannot bear. Still, is
death, which the happy curse, To visit me the accursed as an honored
guest? It will be welcome in my dire need, O care easing sleep akin to
death; Whose arts alone can still my gnawing pains.⁷

Hooft makes Machteld's pain tangible and uses it as the focus of the play that her long monologue introduces.

While Vondel's preeminence as a playwright is unquestionable, Hooft was more successful than Vondel at finding well-paid employment. Vondel held the honorary title of "State Poet." Hooft on the other hand, traveled through France, Italy, and Germany with the intention to prepare for a career in commerce, but this trip encouraged him to pursue his literary desires instead. He accepted a paid position as sheriff of Muiden for 39 years, which allowed him to inhabit the castle of Muiden just outside of Amsterdam. This fortuitous financial and geographic position enabled him to regularly invite friends, scholars, poets and painters such as Hugo de Groot, internationally renown jurist, politician, and theologian (who came until he was imprisoned in 1618), Vondel, Constantijn Huygens, G.A. Bredero, and Maria Tesselschade Visscher. This literary circle, known as the Muiden circle after the castle, generated discussion across diverse

⁷ "En naedemael't niet is uw goddelijcke wille/ Dat ick van desen val erryse', oft opwaerts tille/ Het overlaeden hoofdt, en beure' het door mijn quael; Soo gundt my dat de doodt het voorts heel onderhael,/ En met haer killende' handt dees weenende' ooghen luycke;/ En graeve' in d'aerd' een wech waer lanx dat ick ontduycke/ Des levens leyde licht van alte stercken dach,/ En al den druck, daer ick niet teghens op en mach./ Doch, is de doodt, dien de gheluckighe vervloecken,/ Te waerden gast, om my verfoeyde te besoecken?/ Soo zijt ghy welkom my in mynen banghen noot,/ O sorchsachtende slaep naemaeghe vande doodt;/ Die stillen kundt alleen het knaeghen van my smarten." Hooft, 117-129.

genres and might explain in part why both Hooft and Vondel chose the historically inaccurate story of the sexual violation of the Van Velzen women as focal point for their plays.

This chapter argues that Hooft's and Vondel's choice of rape as subject matter is much more than a coincidence. The opening of the Amsterdam Theater was an important civic event that heralded the greatness of the Dutch and their new republic. That such an event of civic pride focused the crowd on the dead body of a raped woman suggests that bodily violation was a central way the early modern Dutch conceptualized a wider range of religious and political violations. This chapter will explore how Dutch authors evoke images of raped or sexually vulnerable women to instigate feelings of national identification by using them to symbolize the infringement of political power on subject's rights, the desecration of both family bonds and sacred spaces, and the vulnerability of the Dutch nation.

The Rape of Lucretia, Machteld and Claris:

Hooft and Vondel set their plays in medieval Holland where Gijsbrecht, Lord of what is now roughly Amsterdam, and his allies, Geeraerd van Velzen and Herman van Woerden, capture Floris V, count of Holland because of his heinous rape of one of the preeminent wives of the nobility. Hooft's *Geeraerd van Velzen* focuses on the play's namesake's inability to control his anger after Count Floris rapes his wife Machteld. Instead of allowing other forces to deal legally with Floris' crimes as his cousin Gijsbrecht suggests, Geeraerd murders him. Vondel's *Gijsbrecht van Aemstel* focuses on the later consequences of Count Floris' murder. When Vondel's story commences, allies

of Count Floris, namely the Kennamers and the Waterlanders led by Witte van Haamstee, have besieged Amsterdam for about a year to avenge Gijsbrecht's role in the murder of the count. On Christmas Eve, Haamstee's troops execute a plan that imitates the Greeks' defeat of Troy through the ruse of the wooden horse. Haamstee's forces make it look like they have given up the siege and left behind a ship of peat. The inhabitants of Amsterdam celebrating their apparent victory, as well as Christmas, bring the ship inside the city walls to use its fuel and of course, as in Virgil's *Aeneid*, with it they bring its cargo of hidden soldiers. As his troops destroy and burn the city, Haamstee rapes Claris, who is Gijsbrecht's niece, on the dead body of her uncle the priest in a gruesome circle of slain nuns.

The way that both of these tragic plays center the rape of a prominent noblewoman echoes Roman historian Livy's story of the rape of Lucretia.⁸ According to Livy's account, Sextus Tarquinius, the son of the last Roman king rapes the honorable wife of Collatinus, causing the latter to ally himself with Brutus in an indignant rebellion. These two allies overthrow the king and begin to rule as republican consuls. The connection between Hooft and Vondel's works and this foundation myth of the Roman Republic provides us with clues as to how tragic depictions of tyranny allow playwrights to celebrate contemporary republican structures. While both Dutch plays describe the immediate victory of tyranny in the medieval period, Hooft and Vondel use the story to portend the just rule of the seventeenth century Dutch Republic and the economic power of Amsterdam, in the same way that Lucretia's tragic rape led to the political overthrow of a tyrant and the institution of a great republic.

⁸ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*. Book I, 57-60.

In addition to echoing the Roman precedent, Hooft ties Machteld's rape to Lucretia's in other ways. He explicitly mentions Brutus' "praiseworthy punishment" of the "evil lusts" of those with regal ancestry⁹ and connects him with Geeraerd van Velzen through their similar failure to create order out of disorder. The latter asks: "Who can...bring order to a state if the highest ruler leads in an immoderate manner?" and Herman van Woerden responds: "Neither the first nor the second Brutus managed it."¹⁰ Hooft's tragedy is centered on this similar medieval Dutch failure to create lawful, warless rule. Hooft also connects Machteld's and Lucretia's rapes as Geeraerd confronts Floris. Geeraerd points out that Machteld, like Lucretia, was "born to outstanding honor, and knightly kin." He also asks Floris if he expected Machteld to "bare her dagger/ [And] to bury it in her heart so that she may also pierce [Count Floris'] chest in order to save this worthy Fatherland..." as Lucretia had done.¹¹ Though Hooft does not mention Lucretia by name here, this reference to her nobility, suicide, and salvation of her country is clearly recognizable.

Lucretia's story was a popular theme in seventeenth-century Dutch culture. It was a favorite subject of history painters. Rembrandt painted the subject three times. Dutch Catholic priests discussed Lucretia often because of her exemplary chastity and problematic suicide, including a particularly detailed analysis of her actions by Johannes

⁹ Hooft, 649-651.

¹⁰ "Wie kan ordentlijck verquicken/ Een staet ter doot toe kranck, en weêr in/ orden schicken, Als d'Oppeoverheyt onordlijck word beliedt? Dat konde d'eerste nocht de tweede Brutus niet." Hooft, 753-6. The "second Brutus" Hooft refers to is Marcus Junius Brutus who claimed descent from this Brutus and later murders Julius Caesar.

¹¹ "Verrader, dacht ghy niet dat yemandt van mijn bloedt/ In hoogher eer verweent, en ridderlijke maeghen, Die haer in duystre' en licht ghewoon zijn preusch te draeghen, Dat yemandt van myn grootte' en edle swaghery/ Den Lande deur ontsien, dat yemandt van dat vry/ En vranck Hollandsche volck zijn daghe soud' ontblooten/ Om, door zyn eighen borst oock, dy in 't hart te stooten; Tot lossing van dit allerwaertste Vaderlandt..." Hooft, 428-435.

Fredericus Lumnius in his *Lives of Christian Maidens* of 1671.¹² Jacob Cats, leading Protestant moralist, also expects his readers to understand his references to Lucretia even when he provides little detail. In his story of the rape of two women, he refers to Lucretia as “the courageous woman/ who because of no other reason than remorse killed herself.”¹³ When the audience is reading about rape, Cats expects them to think of Lucretia. Johan van Beverwijk explicitly mentions Lucretia’s fame:

...who does not know Lucretia, who sticking the weapon in her innards, took the punishment of violence upon herself by stabbing herself, so that she could firstly separate the honorable and pure soul from the contaminated body, [and secondly] because she could not punish the violator.¹⁴

Dutch authors often used Lucretia’s story in their attempts to claim a classical heritage and discuss female chastity.

Hooft’s and Vondel’s use of the story of Lucretia as a model also puts them in a long tradition of European literature. This story, because it is often told at the emergence of republics, seems to suggest that there is some sort of logic that requires a story of rape to initiate a republic. Creating new foundation myths based on rape, or adopting the Roman one, helps construct a political identity. Each time authors tell the story of Lucretia or create new versions of it, they seem to simply describe their republic’s

¹² Joannes Fredericus Lumnius, *Van dleven der christeliicker maechden, vier dialogi, dat is tsamenspreckinghen van twee persoonen: Ghemaeckt by Ioannem Fredericum Lumnium Pastoor des Beghijnhofts T’Antwerpen. Noch een Boecxken vanden H. Doctoer Ambrosius Bisschop tot Melanen, ghescreven aen een Maghet die tot val ghecomen was, door den selven nu eerst in duytsch overghesedt* (Antwerpen: Plantijn 1571).

¹³ “...het moedigh wijf, Dat sigh uyt enckel spijt gingh brengen om het lijf.” Jacob Cats, “Twee verkracht, en beyde getrouwt” Jacob Cats, “Twee verkracht, en beyde getrouwt” in *Verhalen uit de Trouw-ringh*. Ed. J. Koppenol (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003), 57.

¹⁴ “Wien is LVCRETIA niet bekend, die stekende het geweer in haer ingewant, de strafe van geweld aen haer selven genomen heft, ende op dat de eerlicke ende suyvere ziele van ‘t besmet lichaem ten eersten zoude scheyden, haer selven door-steken, om dat sy den schender niet en konde?” Johan van Beverwijk, *Van de Vvtmentheyt des Vrouwelijcken Geslachts* (Dordrecht: Hendrick van Esch, 1643), 149.

history, but their stories of rape actually help create that republic.¹⁵ Far more than the Roman Republic, the Dutch Republic required stories of rape to create a nation where none previously existed. While this study does not challenge the idea that nation-states developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it traces the earlier development of emerging national identity in the seventeenth century.¹⁶ The Netherlands developed ideas of a Dutch identity under its new republican government that helped its inhabitants associate themselves with the rulers of their state and its economic center of Holland.

Creating Dutch identity:

Like all emerging nations, the Netherlands was not waiting to be discovered. It had to be invented.¹⁷ This seems far more obvious for the Netherlands than it is for England whose long history obscures this idea. However obvious it is that the Dutch created a new national identity at this time, it demands closer examination because of their unique situation in which the political entity essentially preceded a national identification. At the time of its inception, the Republic lacked a ‘Dutch’ people or historical geographic entity, had a haphazard manifesto as a stand-in for a constitution, two main political factions amid many conflicting political aspirants, an entirely new ruling class, and religious heterodoxy. The identification of anything as Dutch was very difficult at the turn of the seventeenth century.

¹⁵ Matthes, 4-5.

¹⁶ This position is held by so-called “modernists” including Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, New York: Verso, 1983), David A. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), Eric Hobsbawm *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), and Ernest Gellner *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983).

¹⁷ Philip Schwyzer, *Literature, Nationalism, and Memory in Early Modern England and Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3.

Although the Dutch had gained economic ascendancy in Europe by the 1590s, they had a very significant problem, namely they had little or no reason to be a political entity. There was no historical basis for the Netherlands or for a Dutch people. The Dutch Republic simply came into being when Philip II was unable to re-conquer the northern Low Countries after William the Silent's rebellious protest of Philip's cruelty to the Protestant iconoclasts. In addition to the fact that the Dutch had no political history, the Republic was religiously heterogeneous. To make matters worse, the Dutch also felt that they had to account for their unique republican government. Breaking away from the continental European trend toward absolutism and courtly society, the politics of the Dutch Republic was characterized by extraordinary decentralization and lacked a traditional aristocracy. While their English neighbors also developed a form of constitutionalism, the English government remained far more centralized than the Dutch and their aristocracy better survived the rise of the merchant class. Throughout the long seventeenth-century, the Dutch struggled to identify and justify the existence of their political and social systems without a contemporary model, a historical basis, or religious homogeneity.

Despite the unlikelihood of a unified Dutch nation and its deep religious and political polarity, within a century, the Netherlands and the Dutch people came to be much more clearly defined. The republic was able to generate an "imagined community" among the people of the Netherlands.¹⁸ There were a number of factors that acted as important prerequisites for Dutch national identification including the existence of a

¹⁸ Anderson, 6-7. He explains the use of this term: "It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" and a community that is seen as a collection of comrades despite the "actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail."

common external enemy. Their struggle against Spain obscured differences among the people of the Netherlands and made them focus on their similarities.¹⁹ Since their new borders were in fact the geographical bounds from which they were able to expel the Spanish, Spain was both the metaphoric and literal enemy who united them. The prominence and number of merchants and bureaucratic administrators also played an important part in creating this idea of Dutch affiliation. During their travel in and beyond the Low Countries they noticed the similarities of language and custom of those who lived nearby and the vast differences in language and custom of those living further afield. Trade and diplomacy required travel and literacy and their literacy encouraged them to disseminate what they had learned.²⁰ As this overlap of economic and political power and cultural production shows, there is no strict separation of cultural and political texts. Rather, cultural texts are formed within particular social and cultural power structures that affect them profoundly.²¹ Merchant/regents fulfilled their political duties to realize a certain political character of the Netherlands and wrote literature and histories to encourage their desired Dutch social and cultural characteristics.

Because of the economic, political, and cultural dominance of the merchant/regent class and the single-mindedness of their struggle against Spain, they successfully laid a foundation of Dutch identity within record time. They were both the political and literary founders of the Dutch Republic and propagated the ideas that form the prerequisites of

¹⁹ For a discussion of unification in response to a common enemy see Vilho Harle, "On the Concepts of the 'Other' and the 'Enemy'," *History of European Ideas* 19, nos 1-3 (1994), 27-34.

²⁰ Art historian Svetlana Alpers notices the prominence of letters in Dutch paintings of this period and attribute them partly to Holland's level of literacy (the highest in Europe) and partly to the improvement of the Dutch postal service and their need to communicate with their international trading contacts. Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 197.

²¹ Susanne Scholz, *Body Narratives: Writing the Nation and Fashioning the Subject in Early Modern England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 2000), 5-7.

nationalism, namely that a particular group of people makes up a particular nation and that the fatherland is a territory to which people are emotionally attached and politically loyal.²² These ideas were championed so quickly in the history of the Republic that even (or perhaps especially because of their experience of torment by Spain) immigrants from the Southern Low Countries, such as Vondel, were among the greatest propagators of a consciousness and pride in being Dutch and a loyalty to the territory where they now lived. Vondel's *Gijsbrecht* ends with the claim: "One always loves one's country: it's a normal thing."²³ This proclamation encourages the audience of the nascent Republic to identify themselves as the people, who like Gijsbrecht, rightly belong to the territory surrounding the Amstel regardless of where they may have been born. It also encourages them to recognize the territory of the Republic as that which commands their emotional attachment and political loyalty.

New types of media were also important prerequisites for feelings of attachment and loyalty to the Dutch Republic at this time.²⁴ For the Dutch, unity meant the creation of a single Dutch language and the pride in it necessary to make it the primary print language of the Republic. Since the middle of the sixteenth century, a few Dutch authors, such as Jan van de Werve in his *Treasury of Germanic Languages* of about 1553 and Coornhert's preface to his translation of Cicero's *De Officiis* had begun to announce the need for a purification of the Dutch language. By the seventeenth century, a consensus emerged that Dutch should be purified grammatically by modeling it more closely on Latin, while simultaneously purging adopted Latin and French words. Authors wrote

²² Bell, 7.

²³ Joost van den Vondel, *Gijsbrecht van Aemstel*, ed. Mieke B. Smits-Veldt, 2001 Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren 2001, 11 November 2006, <<http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/vond001gysb01/>> 108.

²⁴ Anderson, 25.

dictionaries and lists of loan words and their Dutch equivalents to encourage the use of forgotten Dutch vocabulary.²⁵ The Chambers of Rhetoric, which were associations whose members dedicated themselves in part to the writing of poetry and drama, initiated these developments. The effect of this new linguistic consciousness in the Netherlands spread throughout Dutch society. The standardization of written and spoken Dutch commenced at this time through the conscious efforts of combining the various dialects spoken by the southern immigrants and the northern inhabitants, while largely ignoring the eastern dialects, which were considered less attractive. A more standard Dutch continued to gain popularity through its usage by the influential group of writers, poets, merchants and officials, and its prestige as the language of the wealthy and ruling classes.

To further encourage its usage, members of the Chambers proclaimed their pride in Dutch as a language as great as any. Vondel, for example, wrote:

If [one] decides to sing in Dutch, his mother tongue, he needs to be no more ashamed of it than the Hebrews, Greeks, Romans ... As concerns our own language, in recent years it has been cleansed of loan words and un-Dutch usage, improved, and now gives the pupil great advantage.²⁶

As early as the 1580s, Hendrick Laurenszoon Spieghel and others produced the first printed Dutch grammar, which claimed that “Dutch was the Germanic language par excellence” and that no other language “possesses such outstanding qualities as their

²⁵ See E. Ellerbroek-Fortuin, *Amsterdamse rederijkersspelen in de zestiende eeuw*. (Groningen/Batavia: J.B. Wolters, 1937), 36 and M. van der Wal, *De moedertaal centraal. Standaardisatie-aspecten in de Nederlanden omstreeks 1650* (Den Haag: SdU., 1995), 28-29. Quoted online: <http://www.ned.univie.ac.at/publicaties/taalgeschiedenis/en/rede-mitglieder.htm#hooft>.

²⁶ “Neemt hy voor in Nederduitsch, zijn moederlijcke tale te zingen; des hoeft hy zich zoo luttel te schamen als de Hebreëen, Grieken, Latijnen ... Wat onze spraek belangt, die is, sedert weinige jaren herwaert, van bastertwoorden en onduits allengs geschuimt, en gebouwt, en geeft den leerling nu veel vooruit.” Vondel, *Aenleidinge ter Nederduitsche Dichtkunste*, 1650. Quoted and translated online: <http://www.ned.univie.ac.at/publicaties/taalgeschiedenis/en/standardsprache.htm>.

own.”²⁷ Also in the 1580s, the Chamber of Rhetoric called *In Love Blooming*, made a case that all the courses at Leiden University should be taught in Dutch instead of Latin. They were unsuccessful because the professors were concerned with the international marketability of their courses, but a few, such as Simon Stevin, did give their lessons in Dutch.²⁸ The prestige of the Dutch language was not only increased by the pride expressed in particular works and the belief that it is a worthy language for academic instruction, but also by the classic content of many Dutch Golden Age works. Vondel’s *Gijsbrecht*, for example, adapts the history of Troy and thereby exudes “a literary pride in the fact that the Dutch language was...capable of handling...great subjects of classical antiquity.”²⁹ The subject matter of the new works appearing in the Dutch language confirmed its esteem among the educated of the Republic. Spanish discouragement of its usage further enhanced the popularity of Dutch, now the language of freedom.

Rape and Rebellion

The inimical actions of Spain and the literary consumption and production of the merchant class were important prerequisites to national identification. However, a republic requires a great deal of popular support. In order to gain that kind of support playwrights, poets, and contemporary historians embarked on a cultural offensive. Using raped women as symbols of personal, political, and religious violation, they justified the Dutch rebellion against Spain, encouraged people to feel an emotional attachment to the

²⁷ *Twe-spraack vande Nederduitsche letterkunst* - see Van der Wal 1994: 188)

<<http://www.ned.univie.ac.at/publicaties/taalgeschiedenis/en/rede-mitglieder.htm#hooft>>.

²⁸ See J.W. de Vries, R. Willemyns, and P. Burger, *Het verhaal van een taal. Negen eeuwen Nederlands* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 1993), 252 and M. van der Wal, *Geschiedenis van het Nederlands* (Utrecht: Het Spectrum (Aula), 1992), 197. Quoted online: <http://www.ned.univie.ac.at/publicaties/taalgeschiedenis/en/rede-mitglieder.htm#hooft>.

²⁹ John Prudhoe, “Joost van den Vondel: The Dramatic Technique of *Gysbrecht van Aemstel* and *Lucifer* considered as a Contribution to World Tragedy,” *Modern Language Review*, 51 (1956), 558.

new nation, and vilified the Spanish. Stories of rape during this time were not accidental or inconsequential, but provided the central symbolism through which the early modern Dutch people translated feelings of personal violation into political terms, and perhaps more importantly, experience political attack as an intimate, personal violation.

For Hooft and Vondel, rape was not only a symbol of political violation. The rapes of Machteld and Claris were first and foremost actual political crimes in which the ruler infringed upon a male citizen's exclusive sexual rights to his wife (or in Claris' case, Gijsbrecht's responsibility to protect a family member). Just as in the case of Lucretia, Floris' rape of Machteld was a tyrannical act because he overstepped his bounds and violated Geeraerd's noble rights. In Hooft's summary of the contents of the play, he explains that Floris' alienation of his subjects is not a new or a one-time occurrence. He sets the scene thus: "After Floris V, Count of Holland, had suppressed the nobility for a long while, his unjust and inimical treatment of the nobles increased with the rape of van Velzen's wife."³⁰ Floris had long suppressed the nobility and the rape of a nobleman's wife was one violation of their rights in a long line of actions against their privileges.

Desecrating the property and rights of his vassal was not Floris' only crime. According to the contemporary Frisian jurist, Aggaeus van Albada, political authority existed "to foster and protect the common good of the community." He meant that princes exist solely to benefit the people by firstly, protecting them against wrongdoers and secondly, against discord and dissent that is natural among humans. Floris' failure to protect his subjects undermined the basis of his authority. His vassals remind him of this: "You swore with God as your witness, and on your honor/ That you would lead and

³⁰ "Nae dat Floris de vijfde, Graeve van Hollandt, de gemeente lang gequeeckt hebbende om den Adel te onderdrucken, d'onghe-lijcken ende wederwaerdicheden den selve toeghedreven opghe-hoopt hadde met het vercrachten van de huysvrouwe des Heers van Velsen." Hooft, 35.

bravely protect/ this sovereign people, in war and peace.”³¹ He fails to do so. Machteld cannot believe he did not protect her as he should have. She wonders how he could:

“Rape? A Wife? A well-born woman? A daughter of his friend? A love of his vassal?”³²

As a sovereign lord, his position requires him to protect her because of her position as a wife of his vassal, noble and daughter of a friend. As he rapes her:

She cried so loud: ‘I am raped and here is violence; What are you doing my noble Lord? If any other man was thus attacking me, You would be the one to turn him away with your sword.’³³

Floris’ position as her feudal lord requires him to fight off any of Machteld’s would-be rapists and yet he instead is the one raping her at the very moment he should protect her. Through her statements one can see that Hooft does not portray her rape as a personal violation. She does not lament the loss of control over her own body, but rather points to the men whose rights Floris violates as he rapes her. She mentions her relationships to Geeraerdt and to her father. Hooft suggests that Machteld’s rape is hideous because it is one way Floris harms his subjects instead of protecting their rights and persons.

In fact, according to contemporary political thought, violating noble rights, hurting one’s subjects, and causing discord among them justified rebellion against Floris. A number of theorists, including Van Albada, Fernando Vasquez de Menchaca, a Spanish intellectual in the court of Philip II, John Locke, and de Groot, agreed that resistance to a king could be legitimate. Building upon the sixth-century Justinian Code’s suggestion that the sovereign obtains power from the people rather than from God, Albada insisted

³¹ “Ghy swoert met daeghing Gods, en by ghestaefden eed, Dat ghy dit vrye volck, in oorloch en in vreed, Trouwlijck berechten soudt en vroomelijck beweyren.” Hooft, 67.

³² “Vercrachten? een ghehuwde? een welghebooren vrouwe? Een dochter van zijn vriendt? een lief van zijn ghetrouwe?” Hooft, 43.

³³ “Zy riep soo luyd kracht, en gheweldt; Wat maeckt ghy mijn edele Landesheere? Waer daer een man op my ghestelt, Ghy soudt hem met uw swaerd afkeeren.” Hooft, 59.

that "...the States, being those who have established a prince in his authority, retain the power to take the latter's authority back, if he violates the conditions on which he is appointed."³⁴ Believing that a prince must honor the "conditions on which he is appointed" means that he must act in accordance with certain laws, which includes respecting the established rights of particular subject groups. A ruler's violation of those laws is a clear sign that he has become a tyrant. De Groot draws a sharp contrast between a ruler who respects laws and the existing rights of his subjects, which is in fact the foremost condition under which the ruler is appointed, and a ruler who excuses himself from these laws and rights.

Like De Groot, Vondel creates a distinct dichotomy between Gijsbrecht's just rule characterized by respect for laws and protecting his people and Haamstee's rapacious tyranny. Vondel describes Gijsbrecht's beneficial leadership and Haamstee's hurtful rage in a number of ways. For instance, when Gijsbrecht's wife, Badeloch, fears he has been killed, she exclaims: "Patience! I'm afraid. Oh, if only he's unharmed/ In this tempest – our ship [is] adrift without a helmsman."³⁵ Gijsbrecht is needed to steer the ship occupied by his people to safety. This repeats a metaphor Albada uses in his political theory when he states that a prince is only a "custodian, servant and executor" of the law, 'a servant of the ship.' In the ship of the community the prince holds the place of the 'steersman'; the *populus* is the master of the ship."³⁶ Vondel's image of Gijsbrecht as the helmsman means that he is ruling in a correct manner; he steers the ship for the benefit of the people

³⁴ Martin Van Gelderen, "From Domingo de Soto to Hugo Grotius: theories of monarchy and civil power in Spanish and Dutch political thought 1555-1609" in Graham Darby Ed. *The Origins and Development of the Dutch Revolt* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 156-7, 161.

³⁵ Vondel, trans. Aercke, 78, lines 1080-1.

³⁶ Van Gelderen, 156.

while he heeds their well-being. Conversely, Vondel continually refers to Haamstee as the tempest that upsets Gijsbrecht's well-ruled state:

Thus the scythe the ears of wheat will break. Thus the rain the greenest
leaves will shake, When fierce tempests hit the wild forest. Blind pride of
state is so mischievous/ And when it rages on, so devious! How its own
raging ache makes it wretched!³⁷

Haamstee fiercely rants and raves like a wild storm. He embodies the “blind pride of state” which here is synonymous with an unjust tyrant greedily consuming lands that are not justly his to rule. Vondel similarly refers to Gijsbrecht as a dike defending the land against the sea, where the sea is Haamstee's force:

As soon as our foes had taken over the Dam, I fled with my few men to
city hall. Picture this. We can stop them there – like a dike that curbs the
flood: Bells toll at night, to warn country-folk of danger. They wheel in
loads of sod, and stones, and beams, and beds, Or bedding, whatever helps
to strengthen their dike/ Where the sea has soaked it; and all sweat
mightily...³⁸

Gijsbrecht justly works with the people for the common good and the protection of their land, while the sea kills people and steals their land. Contrary to Gijsbrecht's faithfulness to his land and people, Haamstee's failure to heed the good of the people makes him an evil force the people have to combat.

Vondel provides yet more images of Gijsbrecht's rightful, strong political power. For instance, the latter is a lion that can scare off wolves and tigers: “[F]ierce wolves in packs, and ferocious tigers, Will run with frenzy once they've heard the awesome roar/ Of all beasts' monarch, the every-hungry lion...”³⁹ He is the just ruler, rightful monarch of all beasts, as well as the bellicose symbol of Holland. Gijsbrecht protects his people

³⁷ Vondel, trans. Aercke, 90.

³⁸ Vondel, trans. Aercke, 86, lines 1294-1300.

³⁹ Vondel, trans. Aercke, 38, lines 10-2.

from packs of wolves and ferocious tigers by which Vondel suggests rapists and murderers. Haamstee on the other hand is a maddened lion, not to be controlled once set off by vengeance:

Who will stop the maddened lion once his chain is off? He follows cruel instincts, at once flies forward, And blindly sinks his teeth in the first one he sees... In this blood-drunkenness and blind and cruel lust, When of reason's clear light hardly a spark remains, ...quiet people become irrational beasts.⁴⁰

Haamstee becomes an irrational tyrant fuelled by vengeance and lust and is no longer able to protect his subjects. While Gijsbrecht is the Batavian lion protecting the Amstelland, Haamstee is an enraged lion who hurts and kills those he should protect.

As Vondel develops this dichotomy between tyrant and just ruler, he demonstrates that Haamstee's willingness to rape is inseparable from his other tyrannical acts. He lists the characteristics of tyrants during Gijsbrecht's vehement refusal to leave his wife unprotected:

Oh horror, Badeloch. Am I the type of man/ Who'd kill a woman – and imagine, his own wife! – With the sword that I've wielded all my life so well/ For her sake, her children, her kin, and these good folks, Just like any cruel, rapacious tyrant would? ...That means I've renounced Christianity, my duty. ...Do you want me to betray you altogether And load my conscience with your death and ravishment?⁴¹

Gijsbrecht refuses to hurt or murder women like a “rapacious tyrant would.” According to Vondel, a tyrant is a particular “type of man” who hurts women and children, is rapacious by nature, and heretical. Gijsbrecht exclaims that these actions do not follow in the pattern of his life spent thus far protecting his wife and children and fulfilling his Christian duty. Vondel, following Virgil's lead, closely binds Floris and Haamstee's

⁴⁰ Vondel, trans. Aercke, 98, lines 1630-1632, 1639-1641.

⁴¹ Vondel, trans. Aercke, 115-6.

reprehensible traits of harming women, their people, and heresy. Vondel believes that obedience to God's law requires those in power to respect the rights of the nobility and work to protect their people just as Gijsbrecht does who thereby fulfills Albada's first requirement for a just leader. However Floris, and later, Haamstee do not protect men, women, or even innocent children— acts that deem them disobedient to God in all their relationships and unworthy, tyrannical lords.

To Hooft and Vondel's seventeenth-century audience, these tyrannical traits, namely disregarding the rights and safety of one's subjects and creating discord in place of order, would have immediately brought the Spanish to mind. Floris' failure to respect the nobles' rights and prevent discord connect him to the Duke of Alva, Spanish general and governor of the Netherlands between 1567 and 1573, whose regime violated the privileges of nobles and towns. Their plays build upon the legalistic foundations for the justification of the Dutch Revolt laid by de Groot, whose works specifically assert that because the Spanish crown had violated the conditions on which they were appointed and no longer worked for the common good of the community, Dutch resistance to them was legitimate. Hooft and Vondel imitate De Groot's juxtaposition of unworthy Spanish tyranny and Dutch liberty facilitated by a ruler who keeps the peace and concord through their tyrants Floris and Haamstee and their better-intentioned rulers, Gijsbrecht, Geeraerdt, and Herman.⁴²

Following de Groot's lead, Hooft explicitly connects the medieval tyranny of Count Floris with the contemporary Spanish tyranny:

The one [who is] named William [of Orange] appeared in Holland, and replanted/ The suppressed freedom, in her previous position. The foreign

⁴² Van Gelderen, 160-4. Schama, Simon. *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Culture in the Golden Age* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), 63-4.

violence was driven out of everywhere; The great inhumanity, the great horrors/ Of the Spanish Tyranny; which stood as firmly as a pole...⁴³

The characteristics of Spanish tyranny that he names are the suppression of freedoms, the use of violence, great inhumanity and horrors, and inflexibility in dealing with their people. Conversely William of Orange supports native Dutch freedoms, which Hooft considers is the natural state of things since as he says William “replants” them. He also juxtaposes Spanish intolerance and Amsterdam’s tolerance as he describes the Fall of Antwerp:

The famous city defended by his dagger/ Shall increase in power, and numbers of people, More than before, in three hundred Years, And spread wider the circle of her walls. All those people who tyranny cruelly disrupts, [And who] bloody laws or inimical violence expel from their fatherland/ She [Amsterdam] will accept them with open gates, With their wives, young children, and many poor kin, naked and bloodied; And will patiently resurrect them in her lap. They will become faithful citizens working hard to earn their keep.⁴⁴

Amsterdam allows new citizens, exiled from their own countries ruled by tyrants, to live peaceably and in greater tolerance. Hooft adds that intolerance is a sign of tyranny, but fails to pass judgment on Floris and believes his death to be a failure to return to just government.

Vondel also connects Floris and Spanish tyranny. The archangel Raphael appears at the end of his play and pronounces that Holland will end the rule of their Spanish overlord:

Ere three centuries will have run their course, Holland/ Will increase its might with allies, and forcibly/ Kick the Romish altars out of all her

⁴³ Hooft, 131, lines 1514-1518.

⁴⁴ “De naemhaftighe stadt verdaedicht door zyn dolck/ Sal nemen toe in macht, en menichte van volck, Meer dan te voeren, in driehondert Sonneringhen, En wyder uyt, den creyts van haere vesten dringhen. Want, al, wie tyranny te woedichlyck ontstelt, Bloedighe wetten, oft vyandelyck gheweldt/ Ellendelyck sal uyt haer vaederlandt verjaeghen, Met vrouwen, kind'ren jong, en hoop beroyde maeghen, Door open poorten zy ontfâen sal, naeckt en bloodt; En met meedoogentheyte verquicken in haer schoot. De trouwe burghery haer nyver sal gheneeren.” Hooft, 137-8, lines 1622-1632.

churches, Declare annulled all Rights of the Count her ruler, And govern
as united states.⁴⁵

Although Vondel's play has tragic consequences for Gijsbrecht and his family, his message is one of ultimate victory over tyranny and evil. He incites the audience of this play to imagine themselves as the descendants of honorable Christians who fight against medieval and Spanish tyranny for the good of the Dutch people. Vondel identifies the country around its strong center of Amsterdam in a way that shows that the Dutch identification is under construction. While the Dutch can confederate themselves behind the leadership of Amsterdam and Holland, this is not like the personal identification with the nation identified by clear borders that would occur only in the nineteenth century. Dutch identification at this earlier point was based on allegiance to particular political leaders and the economic center of the provinces.

While both Hooft and Vondel agree that the Spanish regime is tyrannical, Hooft alone imparts an abstract lesson concerning tyranny. Hooft believes that the people must agree upon resistance to a tyrant and that all rulers must be careful not to become tyrants. Through Hooft's more reasonable character, Gijsbrecht, he explains that if people want to be ruled by a person who is tyrannical, they may.⁴⁶ The judgment of who is and who is not a tyrant belongs to the "best of the people" by which he means the wealthiest citizens who rule the state. They decide for the whole country whether to support or expel a tyrant:

If the best of the people want to be ruled over by Tyrants/ The decision is theirs: in case they allow that, then each [citizen] Should allow that or go into exile. Because if you revolt against [the general consensus] then the

⁴⁵ Vondel, 106-7.

⁴⁶ Hooft calls him Gijsbert, but I will refer to him as Gijsbrecht to limit confusion because Vondel's name variation is much better known and it is the same historical personage to whom both refer.

basest citizens and farmers will turn you out of the land just as they have the Prince.⁴⁷

Gijsbrecht explains to his companions that a decision must be made by those in power to follow or turn a tyrant out of the country. Thus there are no set criteria for when a ruler becomes a tyrant except for the opinion of the ruling class and they must all agree or risk being exiled with the tyrannical prince. This point follows another Dutch political theorist Francois Vranck, who accepted the notion of popular sovereignty, in so far as one uses the term “popular” to mean the nobles and towns of Holland.⁴⁸ In line with this thought, Hooft’s Gijsbrecht insists his allies consult the “best of the people” before deciding how to proceed after they captured Floris. Gijsbrecht states that any rash action would not be just: “I did not bring the Tyrant into the hands of those who are more intent on attaining their own revenge than on the benefit of the Fatherland.”⁴⁹ To allow Geeraerd and Herman to decide his fate alone would make them tyrants just like Floris. Gijsbrecht insists that they handle the matter legally and in harmony with other Dutch political leaders. Contrary to human nature, which according to Vasquez leads societies to discord, Gijsbrecht proclaims to his allies “There has been enough disorder. Let order now begin.”⁵⁰ He protects his people by advocating the rule of law through their careful treatment of Count Floris.

Another way that both Hooft and Vondel connect tyranny and rape is by asserting that the same motivation drives one to rape a woman and to violate a political body. They

⁴⁷ “... Wil 't beste deel des volcx verheert zijn van Tyrannen/ Het oordeel staet an haer: des dulden zy, elck een/ Die dulde dan met haer, oft geev' hem elders heen. Want, stootmen dit om, 't schuym van Burghers en van Boeren/ Sullen, ghelyck als ghy den Prins te land uytvoeren.” Hooft, 87-8, lines 786-790. The DBNL’s (Digital Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren) note 786 explains that Hooft’s uses “the best part of the people to mean the aristocracies or the leaders of the states under the influence of Montaigne and Lipsius.

⁴⁸ Van Gelderen, 157.

⁴⁹ “Ick brachte den Tyran in handen niet den gheenen, Die min het vaderlandt als eyghen wraecke meenen.” Hooft, 83, lines 733-734.

⁵⁰ “Onordens al ghenoech, laet orden eens beginnen.” Hooft, 85, line 762.

repetitively use the motif of fire as the pervasive sign of unruly disobedience to God and/or civic morality – a force that instigates both the urge to rape and the desire to destroy political and religious institutions. Just like Floris and Haamstee, this fire rages, violates and destroys and generally works to signify the opposites of God’s love: the evil forces of vengeance, lust, hatred, greed, discord, and for Vondel, desecration. In the passage quoted at length below, Vondel’s Gijsbrecht claims that it was the “flame of this fierce fire” of vengeance which “first began [in] Floris’ mischievous breast” and made him “scandalously embraced and violated” Gijsbrecht’s niece and raise troops against Amsterdam.⁵¹ In this case, fire is emblematic for political vengeance enacted on Machteld, as a kinswoman of Gijsbrecht, and Amsterdam. It also signifies Floris’ desire for vengeance burning within his chest and perhaps also his burning desire for Machteld. The fire within him makes him both tyrant and rapist. While fire is the sign of vengeance and often lust, it is also the signal Vosmeer, a spy, used to let Haamstee know that he could pierce Amsterdam’s gate with his troops. Vondel writes that Haamstee’s troops: “...move in quickly, guided by the blazing light/ Of the raging fire which Vosmeer starts within.”⁵² Fire is used to signify both vengeance and lust, and it also is the tool that allows Haamstee to break through the protective barrier of the city and enter it, foreshadowing his similar mistreatment of Claris. Both Vosmeer’s and Floris’ fires lead yet again to the destruction of Amsterdam in flames.

Vondel also uses the motif of fire to connect the unjust political power that violates the female body as it violates the political body, desecrates the church, and performs social injustices. From Floris’ first attack against Gijsbrecht, he ties together the

⁵¹ Vondel, trans. Aercke, 41, lines 109-14.

⁵² Vondel, trans. Aercke, 54, lines 487-8.

rape of his niece Machteld van Velzen and the political violation he suffered at Floris' hands:

My body and soul was at the service of the count and the people, And still they collected so many troops in the saddle, Who called for vengeance over Amsterdam and Aemstel, And roar night and day, and see not how the flame/ Of this fierce fire first began/ From Floris' mischievous breast, and scandalously embraced/ And violated my niece, the more beautiful bloom of Velzen, The unjust treatment of the nobility, in their Right, Sworn with his mouth. Blinded people, say, If no wrath and vengeance blinds your eyes, Should he not find enough stuff to prove Amstel's innocence?⁵³

In this passage, Vondel firstly shows that Floris' rape of Gijsbrecht's niece implies the former's political guilt or unworthiness. It is immediately after the rape that Gijsbrecht questions how anyone could not recognize his own innocence. As a rapist, Floris manifests his inability to replicate God's love in his social relations and thus also calls his ability to rule into question. If he is incapable of obedience to God in social matters, then he is incapable of obedience in political and religious matters. His hatred and lust pervade all the areas of his life. Vondel secondly shows that Floris enacted his political vengeance against Amsterdam upon the body of Gijsbrecht's kinswoman. As Gijsbrecht says, the "fierce fire" of vengeance against Amsterdam and Aemstel began in Floris' breast through his desire for Machteld van Velzen's body. The violation of his kinswoman stands in for the violation of Gijsbrecht's political body. Similar to the way Machteld's rape was seen as a violation of Geeraerd's noble rights in Hooft's play, for Vondel the rape of both Machteld and Claris are symbolic violations of Gijsbrecht's legal and political rights.

⁵³ Vondel 41.

Hooft's use of the motif of fire also links the violation of Machteld with the political violation of Geeraerd. For Hooft, however, fire does not express desire but only the vengeance and hatred that cause all the violations in this tragedy. A chorus of young ladies of Amsterdam tells the story. They rhetorically ask: "O offspring of the noble King William II, Why did you infect such a courageous and upright heart, With such a raging fire?"⁵⁴ They wonder why Floris would have angered Geeraerd in such a way. They then explain that Floris' anger toward Geeraerd resulted from the latter's refusal to marry Floris' lover. Worse still, Geeraerd insulted Floris when asked to do so by saying that the latter's "worn-out shoes do not fit him."⁵⁵ Floris waited to avenge this insult until Geeraerd was away from home, then took off toward Machteld with a "smoldering fire in his heart"⁵⁶ where he found her knitting, reminiscent of the chaste Lucretia. However, unlike in Livy's story of Lucretia in which Tarquinius desired her because of her beauty and her chastity,⁵⁷ Hooft never writes that Floris desires Machteld. He only violates her to avenge himself on Geeraerd. Fire signifies Floris' intentions to punish Geeraerd for not fulfilling the political alliance Floris wanted him to make and again implies that Machteld's violation is important not for its personal, but only for its political implications.

Again fire is the motif that connects Machteld's physical violation and her family's political violation as Machteld asks her husband to wait until their feelings have cooled before he acts: "If it is proper for a woman to express her feelings, I pray let the fire of our suffering cool/ So that our suffering and our personal hatred, Not supersede the

⁵⁴ "O saet des Roomschen Konincx waerd, Wat oorsaek had uw onbesweecken/ En moedich hart van eelder aerdt, / Met soo verwoeden brandt ontsteecken?" Hooft 57, lines 281-284.

⁵⁵ "Uw slete schoen myn voet niet passen." Hooft 57, line 292.

⁵⁶ "...smoockend vier, in 't hart..." Hooft 58, line 299.

⁵⁷ Livy, 57-60.

common good.”⁵⁸ Machteld voices Hooft’s main lesson in this tragedy: in the interest of peace and harmony in the community, one must not respond to the inner fire of hatred or vengeance, but rather ignore these negative emotions and let the institutions of government legally punish criminals. Instead, Geeraerdt cannot ignore the fire within created by Floris’ violation of his wife. He politically violates Floris by murdering him rather than letting the law determine Floris’ fate.

In these examples, fire is both the emotional source of the ravishment and destruction and the means through which all is destroyed. It is the manifestation of the opposite of obedience to God’s will and the failure to replicate his love on earth. Fire is also a force that is quickly expended. Vondel often refers to the smoke made by the fire, which again points to the transience of the benefit of disobedience to God as opposed to its eternal consequences. Haamstee’s fiery destruction of Amsterdam suggests that his rule over it will not last, just as his lust also is quickly extinguished. Vondel’s use of fire also suitably evokes images of the consequences of this disobedience, namely hell fire.

Rape and Revulsion

In the two plays under consideration here, rape is more than a political crime that justifies rebellion against a tyrant. For Hooft, rape is an outrageous act that stimulates moral revulsion and immediate violent response, because rape is a crime enacted upon wives and mothers.⁵⁹ The destruction of family bonds, which the Dutch considered sacred, was seen as particularly heinous. Amid all the atrocities disparagingly depicted by

⁵⁸ “Indien een vrouw betaemt te segghen haer ghevoelen, Soo bid ick laet den brandt van onse smart bekoelen, Soo veel, dat onse leedt, en de besondren haet, Niet boven liefde van 't ghemeene best en gaet.” Hooft 89-90, lines 814-816.

⁵⁹ Schama, 88, 91-2.

the Black Legend of Spanish misconduct both in the New World and in the Europe, these Dutch histories particularly lamented the Spanish mistreatment of Dutch housewives. In Hooft's *History of the Netherlands*, Spaniards murder a young woman's husband on their wedding day as he falls down dead at her feet; then her mother expires in her arms and shortly thereafter they stab and kill her father as he tries to protect her; and finally, they rape and murder her as well. The raped woman is not only the central figure in this depiction of Spanish depravity (see below), but her gruesome experiences are the impetus of Hooft's historical narrative as well, in so far as the other characters are described by their relationship to her and the story follows her after the death of her family.⁶⁰ While the Dutch spurred resistance to Spanish tyranny by focusing on the violation of a number of personal bonds the Dutch held dear, the violation of young and married women was seen as a particularly depraved act that authors, such as Hooft in this case, used to get their audience's attention.

⁶⁰ Schama, 85-6. Hooft, *Nederlandsche Historien* (Amsterdam 1703 ed.), 473-4.



Figure 2: Dutch Wife Attacked by the Spanish⁶¹

Just as in his history of the Netherlands, Hooft uses Machteld's rape both to symbolize the political violation of the nobles and to incite a rebellious response to the tyrannical power. For Hooft, Machteld's rape is the key motivation for the nobles' uprising against Floris. She delivers a moving speech against Floris describing her family's dishonor and her own sadness resulting from her rape both to commence the play and to introduce the allegorical figures of Discord, Violence, and Deception. Floris' rape of Machteld directly causes their ascension from Hell: "Here am I crack-ridden Discord/ Just climbed out of the vestibule of Hell, Due to the incantations of Hollandish Lords, Who called me up full of bitterness and fierce recklessness, Against the

⁶¹ Image in Hooft, *Nederlandsche Historien* (Amsterdam 1703 ed.), 473-4. Leiden University Library, Western Printed Books, Gesloten Magazijn 5 - 365 A 9-10.

Heavens.”⁶² Floris sows the seeds of Geeraerdts and his allies’ discontent against him by violating Geeraerdts’s wife. The rape enrages Herman van Woerden who asks Floris how he could possibly expect the nobles not to fight back when he sends “our sons to executioners and our daughters to brothels.” He then warns Floris, “We are not bastard offspring, but descendents of the courageous heroes and nobles who one cannot shame without expecting punishment.”⁶³ Instead of respecting the traditional rights and privileges of certain segments of society, Floris was a tyrant who incited them to rise up against him. Hooft vilified Floris, and through him the Spanish, for trying to wipe out Dutch nation through their destruction of households and their primary representatives, housewives. His anti-Spanish propaganda is primarily affected through his characters’ and audiences’ outrage at Machteld’s rape and all the other violated and murdered Dutch housewives she symbolizes.

While Hooft stresses that rape is particularly horrendous because of its violation of family bonds, Vondel and many contemporary historians, employed images of vulnerable women to symbolize the nation. See for example, the image below of a Spaniard threatening “Hollands’ Maid” with his dagger that introduces Johan Gijsius’ history of the Spanish torment of the Netherlands.⁶⁴ It is specifically through the use of the images of female bodies to symbolize the nation that citizens develop political passion for their home and fatherland because the male citizen can better imagine an

⁶² “Hier, opghedondert uyt het voorburch vander Helle, Ben ick scheursiecke Twist: dien ghy met moeden felle, Hollandsche Vorsten, hebt beswooren, om den kop, Teghen den Hemel vol van spijt, te steecken op.” Hooft, 47-8.

⁶³ “Dat wy in dienstbaerheydt verbluffet soudē teelen/ Voor beulen onse soonen, ons dochters voor bordeelen? W'en zyn van de' Helden vroom en braeve stammen, die 't/ Noyt vaylich was te smaēn, die bastaertspruyten niet.” Hooft, 66.

⁶⁴ Joannes Gijsius, *Oorsprong en Voortgang der Neder-Landscher Beroerten ende Ellendicheden: Waerin vertoont worden/ de voornaemste Tyrannijen, Moorderijen, ende andere onmenschelijcke Wreetheden, die onder het ghebiedt van Philips de II Coninck van Spaengien, door zijne Stad-houders in 'twerck ghestelt zijn/ gheduyrende dese Nederlantsche Troublen ende Oorlogen...* 1616.

intimate relationship with an attractive woman than with an impersonal state.⁶⁵ By making the Dutch nation a maiden, this artist woman.



Figure 3: *Allegory of Dutch Nation Attacked by Spaniard*⁶⁶

Vondel also utilizes this type of imagery to heighten emotional attachment to the Dutch nation by using his rape victims, Machteld and Claris, as symbols for the rape of Amsterdam. He first depicts Machteld as she appears in a dream of Gijsbrecht's wife:

Niece Machteld, or so I thought, stood before my bed, Unhappy, and much like when she was still alive; She would often confide to me her heart's distress, When she'd break down in tears, and utterly upset, Would pathetically wring her hands, pull her hair, Scratch open her tender breast, rip her gown apart, And sprinkle herself with dust – I couldn't stand it,

⁶⁵ Joan B. Landes, *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), see introduction and chapter 2, especially p. 2, 22, and 79.

⁶⁶ Title-page of Joannes Gijsius, *Oorsprong en Voortgang der Neder-Landscher Beroerten...* 1616. Leiden University Library, Western Printed Books 5 - 704 F 27.

Couldn't hear her dreadful wailing, or her curses/ To the count [Floris]
addressed: "You vicious, violent rascal, You the rapist of a chaste and
high-born woman..."

Machteld died long before this moment and yet she returns to earth as a specter in the form of a woman just raped to focus the audience on her violation. Vondel then connects her violation to that of Amsterdam by having her announce its destruction:

How ignorant! So all your enemies have fled? And you're quietly asleep?
And you fear no ruse? Whereas for my own sake, you're at the edge of
doom/ And close to your defeat. Up! Up! It's not the time/ For sleeping
now; arise and flee this house and try/ To reach another coast. Your foes
control the walls, The city is on fire, and her end has come. Uncle
Gijsbrecht tried in vain to protect his town. No fighting or resisting will be
useful now.⁶⁷

Like Machteld, the city is in distress; She appears with her flesh and gown ripped open at the moment when Haamstee's troops rip Amsterdam apart. Machteld's own rape and the violation of the city are equally disturbing for this apparition. Vondel's play focuses both on Machteld and Claris' raped bodies as symbols of the most powerful Dutch city to encourage the citizens of the Republic to love the Dutch nation and despise its Spanish attackers.

Vondel not only uses Machteld and Claris' to symbolize the violation of the Dutch nation, he also describes the attack on the city as a rape of her own feminine body as well. Haamstee does not just rape Claris, but also:

...with swords and spears/ Tried to shave the head from its tower-crown/
The beautiful and widely praised city, And through the violence of gangs/
To rip the girdles of defense from off her hip, And plunder her jewels and
her treasure; And violate the noble and trustworthy, Just as the violator of
Velzen's wife...⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Vondel, trans. Aercke, 67, lines 760-9, 793-801.

⁶⁸ Vondel, trans. Aercke, 73.

Vondel collapses the symbol of violation into the destruction of the state here.

Amsterdam is not like a woman who is raped; rather the city becomes a woman whose “girdles of defense” are ripped “off her hip” “through the violence of gangs” and her defenses pierced. Vondel’s play features the rape of Machteld, Claris, and the city of Amsterdam, all three of which heighten emotional revulsion against the illegitimate tyrants who violate the Dutch nation.

Vondel also provides a counterpoint to this graphic portrayal of the rape of Amsterdam. He continues to depict Amsterdam as a female figure in the archangel Raphael’s prediction of Amsterdam’s golden age: “Harassed by such strife, never tired of the wars, Your city rises and lifts her crown to heaven, And through ice and fire will find another world, And four winds will spread her roaring cannons’ thunder.”⁶⁹ Amsterdam, imagined as a woman crowned and victorious, armed with cannon, withstands the war against Spain and discovers the New World. Vondel employs the female body to symbolize both the violated and the victorious body politic.

Embodying Religious Violation

In addition to his use of female bodies to represent the Dutch nation, Vondel also uses the symbolism of rape to critique the Spaniard’s destruction of churches and religious men and women. It is in the gory scene in which Haamstee murders the nuns, bishop, and Claris after raping the latter that Vondel weaves Haamstee’s villainy in one act. He rapes Claris, attacks the ruling family of Amstel, and destroys Christian institutions simultaneously. Claris’ physical violation is Gijsbrecht’s political violation and the violation of God’s faithful. Gijsbrecht states as much: “The enemy is here, The

⁶⁹ Vondel, trans. Aercke, 106-7, lines 1829-1842, 1846-1850.

godless bastard-spawn, who's deaf to all pity, And who dishonored our niece Claris van Velzen/ Before the altar and its cross, before her Spouse..."⁷⁰ Haamstee dishonored Claris, whom Gijsbrecht refers to as "our niece," and does so in a sacred space. More than only personally injured by rape, Claris' despoiled purity marks the defilement of both Church and state.

Historians and literary critics have often wondered whether Vondel's *Gijsbrecht* portended the author's later conversion to Catholicism because of his favorable treatment of the nuns and priests. Scholars have argued the opposite as well, that Vondel meant to criticize Catholicism through the priest Gozewijn's possible disobedience to God.⁷¹ However, when one reads the *Gijsbrecht* in close conjunction with contemporary histories, it becomes apparent that the important symbolic roles given to Claris and her uncle Gozewijn serve a different purpose. Vondel is not arguing for or against Catholicism, but rather echoing the argument made repetitively by the contemporary historians against the Spanish for not sparing their co-religionists. Jan Everhardt Cloppenburg expresses this idea in his *Mirror of Spanish Tyranny in the Netherlands under Philip King of Spain*. He writes that the Spanish "plundered cloisters" and "raped Virgins and Nuns." He adds that: "They spared no Women/ regardless of their status/ yes Spiritual Nuns and Beguines suffered an unfair proportion of the dear Spaniards/ for whom they still pray daily."⁷² The consensus among the seventeenth-century literary

⁷⁰ Vondel, trans. Aercke, 105, lines 1758-1761.

⁷¹ Smidts-Veldt also argues that Gozewijn, whose parallel in in Virgil's second book of *Aeneas* is Anchises, Aeneas' father, breaks the parallel by not believing the heavenly sign that convinced Anchises to be carried out of danger by Aeneas. She suggests that the fact that Gozewijn decides to stay behind shows that Vondel is much more critical of Catholicism than he is often considered to have been. Mieke B. Smits-Veldt, "Vondels Gysbrecht van Aemstel onder de loep," *Spektator*, 17-5, 393.

⁷² Jan Everhardt Cloppenburg, *Tweede Deel van de Spieghel der Spaensche Tyrannye Geschied in Nederlant. Waer in te sien is de onmenschelijcke en wreede handelingen der Spangiaerden, die sy in dese*

elite, with which Vondel concurs, is that the Spanish were no longer Catholic as evidenced by their violation, abuse, and murder of Catholic women. They were more like demons, or “devils in human bodies.”⁷³ His presentation of medieval Catholics raped and murdered by a foreign power is principally a polemical statement against the Spanish, rather than support of Catholicism.

The evil force of fire does not only cause the political destruction of Amsterdam and the physical violation of Machteld, but also religious violation of nuns, church buildings, altars, and relics:

Where does one not see the glow of blazing fires? What grave, what altar, what church has this robber's hand/ Neglected? What sanctuary, church, convent, nuns/ Have not been hurt and ravished by his filthy claws? Not to mention how atrociously this soldier/ First profanes and then tortures the religious state.⁷⁴

Just as before, fire connects the different types of destruction. Vondel uses the raped body of the nun to symbolize the desecration of the church in the same way he uses rape to symbolize the violation of the political body. Women become objects whose violation is more important for its political and religious implications. Again using the motif of fire to connect lust and destruction, Haamstee “sets fire to the church” with “a sacred torch in hand.”⁷⁵ He wrecks tombs and “the sacred altar, and right away he has the convent set on fire.”⁷⁶ To complete this image of the anti-Christian tyrant, destroyer of female, political, and religious purity, Vondel adds threats of heretical rights by Haamstee's forces. They wanted to celebrate a profane Eucharist using Gijsbrecht's body:

ende andere omleggende plaetsen bedreven hebben (Amsterdam: Evert Kloppenburg op 't Water tegen over de Koren Beurs inde Vergulden Bijbel, 1638), 110-111.

⁷³ “Duyvels in Menschelijke lichamen” Kloppenburg, 204.

⁷⁴ Vondel, trans. Aercke, 98.

⁷⁵ Vondel, trans. Aercke, 83, lines 1228-9.

⁷⁶ Vondel, trans. Aercke, 93, lines 1504-1505.

You cannot imagine how they spilt their gall and raged... Vilified you all year long, as with greedy teeth they'd tear you limb from limb! ...One would gild your head to use it as a drinking-cup, And have it set in gold. Amazing how they shrieked, And passed around your blood for wine, your flesh for food, And quarreled for the bones, competed for your skin.⁷⁷

The tyrant Haamstee's troops threaten to sacrilege Gijsbrecht's body in a sort of heretical celebration. However, talk of sacrificing Gijsbrecht is just talk; the more fitting symbol of the violated church according to Vondel is bodily violation and destruction of Christian nuns.

A New Dutch Model

Neither Vondel nor Hooft use rape to focus simply on a woman's personal pain and feelings of violation. They use Machteld and Claris' descriptions of pain and emotional distress to discuss their rapes as a property crime against a raped woman's family and as the violation of a community's political rights. Rape is the distinguishing feature of a tyrant who is rapacious in other ways as well. A tyrant hurts his subjects and incites discord. He is motivated by an evil impulse that causes him to violate women, subject peoples, and engage in heretical acts. Hooft and Vondel use the recurring theme of female sexual violation to provoke their audience to loath the Spanish mistreatment of Dutch housewives, the Dutch nation, and even their Dutch Catholic co-religionists while emotionally identifying themselves as the protective husbands of women and the Dutch nation figured as female.

Through their creation of a dichotomy between a tyrant and a just ruler, they also elaborate the ideal characteristics of the Dutch people. Hooft explains this connection between the values of the ruler and the actions of his people:

⁷⁷ Vondel, trans. Aercke, 43, lines 184-5, 189-93.

These laws are obligatory to the Prince, Laws that the Heavens gave to us and that Nature set/ Bind him as well... These he must follow: even just to be an example of them. Because/ His subjects do not closely abide by the law, But each seeks to follow the example of the Sovereign: Men may respect that which he orders: But live honorably and well only by that which he lives.⁷⁸

Thus rulers can positively affect their subjects' behavior. As Vondel and Hooft create their portrait of a tyrant who does not work for the good of the people, does not protect them or spare them from the discord which humans are naturally drawn, and does not obey the laws of God or man, they create the opposite picture of a Dutch Republican leader and an image of morality for the Dutch people as well.

While tyrants are first and foremost rapists, Dutch rulers, patriarchs and guardians are faithful protectors and fathers who look after their subjects, families, orphans, the old, and the very young. Instead of murdering and harming people, starting wars and other discord, Vondel and Hooft encourage the Dutch to ignore their personal desires for vengeance or gain and instead act in a way that leads to greater harmony, the common good, and the advancement of the Fatherland. Rather than engaging in sacrilege and immorality as a tyrant would, Vondel and Hooft locate Dutch pride in religious and civic morality for both the leaders and the citizens of the Netherlands. They create characteristics for the new Dutch Republic, making Machteld's and Claris' rapes function as foundation myths similar to Lucretia's story for the Roman Republic. The next chapter will continue to explore the usage of rape discourse in the construction of the Dutch Republic by turning towards the works of Calvinist moralist Jacob Cats, who uses stories

⁷⁸ "Dees wet verknoopt den Prins, oock binden hem de wetten/ Die ons den Hemel gaf; en de Natuyre setten... Dees moet hy volghen: al waert maer ten spiegel. Want Den ondersaet is op de wet ghewendt te luyeren, Maer yder soeckt den Vorst, zijn wandel na de kuyeren: Gheoorloft achtmen 't gheen dat hy ghebooden heeft: Maer eerlijck eerst en schoon, het gheen dat hy beleeft." Hooft, 70-1, lines 505-512.

of rape to consolidate the power of wealthy Dutch patriarchs at the expense of other segments of society.

Chapter 3: Protestant Moralism Literature: Exonerated Rapists and the Patriarchal State

Jacob Cats was a lawyer and regent whose Calvinist moralist books were the most popular of all texts in the Netherlands. Huizinga declares that during the two centuries after they were published, Cats' works could be found in every Dutch house that had a Bible.¹ His most famous work, *The Touchstone of the Wedding Band*, focuses on biblical, classical, and contemporary stories of marriage framed by a dialogue between a wise, older man, Sophronicus, and a young man looking for advice on how to get married. As the title suggests, these characters test the metal of diverse wedding bands in so far as they compare each story of marriage they tell to an ideal marriage. Because for Cats rape is the antithesis of Christian marriage, his history of marriage includes many stories of rape and abduction to stress humanity's penchant for immorality.

Cats himself is a very different sort of character than the playwrights Hooft and Vondel. While Hooft's and Vondel's lives centered on Amsterdam, Cats spent much of his life in important cities of the Dutch periphery. Born in Brabant, he studied in Leiden and Orleans, and visited Paris and England before becoming a lawyer in The Hague. He served as pensionary, or leading functionary and representative, of Middleburg and Dordrecht before he was appointed at age fifty-nine to the highest bureaucratic position of the Netherlands, grand pensionary.² He was not part of Hooft and Vondel's elite literary circle, but rather tried to create an opposing literary tradition through his

¹ J.H. Huizinga, "Dutch Civilisation in the Seventeenth Century" in Pieter Geyl and F.W. N. Hugenoltz, Trans. Arnold J. Pomerans, *Dutch Civilisation in the Seventeenth Century and Other Essays*. New York: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. And Harper & Row, 1968), 65.

² W.J.A. Jonckbloet, 'II. Jakob Cats' in *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche letterkunde. Deel 4: De zeventiende eeuw* (1890).

collaboration project with many poets and artists of Zeeland.³ This second strain of Dutch literature was a reaction against what Cats saw as the secular and immoral works of the Amsterdam circle. Cats' collaboration project as well as his other works focused on encouraging proper Calvinist morality. His goal in writing *The Touchstone of The Wedding Band* was, in his words, to provide "our fellow countrymen with something amusing and good to read, and thereby make them more suited to domestic and civic life."⁴ Cats uses his history of marriage and rape to teach the Dutch how to be ideal, married citizens in accordance with his belief that the stability of the state depends on its people's marriages and households.

However, Cats' advice on ideal relationships is complex and merits deep analysis. A story from the *Touchstone*, descriptively called "Two Raped and Both Marry" is a good example of the ambiguities embedded in Cats' point of view. The text clearly states that the character, Menander, violently rapes not just one, but two women. He overpowers Tryphose who tries to fight him off "with all her limbs"⁵ and steals Jokaste away "with a terrible grip" and rapes her.⁶ And yet when the trio appear in court, it is the rapist for whom Cats elicits his reader's pity:

Menander is promptly brought in, Where the curious folk awaited him with great longing. His bearing is sorrowful, his eyes cast downward, It appears that he has insufficient power to carry his own body/ His hands are shackled, his head is bare, And he is told that he must kneel. There he sighs in the sand with astonishingly pale cheeks, His mouth is speechless, as if seized by death, His heart beats within, his entire body shudders, It seems that his soul already threatens to leave his body. His face is taut, his

³ This collaboration resulted in a publication entitled *Zeeuuse Nachtegael* (Middelburg, Ian Pietersz vande Venne, 1623). See W.J.A. Jonckbloet, 'De Nederlandsche letterkunde in de zeventiende eeuw. Tweede boek.', 'I. Buiten Amsterdam' in: *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche letterkunde. Deel 4: De zeventiende eeuw* (1890).

⁴ Jacob Cats, *Proefsteen van den Trou-Ringh* (Schiedam: Roelants, 1858), 30-31.

⁵ Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrouwt ed. Koppenol, 44, lines 57-60.

⁶ Cats, ed. Koppenol, 44, lines 43-6.

hair raised, There is a deep fright to be read in his manner. One sees a strange unrest amid his saddened breast, Such that his tongue sticks in his mouth, defeated by thirst. His spirit departs in fear, his heart tightens, And causes a full death from such sorrowful expectations.⁷

Menander is the absolute picture of humility and contrition. He is so sad, humble, weakened, vulnerable, speechless, and fearful that he is practically dead. Cats makes him a pathetic and pitiful character as evidenced not only by his description, but also by the illustration of this scene.



Figure 4: Court Scene from “Two Raped and Both Marry”⁸

⁷ “Soo wort van stonden aen Menander ingebracht, Daer hem het nieuwgier volck met groot verlangen wacht. Syn wesen is bedroeft, syn oogen neergeslagen, Het schijnt dat hy het lijf onmachtigh is te dragen Syn handen syn geboeyt, syn hooft is sonder hoet, En hem wort aengeseyt, hoe dat hy knielen moet. Daer zijght hy in het zant met wonder bleecke wangen, Syn mont is sonder spraeck, als van de doot bevangen, Syn innigh herte klopt, syn gansche lichaem drielt, Het schijnt dat hem de ziel alree verlaten wilt. Syn aensicht staet gestreckt, syn hairen opgeresen, Daer is een diepe schrick in syn gebaer te lesen. Men siet een vreemt gewoel ontrent syn droeve borst, Soo dat syn tonge kleeft, verwonnen van den dorst. Syn geest verdwijnt in angst, syn herte gaet versmachten, En schept een volle doot uyt soo een droef verwachten.” Cats, ed. Koppenol, 45, lines 71-86.

⁸ Image from Jacob Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, vol. II, 83.

In this image, the two raped women, Jokaste and Tryphose, stand tall and seem to suffer no visible harm. Jokaste, on the left of the kneeling Menander, is joyous at the opportunity to marry him and Tryphose is unrighteously angry, overstepping her bounds as a woman by swinging a sword. It is Menander, the double rapist, who is compromised, kneeling, seeking Jokaste to accept him as her husband.

Cats centered this story upon a fictitious law that allows a raped woman to decide the fate of her rapist. He uses this to set up the legal conundrum that ensues when one woman wants to marry her rapist and the other wants him to be executed. Cats models the speeches of the two female characters on Seneca's *Controversia* and the views of the judge follow the *Gesta Romanorum* closely, but importantly it is the defense of the rapist that is unique to Cats' story. The defense of the rapist is new and the way Cats chooses to describe his characters is very telling. The rapist is most often called by his name or young man. Only once is he termed a rapist. Both women are referred to by their characteristics. Jokaste, who wants to marry her rapist is called "cheerful, sweet, and soft" and "the one who is apt to forgive," both of which Sneller notes are "positive descriptions for a woman." On the other hand, Tryphose, who wants Menander executed is described more negatively as "a strict and dignified lady," "the vengeful girl," and "the proud lady." Cats' greatest contribution to this story is Menander's plea, through which he transforms himself from that of a guilty rapist to an impatient young man.⁹ Cats' unequal attention toward the characters is also telling. In his story of Menander, Tryphose, and Jokaste, Cats takes sixteen lines to describe the rapist's pain and sadness

⁹ Both S.F. Witstein and Agnes Sneller notice Cats' reformulation of Seneca's work. Sneller further investigates Cats' attempts to exonerate Menander. S.F. Witstein, "Menanders pleidooi," *De nieuwe taal* 60 (1967), p. 313-327. A. Agnes Sneller, *Met Man en Macht: analyse en interpretatie van teksten van en over vrouwen in de vroegmoderne tijd* (Kampen: Kok Agora, 1996) 171-4.

and only one line (out of a total of sixteen lines describing both women) to mention that one of the women suffers emotionally.¹⁰ But why would a strict Calvinist like Cats want his reader to pity a rapist when elsewhere he makes it very clear that rape is morally reprehensible? Cats' conflicted presentation of a pitiable rapist, one happy raped woman, and an unjustly angry one raises many questions as to how he conceives of the relationship between rape and marriage.

It is through Cats' stories of rape and subsequent marriage that he encourages male patriarchal violence over single women who were eligible for marriage. Rape provides no impediment against a loving marriage, but it is in fact integral to Cats' larger agenda to solidify Dutch patriarchy by imbuing a certain segment of society with sexual control over all other segments of society. Cats considers the hierarchically-structured, patriarchal society in the story ideal.¹¹ Getting away with raping women is one aspect of patriarchs' control over bodies and sex, but also important is their control over the lower classes and younger citizens and the former's capacity to deny sexual access to the latter. In addition to examining precisely how Cats justifies allowing some rapists in his stories to benefit from rape, this chapter also explores his conceptions of desire and proper male and female roles in order to explain his motivation for making Menander a pitiable man and a worthy husband.

Class Concerns

According to Cats, not all men should be allowed to get away with rape. Class differences play an important role in distinguishing which men qualify. Cats suggests that

¹⁰ Cats, ed. Koppenol, 26, line 92.

¹¹ Sneller notices this in Cats' story entitled "The Royal Shepardess Aspasia," 220-222.

certain classes of people, particularly the destitute and criminal be denied access to sex altogether, whether coerced sex or marriage. This seems on the one hand to reflect the new, rather negative seventeenth-century attitude shift toward the poor. While poverty had provided an important outlet for charity, and thus, virtue in the Middle Ages, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, both church and the state began to regard the poor as dangerous and apt to deceive. On the other hand, increased patriarchal control over bodies seems to be part of a larger trend of seventeenth-century states, whether constitutionalist or absolutist, to penetrate the lives of their subjects more fully.

Dutch culture was inclusive of everyone from poor fishermen to the wealthiest merchants, but it also made some important exclusions. Those who lived outside of the community, such as vagabonds, criminals, and beggars did not enjoy inclusion or the protection offered by the community. Cats makes it clear that it is best to punish this type of outsider for rape because their lawlessness disrupts the goals of the state. For example, Sophronicus answers that there are distinctions that one needs to make in answering the question whether a violated woman should marry her rapist:

Because it can happen, that a woman can be raped against her will by a wretch, a highwayman, or other scum of criminals. Shall someone in this case advise her, only because she was raped, to take such a reckless person for her husband? In my opinion, no. But on the other hand if violence is done to her virtue by a young man who previously was thought to be honest, and is approximately the same age, and who did such out of impatience of love, or through one or another sudden occurrence, it may happen in this case that the woman be advised to preferably live in marriage with the aforementioned instead of living her entire life in a sorrowful state. Otherwise, in mind of the common good, and to prevent such vileness, I judge it better to grant no marriage, but punishment to the abductor.¹²

¹² “Want het kan gebeuren, dat eenig vrouw-mensch wert tegen haren danck onteert van een onverlaet, van een struyck-rover, ofte eenig ander schuym van boeven; soude haer in dien gevalle wel iemand willen raden, alleen om datse verkracht is, soodanigen roeckeloosen mensche tot haeren man te nemen? Voor my, ick meyne neen. Maer indien aen de andere zijde haer in hare eerbaerheyt geweldt ware gedaen, door een

Cats says that a woman should marry a “young man who was previously thought to be honest” and “the same age” “who did such out of impatience of love.” What Cats is suggesting is that the raped woman should marry a rapist if he is socially and financially eligible to woo her. Cats mentions that he must be close to her age, but also very important in Cats’ advice on who should marry, he must be of a similar financial standing. What we should read in this citation is that class plays a role in how a woman should react to her rapist. She should not marry a rapist whom Cats describes as a “wretch, a highwayman or other scum of criminals” and as “such a reckless person.” And one can guess that any lower class male could be fit into the description of a wretch after committing or being accused of rape, but any man of higher standing could be given a second chance by considering his prior reputation. Cats is adamant that for the public good any man not worthy of the woman he rapes should be punished.

The same criteria exist for marriage, according to Cats. The best attributes for marriage are to “be young, healthy, available, beautiful, fertile, noble, rich, reasonable, and, the best of all, good.”¹³ Cats has a very exclusive idea of the best marriages since he prefers the beautiful, noble, and rich to marry. Some circumstances strongly inhibit one’s ability to marry according to Cats:

It is a bad way to begin a good marriage, if an inexperienced young man...comes to entice a sweet, young maiden from her parents’ house, without knowing how he can satisfy her in their new situation and to provide for her. On the contrary, the folly of such necessarily makes such

jongeling te voren voor eerlick gehouden, en haer ofte ontrent haers gelijck, en die sulcks, door ongedult van liefde, ofte anders door den eenen ofte den anderen schielicken inval, mochte bestaen hebben in dien gevalle soude soodanigen vrouw-mensch kunnen werden geraden, sich liever in howelick met den selven te versellen, als haer geheele vordere leven in dien droevigen staet over te brengen. Anders, ten goede van het gemeene beste, en tot weeringe van soodanige vuyligheden, oordeel ick beter te wesen, dat geen houwelick, maer straffe, den schaker oyt toe en kome.” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 87-88.

¹³ “...sijnde jong, gesont, houbaer, schoon, vruchtbaer, edel, rijck, verstandigh, en , dat het beste van allen is, goet...” Cats, *Proefsteen van den Trou-Ringh*, 68.

a strong impression in her tender interior that it especially cannot be a proper or good marriage.¹⁴

If the man does not have a way to financially provide for his future wife, then he should emphatically not marry her because right from the start it is not a “proper or good marriage.” Financial reasons alone make one an unworthy candidate for marriage. Cats provides more examples of who is not worthy:

This gold [wedding band], although it is beautiful and desirable to behold,
Does not fit all men, and does not fit all women... Do not marry, oh
wretched people; It is detrimental for the community, And if it is so, keep
your defect to yourself.¹⁵

In order to keep from perpetuating their failings, some men and women should never marry. Cats describes these people as *onguer*, which in addition to wretched can mean ill, indecent, surly, unattractive, and unkind. These definitions form a partial list of opposites for the characteristics of the best marriages. Cats has a very specific idea of what attributes marrying partners should and should not have. The ideal male partner for marriage corresponds with who can get away with rape. Those who according to Cats should not marry are also the type that he does not think should get away with rape.

Cats believes that any sexual relations between members of different classes are an abomination. He tells the recent story of a young noble maiden from Holland who rejected many offers of marriage made to her by noblemen to demonstrate that choosing a man of lower class is shameful and wrong.

¹⁴ “’t Is een quaet begin van een goet howelick, dat een onervaren jongelingh... een soete jonge deerne uyt haer ouders huys sal komen locken, sonder te weten waer mede aan haer in dien nieuwen state redelick vernoegeen, en goet onthael sal kunnen geven. Gewisselick, de fauten van sulcks moeten noodzaecklick in die teere gemoederen een grooten indruk geven, en kan voor al geen bequaem en goet houwelick maken.” Cats, *Proefsteen van den Trou-Ringh*, 76-77. Also in *Alle Wercken*, v. II, 10-15.

¹⁵ “Dit gout [de trouwingh]; al is ‘et schoon en lustig aan te schouwen, En past niet alle mans, en past niet alle vrouwen... O trout niet, onguer volk; ’t is schade voor ’t gemeen, En soo het wesen mag, houd uw gebreck alleen.” Cats, ‘De Wysheydt Spreeckt, Tot uytlegginge van de Titel-plaet van het jegen woordige derde deel’ in *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 115.

...While she was publicly rejecting the best young noblemen of the land, she allowed herself secretly and stealthily to be dishonestly used by a servant of the house, a tailor, who also thereafter carried his fame to her shame and his own demise.¹⁶

Cats assumes that the noble woman naturally should have chosen to marry one of the “best noblemen of the land.” Any sort of sexual relations between members of different classes, regardless of consent, is shameful and destroys the reputation of both parties.

Cats makes this point again through the biblical story of Joseph and Potiphar’s wife.¹⁷

Joseph scolds Potiphar’s wife:

You, of such a great house, of royal blood, Of body so beautiful, of such high conscience, A housewife of a lord, more free than a count/ To be the lover of a low slave! A mistress of your servant! What would you be beginning?¹⁸

Cats thinks that a noble woman such as Potiphar’s wife should not desire a man of lower class because it would be unnatural and wrong.

One can see the importance of the rapist’s high status in his defense in “Two Raped and Both Married.” Menander puts forth his own nobility to lessen the gravity of his crime.

I was born a nobleman in this land, And I have not lost my parents’ luster. If only I had reined in my capricious ignorance, I would now have married the best of the land...I am a knight, and ... my bad deed/ Did not touch a virgin of higher status. We were raised in the same region, Of similar descent, and of equal wealth.¹⁹

¹⁶ “...terwijl sy openbaerlick jonge Edel-lieden van de beste van ’t lant een eerlick houwelick ontseyde, liet sy haer heymelicken en ter smuycke oneerlick gebruycken by een knecht van den huyse, een kleeer-maecker wesende, die oock des namaels sijn roem droeg tot haerder schande en sijn eygen verderf.” Cats, ‘Weygerige Vrysters, en Tover-Liefde’ in *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 110.

¹⁷ Genesis 39. See the New International Version at <http://www.biblegateway.com/>.

¹⁸ “Gy, van soo grooten huys, van vorstelijcken bloede, Van lyf soo wonder schoon, soo hooge van gemoede, By huys-vrou van een heer, vry meerder als een graef/ Te worden tot een boel van een geringen slaef! Een bysit van u knecht! wat souje gaen beginnen?” Cats, ‘Self-Strydt, Dat is Krachtige Beweginge van Vleesch en Geest’ in *Alle de Wercken*, v. I, 183.

¹⁹ “Ick ben hier in het lant een edelman geboren, En van mijn ouders glans en heb ick niet verloren. Had ick maer ingetoomt mijn grilligh onverstant, Ick hadde nu getrouwt de beste van het landt... ick een ridder ben, en ...dat mijn stoute daet/ Niet aen en heeft geroert een maeght van hooger staet. Wy sijn in een gewest te

Menander claims that he is noble and within the same financial status as the women he raped. This rapist was not a low-class “wretch,” but a high-class nobleman eligible of wooing the women he violated. Considering his positive treatment of Menander and the conclusion of this case in favor of Menander and Jokaste, Cats supports the marriage of a rapist like Menander to his victim of similar standing.

In this story, Jokaste’s social standing is also important in determining the outcome of the case. In her argument that Menander should be executed, Tryphose accuses Jokaste of being an unchaste, lower noblewoman: “What more does a man who wants to violate maidens/ And foully hunt the young animals have to do, Other than simply violate any woman or virgin, And then send a slut from the lower nobility?”²⁰ Tryphose claims that in fact Jokaste was not raped, but was sent to save Menander. She also suggests that because Jokaste is a member of lower nobility, she would be willing to marry a rapist of higher standing. Thus for Jokaste, it is important to contest these claims. She says: “It is not the truth, that only you were raped, And that I am a slut brought into this case. I am an only child. Let judgment safely pass sentence, In nobility, honor, or wealth I am not inferior to any.”²¹ Jokaste declares that she too is of equal status and wealth. This argument concerning Jokaste’s social standing suggests that even the rape victim has to be in a higher class to avoid suspicion. Marriage that results from rape should conform to Cats’ ideal that it occurs between people of similar financial status.

samen opgetogen, En van gelijcken stam, en even van vermogen.” Cats, ed. Koppenol, lines 116-120, 123-126.

²⁰ “Wat heeft hy meer te doen die vrijsters wil schoffieren, En plegen vuyl bejagh ontrent de jonge dieren, Als dat hy (waer hy kan) maer vrou en maeghden schent, En dan eens om een sloir van minder adel sent?” Cats, ed. Koppenol, lines 301-304, 51.

²¹ “’T is dan de waerheyt niet, dat ghy maer zijt verkracht, En dat ick als een sloir word in het spel gebracht. Ick ben een eenigh kint. Laet vry het oordeel strijcken; In adel, eer, of goet [rijkdom] en wil ick niemant wijcken.” Cats, ed. Koppenol, 56, lines 523-526.

While Cats believes that “wretched” people should not marry or get away with rape and that there should be no sex between members of different social standings, he allows wealthy and powerful men a great deal of leeway. Cats believes that single, wealthy men should be allowed to marry the women they rape and suffer no ill consequences, in part because of their ability to persuade women after the rape through expensive gifts. He demonstrates this in his story of the Benjamite abduction of the women of Shiloh:

That is how it goes with the abducted maidens, They are... First sad and unwilling, but afterwards happy. In order to achieve this, every man does whatever he can think of, He speaks all the time of buying, giving, and giving away. All sorts of womanly possessions, clothing, jewelry, All that youth prizes and is pleasing. Many go up on the land and speak with the women, Of beautiful houses or about building another canal... Another leads his sweetie, and shows her beautiful, wide roads/ And large tracts of land, given to him by fate. He points out all that the eye can see, And says: Of all this I am King and you are Queen... Because the men comported themselves thus, after a few days, People found that many women became pregnant... Through which the young women were bonded to the man, He added himself to her bed; he thanked her for her fruitfulness.²²

To change the women from unwilling to happy, the men offer material possessions, such as clothing, jewelry, homes, canals, and tracts of land, which means that these Benjamites were particularly wealthy. Due to the Benjamites’ ability to bestow such gifts, the abducted women were found to be pregnant and willing wives within days. The

²² “Dus even gaen te werck de weg-gevoerde vrijsters, Sy doen in dit geval gelijck gevange lijsters. Sy varen met de mans, sy rijden door het lant, Eerst droef en ongesint, maer vrolick naderhant. Hier toe doet yder man al wat hy kan bedencken, Hy spreekt schier alle tijt van kopen, geven schencken. Van alle vrouwen-tuyg, van kleeren, van cieraet, En wat de jonckheyt prijst en wel te sinne staet. Veel gaet’er op het lant, en spreken met de vrouwen, Hoe eenig cierlick huys of ander slot te bouwen,... En ander leyt sijn lief, en toont haer schoone dreven, En groote streken lants, hem by het lot gegeven. Hy wijst al wat het oog van daer bereycken kan, En seyt: Hier ben ick Vorst en gy Vorstinne van... Maer onder dit beslag, en naer een weynig dagen, Soo vont men menig wijf die kint begon te dragen.... Waer door de jonge vrou wer aen den man verbonden, Hy voegt hem tot haer bed, hy danckt haer van de vrugt...” Cats, ed. Koppenol, 57-8, lines 559-568, 575-578, 587-588, 596-597. *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 36.

abductors' wealth makes them worthy husbands because they can provide for their wives, which persuades the abducted women to accept them as their husbands.

These husbands are worthy due to their wealth, but also because of their ability to impregnate the women and provide for their children as well. According to Cats in the above quote, the unborn child is a bond between the man and the woman. Cats suggests that in the dialogic frame as well. Sophronicus thinks that the birth of children absolves the abduction:

How now! You do not think that the abduction is being avenged too late, when violence has turned to love, and the abduction transformed to marriage? Yes, even more so when children are produced out of that same marriage? What good is it to avenge the stolen Virginity, if those who were then Maidens, have become wives, even mothers?²³

There is a set process that can begin with violence and turn into marriage and love that requires no punishment because it provides economically stable families and offspring. Cats sums up this development: "The women, in conclusion, have all that they want; And this more than anything can calm their anger. A wife, to whom a man offers continual favors, Thinks no longer of her Father's house, or of her Mother."²⁴ The women are no longer angry or homesick when they have a husband who can financially support them and their new family.

²³ "Hoe! Dunckt u niet dat het onschaken al te laet gewrooken wort, soo wanneer het geweld alreede in liefde, en het wegh-woeren in een howelick verandert is? Ja soo wanneer dat alreede uyt dat selvige houwelick kinderen zijn voortgekomen? Wat baet 'et doch de genomen Maeghdom te gaen vreden, als die gene, die onlanghs Maeghden waren, tot vrouwen ja moeders geworden zijn?" Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 37.

²⁴ De vrouwen, tot besluyt, die hebben dates willen; En dit kan boven al verstoorde sinnen stillen. Een wijf, aen wie de man gestage gunste biedt, Denckt aen haer Vaders huys, of om haer Moeder niet." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 36.

A wealthy husband can also restore the female honor lost in rape. Unlike Menander who has not lost his “luster” despite his “mischievous deed,”²⁵ female virtue or honor was based solely on chastity or virginity. In fact, it is their lost honor and not specifically the harm their bodies incurred that Jokaste and Tryphose regret again and again. Jokaste’s honor is restored by her marriage to Menander. He changes her from “the one who had been violated” into an “*echte vrou*,” meaning housewife and containing the connotations that through marriage he granted her an honorable position and legal status.²⁶ Tryphose, “who had previously been violated” is also “raised” by her marriage.²⁷ In his story of the biblical rape of Dinah, Cats also shows that she and her family would certainly have been better off if had she had she been able to marry her rapist, Shechem. Her father curses and punishes her brothers for having murdered her rapist because her father wanted Dinah to marry him.

How is it, saith Israel [Jacob], your sister is disgraced, And we, through your actions, as horrors in the land, We, but a small people, and in a strange place, Will be through your wicked behavior so hated as the pest. This is a very strange event?! My daughter is violated, And we will never find a man to honor her, Ah! Shechem has been murdered by your unwise deeds...²⁸

By killing Shechem, Dinah’s brothers did a greater disservice to her than Shechem according to this story. They took away the possibility that he would marry her and

²⁵ “Ick ben hier in het lant een edelman geboren, En van mijn ouders glans en heb ick niet verloren. Had ick maer ingetoomt mijn grilligh onverstant, Ick hadde nu getrouwt de beste van het lant. De Nymphen bey gelijck, die sigh alhier vertoonen, Die sullen evenselfs soo verre my verschoonen, Dat ick een ridder ben, en dat mijn stoute daet/ Niet aen en heeft geroert een maeght van hooger staet. Wy sijn in een gewest te samen opgetogen, En van gelijcken stam, en even van vermogen.” Cats, ed. Koppenol, 46, Lines 119, 124.

²⁶ “Soo siet men op de zael terstont een priester komen, Die heeft het jonge paer versegelt in de trou, En die geschonden was die wert een echte vrou.” Cats, ed. Koppenol, 58, lines 610-612.

²⁷ Cats, ed. Koppenol, 59, lines 638-642.

²⁸ “Hoe dus, seyt Israël, uw Suster is te schande, En wy, door uw bedrijf, als grouwels in den lande, Wy, maar een weynig volcx, en in een vreemt gewest/ Zijn, door uw stout bedrijf, soo hatig als de pest. Is ’t niet een seldsaam werk! Mijn dogter is geschonden, En die haar eeren sou en wort niet meer gevonden...” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v.II, 226.

restore her honor. As the picture of them below shows, Shechem was a worthy match in fabulous clothing and the son of a king, walking in stride with Dinah and touching her arm affectionately.



Figure 6: Dinah and Shechem²⁹

According to the story and the illustration, they would have made a good couple, Shechem's father would have accepted Dinah's people, allowed them to remain there, and Shechem would have provided for Dinah and her future family. Because Shechem's rape of Dinah could have been rectified through marriage and benefited their people because of his wealth and power, Cats makes her brothers the villains for preventing this outcome.

According to Cats, eligible men of a certain position should be willing to marry raped women and restore their honor. The worthiness of the latter as marriage partners after rape is predicated on their worthiness before they were raped. At her later marriage to a "knight who served on the court council," the high-class Tryphose was permitted to

²⁹ Image from the middle of Anna and Phyllis' discussion of Dina in Jacob Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 226.

be adorned “with greenery and virginal palm, and crowned with flowers” and the room was decorated with “fresh garlands of roses,”³⁰ symbolic plants usually reserved for virgin brides. Tryphose’s social standing and virtue seems to signal that she did not consent during her rape. Cats explains:

It is my opinion, following the wise, that the body is not understood to be violated if the spirit and the will remain entirely inviolate; and that virginity is much more a virtue of the spirit than it is of the body. A woman, although abducted in body by a villain, can be said to have remained honorable, even to have maintained her virginity, and therefore it cannot be dishonorable to take such a Woman to wife, especially if she may be gifted with exceptional virtue.³¹

Cats is very clear again that a virtuous woman of high social standing can be sexually violated by a man and still be considered virgin because “virginity is much more a virtue of the spirit” than of the body. Cats claims that the experience of the body may not be determinative of virginity if such a conclusion would prevent marriage between well-to-do citizens, even if raped by another wealthy man. He provides the reader with the biblical example of King David who married Saul’s daughter Michal, who was then forced by her father to take another husband. David later took her back as his wife “because what happened was forced and not done out of free will.”³² Forced sex does not stand in the way of the reunion or creation of powerful couples. Cats also claims that not only is the woman redeemable after rape, but her offspring is as well. Cats tells the reader that despite much belief to the contrary, “a raped woman can become pregnant by the

³⁰ Cats, ed. Koppenol, 58-9.

³¹ “En daer op meyne ick, na de-mael dat het lichaem by de wijse niet en wert verstaen geschonden te zijn, als de geest en de wille, daer uyt rijsende, ongeschent in haer geheel zijn gebleven; en dat de maegdom veel eer is een deugt des geefts, als des lichaems. Dat een Vrouwe, schoon ontschaeckt aen haer lichaem by een booswicht, even wel geseyt kan werden eerlick te zijn gebleven, ja haren maegdom te hebben behouden, en daerom niet oneerlick te zijn soodanigen Vrou-mensch tot een Vrouw aen te nemen, sonderlinge ingevalle de selve met eenige uytmuntende deugden is begaeft.” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 88.

³² “...wat ‘er geschiet was uyt bedwang, en niet uyt vryen wille was gedaen.” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II 88.

man who does violence to her. And beyond this, that this child shall be considered a legal child, due to the mother, and not a bastard...”³³ Cats was just as concerned with fitting raped women and their offspring back into the social hierarchy as he was with allowing wealthy men to take eligible wives by force.

Not only should women marry their rapists to restore their honor and social standing, but also according to Cats, and most importantly, they should do so to benefit their fellow citizens and the state. Cats’ wise character, Sophronicus, tells us “the well-being of the State is the highest Law, and that such great circumstances often carry some roughness and irrationality with them; but still improves the situation overall through the service of the common good.”³⁴ According to Cats, the good of the state is the primary goal. As long as society profits, breaking laws by abducting and raping does not seem to matter. This is apparently the case in the Benjamite rape of the maidens of Shiloh. Cats explains that the Benjamites were not to blame in abducting the women of Shiloh because they were acting in the best interest of their community. Through Sophronicus, Cats tells us: “the Benjamites...intended no abduction, and even less to incur violence, but they intended something that has such good reasons of innocence...”³⁵ They are not entirely to blame because they did not have bad intentions and they had permission from a higher power:

³³ “...dat is, of een vrou-mensch geweldiglicken lijdende de by-wooning van een man, of, seg ick, de selve daer uyt kan ontfangen? Het welck mede by vele met een volkomen Neen wert versegelt...De Geleerde houden, dat ja een verkracht vrou-mensch kan bevrucht werden door den genen die haer gewelt doet. En boven dien noch dit, dat soodanigen kint na Rechten voor een wettig kint wert gehouden, ten aensien van de moeder, en niet voor een bastaert....” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 88.

³⁴ “...de welstant van den Staet de hoogste Wet is, en dat dusdanige groote gevallen veeltijds soo wat rouwigheyt en onbillickheden in sich hebben; doch verbeteren het al met den dienst van ’t Gemeenebeste.” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 37.

³⁵ “Maer die dit stuck van de Benjamijten wat dieper insien, die meynen hier geen ontschakinge, en min gewelt geschiet te sijn, maer iet sulks dat soo eenige goede redenen van onschult voor sich is hebbende.” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 37.

...the Benjamites did not acquire the virgins of Shiloh to displease, shame, or act violently toward these women or their parents; but importantly, the Benjamites (being empowered by a higher hand) took the Daughters of Shiloh to themselves for their benefit and to fulfill their inability due to the oath which was taken in the time of the elders [of Israel], which forbid them from giving their daughters to the Benjamites as wives, although the Benjamites had wanted to do such: In addition to this they [the fathers of the women of Shiloh] were probably happy, that the situation happened according to their will, without themselves having to break their oath.³⁶

The Benjamites had good intentions, were “empowered by a higher hand,” and were actually fulfilling the will of the fathers of the abducted women who may have been happy to marry off their daughters to Benjamites had they not made an oath against doing so. The abduction helped the Benjamites who had no wives, the people of Shiloh by providing husbands to women who had none and where there was a shortage of men, and by helping to return the once renegade Benjamites back into the favor of the elders of Israel.

In his story “Two Raped and Both Married,” Cats also emphasizes that women should marry wealthy rapists in the interest of the community. Tryphose, who does not want to sacrifice herself for her fellow citizens, addresses Jokaste: “My judgment foolish virgin, causes you a great sorrow. Then how it comes about for you/ does not concern me.”³⁷ Tryphose neither cares what happens to Jokaste, nor about the other citizens of her country. She is only concerned about her fatherland and for other virgins in a very legalistic way:

³⁶ “...de Benjamijten de maeghden van Scilo sich niet hebbe toe-ge-eygent, om deselve, ofte haer ouders, onlust, geweld, of schande aen te doen; maer hier is te letten, dat deselve (van hooger hand des gemachtight sijnde) de Dochters van Scilo tot hen hebben genomen, Om te bate te komen, en als te vervullen de onmacht doen ter tijt in de ouders wesende, die om des gedaenen Eeds wille... haer dochters niet en vermochten de Benjamijten tot vrouwen uyt te geven, schoon deselve hadden gewilt sulcks te mogen doen: in voegen datse vermoedelick blijde sijn geweest, dat de saecken na haren wensch quam uyt te vallen, sonder sich van meyneedigheyt schuldigh te maken...” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 37.

³⁷ “Mijns oordeels, dwase maeght, u naeckt een groot verdriet. Dan hoe het u vergaet, dat stuck en raeckt my niet.” Cats, ed. Koppenol, 52, lines 331-332.

And although he is caught, and stands before the judge, He receives a reward for his cursed deed? That is, in my mind, setting the doors open/ So that all the lusty youth sharpen their desire, This will encourage theft throughout the entire city/ And all the fatherland, and set it all on fire. If you let this villain and bands of those just like him free/ They will violate all your daughters, all your young women... No rulers, be harsh, and let this villain suffer, So that all who witness it will shun his evil path.³⁸

Tryphose contends that to let a rapist go free will encourage more men to commit the crime. While she is concerned that her fatherland not be embroiled in chaos, she is primarily concerned with upholding the law. On the other hand, Jokaste, whose will the court honors, claims to be fighting for the benefit of the state. She tells the court:

I want to profit my father's house and this city, and to honor my fallen name through bonds of marriage... Ah! If the council will believe ...[Tryphose's] story, Our city will be robbed of many houses, You will make all three at once look untrustworthy, You will make it necessary to throw all three at once out of the city...³⁹

Jokaste argues that while her marriage to her rapist will promote the well being of the state by maintaining the wealth of families, Tryphose's plea that he should be killed will rob the families and state of wealth and stability. Jokaste continues: "I want the marriage bed, that richly exists; And you [Tryphose] the bloody sword that annihilates lands... I pray you here O wise council, will do/ What is best for the city, and most beneficial for the state."⁴⁰ Jokaste and Menander's marriage will benefit the city and the state. Cats

³⁸ "En schoon hy wort betrapt, en voor den rechter staet, Dan even loon ontfanght voor syn vervloecte daet? Dat is, na mijn begriip, de poorten open setten/ Om al de geyle jeught in haern lust te wetten, Dat is de gansche stadt en al het vaderlant/ Te stellen tot een roof, en al in vollen brant. Wel laet vry desen bouf, en syns gelijcke benden/ U dochters altemael, u jonge vrouwen schenden...Neen, vorsten weest gestreng, en laet den bouve lijden, Soo magh al wie het siet syn quade gangen mijden." Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrout," ed. Koppenol, 53, lines 371-378, 381-382.

³⁹ "Ick wil mijns vaders huys en dese stadt vermeerren, En mijn vervallen naem door echte banden eeren... Ach! Soo men in den Raet haer voorstel wil gelooven, Men sal dan onse stadt van menigh huys berooven, Men salder drie in een gaen stellen buyten raet, Men salder drie gelijk gaen stellen buyten staet." Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrout," ed. Koppenol, 55, lines 461-472.

⁴⁰ "Ick wil het echte bedt, dat rijcken doet bestaen; En ghy het bloedigh sweert, dat landen doet vergaen... Ghy, wat ick bidden magh, doet hier o wijsen Raet, Het beste voor de stadt, en't nutste voor den staet." Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrout," ed. Koppenol, 58, lines 583-584, 587-588.

imagines the Dutch state as composed of a myriad of family-shaped building blocks oriented around a couple regardless of the force it required to initiate that family.

Contrary to Tryphose's desire for retribution, Cats believes that women should sacrifice themselves for the republic. He makes this point often by telling women to marry their rapists for the good of the state, but even more clearly in Jokaste's statement:

I think it is better to imitate/ the daughters of the Sabines in their whole conduct, Than to want to act just as the courageous wife [Lucretia] did, Who killed herself only out of sorrow. But this woman was married when she was violated, And maybe thus could find no better advice.⁴¹

Cats tells raped women to sacrifice themselves for their Dutch Republic in the same way the Sabine women did for the Roman Republic. They should not imitate Lucretia by committing suicide after suffering rape, but instead submit to their rapists to become mothers of the new state. Single women, refashioned as living wives, are the proper sacrifices for the new republic.

Obedient Minors

Not only do women have to sacrifice their sexual agency to wealthy men for the good of the Republic, Cats also encouraged young men to subject their will to the will of their parents. Age and authority were important additional foundations for the organization of all of society into what the Dutch considered a divinely ordained hierarchy. The Dutch understood that "the obedience of children to their parents, of Christians to their spiritual counselors and of all men to their secular leaders" is vital because "all just men of authority on earth received that authority from God, and all men

⁴¹ "'T is beter, na my dunckt, de dochters der Sabijnen/ In dit geheel beleyt gelijk te mogen schijnen, Als hier te willen doen gelijk het moedigh wijf, Dat sigh uyt enckel spijt ginch brengen om het lijf. Maer dese was getrout wanneer sy was geschonden, En heeft daerom misschien geen beter raet gevonden.'" Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrout," ed. Koppenol, 57, lines 553-558.

who subjected themselves to a God-fearing authority were but showing obedience to God through them.”⁴² Disobeying a father or guardian was on par with disobedience to God, as was disobeying a just ruler. This shows both how the rule of the household translated into rule of society, and how Dutch patriarchs equated all disobedience with sin and naturalized their rule. Their authority was not debatable because it was a natural result of God’s will. According to Simon van Leeuwen in his normative discussion of Dutch legal sources from 1664, young men did not reach the age of majority until they were 25 and only then could parents no longer stop them from marrying.⁴³ A later legal source confirms this: “Minors are those, who whether Men or Women, are under the age of 25, as is the Custom of Holland as is the general right practiced everywhere...”⁴⁴ Until that age, young men and women could be forced or prevented from exercising their sexual will. Just as Cats wanted to deny sexual activity to lower class men who could not financially maintain a family from sexual activity, he also wanted to control the sexual activity of young men.

In two of Cats’ stories in his *Touchstone of Marriage*, he illustrates his young characters’ acceptance of the limitations on their sexual control over their own bodies. The young woman, Jokaste for example, reacts to her rape by weighing her options at that point. She decides that she would like to marry her rapist because as she says: “What

⁴² Peter King, “The Sacramental Thought in Vondel’s Drama,” *Modern Language Review*, 51 (1956) (203-214), 208.

⁴³ Van Leeuwen, *Het Rooms-Hollands-Regt, waar in de Roomse wetten, met het huydendaagse Neerlands regt, in alles dat tot de dagelijkse onderhouding kan dienen, met een bysondre korthheit, so wel in de vaste regts-stoffen, als in de manier van regts-vordering over een gebragt werden : met allerhande ordonnantiën, placcaten, hand-vesten, keuren, gewoonten, ende gevijsden deser ende omleggende landen bevestigt / van nieuws beschreven, hersteld, ende vermeerderd* (Leyden: R.G. by Hackens, 1664).

⁴⁴ “Minderjarige zyn allen het zy Mannen of Vrouwen, die beneden vyf en twintig Jaren oud zyn, het welk na de Costume van Holland als het algemeen regt over al word gepractiseeerd...” *Hollandsch Rechtsgeleert Woorden-boek, ...* (Uitgegeven onder de directie en het opzicht van Mr. Fransiscus Lievens Kersteman, Professor honoraire, en Praetizerent Advocaat te Amsterdam by Steven van Esveldt, 1768), 575.

better can I do in such a damaged case? It is wisdom to make a virtue out of necessity. Even the wisest man does this; If he cannot do as he wants, he must do what he can.”⁴⁵ She cannot undo the rape and so she wants to do what would be best for her at that point. She suggests that men may also find themselves in situations they cannot control, and thus, may also have to conform. We can see from this and other cases that Cats thought it was important that people, especially young women, accept situations they could not change. What is particularly striking is Cats’ conception that marrying one’s rapist would, in his words, “make a virtue out of a necessity.” We have to keep in mind that the seventeenth-century Dutch had far lower expectations of control and expected to be forced to do a great number of things.⁴⁶ Only a small minority of males could expect to have control and capacity for consent or agency, while the lower classes, young men and particularly women were largely subject to the will of others.

Based on biblical and legal precedents, Cats explains that a young man can be forced to marry a girl with whom he has had sex:

[When] a father and other friends, [found]...a young man on the bed having satisfied his lusts with the daughter of the house, [the father]...made the young man promise to legally marry her by threatening him; and they even forced a written promise from him.

Cats goes on to explain that the young man must honor his promise despite the common belief “that marriage must occur voluntarily” because of the biblical commands in

⁴⁵ “Wat kan ick beter doen in soo verboste saken? ’T Is wijsheydt, van de noot een deught te kunnen maken. Dit wort alsoo betracht oock by den wijsten man; Magh hy niet soo hy wil, hy doet gelijck hy kan.” Cats, “Two Raped and Both Marry,” ed. Koppenol, 57, lines 545-548.

⁴⁶ Evelyn Birge Vitz, “Rereading Rape in Medieval Literature: Literary, historical, and theoretical reflection” *Romanic Review*, (Jan 1997), Vol. 88, Issue 1. See also the introduction of Laiou, vii- ix, especially: “What varies, and is therefore historically significant, is the weight that each society places on individual consent, the limits it imposes upon it, and the validity it recognizes to measures or acts of coercion.”

Exodus 22:16 and Deuteronomy 22:28-9.⁴⁷ In spite of the recognition that a young man must consent to marriage, he must marry a woman as long as she is not promised to another, if he violates her. A young man's immediate consent is not required to make him marry a woman he has raped.

Cats provides another example in which a young man can be forced to marry a woman with whom he has had sexual intercourse. In his version of the biblical story of Jacob, Cats tells how Laban tricked Jacob into marrying his first daughter Leah instead of his second daughter Rachel:

People led ... [Rachel] through many rooms, No eye is able to follow and keep up with her, And see! In this confusion, and in the enormous tour The right Bride is pried from the crowd, Taken from among the people, and with brisk steps/ Leah was brought there, and forced into the game... The wily fox [Laban] carried this out so craftily, That no one in the group noticed the switch. And see! In this confusion, aided by the night, Rachel was led away and Leah brought there. Her face is covered... The Bride is put to bed, the candles taken away; People call the Bridegroom, and let him come in. He [Jacob] proceeds with no shred of suspicion, Approaches the maiden, as if to his own wife: The joy, the wine, the night, all work in collaboration, And prevent him from noticing any of the ruse. So long as it is dark he knows no better, So that he with a deed enjoys his own bride; But as the golden sun rises, He raises up his eyes, and opens the curtains of the bed; But he does not win the one he

⁴⁷ “Een vader en andere vrienden, hebbende onlangs een Jongeling op het bedde betrapt, daer by met de dochter van den huysen lust hadde gepleegt, hebben den selven met dreygementen daer toe gebracht, dat hy... de selve heft belooft wettelick te sullen trouwen; en hebben den selven oock een schriftelick bescheyt afgeperst. De vrage is, nademael by een yder vast wert gesteldt, dat alle howelicken uyt bewilginge moete geschieden, en anders niet, of de selve jongeling gehouden is sijn trouwe, in-voegen als voren hem afgedwongen, te voltrecken, dan of hy vryheydt heeft sich elders te mogen verbinden?” Soph: “...soodanigen jongeling, ten zy de dochter, daer hy mede te doen heeft, anders van oneerlickheydt beschuldigt kan werden, verbonden is sijn belofte na te komen, en meyne boven andere redenen daer toe te dienen de bolgende Schriftuer-plaetsen, *Exod. XXII:16. Wanneer iemant een maegt bekout, die noch niet getrouwt en is, en beslaeptse, die sal haer geven haer bruydt-schap, en haer ten wijve nemen. Deut. XXII.28,29. Wanneer iemant aen een maegt komt die niet belooft en is, en grijptse en slaept by haer, en het word alsoo bevonden: Soo sal die, diese beslapen heeft, haren vader vijftig sickel silvers geven, en salse ten wijve hevven, daerom dat hyse geschendet heeft. Hy en kanse niet verlaten sijn leef-dage....* Mitsgaders op dat de weelige jonge lieden haer leeren onthouden, en tot eerlicke houwelicken, niet tot vuyle dertelheden, sich leeren begeben.” Cats, “t Samensprake, roerende d’ontschakinge” in *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 90.

thought was there...But see, finally through the gray air it all becomes clear, And alas Jacob found his cousin Leah there.⁴⁸

While Jacob is not actually forced to have sex with Leah, it is still sex with a woman that he did not choose. He angrily accosts Laban:

Uncle, you have taught me well to break my marital promise? You have made me a villain, even on the first night?...I was beholden to Rachel, my beloved, To whom I alone find myself bounded to with faithfulness, That you have this night turned from her through a ruse, And she who took her place is thereby violated. Your daughter is a whore, and I am now a villain.⁴⁹

Jacob refers to himself as a villain and to Leah as a whore because he believes that Laban forced the two of them into an illicit sexual relationship.

The moral lesson of Cats' story "Marriage of Three" is that regardless of the elder's impropriety, one must still be obedient. Cats stresses that Laban was the only one to blame for tricking Jacob into marrying Leah:

Some have determined that neither Jacob nor Leah did anything wrong here, because either could intend to lie in the arms of their own and lawful partner. Because they say Jacob knew Leah, imagining that it was Rachel his legal Bed-partner; and Leah paid guilty goodwill to Jacob, taking him according to her right as first-born [daughter], just as her Father's ordered will, for her legal husband.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ "Men leyde wast de maeght door veelderhande salen, Geen oogh van die haer volght en kan haer achterhalen, En, siet! In dit gewoel, en in het woest geloop, Soo wert de rechte Bruyt ontsutfelt uyt den hoop, Getogen uyt het volck, en met geswinde sprongen/ Wert Lea daer gebracht, en in het spel gedrongen... Dit wist de loose vos soo listigh uyt te wercken, Dat niemant van de hoop de greep en konde mercken. En, siet! In dit geraes, door gunste van den nacht, Wort Rachel wegh geleyt, en Lea daer gebracht. Haer aensien is bedeckt, ...De Bruyt die wert gebet, de kaersen wegh genomen; Men roept den Bruydegom, en laet hem binnen komen. Hy, die hier niet en gaet als met de beste trou, Begeeft hem tot de maeght, als tot sijn eygen vrou: De vreught, de wijn, de nacht, die hier te samen wercken, Sijn oorsaek dat de Man geen list en kan bemercken; Soo langh het duyster is, en weet hy anders niet, Als dat hy met ér daet sijn eygen Bruyt geniet; Maer als de gulde son is hooger op geresen...Hy slaet sijn oogen op, hy schuyft de bed-gordijn; Maer hy en wint haer niet, die hij daer meynt te sijn...Maer siet, de grauwe lucht die wort ten lesten klaer, En Jacob vont, eylaes! Sijn Nichte Lea daer." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 17.

⁴⁹ "Wel Oom, leert ghy my self mijn echten trouwe breken? Maeckt ghy my tot een boef, oock op den eersten nacht? ...ick schuldigh was aen Rachel, mijn beminde, Aen wie ick my alleen met trou verbonden vinde, Dat hebt ghy desen nacht met list van haer gewent, Endie haer deel geniet die is ér door geschent. Uw dochter is een hoer, en ick een boef geworden..." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 18.

⁵⁰ "Eenige stellen vast, noch Jacob noch Lea hier in misdaen te hebben, vermits yder konde meynen in de armen van sijn eygen en wettigh partuur te leggen. Want Jacob (seggen sy) heeft Lea bekend, die houdende voor Rachel sijn wettige Bed-genoote; en Lea heeft schuldige goetwilligheyt aen Jacob betaelt, den selven

Jacob acted correctly because he thought he was with Rachel and Leah acted correctly because according to the customs of the land the oldest daughter had to be married first and because she was being obedient to her father. Cats explains that only Laban acted in an unseemly manner. He thinks Laban should have mentioned the customs of the land when Jacob asked to marry Rachel. Cats says that Laban acted “entirely improperly” and that since he “did not keep his word, he fell into the sin of unfaithfulness.” Cats also explains that he was wrong to keep Jacob in his service under false pretenses, to make his daughter’s husband cheat, and to put Leah in danger of being violated. In addition, Laban is not “pious or reasonable” because he makes Jacob work for a dowry that the former should have given with his daughter. And yet, in spite of Laban’s failure to explain the customs, his impropriety, faithlessness, the endangerment of his daughter, and for forcing Jacob to work for something that he should have given, Jacob still had to make the best of things because “he was alone in Mesopotamia and under the power of his Uncle.”⁵¹

Jacob had to be obedient to his elder in order to eventually attain his beloved Rachel.

Cats also quotes a legal precedent in which the consent of young men and women is unnecessary so long as the parents approve of the match. He cites the Roman poet Catullus, who writes from the perspective of a man wooing a reluctant young woman:

Your Father has given me full power, Your mother has given me
permission/ To take you to bed/ This pleases the both of them, And you
are under their command. Your Virginity is not entirely your own; To
your Father is a third, Your Mother has the same rights, Thus is your case
very weak. Because of that, tender and sweet jewel/ Only one-third is your

nemende, soo om het recht van haer eerst geboorte, als om haer Vaders bevels wille, voor haren wettigen man.” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 22.

⁵¹ “...hy, in Mesopotamia alleen wesende onder de macht van sijnen Oom”. Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 22.

own. Strive then not, o ...child, Now that you find yourself mastered, But give up your bloom as it serves, But give it to a dear friend.⁵²

The father and the mother have given permission for the man to take their daughter and together they have more right to her virginity than does she.

Only the consent of the parents is necessary for marriage according to Cats and by parents, he primarily means fathers. Sophronicus explains to Philogamus: "...in such a situation the Father above all is ... given the highest power."⁵³ Cats provides an example in which a bride and groom both consented to a marriage, but the groom's parents "were completely displeased" by what had occurred. After finding out about the marriage of their son, they "separated the young people."⁵⁴ Cats also explains that according to law, if a young man takes away a young woman with her consent, but without that of her parents, "the abductor will in no way be spared from the punishment of death." His reasoning is that the parents have "the say over her and her body, and her will."⁵⁵ Cats provides the example of the daughter of a prominent person who claimed to have been abducted had:

⁵² "Uw Vader geeft my vollen macht, Uw moeder heeft my toegestaen/ Met u te bed te mogen gaen Het stuck bevalt hun beyde wel, En ghy staet onder haer bevel. Uw Maeghdom hoort u niet geheel; Uw Vader komt een derde-deel, Uw Moeder heeft gelijke recht, Dus staen uw saken wonder slecht. Want van dat teer en soet juweel/ En komt u maer een derde-deel. En streeft dan niet, o sietste kint, Nu ghy u dus vermeestert vint, Maer geeft uw bloemtjen als het dient, Maer geeft 'et aen een lieven vrient..." Cats, *Maechden-Plicht ofte Ampt der Ionck-vrouwten, in Eerbaer Liefde, Aen-ghewesen door Sinne-beelden* (Middleburgh, Ghedruckt by Hans vander Hellen, 1618), 29-30.

⁵³ "...de Vader over-al in dusdanige gelegentheyt de bove-sangh toe wort gelaten, dat is, de hoogste macht wert gegeven." Cats, *Maechdenplicht*, 31.

⁵⁴ "Doch de ouders van den voorschreven Graef, van 't gene dat'er tot Oxfort gebeurt was verwittigt, en des gansc t'onvreden wesende, hebben beiden de... jonge lieden... gescheyden." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 90.

⁵⁵ "...de Rechten duydelick seggen, dat een Dochter ontschaeckt sijnde, schoon het bleecke, ja schoon sy selfs verklaerde sulcks met haren wil geschiet te sijn, dat sulcks den schaker geensins en soude verlossen van de strafe des doots, uyt redenen, dat hy niet en heeft gehad de bewilliging van de ouders, ofte de gene die macht over de Deerne waren hebbende... want komt de bewilliging van de Dochter in geen achtginge, als hy die met haeren wille ontschaeckt heeft, om hem van de straffe des doots te verlossen, vermits hy niet en heeft gehad dese toestemminge van de Ouders, soo en moest (soo het schijnt) aen de andere sijde de onwille van de Dochter niet beswaren de sodanigen, die gehadt heeft den wille van de gene die over haer en haer lichaem te seggen hadde." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 37-8.

...herself rented the wagon, and her chambermaid... had herself sought the Young man (who was said to have abducted her) to travel with her as it later took place. ...[T]he father of the aforementioned Young woman continued the case determined that justice and punishment should be exercised. He brought the case so far, that in the Court, he nearly had the Young man transformed from vibrant life to death, and such certainly would have been brought about had Friends not intervened and softened the anger of the Father, [and] convinced him to desist in his pursuit...⁵⁶

Cats message is severe: it is permitted to steal a virgin against her will, but abduction with the consent of the woman against the will of her guardians is punishable by death.

Despite this precedent, he insists that the consent of the young is theoretically necessary. Parents do control marriage, but cannot completely ignore the interests of their children:

The parents never could and cannot abuse their power over their children, nor can they force a man or wife upon a child against the latter's will; Rather, the willingness of the one that one wishes to give away, must be achieved. In this case there must be no mutual discord.⁵⁷

Parents had to achieve the willingness of their children. At the same time that Cats makes this claim, he also teaches that in practice, the unwillingness of the children can be ignored because elders can assume that they will consent in time. Cats elucidates the necessity of Jacob's consent:

...no marriage can be understood to exist without the willingness of both parties involved, it is also so that someone who is led astray, cannot be

⁵⁶ "...hier in ons land is geweest een dochter van een voortreffelick persoon, en doen ter tijt een aensienlicken staet bedienende, de welcke, nae haere vervoeringe, met den persoon, die haer vervoerde, gevangen sijnde, verklaerde de waerheyt sulks te wesen, dat sy self een wagen hadde gehuert, en, met haer Kamermaecht daer op sittende, den Jonck-heer (die haer werde geseyt ontschaeckt te hebben) selfs hadde versocht de reyse met haer te willen doen, soo als het naderhant geschiedde. En des niet tegenstaende, de vader van de selve Jonckvrouwe scherpelick aenhoudende, ten eynde dat 'er recht en straffe geoeffent soude worden, hadde het stuck soo verre gebracht, dat het Hof in pointen stont, om de Jonckheer van levende lijve ter doot te wijsen, en sulcks ware sekerlick al geschiet geweest, ten ware de Vader, door tusschenspreckende Vrienden versacht sijnde, af hadde gelaten van zijn vervolgh, en dat daer op vergeef-brieven voor hem bekomen waren geweest." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 38.

⁵⁷ "De ouders vermochten, en vermogen als noch niet hare macht over hare kinderen in desen te misbruycken, en aen deselve, tegen wil en danck, vrouw of man op te dringen; maer de bewillinginge, van de gene, die men uyt wil geven, moetst daer by komen. Immers daer en moeste geen onderlinge tegheheyt wesen." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 38.

understood as willing; from which it follows that in the situation of Jacob, Leah could not have overwhelmed him; thus it follows that he is not beholden to Leah as her husband... So is it not that these two became spouses, not through sleeping together, but from the willingness that followed.⁵⁸

Cats explains that both Jacob and Leah had to consent to make it a valid marriage and that someone who is tricked does not consent. But while consent is deemed important, two issues complicate this idea. The first is the idea that the body can consent. Jacob was tricked into sex before he consented to marriage with Leah. Laban even argues that only the consent of Jacob's body was necessary to make his union with Leah a valid one. His failure to send Leah back immediately meant that he immediately consented:

But you have lain all night in her lap, And she in your arms, and no one has complained; A sign that you were not displeased in the work. Because when you did not send her back at once/ You have proved that you enjoyed the business; This deed showed that she pleased you, And that she reciprocated this feeling... You have enjoyed of her sweet youth, and her tender bloom, And that oh lusty Young man! And that did not bring you sorrow.⁵⁹

Although Jacob did not mentally accept Leah as his partner, Laban suggests that their sexual intercourse is a worthy basis for a relationship. He claims that Jacob enjoyed Leah's "tender bloom," that "she pleased [him]," and that he "enjoyed the business." He insists that Jacob consented to the sex regardless of the fact that it was the wrong woman. These two examples also teach us some things about Cats' notions of bodies in rape and

⁵⁸ "...geen houwelick en wort verstaen gemaect te konnen werden als met bewillinge van beyde de gene die handelen, sijnde kennelick, dat iemant, die dwaelt, niet en kan verstaen worden te bewillingen ; waer uyt dan volght, dat, sonder naeder toestandigheyt van Jacob, Lea hem niet overdrongen en hadden konnen worden; dien volgende dat hy aen Lea als man niet en is gehouden geweest...Soo sijn dan dese twee echte lieden geworden, niet uyt het byslapen, maer uyt de bewillinge naderhant daer op gevolght." Cats, "A marriage of Three Dialogue" in *Proefsteen van den Trou-Ringh*, 109.

⁵⁹ "Maer ghy hebt al de nacht in haren schoot gelegen, En sy in uwen arm, en niemant heeft geklaeght; Een teyken dat het werck u niet en heeft mishaeht. Want mits ghy haer terstont niet weder hebt gesonden/ Soo hebt ghy voor gewis den handel goet gevonden; De daet die heeft betoont dat sy u wel beviel, En dat sy wederom u waert en liefstal hiel. Ghy hebt haer soete jeught, haer teere bloem genoten, En dat ó dertel quant! En heeft u niet verdrotten." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 19.

sex. According to Cats, Jacob's unwanted sexual encounter is not rape because "Leah could not have overwhelmed him." His body consented when he had sex with her in spite of himself. As in cases in which women are raped, men's bodies can consent without the consent of their minds.

The second issue that complicates the necessity of both the husband and wife to consent is the timing. In Cats' story of the Benjamites' abduction of the women of Shiloh, he mentions twelve specific counts of rape, identifiable either by the abductor or the woman raped, and implies that there were many more. The abductions were clearly forced; the women fled in terror, their clothing and possessions fly off in a chaotic, panicked way, and they made up scores of lies and excuses to avoid being taken. The men immediately force kisses upon the women, feel "great longings," and perceive "fires of love" burning within their captives.⁶⁰ However, both marriage and procreation follow these abductions, which theoretically required the consent of the women taken. Cats explains that consent will come and is not of immediate importance. He carefully describes how the passing time healed the women's anger.

Neither the lower classes nor minors are thus allowed to exercise their own will. Sexual encounters were among many activities that were controlled entirely by well-to-do men and one's elders. The young were expected to accept marriage partners who were forced upon them and their immediate consent was not required. It was however an important theoretical aspect of marriage that both parties enter into the agreement willingly. However, this obstacle was easily discarded through the belief that the obstinate would always give in and offer their consent at some time in the future.

⁶⁰ Cats, ed. Koppenol, 104.

Natural Male Sexual Aggression

Ideal husbands who are wealthy and of the right age for marriage could thus get away with rape, while lower class “wretches” are punished. Parents’ will is privileged over their sons until they reach majority and over their daughters throughout their lives, until they become subject to their husbands’ wills. Most important in this study of Cats’ use of rape discourse is the examination of the third axis of Dutch social hierarchy: gender. We have to examine Cats’ gendered justification of rape more closely in order to explain why he believed that a woman should marry a rapist of her own class and why a woman would never really reach majority regardless of her age. Based on different conceptions of male and female desire and acceptable roles, Cats asserts that men are not responsible when they rape and that it is an expression of natural male sexual aggression. Natural active male sexuality makes men rape, as does the impatience of youth, love, and the sight of passive and virtuous maidens.

Cats presents his reader with the idea that men should do what they can to avoid rape even though they are drawn to it. For example, he instructs young men how to fight their sexual urges and try to control themselves. By using the examples of Dinah, Thammar, and Susanna in a poem called “Reason Speaks,” Cats shows that he is more concerned with the specific evil of rape than with other forms of unchaste behavior. Cats uses biblical rapists Shechem and Ammon as examples of young men who did not consult reason:

If Shechem had made but one trip to my [that is, Reason’s] abode, When
he was ignited with a hot fire by Dinah, His city and citizens would not
have been disturbed; And he and his family...would not have been
murdered. If Ammon had visited me, when he was heated/ By

lavisciousness for [his sister] Thammar, and sat and worried about her, I would have then served him with better advice.⁶¹

Shechem and Ammon could have dealt better with their longings for Dinah and

Thammar. If they had consulted reason, they might have not raped these women.

Although natural urges can cause rape, Cats hopes that if a young man employs reason he can control his urges. Cats reiterates this point by saying, “Those who...make their senses answer to reason...will be freed from suffering and misfortune, from all evil, both in their youth, and for all time.”⁶² Young men must employ reason to avoid temptation or their natural sexual urges will lead them to rape women, such as was the case for Shechem and Ammon.

Cats explains elsewhere that one way for men to employ reason and thereby avoid rape is to marry. Marriage can prevent men from raping women: “...while I was bonded to you in marriage, Never did I dishonor a woman, never did I violate a virgin, Although I was young and happy by nature, For you I spared my lascivious youth and happiness.”⁶³ In spite of this young man’s “lascivious youth,” by which Cats means his natural urge to mate that was exacerbated by his youthful impatience, he did not dishonor or violate a virgin because he married. Cats assumes that without marriage, the natural male urge to mate can easily manifest itself in coerced sex. Cats conceptualizes rape as a natural product of male aggressive sexuality and as the antithesis of marriage.

⁶¹ “Waer Sichem maer een reys in mijn [reden] vertrek geweken, Als hy met heeten brant op Dina was ontsteken, Sijn stadt en borgery en ware noit gestoort; En hy met sijn gesin en lage niet vermoort. Had Ammon my besocht, als hy uyt enckel weelde/ Op Thamar was verhit, en om haer sat en queelde, Ik had hem even toen van beter raet gediend.” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. I, 445.

⁶² “Wat dient’er meer geseyt? Die mijnen weg betreden,/ En geven met bescheyt haer sinnen tot de reden,/ Die zijn in hare jeugt, die zijn tot aller tijt/ Van leet en ongeluk, van alle quaet bevrijt.” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. I, 445.

⁶³ “...terwijl ick was met trou aen u verbonden, Noyt wijf en heb onteert, noyt maeght en heb geschonden, Dat ick al was ick jongh en vrolick uyer aert, Voor u mijn gulle jeught en blijdschap heb gespaert.” Cats, *Proefsteen van den Trou-Ringh*, 17.

Despite his good advice, Cats suggests that sometimes, men's sexual nature cannot be resisted. Forces beyond men's control can cause them to lose control of themselves. For example, some young men who impatiently act on their natural urges rape women. Such was the case when Menander raped Jokaste and Tryphose:

My Lords... see here a guilty man, Who will not deny that which cannot
be renounced/ The sad misfortune of my unwise years. Alas! I was drawn
to mate too early. I admit I am guilty/ But really my crime is but
impatience.⁶⁴

Menander explains rape here as a sad misfortune due to his unwise impatience. Menander eschews responsibility, instead blaming his youthful, natural urges. Cats describes Shechem's rape of Dinah in similar terms: "And Shechem must also bear the punishment/ Of his untimely fire, and unbridled lust, Which all the city together extinguished."⁶⁵ While Menander was simply making a case to exonerate himself, here Cats directly points out that Shechem's responsibility was solely in his impatience and inability to control his lust for Dinah. At the moment that their actions would otherwise make them criminal, Cats' language shifts the responsibility away from men.

In addition to the idea that rapists are not responsible for their actions, Cats expresses the notion that they are actually victims of a force that makes them rape. For both Menander and Shechem, being overwhelmed by their impatience and natural lust is apparently a painful experience. Menander claims: "The fertility of the land, youth and its capriciousness/ Have violently abducted my senses, [And] ripped away my heart..."⁶⁶

⁶⁴ "'Mijn Heeren' (is zijn woort) 'siet hier een schuldigh man, Die niet ontkennen wil, die niet versaken kan/ Het droevigh ongeval van mijn onwijse jaren. Eylaes! Ick was te vroegh genegen om te paren. Ick heb, en ick bekent, ick hebbe groote schult, Maer efter mijn misdaet en is maer ongedult.'" Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrouwt," ed. Koppenol, 46, lines 111-116.

⁶⁵ "En Sichem nevens hem moet oock de strafe dragen/ Van zijn ontijdig vyer, en ongetoomde lust, Daar ley de gansche stadt te samen uyt-geblusst." Cats, 'Lof-Sangh op het Geestelick Houwelick van Godes Soon' in *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 226.

⁶⁶ "De weelde van het lant, de jeught en hare vlagen/ Die hebben met geweld mijn sinnen weghgedragen,

Not only is Menander's youthfulness to blame, but also the fertile land that violently deprived him of his senses and "ripped away" his heart. In this case, Cats describes the violence as if it was enacted upon Menander's body, a description that Cats does not use when he depicts the rape of a female body. One sees the pain rape causes the rapist again in the story of Dinah and Shechem:

...The son of the king drew from her face a heated thirst for love. He saw her... and out of this ignited a quick fire, That penetrated his heart by way of his eye. Then fell the young man into sorrow, severe suffering, Into strange senselessness, in various thoughts, Ah (he said), it is truly a sad burden, That my wretched heart thus burns with love...But why am I so distressed?⁶⁷

According to Cats' description, this prince suffers from his lust for Dinah. His thoughts are irrational; he is burdened by his love for her, his heart is wretched, and he is distressed. Again, like Menander, he is pitiful and burdened by his lust. Cats uses his emotional suffering as a way to explain his helplessness. Shechem could not help but rape Dinah due to the power of his own lust for her. It is by blaming rape on forces outside of rapists' control and depicting them as victims of those forces that Cats encourages his audience to see Menander, Shechem, and other rapists not as evil men, but as pitiful victims of their own aggressive sexuality.

Cats describes the same inability to resist lust again in his story "Two Raped and Both Married," but in this case he blurs lust and love. The crowd questions why Menander was compelled to rape, or as they say, "love" two different women: "When (cry the people) has there been a case that someone's disorderly senses/ Ever drove him

Mijn herte wechgeruckt..." Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrouwt," ed. Koppenol, 47, lines 133- 135.

⁶⁷ "...De Sone van den Vorst, Die treckt uyt haar gesicht een heeten minne-dorst. Hy siet haar...En uyt dit al-te-maal ontstaat een snelle vlam, Die slux hem door het oog tot in het herte quam. Daar valt de jongeling in druck, in sware klachten, In vreemde dwepery, in veelderley gedachten, Ach (seyt hy) 't is voorwaar een droevig ongemak, Dat mijn ellendig hert in liefde dus ontstack...Maar waarom dus benaut?" Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 225.

to love two. If that ever happened, it is due to lascivious lust, That deserves to be extinguished by the sword.” The crowd suggests that lascivious lust is the only force that could cause Menander to rape two women. They also suggest that indeed he is responsible for his actions even if motivated by lust. Menander replies:

That is what I too believed; but, see, I have been deceived, I have been enticed to love two at once...although these two are distinctly different beings, Nonetheless my love still hovers between both, And if my inner heart must perform a test, I would not know who to let stay and who to make go. And what shall I do now, alas!⁶⁸

Menander reformulates the crowd’s accusation. Instead of his own responsibility for his “lascivious lust,” Menander stresses the power of love that has taken control of him. He underlines his inability to explain what has happened and his inability to rectify the situation. The ellipsis in fact stands in for nine lines describing what he loves about the two women. It was love, not Menander’s own will, that made him rape. Cats obscures Menander’s active role in the double rape of Tryphose and Jokaste by highlighting love’s role. Cats also proposes that abduction cannot be bad if it is initiated by love: “Why not take advantage of such a good chance? ...Anything that proceeds /from love can be no ill deed.”⁶⁹ Love is enough justification for any male violence in attaining a woman as a wife.

⁶⁸ “Waer siet men (roept het volck) dat yemants losse sinnen/ Oyt aengedreven zijn, om twee gelijk te minnen. Of soo dat oyt gebeurt, het is uyt geyle lust, Die niet als met het sweert en dient te zijn geblust. Dit had ick oock gelooft; maer, siet, ick ben bedrogen, My hebben twee gelijk tot haer min getogen. ...schoon of dese twee in wesen zijn verscheyden, Noch sweeft des niettemin mijn liefde tussen beyden, En als mijn innigh hert hier van een proeve doet, ‘K en weet niet wieder staen, of wieder wijcken moet. Wat sal ick nu, eylaes!” Cats, “Twee verkracht, en beyde getrout,” ed. Koppenol, 48, lines 181- 186, 197-201.

⁶⁹ “Waarom so goeden kans niet heden waar-genomen? Het wildt-braat, dat ik jaag, dat is my t’huys gekomen, Wel aan dan, treurig hert, gaat stelt uw saken vast, Al wat uyt liefde komt en is geen over-last.” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v.II, 225.

Love is an outside force that causes men to rape women in other of Cats' stories as well. When Cats writes about both rape and abduction, it appears that he describes consensual love. Just after Shechem rapes Dinah, he:

...held her by the hand, And earnestly offered her nice promises of love,
Comforted her, spoke to her, and wanted to lead her further, And also had
a fruit dish prepared, He offered her sweets and things of art, In order to
win her favor by such sweet coaxing.⁷⁰

Shechem tries to win Dinah over with loving gestures. He holds her hand, offers her a home, feeds her, and tries to convince her to accept him. This fits very well with Gowing's assessment of rape at this time in England. She explains that sexual violence is not incompatible with a man's desire to marry a woman or:

...her will to marry him. The conjunction of force and marriage promise
...is consonant with the culture of service and the prerogatives that
masters assumed, and it reflects a particular culture of marriage, in which
economic necessity and social compulsion played a large part in decision-
making. But it is also part of wider discourses of desire, in which men's
lust or love was readily expressed through force and women's sexual roles
were negotiated in response to this.⁷¹

In all Cats' stories on rape, men's lust and love are expressed through force and are not easily differentiated from courting a woman in more proper ways.

We can see this blurring of the line between abduction and courtship in Cats' story of the abduction of the women of Shiloh. Abduction looks very much like consensual love:

When one hears a maiden crying for her mother, One hears our
Benjaminites reply: Girlfriend, calm yourself; I am your dear husband,
I am better for you than any other can be. Or if her bitter sorrow cannot be
extinguished by words, Then he stops her mouth with a thousand sweet

⁷⁰ "Maar Sichem even-wel die houtse byder-hant, En biet haar even-staag een aardig minne-pant, Vertroost haar, spreek haar aan, en wilse vorder leyden, En liet oock even daar een fruyt-gerecht bereyden, Hy biet haar suycker-werck en dingen na de kunst, Om soo door soet gevley te winnen hare gunst." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 225.

⁷¹ Gowing, 100.

kisses. The young man hushes her scream with such a steady kiss, That her cries present no obstacle.⁷²

Although Cats mentions a maiden crying for her mother, the Benjamites refer to them as girlfriends and to themselves as husbands, and kiss them. Cats goes so far as to say that the abductor “hushes her scream” with a kiss. One can see this in the image of the abduction below:



Figure 6: *The Benjamite Abduction of the Women of Shiloh*⁷³

⁷² “Indien men hoort een maegt om hare moeder krijten, Men hoort in tegen-roep van onse Benjamijiten: Vriendinne, weest gerust; ick ben uw lieve man, Die sal u beter zijn als iemant wesen kan. Of is haer wrange spijt met woorden niet te blussen, Soo wort haer mont gestopt met duysent soete kussen. De vryer breekt den schreeu met soo een stagen soen, Dat sy door haer gekrijt geen hinder weet te doen.” Cats, “Maeghden-Roof,” ed. Koppenol, 103, lines 275-292.

⁷³ Image from Jacob Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II.

The Benjamites embrace the women of Shiloh as if they were lovers. The woman in the center already appears to have accepted her abductor, while the men on the right and left seem to patiently hold the women while they protest. Cats' text and illustration sanction male prerogatives to have sex and marry even if it necessitated coercion. The language of girlfriend, husband, and kisses as well as the image of couples masks the abduction, cries, bitter sorrow, and screams.

Problematically, because male activity and even force were part of ordinary sex, it is nearly impossible to distinguish between sex and rape. Both courtship and rape are described in similar terms, both of which make the male the only actor in the scene. Cats advises women that men have to hunt them to desire them:

You should not move quickly when it comes to love, And even if you
want to [love], hold yourself back; Know that a hastily-prepared maiden/
Does not appeal even to a lover: Because if he too easily attains what he
sought/ He fears that he was just cheated; Also when the maiden is too
fast, Then the lover turns quickly away.⁷⁴

Here Cats shows that women who demonstrate desire turn men away. Men have a need to conquer and a fear that a quick woman is an unworthy one. A woman who can be easily convinced to love is not enough work. Rather women must be forced or it is no fun for the man:

This is lovers' rightful nature, What you offer them is immediately judged
unworthy; The little fish avoid the bait that is thrown, Never did the good
hunter grip the hare/ When he was resting in his abode, The labor whets
the hunter's appetite; He will capture no ducks... That come to him
willingly, Adversity provides the appeal of the game of love.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ "Ghy, weest niet schootich in de min, En schoon ghy wilt, hout u wat in; Weet dat een haest-bereyde maeght/ Selfs aen den minnaer niet behaeght: Want krijgt hy licht'lic dat hy socht/ Hy vreest terstont te zijn bekocht; Oock waer de vrijster is te vlug, Daer gaet den minnaer licht te rug." Cats, *Maechden-Plicht*, 16.

⁷⁵ "Dit is der minnaers rechten aert, Wat ghy hun biet, 't is al onwaert; Het visken vliet 't gheworpen aes, Noyt goeden wey-man grijpt den haes/ Daer hy sitil in sijn leggher rust, Den arbeyt wet des jaghers lust; Hy vangt geen wilt, (het waer hem schant) Dat hem van selfs coomt in de hant, Door moeyte smaect het minnen-spel." Cats, *Maechden-Plicht*, 18.

Labor, hunt, and activity define the male experience of love. Cats characterizes men as predatory, like hunters who capture wild animals. Men are however, very complex predators, who do not accept willing or easy prey. They do not want women to come willingly, like bait thrown to fish or wild animals that come willingly. The natural male sex drive requires men to attack and overpower something that seems unwilling.

Cats explains that men find female sexual desire repugnant through the biblical story of Potiphar's wife, who actively, and unsuccessfully, tried to seduce Joseph. Cats says she:

...took the wrong path to attract him, foolishly expressed in that hateful: *come sleep with me*, which unwisely caused the honorable and good young man to feel aversion (in place of attraction) for her. She should have made her way with more subtle and longer strides as it is commonly done.⁷⁶

The willingness and action of Potiphar's wife repulsed Joseph instead of attracting him as she had hoped to do. If she had been subtle and passive, Cats believes she would have had a better chance with him. Cats wants to teach women that female willingness and action will only drive away men. He believes that men only want seemingly unattainable women. Cats sees promiscuous and lusty women as beastly abominations of proper expressions of sexuality. Active expressions of female desire were disgusting and repulsive according to Cats.

The kind of woman that attracts men is a virtuously passive one. On the one hand, Cats suggests that this is the ideal way to attract a husband:

And you, o tender Maiden, when you feel your grape bunch ripen, In its due time, let it be gripped it by its stalk; If an honorable hand plucks your

⁷⁶ "...dat het wijf van Potiphar, op den jongelingh Joseph verslingert wesende, verkeerde gangen in-gingh om hem te trecken, dwaeselick uytherstende in dat haetigh: *kom slaept by my*, het welck onwijselijck den eerbaren en goeden jongelingh (in plaetse van aenlockinge) een vollen afkeer van haer heeft gegeven. Sy moest met bedeckter en langer schreden hebben gegaen, soo gemeynt wort." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 13.

sweet fruit, Say then, openly, I have succeeded. And proceed to be married in due time, with the council of your Friends...⁷⁷

Young women must wait to be picked metaphorically and literally in the sense of being chosen by a man who wants to marry them. It is her virtue and passivity that will allow her to be chosen. Cats describes this again through his wise character Anna:

She [the maiden] must wait expectantly (though it is painful)/ Until she may be grasped... Although it may be our own wish and will, Even so we should be quiet, Until the one who loves us, As if with violence wins us over.⁷⁸

A young woman can only wait until she is grasped and even if she likes the young man, she must pretend otherwise. The language of these two quotes betrays the connection Cats sees between male activity and violence. Cats tells women that they will be plucked and that the man should be made to think that he wins them over “as if with violence.” Even in cases when a man courts a woman, Cats suggests that he needs to have the sense that he rapes her. In these examples Cats makes it clear that willingness and consent are actually inappropriate in courtship.

While men must always be offered a passive and clearly unwilling woman to incite their desire, Cats explains to his readers that men can always simultaneously assume that a woman is willing. Regardless how a woman reacts to a man, she desires him. He believes, in fact, that sex fulfills a specifically female need and that abduction can play a positive part in satisfying this need as he demonstrates in his account of the Benjamite abduction of the women of Shiloh.

⁷⁷ “En ghy, o teere Maeght, voelt ghy u Trosjen rijpen, Soo latet op sijn tijt, en by sijn Steeltjen grijpen; En als een eerbaer hant u soete vruchten pluckt, Segt dan, met vollen mont, Het is my wel gheluckt. In tijts, met Vrienden raet, in Echten Staet te treden...” Cats, “Wapen-Schild alle Eerbare Maeghden Toe-ghe-eyghent,” in the *Maechden-Plicht*.

⁷⁸ “Sy [de maghet] moet verwachten (al ist pijn) Tot datse mach ghegrepen zijn... Al isset schoon ons sin en wil, Noch dientment sick te houden stil, Tot dat den ghenen die ons mint, Als met ghewelt ons over-wint.” Cats, *Maechden-Plicht*, 24.

People say, that in the city there were hundreds of Maidens, Willing to be harnessed and ready to pair; But that the men folk were far fewer in number, Because through battles and accidents, They were either dead or in foreign lands. People say, that even now diverse young Maidens, Who (as one could see) had never had a lover, Soon would be desired, despite the scarce times, And so would finally be freed of slander.⁷⁹

This passage is laden with Cats' assumptions about female sexuality. First, he describes a scene of hundreds of sexually mature young women whose virginity is evident upon sight. Female sexuality can thus be viewed from apparent physical characteristics. Second, these women have had to endure the humiliation of having to remain virgin because of a shortage of men. Virginity past a certain age thus makes an older virgin susceptible to slander. Third, and most importantly, it is obvious to observers that women they are "willing to be harnessed" and "ready to pair" without having to ask specific women what they want. Cats presupposes that the women of Shiloh gain their lifelong mates because they were virgin, gain honor as wives to end their virginal humiliation, and have their desires fulfilled.

Cats provides two particular cases of the female desire for their captors within this story that illustrate how he blurs the line between sex and rape. Both Zepho and another maiden flee from their abductors, but in both cases the latter perceive the two women's hidden desire. In both cases Cats does not tie this female desire to evil forces, but rather it makes them ideal, passive brides. Quick Zepho lies to her captor, saying:

Your request comes too late, I am already a Bride. Upon which the young man begins to depart, His heart gives a sigh, his hands yield, But when he

⁷⁹ "Men seyt, dat in de stad veel hondert Maegden waren, Genegen tot de trou, en vaerdig om te paren; Maer dat het manne-volck, door krijg en ongeval/ Of dood of buytens lands, is minder in getal. Men seyt, dat even nu verscheyde jonge Maegden, Die (soo het schijnen mogt) geen vryer oyt behaegden, Straks sullen zijn gewilt, vermids den schaersen tijt, En soo van hare smaet ten lesten zijn bevrijt." Cats, *Alle de Werken*, v. II, 36.

rightly saw her eyes full of sweet fire, He clasp her once again unhindered
with a tight grip; And again: Sweet flower, you are bound to me.⁸⁰

Even though Zepho tried to evade her abductor through both flight and deception, Cats believes that the abductor “rightly” sees through these actions and is able to sense Zepho’s desire for him by looking in her eyes. The second maiden is captured by Ophel, who also ignores the fact that she is trying to escape:

Not far from the city she comes across Ophel, Who is very attracted to this maiden. And she too loves him alone, He felt the burning love in her/
interior disposition...He inquired...Why did she flee? The courageous young woman was silent, Because her courageous soul still continued to gasp for breath. He grabbed her arm, and kissed her red cheeks, And asked once again, with just as great a longing.⁸¹

Ophel catches this second maiden as she attempted to flee, and just as Zepho’s captor had done, Ophel “felt” a “burning love” in her silence and believes that this proves her want for him and justifies his longing for her. Cats suggests that when abducted, these maidens show clear signs of love and lust in their eyes and faces. Not only is Zepho’s and the second maiden’s virginity externally apparent, but also female willingness can be assumed despite evidence to the contrary. Because of her nature, a woman of a certain age desires a mate both in terms of a sexual partner and a companion. Her consent is not required; her rejections are meaningless. She is at once both required to demonstrate her lack of sexual desire through her passivity and initial rejection of male advances and understood as always desiring male advances regardless of her refusals and even attempts

⁸⁰ “Uw bedde koomt te laet, dewijl ick ben de Bruyt. De vryer op het woort begon alree to wijcken, Sijn herte gaf een sucht, sijn handen die beswijcken, Maer als hy recht besagh haer oogh vol soeten brant, Doe greep hy weder toe, en bry met vaster hant; En weder: Frisse bloem, gy zijt aen my verbonden.” Cats, “Maegden Roof van de Benjamijten te Scilo,” ed. Koppenol, 103, lines 252-257.

⁸¹ “Niet verre van de stadt soo koomt haer Ophel tegen, Die tot de jonge maeght ten hoogsten is genegen. En sij, oock even-selvs aen hem alleen verpant, Gevoelt in haer gemoet gelijcken minne-brant... Hy vraegt,... Waerom datse vlucht? De moede Juffer swijgt, Vermids haer moede ziel noch soo geduerig hijgt. Hy grijpt haer in den arm, en kust haer roode wangen, En vraegt nogh ander-mael, met even groot/ verlangen;” Cats, “Maegden Roof van de Benjamijten te Scilo,” ed. Koppenol, 104, lines 305-308, 319, 323-326.

to fight him off. By making all women willing partners despite evidence to the contrary, Cats makes rape impossible. Even if a young man abducts or rapes women, it will always result in sex with a willing partner.

Obscured Pain:

Cats uses abstract descriptions of rape as an additional rhetorical device to shift the focus from forced sex to women fleeing and from damaged female bodies to benign images of picking flowers and food. For Cats, abduction is a violent capture of a woman against her will and the will of her families, but he never explicitly mentions sexual coercion. He hides rape behind the description of women being taken to become proper wives. Cats uses the actions, clothing, and jewelry to signify the disruption of women's lives, but does not mention a single detail of forced sex. Cats makes it very clear that the women of Shiloh do not want to go with the Benjamite men. One of the latter, Hasor, for example, chases the maiden who is "...completely surprised [by him,] moved to the sand, And showed, by her gesture to be entirely incensed, And unwilling to go, and unwilling to follow."⁸² Cats further depicts the unwillingness of the women of Shiloh as their jewelry flies off as they flee: "there falls a bracelet, a shell, or necklace, There the best cap is flung in the street. Whoever sees an opening, tries to flee, And who is captured begins to sigh."⁸³ The women are in disarray because of their desire to run away. They also yell at their captors and cry for their mothers: "One hears an angry maiden curse at

⁸² "Maar sy geheel verbaast begaf haar in het zant, En toont, aan haar gebaar geheel te zijn verbolgen, En niet te willen gaan, en niet te sullen volgen." Cats, "Maegden Roof van de Benjamijten te Scilo," ed. Koppenol, 100, lines 152-154.

⁸³ "...daer vale een arrem-ring, en dop, of hals-cieraet, Daer wort de beste kap geslingert over straet. Wie dat een open siet, die stelt haer om te vlugten, En wie gevangen is begeeft haer om te suchten." Cats, "Maegden Roof van de Benjamijten te Scilo," ed. Koppenol, 101, lines 199-202.

her abductor:/ Oh rascal, oh rogue, oh criminal and people thief! / At the same time, one hears a maiden screaming for her mother...⁸⁴ Their unwillingness to be abducted is indubitable. Cats also clarifies that abduction is understood to include taking the virginity of the maiden abducted, based on Cats' declaration that "after a few days" the women are all happily pregnant. Cats' blurring of abduction and rape works to obscure the violence endured by women by ignoring the violence and instead focusing on the reconciliation of men and women that comes later.

By disconnecting virginity from female flesh, Cats encourages his audience to ignore the violence done during abduction or rape. He often uses grapes as a metaphor for virgin women's bodies in order to describe the types of violations their flesh may suffer if touched:

A Bunch [of grapes], on which neither *Spreeum* [a type of bird], nor the heart-beaked finch, Have pressed an all too deep kiss. A Bunch, that no slug has violated by its creeping, Into which no strong fly has printed her mouth. A Bunch, upon which no spider, Upon which no snail has spewed her foul slime; A Bunch, of which no Mouse, of which no evil rat, In the darkness of the night, have taken their share. A Bunch, that never was bruised through contact with the wall; [And] Never was eaten by an army of ants...⁸⁵

Cats goes to extreme lengths to separate female purity from the idea of female genitalia. Impurity is not sexual violence, but rather a bird whose beak presses into an untouched grape or a spider that pierces one. Even when he does mention a person destroying purity,

⁸⁴ "Men hoort een gramme maegt op haren rover schelden: O guyt, o siel, o schelm, o boef en menschendief! ...Indien men hoort een maegt om hare moeder krijten..." Cats, "Maegden Roof van de Benjamijten te Scilo," ed. Koppenol, 103, lines 278-279, 285.

⁸⁵ "Een Tros, aen wie noch Spreeum, noch hart-gebeckte Mus, Heeft in de Druyv' gedrukt een al te deepen kus. Een Tros, die noyt een seug' met cruypen heeft geschent, Daer noyt een sterk vlieg haer beek heeft in-geprent. Een Tros, daer noyt een spinn' haer raegh heeft om getogen, Daer noyt een vuyle sleck haer dracht heeft op gespoghen; Een Tros, daer noyt een Muys, daer noyt een snoode rat, Int duyster van de nacht, haer deel van heeft gehad. Een Tros, noyt aen de Muys door wrijven aff-ghesleten; Noyt onder, hare schors van mieren uyt-gegeten;" Cats, "Wapen-schild alle eerbare maeghden toegeheeyghent" in *Maechden-Plicht*.

he maintains the image of the bunch of grapes: “A Bunch, upon which no human has pressed their fingers, From which no Hand has plucked a grape.”⁸⁶

In a wide variety of his works, Cats continues the production of abstract images that stand in for violated women’s bodies through the equation of raped women with plucked flowers. He describes the abduction of the women of Shiloh as a man picking a bouquet from a garden:

If someone in a garden comes to pick the Roses, And wants to make a nice bouquet for his pleasure, He does not pick just the flower that he carefully chose, But he takes those that greet him, and those nearby; Thus has it gone here...⁸⁷

Cats suggests that abducting women works much like making a bouquet. You pick a flower here and there, mostly those nearest you. In encouraging this image of abduction, Cats is shifting the focus from violence done to bodies to a pleasurable outdoor activity in which one collects beautiful things. Instead of violated genitalia, Cats shifts the focus to picking flowers.

This is how Cats describes other cases of rape as well. His story of the double rapist, Menander, starts with hunting and flower-gathering metaphors:

Not long after this time, a knight from Milet/ Briefly forgot himself with a beautiful maiden in this way: The fox had often lay in wait for this prey, And with a wicked grip he carried Tryphose away, Raped her, and even without asking/ Took her maiden bloom as loot.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ “Een Tros, daer noyt een mensch met vingers op en druckte, Daer noyt vermeten Handt een druyfken van en pluckte.” Cats, “Wapen-Schilt alle Eerbare Maeghden Toe-ghe-eyghent,” in the *Maechden-Plicht*.

⁸⁷ “Als iemant in een tuyn de Roosen komt te naken, En wil tot sijn gerief een aerdig tuyltjen maken, Hy pluckt niet juyst de bloem, die hy met oordeel koos, Maer treckt dat hem ontmoet, of wel de naeste roos; Soo is het hier gegaen...” Cats, “Maegden Roof van de Benjamijten te Scilo,” ed. Koppenol, 107, lines 435-439.

⁸⁸ “Niet langh na desen tijt, een ridder van Milet/ Heeft aen een schoone maeght sigh even dus vergeten: De vos had menighmael op desen roof geloert, En met een slimme greep Triphose wechgevoert, Triphose kracht gedaen [verkracht], en even sonder vragen/ Haer maeghdelicke blom ten roove wechgedragen.” Cats, “Twee verkracht, en beyde getrouwt,” ed. Koppenol, 44, lines 41-46 and 59, lines 649-652.

Tryphose is prey and loot; she is an animal that can be hunted and a flower that can be carried away. However, the loot is not her entire body or capacity to become a wife and mother. Her bloom is the loot; Menander's rape of her is the prize. He then loses her in a crowd and rapes another. Menander uses a flower once again to stand in for Jokaste's violated body by telling the court he "plucked her little flower."⁸⁹ Cats expresses Dinah's rape in precisely the same terms.⁹⁰ This type of expression conceals the bodily harm women suffer in rape and abduction.

Cats also obscures the violence of abduction by likening women to food. Again in his story of the abduction of the women on Shiloh, Cats explains why different men choose different women:

There one requires an old wine, another a new young wine, One that bites the tongue, still another a sweet meal. One wants warm pastry, and another demands roasted, According to where his mouth or thoughts lead. And never is there something so uniquely made. There all in every thing, especially in loving, There are in every thing varying, changing preferences.⁹¹

Cats explains that each abductor has different tastes and chooses the woman he would abduct accordingly. Just as when Cats described the scene as a garden of roses plucked for a bouquet, here he also conceals the pain of the abduction. The reader imagines sitting down to a table with numerous delicious choices of food and drink instead of a group of men attacking a village of women, whom they will take away from their homes forever.

Cats likens women to food in a much less appetizing way in the same story. In this case women are food for doves, which now are the men snapping up the food:

⁸⁹ "...haer blomtjen heb gepluckt..." Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrouwt," ed. Koppenol, 47, line 152.

⁹⁰ Cats, "Lof-Sangh op het Geestelick Houwelick van Godes Soon" in *Alle de Wercken*, v. II. 225.

⁹¹ "Daar eyscht d'een ouden wijn, een ander nieuwen most, Een dat de tonge bijt, een ander soete kost. Een wilder heet geback, een ander eyscht gebraden, Na dat de mont hem leyt of na hem dunckt geraden. En noyt en is'er iet soo selsaam toe-gemaackt. Daar zijn in alle ding, bysonder in het minnen, Daar zijn in alle ding verscheyde tuymel-sinnen." Cats, "Maegden Roof van de Benjamijten te Scilo," ed. Koppenol, 100, lines 131-138.

See, just as a hungry dove flies to food... She eats all that...she finds on the land, or on the streets; But if later she comes to taste a better food, She is able to regurgitate her previous food from her throat. And as her thick throat has removed its ballast, Then is the greedy animal consumes a new meal.⁹²

Cats uses these images to describe how a man chooses to abduct one woman, only to change his mind and take another instead. Here at least, one can imagine some of the damaging effect ingestion and regurgitation has on the food which stands in for the abducted woman.. However, in this metaphor, women are still objects. They are only inanimate grains that can be discarded without care.

Cats also hides the violence done to bodies by using other images as well. For example, he makes abduction seem like shopping: "I found you in flight, and not in your home. No law ever said that someone errs who comes upon a free market and buys something pleasant."⁹³ Yet again, Cats likens women to birds in flight and elides this with the image of birds that can be bought at market in order to undermine the readers' recognition of the pain that accompanies abduction. Cats also obscures women's pain by making abduction seem like beekeeping: "See, when one steals honey, although someone gets stung, one should not avoid the hive in the least."⁹⁴ Despite the slight sting that may occur when gathering honey or women, one should not discontinue these activities. Interesting here is that Cats seems concerned more with the pain the beekeeper may incur while doing his job. This means that Cats is suggesting that men should continue to

⁹² "Siet, als een grage duyf is om haer aes gevlogen... Sy eet al watse ...vint op het landt, of aen de wegen staen...Maer koomtse naderhant een beter vrucht te smaken, Soo weets'haer vorig aes ter keelen uyt te braken. En als haer dicke krop zijn ballast heeft gelost, Soo wort het gulsig dier gespijst met nieuwen kost." Cats, "Maegden Roof van de Benjamijten te Scilo," ed. Koppenol, 101, lines 173-176.

⁹³ Ick heb u aen den rey, en niet in huys gevonden. Geen wet heeft oyt geseyt, dat iemand sich verloopt, Die op eene vrye marcktk bequame waren koopt." Cats, "Maegden Roof van de Benjamijten te Scilo," ed. Koppenol, 103, lines 258-260.

⁹⁴ "Siet, als men honig rooft, schoon iemand wort gesteken, Noch dient'er van de korf in't minst niet geweken." Cats, "Maegden Roof van de Benjamijten te Scilo," ed. Koppenol, 104, lines 293-4.

abduct despite the pain it may cause them. Far more effective than downplaying the effects of women's pain resulting from rape and abduction as he does elsewhere, here Cats only mentions pain incurred by the abductors and rapists.

Cats continually reinforces this idea that women are passive by describing them as prey in the hunt. When pursued by men, their natural predators, women become a variety of different hunted animals in Cats' texts. They are many types of different birds, such as hens: "...the wild young men hide in stillness, Lying in wait for their prey... Just as a sly fox around a hen house."⁹⁵ The active foxes lie in wait for their winged prey. Women are also doves hunted firstly by men: "There the pack of Maidens flees, just like hunted doves..."⁹⁶ and secondly, by other birds of prey: "...No dove can make a harder turn, When the bird realizes that her life is in danger, Because a swift falcon launches himself in the air, And now with his beak brushes her longest feathers."⁹⁷ Women are defenseless birds, while men are sly foxes, and swift falcons. And again, abduction is the hunt: "He lay in wait for her, and spanned his sly nets."⁹⁸ Women are nothing more than animals hunted, pursued, and tricked by their captors. Men are the lurking, sly, pursuing hunters. This simultaneously naturalizes male aggression by giving it natural, animal imagery.

Women are also figured as animals in their efforts to avoid abduction. In Cats' account of the Benjamite abduction of the women of Shiloh, women are sheep: "Yet who

⁹⁵ "Daar gaat de rappe jeugt in stilheyt neder-duycken, En loert op haer bejag, ...Gelick een loose vos ontrent een hoender-kot." Cats, "Maegden Roof van de Benjamijten te Scilo," ed. Koppenol, 98, lines 74-76.

⁹⁶ "Daer vlugt het Maagden-rot, gelijk verjaagde duyven,/ Daer vliegen in de lugt de fijnste doecken-huyven..." Cats, "Maegden Roof van de Benjamijten te Scilo," ed. Koppenol, 101, lines 197-198.

⁹⁷ "...Geen duyf kan harder sweven, Wanneer de vogel siet, het gelt haer aen het leven, Vermids een snelle valck hem in de lucht genaect, En nu met sijnen beek haer langste veeren raeckt." Cats, "Maegden Roof van de Benjamijten te Scilo," ed. Koppenol, 104, lines 301-304.

⁹⁸ "Hy, stracx na dit gespreck, doet op haar gangen letten, Doet loeren achter haar, en spant sijn loose netten." Cats, 'Lof-Sangh op het Geestelick Houwelick van Godes Soon' in *Alle de Wercken*, 1712, v. II, 225.

shall the Benjamite catch in his theft? He is just like a wolf: he travels in quick movements. Before the Shepherd appears, he hides in the woods, And, see, then is the village and all the farmers in disarray.”⁹⁹ The women are not even mentioned here, but it is clear that the shepherd would like to keep the wolves away from his sheep. Here and again in the following, men are the active, hunting wolves: “That Sheep is persistently hunted by the Wolf, So that it seriously complains to its shepherd.” Immediately following this, Cats returns to discuss doves once again: “The sweet Turtledove must live in the rocks, While she defies all the evil hunters.”¹⁰⁰ While Cats uses the same animal imagery, these last two quotes are different. Both the sheep and the turtledove have greater capacity for action. The sheep “complains to its shepherd” and the turtledove “defies all the evil hunters.” While men hunt women in the story about the Benjamite abduction of the women of Shiloh, the second set of images portray the human race in adverse conditions resulting from the fall from grace. When Cats uses animal imagery to portray humanity, he grants them the capacity to seek help from others and successfully evade their captors. When women are animals, they are easily caught.

Cats even suggests that women in fact are more like the animals that symbolize them than they are human. In his introduction to his *Touchstone of Marriage*, Hansje, an eighteen-year-old young man, seeing women for the first time asks: “What animals must that be?” Hansje does not recognize the women as being human like himself. It is also

⁹⁹ “Doch wie sal Benjamijn op sinnen roof beknippen? Hy doet gelijk de wolf: hy gaet in haesten glippen. Eer dat den Harder kooft hy geeft hem in het bos, En, siet, dan is het dorp en al de boeren los.” Cats, “Maegden Roof van de Benjamijten te Scilo,” ed. Koppenol, 105, lines 353-356.

¹⁰⁰ “Die Lely is geplant te midden in den doren, Daar staatse menigmaal en schijnt geheel verloren, Die Roose groeyt gestaag in eenig eensaam dal, Daar vocht van tranen vloeyt en enkel ongeval, De Re is lang gewent te dolen op de bergen, Daar haar meest alle daag de felle bracken tergen, Dat Schaap wort van den Wolf geduerig na-gejaegt, Soo dat het even-staag tot sijnen Herder klaegt, De soete Tortel-duyf moet woonen in de rotsen, Terwijl haar over al de felle jagers trotsen.” Cats, ‘Lof-Sangh op het Geestelick Houwelick van Godes Soon’ in *Alle de Wercken*, 1712, v. II, 220.

important to recognize that the Dutch word used here for animal (*dier*) also has the meaning of a sweet designation for a young girl. Cats plays with the idea that a young girl is a different sort of animal both in Hansje's question and as he further describes them as "geese."¹⁰¹ Thus, women are likened to animals not only to encourage their objectification as passive, hunted and captured in love, but also to set them apart from men whom Cats considers as more fully human.

One can see why Cats does this in his description of Menander's rape of Jokaste, in which he describes the latter as a sheep led to a new pasture:

Thus he comes by a maiden whom he loves very much, Whom he finds all alone and without a shepherd. He knows how to lead her away from her castle, To lure her to the field, to bring her to the heaths; And while he is there alone with her in the green retreat, He undertakes the fulfillment of his unbridled lust.¹⁰²

Just as in the case with the women Hansje sees, Cats' connection of Jokaste to a sheep that can be led away and has no say in what happens is not simply a metaphor. Cats likens Jokaste to a sheep because like an animal, she has no capacity to consent or dissent. She is in essence the sheep who can be led astray, taken home, or perhaps butchered at Menander's whim. Sneller concludes that based on Hansje's perception of how his "little goose" will serve him in marriage and his understanding of women as animals, his housewife will have "the function of not more than a pet," which more suitably in Dutch is literally a "house animal" which linguistically resembles

¹⁰¹ "Wat dieren mogent zijn?" Agnes Smit, *Met Man en Macht: analyse en interpretatie van teksten van en over vrouwen in de vroegmoderne tijd* (Kampen: Kok Agora, 1996) 166. She also refers to the definition of *dier* in the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*: III/2, 2580.

¹⁰² "Soo raeckt hy by een maeght wel eer van hem bemint, Die hy doen juyst alleen en sonder hoeder vint. Hy weetse van haer slot met woorden af te leyden, Te locken op het velt, te brengen aender heyden; En t'wijl hy daer alleen met haer in 't groene rust, Soo stelt hy in het werck syn ongetoomde lust." Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrouwt," ed. Koppenol, 44, lines 51-56.

housewife.¹⁰³ Cats systematically justified women's sexual subjection to certain men by naturalizing male sexual aggression and female passivity and removing these assumed male and female characteristics from debate. Men were hunters by nature and women the hunted.

The closest he comes to describing actual bodies is when he describes how Menander overpowers the two women. Cats uses the term "*kracht gedaen*" which can describe Menander's rape of Tryphose, but since Cats later mentions that Menander also steals her "virginal bloom," *kracht gedaen* more likely means he overpowered her. Cats says that Jokaste "at first tries to fend [Menander] off with good reason, And when that did not help, with all her body," but in spite of this, he is too strong for her and "so goes the rascal forth with his dishonest work."¹⁰⁴ Here Cats mentions Jokaste's body, but only in terms of her being physically overpowered. The sexual attack is obscured by the term "dishonest work." Cats thus can explicitly describe men when they physically overpowered women, but not any details of the sexual violence. He may do this simply to avoid using the language of sex, but skipping the sexual attack allows him to avoid recognizing the damage and pain inflicted upon the bodies of Tryphose and Jokaste.

Cats goes so far as to allow Menander to argue that he has inflicted no damage upon Tryphose when he raped her:

If I had not acted so rashly in this case, I think I would not have done any ill. If I have given her a kiss or two against her will, That is not murder, no one is dead, No temple, no altar is thereby desecrated, I have only slept with her a bit too early and a bit too roughly.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Sneller, 166-7.

¹⁰⁴ "Jokaste weert hem af voor eerst met geode redden, En, als dat niet en hielp, met haer geheele leden. Doch mits de rappe gast de juffer is te sterck, Soo gaet de lincker voort in syn oneerlick werck." Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrout," ed. Koppenol, 44, lines 57-60.

¹⁰⁵ "Had ick in dit geval niet al te ras gegaen, 'K en hadde (na my dunckt) niet quaets hier in gedaen. Heb ick haer tegen danck een kus of twee gegeven, Daer is geen moort geschiet, geen mensche doot gebleven,

Here Cats again uses an abstraction to refer to Menander's destruction of Tryphose's virginity by saying that he did not destroy a temple or an altar. In using these terms to describe the rape, Menander masks the damage done to Tryphose. At one and the same time, rape is referred to in an abstract way and made less significant than destroying a temple or murdering someone. Rape is reduced to "a kiss or two" and having "slept with her a bit too early and a bit too roughly." Even by using the metaphor that we often use for sex, namely sleeping with someone, Cats undermines the physical consequences of rape by refusing to mention the sexual violence done to female bodies.

This chapter has explored Cats' systematic justification of a particular group of men's ability to get away with rape. His works propagate the idea that men who have the means to marry a woman, namely wealth and power, are anything but responsible for rape. Cats denies men the capacity to control their actions at the moment of rape so that they may be exonerated and pitied, like the character Menander whose story commenced this chapter. The urge to act forcefully, hunt, and conquer resides naturally in men and causes them to approach relationships with women in aggressive ways. The very construction of male sexuality as necessarily active and aggressive perpetuates violent, forced sex. Not only do women and exterior factors like natural urges force men to rape, but even their sexuality when exercised properly is violent.

We have witnessed contradictions in example after example. Women must be devoid of desire to attract a man and yet any man can assume that women desire their advances. Women must be virtuous to attract a husband and yet her virtue will put her in

Geen tempel, geen altaer en isser door ontwijt, Ick heb maer wat te vroegh en wat te rau gevrijt." Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrout," ed. Koppenol, 64, lines 127- 132.

danger of rape. Even if a woman would like to accept a certain man to be her husband, she must pretend that he has to win her over violently. To worsen the situation, Cats denies women a claim to injury when raped by refusing to refer to damaged female bodies. For Cats, rape does not hurt the female body; it is like plucking flowers or piercing grapes. Furthermore, a raped woman will most likely benefit by marrying her rapist, whose capacity to act is re-established in order to choose to marry the woman he raped, restore her honor, and rectify the situation.

It is apparent that Cats' concern is not for the personal effects of rape upon an individual woman. He is concerned with rape's effects on society and particularly on men. He wants to allow wealthy patriarchs to practice their natural sexuality in order to maintain the precious social order based on neat heterosexual pairs. Cats wants to ensure that all eligible men and women can marry despite the mishaps that he believes the male sexual impulse may cause. The bleakness of Cats' view can be ascertained by his description of what happens after Shechem took Dinah: "Her maidens were all just as innocent doves, So that they did not comprehend the sorrowful misfortune...Nor that which all women must fear."¹⁰⁶ For Cats a sexual encounter in which a man forces his will upon an innocent woman who refuses him is inevitable because his conception of natural male and female sexuality requires it.

¹⁰⁶ "Haar maagden van gelijk zyn duyven sonder gal, Soo datse niet en sien het droevig ongeval: Soo datse niet en sien wat dat de linckers brouwen, Noch wat te vreesen staat voor alle jonge vrouwen..." Cats, 'Lof-Sangh op het Geestelick Houwelick van Godes Soon' in *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 225.

Chapter 4: Protestant Elite Literature - Women's Powers and Responsibilities

Anna Maria van Schurman (1607-1678) was the most well-educated and well-known woman of the Dutch Golden Age. She wrote in Latin, French, and Dutch, knew Hebrew and Greek, studied with theologians, and corresponded with scholars and rulers throughout Europe. Her fellow countrymen wrote countless poems praising her achievements and encouraged her literary aspirations. Cats dedicated both his *Touchstone of the Wedding Band* and his *Maidens' Duty* to her, referring to her as a jewel, an exceptional woman, and included the engraving and text below. The text proclaims that here is the “glory of all women” and that no one has nor will ever equal or surpass her.



Figure 7: Anna Maria van Schurman¹

This all changed when she chose to follow Jean de Labadie's radical Protestantism in 1669. While she had been praised as uniquely rational, many could only

¹ “Wie oyt dit aerdig beelt sult comen aen te schouwen/ Hout vast dat ghy hier siet een roem voor alle vrouwen/ Van dat de werelt stont, tot heden op ten dagh/ Niet een die haer geleeck of nu berycken magh.” Cats, Dedication, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II.

understand her conversion to Labadism as irrational and due to her female susceptibility to his seduction. She became the target of scathing criticisms from her one-time friends, who now stressed her shiftiness and sexual impropriety. By following her religious convictions and turning her back on Calvinism, Van Schurman became irrational in the minds of many members of the Dutch cultural elites and a slave to her female fleshly desires.

This case clearly demonstrates the extremes of elite male conceptions of female nature, which were seconded by biological understandings of female bodies. Seventeenth-century perceptions suggested that women's physiology was inferior to that of men. Contemporary scholars issued new editions of Galen's and Aristotle's works in which women are described as less developed than men due to a lack of heat. Scholars proposed that specific female physical characteristics, including colder and moister humors and the womb, which was thought to be the cause of many female diseases, had psychological implications such as instability, intense emotional states, and mental and physical weakness. Others, especially Johan van Beverwijck, stressed female capacity that could emanate from competing characteristics united within one person. He believed that Van Schurman was exceptional because she was comprised of both the heat necessary for creativity and the cool humors necessary for scholarly pursuits.²

While the previous chapter examined Jacob Cats' support for the idea of male aggressive sexuality that allowed elite men to be excused from charges of rape, this chapter will examine ideas about female nature that have direct bearing on why they

² See Sneller, chapter 2: "De 'Uitnemenheit' der vrouwen: Johan van Beverijk" and Johannus van Beverwijck, *Van de Wtnementheit des Vrouwelicken Geslachts. Verciert met Historyen, ende Kopere Platen; als oock Latijnsche, ende Nederlantsche Versien van Mr. Cornelius Boy*, Book II (Dordrecht: Hendrick van Esch, 1643).

should accept a rapist as a husband, how they contribute to their own rape, and what they have to do to prevent it. This chapter will foreground the concept of female nature fostered by men from the Dutch cultural elite, focusing particularly on Cats' assessment of female nature, but also including Vondel and authorities from the Protestant Church. As evidenced by this initial example of Van Schurman, men often praise and condemn women excessively in this republic of letters. They believe that women have the power to excel, but also, as we will see, the power to rape men.

Controlling Women's Bodies and Minds

The greatest danger, according to many seventeenth-century authors, is that women begin to exercise their own will, which as we saw in the case of van Schurman leads only to unreasonable decisions that are morally wrong. The Protestant ideas about women examined here suggest that for their own good, women must never exercise their own will, but rather be protected and steered by fathers and husbands. Unless men control their wives and daughters and unless women are careful to control themselves, sexual immorality, even rape, is likely. While ideal women are utterly passive, Cats' advice to women and the decisions of the Amsterdam Reformed Church disciplinary council show that few women are in fact ideal. Women are likely to behave incorrectly and when they do, they deserve the consequences. Cats and long-time Protestant author, Vondel, describe many instances of extreme female assertiveness. They make a strong case advocating strict control of women by suggesting that when women become assertive, they become raping, abducting, man-killers.

Fathers, husbands, and mothers are responsible for controlling female bodies. Cats' book *Maidens' Responsibilities, or the Duty of Young Women in Virtuous Love*, opens with a poem entitled "Address to All Those Burdened with the Care of Maidens." It reads: "Parents, Guardians, Friends, Brothers, Maiden-caretakers, virtue-protectors of the Cloth, If you wish to take care of your Daughters, Seek the ways in no place as much as in this book."³ Cats has written this book for young women's parents, guardians, friends, brothers and, as he mentions in the next stanza, also for young widowed mothers. This makes sense considering the Protestant stress on social structures to help organize society and encourage specific behavior. Unlike Catholics, who could no longer stress that the public social order is right, Cats could appeal to those in charge of young women to control them in the way he describes.

The father's role in helping his daughter maintain her purity is foremost, as evidenced by its premier position in Cats' discussion, its numerous lines, and because Cats refers to it often in his other works. He mentions some signs to know when a daughter needs her father to marry her off:

When a maiden grows so tall, That she fits her mother's cape, Or if she reaches the year of three times six, These are for you father a warning/
That your Daughter misses something, Even though she may not say a word...⁴

³ "Ouders, Voeghden, Vrienden, Broeders, Maeghden-hoeders, Eer-bewaerders van den Douck, Als ghy Dochters wilt besteden, Souckt u reden nerghens, als in desen Bouck. Weduw'-vrouwen, eerbaer herten, Vol van smarten, Die nu zijn moet vrou en man, Hebt ghy Dochters jonck van jaren, Teere Waren, Hier is, dat u helpen can. Maeghden die nu crijght behaghen, Om te jaghen In des liefdes jeughdich velt, Om niet buyten's weegs te dwalen, Hout de palen U in dese Bouck ghestelt. Dat de Maeghden wel bestieren Haer manieren, Is voor d'Ouders wonder soet..." in "Aen-spraecke tot alle belaste met Maeghden-Sorghe," in Cats, *Maechden-Plicht*.

⁴ "Wanneer een maeght so hooge wast, Dat haer des moeders heuycke past, Off coomt tot jaren dry-mael ses, Dit zy u, vader, voor een les, Dat aen u Dochter wat ontbreeckt, Hoe-wel sy niet een woort en spreekt. Cats, *Maechden-Plicht*, 10.

Addressing fathers directly, Cats explains that when a daughter grows to be as tall as her mother or reaches eighteen, she lacks a man to satisfy her.

Fathers in particular need to remember this because they are responsible for allowing their daughters to marry. Again Cats expresses that women need a sexual partner when they reach sexual maturity: “Be sure that a ripe virgin lacks something, Even if she does not complain. When you see these signs, O Fathers do not scorn them/ Pay careful attention to these things/ Or you will contract great unhappiness...”⁵ Cats warns what can go wrong if fathers fail to realize their daughters’ need to be married, using pears as a metaphor for young women’s bodies:

Be wary fathers, to care for your children when it is necessary; Because he who through immodesty does not heed and strike, Laments it greatly when it is too late. There! As the pear blooms, then begins to fall in place, And as the eligible maiden ripens, so will she often lie shattered, Thus you will be freed from sorrow and disgrace, Market this weak fruit; sell it at the right time.⁶

There is a specific time by which daughters have to be given by their father in marriage according to Cats. It is unclear whether it is women’s own desires or men’s that may cause this, but in any case women are fruit that must be sold to a man or they will lose their virginity, which is their source of value. Cats also mentions mothers’ responsibility for their daughter’s purity. He has the wise virgin Anna, whose advice the reader is directed to follow, state: My wish is that a mother pay attention to when a daughter

⁵ “Denckt vry dat aen een rijpe maegt/ Iet schort, hoewel se niet en klaegt. Wanneer gy dese peylen siet, O vaders, en verachtse niet, Maer let wel neerstig op het stuck/ Of u genaecht groot ongeluck...” in Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, 10.

⁶ “Leert vaders, als het dient, op uwe kinders passen; Want die uyt onbescheyt hier op geen acht en slaet, Belkaegt hem menigmael wanneer het is te laet. Die! Als de peere bloost, dan plagtse ligt te vallen, En als de vryster rijpt, soo wiles veeltijts mallen; Dus wilt gy van verdriet en schande sijn bevrijt, Vent, vent dit weecke fruyt, en dat te regter tijt.” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. I, 532.

should be transplanted.⁷ Mothers too share in the responsibility of making sure a daughter is married off in time in order to avoid “great unhappiness.”

Marriage is the way to ensure a woman’s purity according to Cats, because he believes that marriage is the only way to control humans’ sinful desires.⁸ He explains that all people are drawn naturally to ‘couple’. To illustrate this point Cats draws an analogy between humans and animals: “Every animal pairs within its own genus; Each one feels and feeds his own fire, Each one mates, and marries, in its own way.”⁹ Humans, like every type of animal, have an internal feeling according to Cats – a fire – that makes them mate. He uses animals to show that sex is a natural urge that no one escapes.

Elsewhere he continues on this same track of thought:

Marriage is the best advice; Has ever there been a virgin/ Who did not complain? To live alone is sorrow, And does not serve us weak humans: Virginitie is a difficult burden, Which brings nothing more than discomfort.¹⁰

Cats believes that humans, especially women, are weak and require sex and company.

Even better, marriage does not mark the end of sexual purity, but rather sexual purity is maintained during marriage. In his introduction to the *Maiden’s Duty or the*

Responsibilities of Young Women in Honorable Love of 1618 he quotes Church Father

Chrysostomus: “That is the best way to maintain your virginity, Because whoever carries

⁷ “Ick wensche dat een moeder let, Wanneer een dochter dient verset.” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 245.

⁸ Following Martin Luther’s attack on the possibility of a life of celibacy, most Protestant Reformers both married and argued that marriage was the best way to live a Christian life. Only in England did monarchs, Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, and many parishioners disfavor married priests and occasionally refuse communion celebrated by them. For more on this see Merry Weisner-Hanks, *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2000), chapter 2: Protestantism in Europe, especially 61, 73.

⁹ “Elck dierken paert in sijn gheslacht; Elck voelt en voet sijn eygen vier, Elck vrijt, en trout, op sijn manier” Cats, *Maechden-Plicht*, 2.

¹⁰ “Het trouwen is den besten raet; Wie bleef’er oyt sijn leven maegt/ Die sig des niet en heeft beklagt? Alleen te leven is verdriet, En dient ons swacke menschen niet: De maegdom is een lastig pack, Die niet en baert als ongemack.” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, vol. I, 245.

herself in honorable love without sin, Although she'll become a Wife, she will still remain a Virgin.”¹¹ Cats teaches that sex within a proper marriage did not cause sexual impurity, but rather preserves purity.

Protestants did not think virginity was entirely unworthy. On the contrary, Cats addressed virgins often in his works, and directly in the first section of his work *Marriage* of 1625 and throughout his *Maiden's Duty*. It is in the latter that he praises virgins and works to set them apart: “Why is there as of yet no weapon imputed/ To you, oh treasure of the world, oh Virginal sex, Who in the lover's heart is so nobly adored?”¹² Virgins are a valued and distinct group for whom Cats devises an identifying coat of arms. The difference is that for Protestants, such as Cats, a virgin is a young woman only. This can be seen in his description of a virgin:

Learn, Maiden, to preserve your sweet youth for one alone...Be women in understanding, and maidens in habits... Learn here how best to direct your youth in chastity, Your honor is your ware; your bloom is your all, Ah, you are finished if you fall.¹³

Cats understands maidens to be young women who need to be chaste and preserve their maidenhood only until a husband finds them. For Cats, all virgins are meant to marry, just as all “honest people do.”¹⁴ In marriage, their husbands ideally will ensure their passivity and good behavior.

¹¹ “Dat is den besten voet om Maeghdom te besteden, Want die haer sonder smet in eerbaer liefde draeght, Al wertse schoon een Vrou, soo blijftse doch een Maeght.” Cats “Wapen-schild alle eerbare maeghden toegheeyghent” in *Maechden-Plicht*.

¹² “Waerom en werter noch gheen Wapen toe-gheschreven,/Aen u, o ‘s Weirelts ooghe, o Maeghdelijck gheslacht,/ Die in des minnaers hart soo edel zijt gheacht?/ En isser gheen Heralt, die, na den eysch van saken,/ En na u sachten aert, een Wapen weet te maken?” Cats, “Wapen-schild alle eerbare maeghden toegheeyghent” in *Maechden-Plicht*.

¹³ “Leert, Maegt, voor een alleen u soete jeugt bewaren...Weest vrouwen in verstant, en maeghden in manieren...Leert hier van uwe jeught in eerbaerheyt bestieren, U Eertjen is u goet, u Bloemken is u al, Ach ‘t is met u ghedaen, soo dat commt tot een val.” Cats, “Wapen-schild alle eerbare maeghden toegheeyghent” in *Maechden-Plicht*.

¹⁴ Cats, “Wapen-schild alle eerbare maeghden toegheeyghent” in *Maechden-Plicht*.

The question that arises at this point is whether marriage was a patriarchal form of social control or an opportunity for companionship in the 17th century Netherlands. Many modern historians of the family, such as Lawrence Stone and Donald Haks, believe that there was a slow evolution from patriarchal to companionate styles of marriage. Dutch cultural historian Simon Schama agrees, and asserts that the Dutch seem to have been, in his words: “pioneers on the frontier of friendly, loving marriages.” Schama finds proof for this in the “informal tenderness” and “reciprocal friendship” displayed in marriage portraits.¹⁵



*Figure 8: Marriage Portrait of Issac Massa and Beatrix van der Laen*¹⁶

See for example this portrait by Frans Hals. Situated outdoors, perhaps because the husband is there to protect her, this husband and wife do appear to be affectionate companions, sitting adoringly side by side.

¹⁵ Schama, 424.

¹⁶ Frans Hals, *Marriage Portrait of Issac Massa and Beatrix van der Laen*, oil on canvas, 1622, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

However, my findings challenge Schama's rosy view of Dutch marriage. It is true that this man and wife are positioned as companions, but even here Hals infuses this portrait with a variety of symbols that undermine the idea that his subjects are equal partners in marriage. Most tellingly, as Schama notices, Hals seats the couple in front of a tree surrounded by ivy and has the couple themselves echo the positions of these plants. Like the ivy, the wife drapes her arm across her husband's shoulder. This was common symbolism for the relationship between husband and wife. Below is an example of this imagery from Jacob Cats' work.

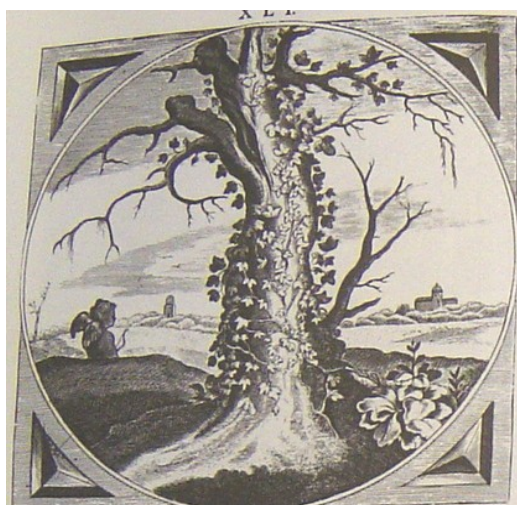


Figure 9: *Emblem of a Tree*¹⁷

This emblem is actually meant to critique a woman who marries a man who is too old for her because, as you can see, the ivy is attached to a dead stump. However what Schama fails to note is the implication of using weak ivy to symbolize a wife supported by her husband, the sturdy tree. This demonstrates that even in portraits in which men and women appear as affectionate companions there are undertones that demonstrate the

¹⁷ Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, vol. I, 148.

husband's superior position in marriage and women's dependence on them. While couples share a partnership, Cats shows that it is a very unequal one.

Contrary to earlier historians who claim that Protestantism was a driving force of progressivism, individualism, and modernization, women's historians have been more sensitive to the way the Reformation limited the female half of its believers' actions by requiring the incorporation of women under their husbands' leadership. Lyndal Roper, for example, in her *Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg*, showed that Protestantism allowed patriarchs to exercise greater social control over women through the increased control of their sexuality. If Protestantism did encourage some progression and individualism for men, it did so at the expense of the independence of their wives. While Catholicism continued to allow women official religious roles, Protestantism eliminated this possibility and thereby ensured that women were more fully subjected to men.¹⁸ Cats and other Dutch Protestant elites suggest that the only ideal woman is one who exercises no assertiveness and that once a woman takes any sort of action, or expresses her will, rape, and sexual immorality ensue.

In fact, according to Cats, women's responses to proposals, their own abduction, and later, to their husbands are all predetermined, leaving no opportunity for a woman to make a choice. He explains that when a man woos a woman, she should always initially reject a man to make herself appear virtuous: "A courteous refusal ... is always judged tasteful in such circumstances, and (in my opinion) not harmful as is said by a certain poet of lovers, '...All that is not permitted is what [men] want the most'." As a manner of etiquette and to make themselves attractive to their suitors, women have to initially

¹⁸ Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household: Women and Morals, in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 2-3 and Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975).

refuse. This does not mean that women can actually choose to reject a man. According to Cats: “To initially refuse is friendly virtue, but to persist in refusal, is insolent stubbornness, or... true perjury.”¹⁹ Women thus have no choice, once they refuse out of form, they have to accept out of submission. We can see this again in the biblical story of the abducted women of Shiloh:

Whatever a maiden or young woman does, There is a young man from the crowd that finds her nature sweet. People hear an angry maiden cursing her abductor: You rascal, rogue, evildoer, villain and kidnapper! What answer? However you may curse, you still are my worthy love; This evening it will be better. Although someone is hit, He can bear it with patience and without rancor. But whatever the case may be, or whatever may happen, Whoever catches a worthy prey will not leave her behind.²⁰

Regardless of what the maidens of Shiloh do, how they curse, and how they strike, their abductors realize that they will not be able to persist in their refusal. When men’s love and desire assumes forms of coercion and violence, female consent is considered unnecessary. It is by this same token that female’s capacity to reject is also erased. When desire and agency are both assumed to be male, female consent, or the lack thereof, becomes irrelevant.²¹ Cats requires women to reject all men until one is forced upon them and then requires women to consent.

Cats’ emphatic denial of female will does not cease upon their marriage. Ideally women must continue to deny their desires and will as they subject themselves to their husband. Cats admonishes wives to:

¹⁹ “Wat te weygeren is heusche eerbaerheyt, maer in het weygeren te volherden, is stuersche moetwilligheyt, ofte (nae eysch van saecken te spreken) rechte meyneedigheyt.” Cats, *Proefsteen van den Trou-Ringh* (1858), 85.

²⁰ “... Wat maegt of vryster doet, Een vryer uyt den hoop die vint haer wesen soet. Men hoort een gramme maegt op haren rover schelden: O guyt, o siel, o schelm, o boef en menschendief! Wat antwoord? Hoeje schelt, gy blijft mijn waerde lief; ’t Sal t’avont beter zijn. Schoon iemand wort geslagen, Hy kan het met gedult, en sonder morren dragen. Maer hoe de saken gaen, of wat’er oyt geschiet, Wie vangt, laet sijnen roof, sijn waerde proye niet.” Cats, “Maegden Roof van de Benjamijten te Scilo,” ed. Koppenol, 103, lines 275-284.

²¹ Gowing, 99, 86.

Learn from our own Gardener; To live in the state of marriage, Who, cuts off the branches of his grapevine, And severs the top of the vine, Before he grafts the new top on the vine. You too, dismiss your own head, Whenever you grow one, And you will rob your bosom/ Of all of your own will/ That might otherwise distract it.²²

Through this advice, Cats tells wives to never exercise their own will that emanates from their own heads, but rather to act only according to their husbands' will. Cats again describes how a woman should subject herself entirely to her husband and even to his moods:

The man is the head, and therefore it is not necessary/ To continually wonder about the desire of the women. Between man and wife, I pray you, make distinction. Because all the women are to do is exercise their husbands' will. In case you seek the way to be clear in this, Think that an honorable wife must be just like a mill; Which now or nevermore turn her arms like fins/ Only as the wind powerfully turns them. The business of the woman is exactly like this, She must never move her arms of her own will/ But wait on her husband, and be turned/ All according to his sign, whether still or hard he blows. If your husband sits and is uncertain, is overcome by sorrow, Then it is certainly no time to come to milling. Make sure you continually wait for his moods; Be sad if he is grieving; and happy when he laughs.²³

A woman's desires are not important to men because of their position in the family and in society. This is a very clear statement of how irrelevant a woman's consent is. Women have no will, as Cats says, "Because all the women are to do is exercise their husband's will." Through the simile that women are like windmills, he advises their complete

²² "Leert tot des echten staets bestier, Noch dit van onsen Hovenier; Die, als de tacken zijn ghevelt, Al-eer hy noch sijn Inte stelt, Berooft het Boomken van sijn top. Ghy mee, doet wegh u eyghen cop, Wanneer ghy krijgt een ander hooft, En uwen boesem dan berooft/ Van alles dat ter syden aen, Uut eyghen sinnen coomt ter baen." in Cats, *Maechden-Plicht*, 88.

²³ "De man is opper-voogt, en daerom niet gehouwen/ Geduerig nae te gaen de wel-lust van de vrouwen. Maekt tussen man en wyf, ik bidde maekt verschil. Want al de vrouwen zyn maer om der mannen wil. Indien gy soeckt den weg om hier in niet te dolen, Denkt dat een eerbaer wyf moet zyn gelyck een molen; Die nu of minnermeer haer raffé wicken roert/ Dan alsse van de wint wert krachtig om-gevoert. 'De saken van de vrou zyn juyst alsoo gelegen, Sy moet uyt eygen sin haer roeren noch bewegen, Maer wachten op haer man, en werden om-gedraeyt/ Al nae dat syn gebaer, of stil, of harde waeyt. Sit uwe man en dut, met droefheyt over-vallen, Ten is dan geensings tyt om dan te komen mallen. Gy, maekt dat gy gestaeg op syn gedaente wacht; Weest droevig, als hy treurt; en vrolik, als hy lacht." Cats, "Self-Stryt" in *Alle de Wercken*, v. I. 189.

physical and psychological subjection to their husbands. They must not only act according to their husbands' directions, but they must also adjust themselves to the latter's every mood. For Cats, who has scripted all of women's responses for them, women are not actors in their romantic affairs but are more like stage props for the men who can be sure of their willingness despite signs to the contrary.

The images that Cats uses to symbolize women underscore his transformation of them from possible actors into passive stage props. His description of women as brittle earthenware vessels is particularly informative. He uses this image (see below) in an emblem that has the caption: "The jug goes to the water until it breaks." The title of this emblem, which is "Playful, unwed, young women dishonored through their playfulness," shows that Cats uses the earthenware water jug as a metaphor for young women.



Figure 10: "Playful, unwed, young women dishonored through their playfulness"²⁴

A portion of the accompanying text written from the perspective of the young girl pictured reads:

²⁴ Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. I, 531.

And in the next village there lived a rough group of young people, Among whom everyday there is the wildest mirth; I was bursting with life and drawn to the game, I came to a group for some pleasurable conversation; Every now and then I bumped my water vessels against one another, But this was too much for such a weak stone: Because amid this excitement, a wild young man/ Came walking from the village, and pounced on me: He knocked into me extremely hard, so that my jar leaks, He knocked into me again, so that my jar broke... Whoever sees my shame, O! Learn a useful lesson from my sorrow... It is true that... ‘The pot goes to the well until it finally breaks.’²⁵

Cat intended each of his emblems to be interpreted on at least three levels – the realistic, the romantic, and the divine. First, a water jar is an implement that a young girl would need to carry water and therefore describes an everyday object. Second, it is a metaphor for the young girl’s fragile physical virginity and the way a seventeenth-century mind perceived the breaking of the maidenhead. Third, it illustrates divine teaching by moralizing that if a girl allows herself to be in a place where she will be tempted, she will eventually relent, as symbolized by the vessel giving way. By portraying young women as weak earthenware jars, Cats defines them as fragile, always open and enterable, and ultimately broken bodies just like the object he uses to symbolize them.

Cats propagates a very specific construction of female bodies and violent sex through this imagery. He considers rape a natural, violent end of female purity, because sex itself implies male violence as the verbs he employs suggest (pounce and knock into), and because he believes the destruction of the symbol for female purity, the jug, is inevitable. At the same time, this image erases the relevance of the claim of rape because in the same way that a passive, fragile pot cannot fight to avoid being broken, Cats robs

²⁵ “En in het naeste dorp daer woont een rauwe jeugt, Daer is dan alle daeg, der is de wilde vreugt; Ick welig uyt’er aert, en tot het spel genegen, Quam mede by den hoop om soete jock te plegen; Ick klost nu en dan twee kruycken tegen een, Maer’t was te veel bestaen voor so een weecken steen: Want onder dit gewoel, een onbesuysde jongen/ Komt loopen uyt het dorp, en tegen my gesprongen: Die stoot te bijster hart, soo dat mijn kruycke leeckt, Die stoot noch ander-mael, sodat mijn kruyke breekt... Wel, die mijn schande siet, O! leer een nutte les, en dat uyt mijn verdriet... Het is een seker woort, daer oock de reddden spreekt, ‘De pot gaet nae de put tot sy ten lesten breekt.’” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. I, 531.

women of the possibility that they might fight against a man when assaulted. The symbol of young women mentioned previously, the bunch of grapes, similarly depicts the bodies of young girls as likely to be pierced, breakable, and in need of protection. In both images, Cats uses language that makes them breakable- thus rapable- and useless once broken. Simultaneously, these maidens are no longer rapable because they have no ability to refuse their consent to sex. They are open to penetration. The likening of young women to fragile grapes and breakable vessels makes rape on the one hand seem inevitable and worse than death; grapes will be pierced and vessels will be broken and once they are, they have no further value. On the other hand, it makes rape impossible because women's objectification makes their role irrelevant. When women can no longer refuse sex, there can be no rape. Like passive maidens, vessels and grapes cannot exercise any will when they are used, pierced, or touched.

Advice to Imperfect Women

Cats' understands women to be inferior and ideally passive, but his advice to women shows that he expects their behavior to be less than ideal. His advice frequently includes examples of failure and threatens women with the consequences in order to encourage women to control themselves. Whether by talking, playing, being outside or in the wrong place, a woman makes herself vulnerable. Once she exposes herself to danger, she is responsible and even deserving of the consequences, which very often include rape. By stressing women's responsibility to avoid rape and their complicity in cases in which they are raped, Cats encourages women to internalize patriarchal control mechanisms, whereby the dominated become active agents of their own restraint.

Cats underlined women's responsibility to avoid contact with men. He often states that whenever women allow themselves to be near men, they have to expect negative consequences: "Anna, riper in wisdom... Will show the danger, Into which a maiden may easily fall, Who often jokes and mixes with young men."²⁶ When a young woman talks to a young man, she will likely fall into sexual impurity with him. Not only is speaking with men dangerous according to Cats, but women may also lose their sexual purity by listening to men: "Because as a maiden lends her ear, Although she does not intend this business, She is yet won many a time, Through convincing language. And many, who are more clever than she, Often fall into trouble."²⁷ If she but listens to a man, regardless of her pure intentions, he can often convince her to accede to impurity. Cats makes this point again metaphorically in a story about a girl who plays with a bee:

A young girl tormented by her youth, Went to play in a lively field, She picked little flowers here and there, And there was placed in danger by a bee, The young woman had a desire to play, She never gave the little animal a rest; She grasped, and pinched, wherever it went or arose, Until she finally got pricked, Then loudly she exclaimed: foul deceit! I only wanted to play with it; I am so affected by your sting, That my body swells with bumps, The game is sweet and cures sorrow, In a way that does not serve maidens well.²⁸

Talking and joking with a man, even when a maiden's intentions are pure, is like playing with a bee. Cats tells maidens that they must expect to get stung even if they just want to have fun. As a result of being pricked their body will swell, and therefore mimic the

²⁶ "...Anna, rijper van verstant, ...En gaet verthoonen het gevaer, Waer in een maegt wel licht verval, Die veel met iong-mans jockt en malt." in Cats, *Maechden-Plicht*, 1.

²⁷ Want als een maegt het oore leent, Schoon sy de saecke niet en meent, Sy wort noch echter menigmael Gewonnen door een soete taet. En veel, die sneger zijn als gy, Die raecken dikmael aen den bry." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. I, 252.

²⁸ "Een meysje van haer jeugt gequelt, Ging spelen door een lustig velt, Het pluckte bloemtjens hier en daer, En wert daer in een Bie gewaer, De vryster hadde spelens lust, Dies had het beesje nimmer rust; Sy greep, een neep, waert liep of week, Tot dats' in 't leste kreeg een steeck, Doen riepse luyde: fel gedrocht! Ick die alleen maer spelen socht; Ben door u pricken soo gestelt, Dat my het lijf tot bobbels swelt, Het spel is soet en heelt verdriet, Ten dient nochtans de maegden niet." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. I, 251.

possible results of sexual encounter. Cats makes it sound like men are dangerous animals with whom one cannot play because they have no choice but to sting. It is entirely the responsibility of women to avoid men who are dangerous by their nature and likely to hurt and impregnate women.

Cats advises young women to be particularly careful not to touch men because it will permanently damage the female body.

Alas! We [Maidens] are so fragile and weak, Just as a fresh Grape vine:
Go touch once the most beautiful bunch, At once all its sweet blush,
That pleasant earthly blue/ Will change into dark gray: Because wherever
one sets but a finger, There is thenceforth a blemish. Our honor is tender,
our conscience is delicate, It therefore much not be handled much.²⁹

According to Cats, the slightest of touches permanently corrupts maidens. Their bodies, like grapes, are permanently damaged wherever touched because of their fragile nature. It is likely that their natural sexual proclivities will be quickened by this contact, which thereafter are impossible to deaden. Through touch their honor is blighted and their consciences can be negatively affected. Because of all this a maiden must avoid touch at all costs according to Cats.

Cats also admonishes young women not to wander around outside. Cats uses the biblical example of Dinah to show that had she stayed home she could have avoided her rape:

[Jacob's] daughter desired to go wandering, And to see the ways of the
land, And what kind of people there were in the impure surroundings; She
went first through the field with her maidens, She went also thereafter into
the fortified cities, She saw, and she was seen...³⁰

²⁹ “Eylaes! Wy sijn soo meeps en wack, Ghelijck een verschen Druyven-tack: Gaet handelt eens den schoonsten tros, Terston sal heel dien soeten blos, Dat aengenaem, dat aerdich blau/ Verandert sijn in duyster-grau: Want waer-men maer een vingher set, Daer is van stonden aen een smet. Ons eer is teer, ons verw’is fijn, S’en mach niet veel gehandelt sijn.” in Cats, *Maechden-Plicht*, 54.

³⁰ “Sijn [Jacob's] dochter wert belust on haar te gaan vermeyen, En om te mogen sien de wijse van het lant, En wat men voor een volck daar in de vlekken vant; Sy gaat eerst door het velt met hare maagden treden, Sy gaat oock naderhant tot in de vaste steden, Sy siet, en wort gesien...” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 225.

The direct result of her exploration outside her home was her rape. Cats asserts through the tragic story of Dinah that by staying home she could have prevented her sexual assault, her brothers' murder of her rapist, and her own and her family's disgrace.

Elsewhere, he writes that the same rape occurred because Dinah was playful: "[Dinah] is violated because she goes out to play. Alas! There she lost all her glory, There she lost her tender virgin bloom, There she lost her wreath, and proud crown, Ah! That is the wage for playing."³¹ Cats blames Dinah for going "out to play," by which he means following her fleshly desires by satisfying her "curious eye." Dinah is emblematic of the need for young women to not wander around or be playful.

Cats furthermore tries to convince maidens to stay home by using images of farm animals. Just as they passively sit in some guarded interior, women must try to do the same:

It does not fit our status well/ To walk the streets prolongedly; It is also not advisable for a maiden/ To stand often in the doorway or in windows... It becomes a maiden to be still. Thus will she be of good praise, So stay in the house, hold there your court: And wait until you are sought out there, Those most often in the field are the least often sold. It is an adage everywhere, The best cows you find in the stall. And, the Sheep that goes through the thistles, Progressively loses some of its wool.³²

A woman should best stay home where like a cow or sheep, she will be better protected.

Just as it is easier to sell such a well-protected animal, Cats suggests that she will more

³¹ "Sy is door spleen-gaen geschent. Eylaes! Daer bleef haer gansche roem, Daer bleef haer teere maegdebloem, Daer bleef haer krans, en fiere kroon, Ach! Dat heeft spleen voor een loon." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 252.

³² "Noch voughtet qualijck onsen state/ Gheduerich drillen achter straet; Ten is een maeght oock niet geraen/ Veel in de deur of vensters staen...Het vought een maeght te wesen stil. Dus wildy zijn van goeden lof, Soo blijft in huys, hout daer u hof: En wacht tot ghy daer wert gesocht, Waer' meest gheveylt, wert minst vercocht. Het is een spreek-woort over al, De Beste koeyen vint m' op stal. En, 't Schaep dat door de Doornen gaet, Gestaegh yet van sijn wolle laet." in Cats, *Maechden-Plicht*, 66-67.

easily be married. He again compares women to disheveled sheep in the following image and example:



*Figure 11: Emblem of a Sheep*³³

Tell, little Sheep, tell; what reason is there to complain? Why do you blame these thorns? I see that the trip has not gone well, I see your best fur is plucked out in clumps; If only you'd have stayed by the others, or in your stall, Then no thorn bush would have caught your coat. But see! The maiden yells angrily, How did this villain get me? And let him in herself.³⁴

It is less likely that maidens be pristine and pure if they have been wandering around outside through fields or forests, like untended cattle or sheep. According to Cats, women need tending and the protection of a home. Just as Cats blamed the girl for playing with the bee, here he tells the virgin that it is her fault if her exterior is pierced, or her coat is plucked out. She should have stayed home with women like herself, or stayed inside, like

³³ Cats, *Maeghden-Plicht*, 67. Leiden University Library, Western Printed Books, Bijzondere Collecties (KL) - 1019 C 23: 2.

³⁴ “Ey segh eens, Schapje segh; wat is ‘er al te klagen? Wat geefje doch de schult aen dese doren-hagen? Ick sie dat u de reys niet wel en is geluckt, Ick sie u beste vacht met vlocken uytgepluckt; Maer hadje by den hoop, of in de kooy gebleven, So hadder niet een braen aen uwe vacht gewreven: Maer siet! Het meysje riep, als met een grammen sin, Hoe kom ick aen den boef? En liet hem sellef in.” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. I, 140.

the animals in a farm stall.

In Cats' advice to young women, clothing and demeanor are important ways to attract a husband and potentially a rapist. He walks a tight line between advising women to hide themselves while simultaneously displaying their passivity to possible suitors. He does not want young women to seem completely unapproachable, but rather to demurely attract the opposite sex through the way they dress. He tells them: "Your clothes and demeanor should not be too severe. But make them give witness: Present yourself in an appealing manner..."³⁵ Cats expects young unmarried women to dress themselves so that their clothing gives a signal to men that they are available for marriage if the man should be so inclined. The image accompanying this advice suggests that a maiden should act as a lighthouse for a man on the sea. She can shine forth her availability for marriage through her appearance, but she cannot actively seek a man. Cats writes this advice on how young women should dress with the stricter style of the Catholic religious women, called "klopjes" or beguines, in mind. He stresses the fallacies of these women's strict, nun-like practices in his advice to young women:

You may show through your appearance, That you are neither klopje or
Beguine, Your clothes and demeanor should not be too severe, You may
give some sign whereby you/ Make it possible for a man to speak to you,
But do not initiate a conversation with a young man.³⁶

While Cats again gives advice that maidens should make themselves appear to be approachable, he does not want a woman to take the initiative and speak to a man.

Women must remain passive and somehow make it easy for men to address them.

³⁵ "U cleet en wesen niet te straf. Mach daer wel wat ghetuyghen af: Stelt u dan wel beroup'lick voort..." *Maeghden-Plicht*, 26.

³⁶ "Ghy mooght wel thoonen, metten schijn, Day ghy zijt Clopje noch Bagijn, U cleet en wesen niet te straf/ Mach daer wel wat ghetuyghen af/ Stelt u dan wel beroup'lick voort, Maer clampt den vryer niet aen boort." Cats, *Maeghden-Plicht*, 26.

In his story “Two Raped, and Both Marry,” Cats warns women that not following his advice can have undesirable consequences. Tryphose, one of the raped women in this story, has the strict appearance and behavior that Cats advises against. Although she mentions eventual marriage here, she seems too individualistic and righteous, much like the Catholic single women Cats disdains:

What does it matter if a virgin wants to preserve her honor, And to save
her tender limbs for the marriage bed, What does it matter if a virgin locks
herself in her house, And drive out all her frivolity with all her might, If a
seducer, the worst of the criminals/ May hurt her youth, and sadden her
tender soul.³⁷

Tryphose suffers rape despite, or perhaps due to an overly disciplined lifestyle in which she “lock[ed] herself in her house” and drove “out all her frivolity.” The rapist, Menander, even claims that it was in fact her extraordinary virtue that made him rape her:

She has a still countenance, a pure and proper appearance, And there is
strict discipline to be read in her face; Still it is her appearance, even/
though it never reached out to lust, That has awoken the lusts in my
disposition. Is it not a strange thing with our sorrowful life! Even virtue
has driven me to fornication, The stillness to violence, discipline to foul
lust...³⁸

According to Cats, Tryphose’s virtue instigated Menander desire. It was her purity, which he was able to read in her face that awoke his lust and led him to violate her. Tryphose is anything but an example to other young women whom Cats advises to appear attractive and approachable.

³⁷ “Wat batet of een maeght haer eere wil bewaren, En tot het echte bed haer teere leden sparen, Wat batet of een maeght haer in den huyse sluyt, En drijft met alle macht haer losse sinnen uyt, Indien een schuyfelbout, de slimste van de bouven/ Magh foolen haeren jeught, haer teere ziel bedrouven,” Cats, “Twee verkracht, en beyde getrouwt,” ed. Koppenol, 52-3, lines 365-370.

³⁸ “Sy heeft een stil gelaat, een reyn, en deftigh wesen, En daer is strenge tucht in haer gesicht te lesen; En efter haer gelaat, dat noyt tot lust en streckt, Dat heeft in mijn gemoet de lusten opgeweckt. Is’t niet een selsaem ding met ons aalweerdigh leven! De deught heeft even-selfs tot ondeugt my gedreven, De stilheyt tot geweld, de tucht tot vuyle lust...” Cats, “Twee verkracht, en beyde getrouwt” ed. Koppenol, 47, lines 135-148.

Cats provides several other examples in which female virtue tempts men to rape. Orlande's attempts to protect her chastity in marriage, for example, heightens a king's desire for her:

...[Orlande], a pure soul, was steadfast in this case, She would never grant marriage favors to a stranger. After [the king begins to favor her] she avoids her own friends, And does her business so that she seldom rides out: She separates herself from the people, and bans herself from the street, And shows that she hates all excitement and feasts. Hereby the King was ignited by even greater lust, His longings, first disguised, begin to become noticeable...³⁹

Orlande's virtue increased the king's longing for her. In fulfilling her duty to maintain her pure marriage, she made it more likely that the king would take her from her husband against her will. Cats shows the appeal of a virtuous woman again in his *Maidens' Duties* as he uses a bunch of grapes as a metaphor for pure, young, virgin girls: "[When one] sees a bunch of grapes, hung with cool dew, The pleasant sight ...fills everyone with longing."⁴⁰ The purity and virtue of virgins and chaste wives attracts admirers. Women were thus raped because of their virtue and passivity, but simultaneously taught that this is also their only way to attain a husband. Cats' message for women is that they should behave like virtuous prey, so that they may be hunted with the implicit danger that reality may take on some of the violence of the metaphor.

In all this advice to young women, Cats suggests that women are to blame for their own rape. Dinah should not have wandered out of her home, the girl with the bee was stung because she tried to play with it, and the sheep or cattle who leave the stall are

³⁹ "Maar sy, een reyne ziel, set vast in dit geval, Dat sy noyt echte gunst aan vreemde geven sal. Sy gaat na desen tijt haar eyge vrienden mijden, En stelt haar saken aan om seldom uyt te rijden: Sy scheyt haar van het volk, en bant haar van de straat, En toont dat sy 't gewoel en alle feesten haat. Hier door soo wert de Vorst in heeter lust onsteken, Syn togten, eerst bedeckt, beginnen uyt te breken..." Cats, "Schoonheyt bedorven om een man te behagen," in *Alle de Wercken*, 1712, v. II, 79.

⁴⁰ "Hy siet een Druyven-tros, met koelen dauw behangehen, Wiens aenghenaem gesicht een yder doet verlanghen;" Cats, "Wapen-schild alle eerbare maeghden toegheeyghent," in *Maecheden-Plicht*.

likely to get stuck by thorns. Cats is clear that it is not Shechem, the bee, or the thorn's fault. Men will rape, bees will sting, and thorns will prick. Even excessive virtue and modesty can drive a man to rape. It is a woman's responsibility to recognize how she can avoid these dangerous situations. Cats goes so far as to make it a general principal that by not behaving correctly, women invite rape:

There was never young woman instantly violated, Or separated from her chastity, But step by step, and foot by foot, So she comes where she mustn't; One first strikes up a silly conversation, And then in playful exuberance, There follows foolish love, And that grows deeper and deeper... And once then in a dream of love, When all the lusts are out of check, And between joy and madness, Then comes the rat then to the bacon: There sits, alas, the foul bride/ And weeps out her eyes: But, O young maiden, too late/ To complain after the silly deed.⁴¹

Cats suggests that women's bodies are always complicit in violation and loss of chastity.

When a woman talks to a man and is playful, she will also come under the control of "foolish love" at which point she will lose control of herself. Here Cats lists the ways to ensure that lust remains in check: do not go to the wrong places, do not have silly conversations, do not be playful, and do not love foolishly or madly. If a woman does not fulfill this responsibility, she must have become corrupted by the activities themselves and desired sexual attack. Thus if a woman, such as Dinah, is raped, she initiated it herself through her bad behavior.

⁴¹ "Noyt vryster wort terstont geschent, Of van haer kuysheyt afgewent, Maer stap, op stap en voet aen voet, Soo koomtse daerse niet en moet; Men raeckt voor eerst in malle praet, En voorts in dertel ongelaeft, Daer uyt ontstaet dan sotte min, En die gaet diep en dieper in, Dies wast de vryheyt des te meer, En groeyt ten lesten al te seer, En eens dan in een minnedroom, Sijn al de lusten uyt den toom, En tusschen vroet en tusschen geck, Soo komt de rat dan aen het speck: Daer sit, eylaes! De vuyle bruyt/ En schreyt dan beyd' haer oogen uyt: Maer 't is, o vrijsters, al te laet/ Te klagen na de malle daet." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. I, 251.

Frightening Powers of Assertive Women

In stark contrast to his depiction of ideal women as passive objects and prey, Cats claims that assertive women exercise incredible power over men. It is not always a power that they control, but it is apparently their responsibility to prevent it from harming themselves and others. In the following example, Cats explains that women are endowed with the power of static and magnetic forces:

Amber attracts the straw through unknown forces, One sees the hard steel seems to wait for the lodestone, And when it beckons, it hurries toward it, And attaches itself to the stone, and no one knows how. The amber that draws us that are the clear beams, That wanders from a spirited eye to our faces... The lodestone of our soul that exists in a noble face, That no one knows how, goes straight to our hearts. Through this our mind is taken from us by force, So that we cannot act against it. Alas! I was abducted and I knew not how it happened, She raped me first, before I took her virginity.⁴²

Just as Cats exonerates male rapists by blaming the rape on external forces, this statement again shifts blame away from men. Cats describes a situation in which a woman's beautiful face and eyes attract a man's soul. In this case, the woman is the rapist, taking the men "by force" and in Cats' own words, "raping" a man first. But how does Cat manage to endow women with the power to rape when we saw in chapter three that he believes that a woman cannot overwhelm a man, and that as in the story of Leah and Jacob, he expects men to be the only active sexual partners?

⁴² "Het amber treckt het stroo door onbekende kragten, Men siet het harde staal als op den seyl-steen wagen, En als het tot hem naackt, soo schiet het vaardig toe, En hecht sich aan den steen, en niemant wett'er hoe. Het amber dat ons treckt dat zyn de schoone stralen, Die uyt een geestig oog in ons gesigte dwalen. De seyl-steen onser ziel dat in een heus gelaet, Dat ons, men weet niet hoe, tot aan het herte gaet. Hier door wert ons gemoet met krachten weg-getogen, Soo dat wy menigmael hier tegen niet en mogen. Eylaas! Ick was vervoert en wist niet hoe het quam, Sy had my eerst verkragt, eer ick haar maaghdom nam." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 83.

Women's power is exercised primarily through their beauty. He illustrates this in the short story about Orlande, mentioned above entitled, "Beauty lost to maintain honor."

When a ruler threatens Orlande with unwanted sexual advances, Orlande cries out:

Oh! If only I was not so beautiful, then I would not be so sad. Beauty has driven my heart to this sorrow, Beauty has grounded me in this miserable life, Beauty awoke this king to foul lust, That extends grief to [my husband] Agaton and shame to me.⁴³

Cats shows that Orlande has no intention of raping or encouraging the king to have sexual relations with her. But still, her beauty exercises a power over him that she laments. She continues:

It would be better if my face was without luster, Than if I am a fire for all young men, A stumbling block for the youth, a mirror for the villains, Through which I see my husband is most highly saddened.⁴⁴

Orlande cannot control the power she exercises over all types and ages of men.

In response to her predicament, she makes a mush out of poisonous herbs, "rolled it up in cloth and wound it around her face and head." After a single night she is hideous: her limbs are all swollen, as is her nose which resembles a large egg, her eyes were foul and red, and all around her mouth there were bumps and cracked, dried skin.⁴⁵ By destroying her beauty in this way, Orlande extinguishes the king's lust for her. Cats grants her an active, but self-destructive role in maintaining her marital purity.

⁴³ "Och! Was ick niet te schoon, so waer ik niet bedrukt. De schoonheyt heeft mijn hert in dit verdriet gedreven, De schoonheyt leit den gront van dit ellendig leven, De schoonheit heeft den vorst tot vuyle lust verwekt, Dat Agaton [her husband] tot druck en my tot schande strekt..." Cats, *Alle Wercken*, v. II, 80.

⁴⁴ "t Is beter dat ick heb een aansigt sonder glans, Als dat ick ben een brant voor alle jonge mans, Een aanstoot voor de jeugt, een spiegel voor de boeven, Waar door ik mijnen Heer ten hoogsten sie bedroeven." Cats, *Alle Wercken*, v. II, 80.

⁴⁵ "...Sy maakt een kort beraat, En koomt van stonden aan van woorden tot de daat. Sy laat een slim vergif uyt veelderhande saken, Sy laat een seldsaam moes uyt heete kruyden maken, Een tuyg dat vinnig is, en als een kancker eet, Dat waas en blos verteert, schier eer het iemant weet. Dit heeft de jonge vrou in doecken op-gewonden, En om haar aangesicht aan alle kant gebonden. Sy geeft haar op het bed, en siet! In eenen nacht/ Soo is haar jeugdig root gelijk als enckel dragt... En siet een dick geswel haar om de leden hangen, Haar neus gelijk een ey, en uyt'er maten groot, Haar oogen vuyl begaat, en even bijster root, Haar mont aan alle kant met bobbels op-geswollen, Het vel geweldig rau gelijk gedroogde schoolen," Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. I, 80.

His lust becomes pity, his fire goes out. He leaves the church, his misery is healed, And see! This is the fruit of her unearthly being. He no longer knows love, no foolish love pains. See how very useful it is to be ugly!⁴⁶

Lust is a fire sparked by Orlande's beauty, which is an extremely powerful force that controls the king's will. Despite the fact she has no control over this power that works to her detriment, Cats holds Orlande responsible for preventing the king from defiling her marriage.

In many cases, beauty and love are forces that emanate from a woman's body and take, abduct, pierce and figuratively kill men through their eyes. In Cats' story of "Two Raped, and Both Married," the sight of Tryphose overcomes the double-rapist Menander:

...and this maiden/ Who pleased all too much my idle eye, Who never instigated any of this affair, Ripped my senses from me, and drove my lusts, Not through a playful eye, that offers lavisious glances, No, that is especially not in this young woman.⁴⁷

In this case, Tryphose behaves correctly and still her body and comportment please Menander's "idle eyes." Unlike the Catholic idea that seeing a chaste virgin will make people think of God, Cats suggests that Tryphose's beauty and virtue pleased Menander too much.⁴⁸ It is the power of her beauty that "ripped his senses from" him and her virtue that drove "his lusts."

Cats' account of Dinah and Shechem also endows Dinah with the power to initiate her own sexual violation:

⁴⁶ "Sijn lust wort deerenis, sijn brant die heeft gedaen. Hy geeft hem uyt de kerck, sijn quael die is genesen, En, siet! Dit is de vrugt van haer onaerdig wesen. Hy kent geen liefde meer, geen dwase minne-pijn. Siet hoe het menigmael is dienstig leelick zijn!" Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 80.

⁴⁷ "...en even dese maeght/ Die heeft mijn ydel oogh maer al te veel behaeght, Die heeft tot dit bejagh niet weynigh voets gegeven, Mijn sinnen weg-geruckt, mijn lusten aan-gedreven, Niet door een dertel oogh, dat geyle loncken schiet, Neen, dat en is voor al in dese Juffer niet." Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrouwt," ed. Koppenol, 47, lines 135-148.

⁴⁸ "Een Maeght behoort soo zedigh te zyn, dat den genen die d'ooghen op haer laet vallen, aenstonts op Godt dencke, en aengeleyt worde om de deughden te beminnen." Willibrord Kemp, *Zede-lessen voor de Maegden*, 111.

The son of the sovereign/ Who obtains a hot love thirst from her face. He sees her sweet face and her flushed cheeks, He sees her tender youth, and her fresh ways, And from all of this ignites a quick flame, Which came through his eye until it reached his heart.⁴⁹

Just as Tryphose above, Dinah's beauty instigates her own rape by penetrating Shechem's eye and filling his heart with lust. He then highlights her responsibility for the rape by calling her the rapist:

It seems that [Dinah's] happy countenance, Or perhaps her foreign garments, Or otherwise her red mouth/ Appealed to Shechem. Even so we can learn that, It is when one is heated up by lusts, And gives into the demands of their desires/ In the ways of the playful flesh, That God sends heavy plagues, Through which the rapist is raped.⁵⁰

Dinah heats up lusts by allowing Shechem to see her countenance, garments, and mouth. Because Dinah gave into her flesh and thereby paraded her body in front of Shechem, she in fact rapes him.

Cats furthermore suggests that women's beauty abducts men. His depiction of the Benjamite abduction of the women of Shiloh shows that the latter in fact abduct and capture their abductors, before they themselves are taken. Just as Tryphose "pleased too much [Menander's] idle eye," one of the maidens of Shiloh overpowers her abductor because of her beauty:

And see, there is a Maiden come, Who has taken him by the senses through his eye, Just as a sulfur fuse, that is put near a fire, And before anyone realizes, it makes a flame in a hurry. He saw her sweet face, her excessively beautiful body. He asked her who she was, and valued her sweet senses. He felt that this face extended to him a sweet pain, In his

⁴⁹ "De Sone van den Vorst/ Die treckt uyt haar gesicht een heeten minne-dorst. Hy siet haar soet gelaet, en haar gebloosde wangen, Hy siet haar teere jeugt, en hare frissche gangen, En uyt dit al-te-maal ontstaat een snelle vlam, Die sluxx hem door het oog tot in het herte quam." Cats, 'Lof-Sangh op het Geestelick Houwelick van Godes Soon' in *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 225.

⁵⁰ "Het schijnt of dat haer bly gelaet, Of dat misschien haer vreemt gewaet, Of anders dat haer roode mont/ Aen Sichem wel te sinne stont. Dan noch soo leert oock even dit, Wanneer men in de lust verhit, En geeft de tochten haren eysch/ Na wijse van het dertel vleysch, Dat God dan sware plagen sent, Waer door de schender wort geschent;" Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 252.

courage he spoke: O may I be yours! He came closer to her; he told her his concerns. He told her from whence he came, and kissed her fresh cheeks. The little kiss that he gave, gave, I know not what, Something that moved his spirit, and captured his heart...⁵¹

The woman of Shiloh took “him by the senses” when he “saw her sweet face” and “her excessively beautiful body.” Upon seeing her “something moved his spirit” and “captured his heart.” Her beauty penetrated his heart and spirit through the gateway of his eyes and abducted him, just before he abducted her.

This Benjamite was not the only one Cats refers to as abducted by a woman of Shiloh. As the Benjamites looked about they were each captured by particular characteristics of the maidens:

The one permits his eyes to roam along a blooming path. One commends the voice, and holds him to the song; ...And why say more? The eye that is captured/ By something, I know not how or what: The twisting of the mouth, the giving over to weeping, The swinging of an arm, the agitation of the body; Something which not one person noticed before these [Benjamites], Fastened love in many hearts.⁵²

Cats endows these women with a mystical power to capture men through the sight of their anguish. Love is “fastened... in many hearts” at the sight of twisted, weeping mouths, physical agitation and defensively swinging arms. This is the clearest example of the slight of hand Cats performs when he discusses abduction and rape. He describes female anguish, but transforms it into a female power to abduct the hearts, spirits, and

⁵¹ “En siet, dien eygen stont is daer een Maagt gekomen, Die heeft hem, door het oog, de sinnen ingenomen, Juyst als het swivel-werck, dat aen het vier genaakt, En, eer het iemant denkt, in haast een vlamme maakt. Hy sag haer soet gelaet, haer over-schoone leden, Hy vraagt wie datse was, en prijst haer soete redden, Hy voelt uyt dit gesigt, hem steeckt en soete pijn, Hy spreeckt in zijn gemoet: O mogt ick uye zijn! Hy kooft haer naerder by, hy seyt haer zijn belangen, Hy seit van waer hy komt, en kust haer frisse wangen. Het soentje dat hy gaf, geeft, ick en weet niet wat, Dat hem den geest beroert, en aen het herte vat.” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 16.

⁵² “D’een laat zijn oogen oontrent een fieren gang, Een ander prijst de stem, en hout hem aan den sang; ...En waarom meer geseyt? Het oog dat wort gevat/ Door iet, ‘k en weet niet hoe en ick weet niet wat: Het trecken van den mont, het stellen van de schreden, Het swieren van den arm, het reppen van de leden; Yet, waar op niet een mensch voor desen heeft gelet, Heeft daar in menig hert de liefede vast geset.” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 33.

minds of men through their sense of sight. However, unlike the violence of men, women's power is always figurative. Cats tells us that Tryphose "ripped [Menander's] senses from [him], and drove [his] lusts" and her virtue drove him to rape her, Dinah raped Shechem, and the maidens of Shiloh captured their abductors' hearts. Cats attributes these women, who are characteristically understood as physically weaker than men, with the power to rape and abduct men.

Legal Implications of Women's Responsibilities

Although women's ability to rape and abduct men is figurative, Cats shows that the seventeenth-century Dutch did not necessarily understand responsibility that way. Cats and other Protestant sources illustrate that women could be held legally liable for both their failure to avoid dangerous situations and their ability to abduct men's hearts. Cats provides several examples of legal precedents in which women are held accountable for abducting men. His wise character Sophronicus states:

Now I come to the question you have posed, namely, whether a young man can be said to be abducted according to the Law, and to this I answer yes. Just as not only all the learned judges are convinced, but also the high courts and Parliaments have many times proved.⁵³

According to Cats, seventeenth-century European judges and parliaments believed that women were capable of abducting a young men. But because his young companion, Philogamous, constructs abduction as something achieved through force, he questions Sophronicus' statement, finding this point counterintuitive:

⁵³ "Ick kome dan tot de vrage by u te berde gebracht, te weten, of oock een jongeling na Rechten mag geseyt werden ontschaeckt te konnen worden, en daer op antwoorde ick met een woort, dat ja; gelijk niet alleenlick de Rechtes-geleerden over-al getuygen, maer de hooge Recht-bancken en Parlementen oock dickmael gewesen hebben." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 89.

...how can such be called abduction or rape? On the condition that someone dares to say with some appearance of reason that no woman can be raped according to the law without suffering some violence to her body, without at least some damage to her, how can still such happen to a young man? But can it happen also against his will in this case, to force a man to do something that cannot happen without his right goodwill, that I think to be one of the strangest claims that anyone could think of; and I think it is well said: *Although the young woman is wayward, the Bride still she'll become; But if the young man doesn't want it, the friendship is done.*⁵⁴

Philogamous explains one conception of rape in which a woman “suffers violence to her body.” He also interchanges the terms abduction and rape. Cats introduces the topic as abduction, and then Philogamous immediately questions how a woman can rape a man, and concludes that indeed no woman can force a man to have sex with her through violence.

Answering this question, Cats explains that there is another conception of rape in which women use a different type of force to abduct or rape men. He tells Philogamous, “A woman is said to have abducted a young man, although she does not attain him by violence but by deception or flowing words.”⁵⁵ Women’s power can be exercised through language, which penetrates men’s ears. Unlike men who are responsible for abduction and rape when they use brute force, women are responsible for figuratively raping and/or abducting men through their powers of verbal persuasion. Cats also demonstrates that women’s power to abduct a man can be exercised through musical talent. He tells the

⁵⁴ “Maer hoe kan sulcks doch ontschaecken ofte verkrachten genoemt worden? Voorwaer, indiender eenige gevonden worden die met schijn van redenen derven seggen, dat geen vrou-mensch recht verkracht en kan worden, en geen geweld in haer lichaem (90) en kan lijden, sonder ten minsten eenige toe-standigheyt, hoe kan doch aen een jongeling sulcks gebeuren? Maer kan ’t eenigsins geschieden oock tegen danck in dese gelegenthey, een man te dwingen om te doen het gene dat niet als uyt recht goetwilligheyt en kan geschieden, dat dunckt my een van de grootste vreemdigheden te wesen, die men kan bedencken; en ’t is mijns oordeels wel geseyt: *Al is de Vryster steegh, noch wortse wel de Bruyt; Maer wil de Vryer niet, soo is de vrientschap uyt.*” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 89-90.

⁵⁵ “Een vrou-mensch werdt geseyt een jongeling ontschaeckt te hebben, schoon sy den selven niet met geweldt, maer met bedrog of vleyende woorden tot haer lockte.” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 90.

story of “a very honorable, becoming, and beautiful young woman” from England, who was found “guilty of abducting a young Count.” He describes the story in detail:

...because she was very masterful in playing the lyre, and in mixing her voice with [it], she was brought a lyre at the end of the meal and asked to honor the company with a little tune. She, after some refusal, began to play, in which she so pleased the young count, sitting right across from her, that he...offered his right hand, declaring that she had won him, so if it pleased her, this proposal was so bravely forceful that he showed that he was serious...⁵⁶

Although she seems to have no intention of raping or abducting the count, it is through her musical talent that this English woman obtains the young count’s offer of marriage.

Yet, as the English woman’s story continues, she recognizes the power she has over the young count, and decides to exercise it in order to realize their marriage. When the young count sends her to play for him again,

The young woman, strengthened with the advice of her brother, takes up the lyre again, and begins to fish again with the same net as before. The young count being nearby and feeling the same movement within him, again made the same offer to the young woman with great affection...⁵⁷

To the modern reader, it seems that the young count willingly asked her to marry him. He then met with the church official and shared a bed with her the following night. Cats, on the other hand, equates her playing a lyre to fishing with a net. This metaphor shows that like someone fishing, she is intentionally aiming to make the unsuspecting count act in a

⁵⁶ “...een seer eerlicke, bevallicke en aensienelicke Jonck-vrouw...beschuldigt is geweest een jongen Graef ontschaeckt te hebben, ... alsoo sy seer meesterlick op de Luyt wist te slaen, en met het spel van haer stemme te vermengen, werdt haer op ’t leste van de maeltijt een Luyt toegebracht, en met een werdtse versocht, het geselschap met een deuntjen te willen vereeren. Sy, na eenige heusche weygeringe, begon ’t werck, waer in sy soo wel beviel aen sekeren jongen Graef, regel recht over haer sittende, dat de selve...sijn rechter-hant uyt-stayck, verklarende datse in hem een man gewonnen hadde, soo sulcks haer mochte gevallen, het selve sijn voorstel soo dapperlick aendringende, dat hy toonde dat het hem ernst was...” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 90.

⁵⁷ “De Jonckvrouw, met den raet van haer Broeder gestijft zijnde, maeckte wederom de Luyt by der handt te hebben, en bestondt weder te vissen met het eygen net als voren. De jonge Graef daer ontent zijnde, en noch de selve beweginge in sich gevoelende, heeft ander-mael, met groote toe-genegentheydt, gelicke aen biedinge als voren aen de voorsz. Jonck-vrouwe gedaen...” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 90.

way that he would not otherwise act. This was also the understanding of the seventeenth-century court that convicted her: “the young woman was accused of the previously described abduction of the young count” because the opposition believed that “she had lured him into her net.”⁵⁸ Her opponents, namely the count’s family argues that she had abducted him, by laying “in wait for him” and enticing him. Through her musical talent, she maliciously exercises her power over the unsuspecting count, and makes him marry and have intercourse with her. Cats’ example shows the seventeenth-century Dutch belief that women held and employed extraordinary power over men.

Despite the legal consequences of the use of this type of female power, Cats does make it clear that the situation can be rectified. He describes the response of a seventeenth-century audience to this story:

Telling this case at the table of the Lord Ambassador of this State, where several young women and other young people were present, was argued for and against the young woman, and some thought that the aforementioned young woman should have at least notified her own parents of the case... But others thought that such could be *ex praesumpta mente parentum*, assuring that the parents in their entire absence from the happening, silent, must be understood as being willing, even ... [that they] were guilty of lack of judgment; because they may have let such a beautiful chance escape her... After many difficulties and discussion between friends, the marriage was finally determined as legal by the parents of the Count.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ “...de jonge Juffrou is beschuldigt geworden, van door het gene voor-schreven is ontschakinge in de persoon van den jongen Grave begaen te hebben, werdende de omstandigheden ten naesten by als voren is geseyt, maer met hatelicke woorden, opgehaelt, en soo geduyt, als of de selve geleyder lage daer op hadde geloert, om den voorsz. Grave in ’t net te krijgen, daer het tegendeel van de andere zijde erstelick wierdt gedreven.” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 90.

⁵⁹ “Dese sake verhaelt verdende over tafel van de Heer Ambassadeur van desen Staet, daer ter selver tijdt verscheide Jonck-vrouwen en andere jonge lieden wesende, wierdt oorsaecke genomen, voor en tegen de Jonck-vrou discoursen te maken, en wierdt sonderlinge daer op gestaen, dat de voorsz. Jonck-vrou ten minsten haer eygen ouder eerst kennisse hadde behooren te doen van de sake... Maer andere meynden, sulcks verschoont te konnen werden *ex praesumpta mente parentum*, vast stellende, dat de selve, om de gansch vorderlicke gelegentheyt, stil-swijgende, moeste verstaen werden hier in bewilligt te hebben, ja dat de selve... beschuldigt soudén hebben van gebreck van oordeel; vermits sy soo schoonen kans haer vruchteloos hadde laten ontglippen... na lange moeyelickheden en tusschen-sprake van vrienden, het houwelijk eyndelick by de ouders van den Graef voor goet is erkent.” Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 90.

This audience of young men and women argue not only against the woman's exercise of power over the count, but also for it. Some even blame her parents for not advising her to take advantage of the "beautiful chance" she has to make such a good marriage. The response of the audience to the story suggests that women can render men helpless. Some argue that they should use what power they have and in the end things can turn out well.

Cats provides a similar lesson in the story of a young French woman who abducted a man through the power of her beauty. According to jurist, Jean Papon, she had:

...nothing besides the beauty of her person, by her riveting face concluded a marriage with a young and rich boy still under guardianship... Coming before the high court of Paris, the marriage was declared impossible to exist; the young woman scarcely escaped without punishment to her person: but the Mother and her assistants, and the Notary himself, who had written the Marriage Agreement, were all given a hefty fine. In conclusion, the aforementioned Jean Papon says that from this case it is apparent that a man can be abducted just as a woman can.⁶⁰

Just as the English woman overpowered the count by her musical talent, this young French woman is said to have "effected a marriage" through only her "beauty" and "her riveting face." According to these examples discussed by Cats, women used their beauty, "flowing words," and musical talent to abduct men.

Evidence from disciplinary records concurs with Cats' belief that women's failure to avoid dangerous situations makes them culpable in cases in which they claim to have been raped. The Protestant Reformed council records in Amsterdam document the

⁶⁰ "Een vryster, seyde *Papon*, niet anders hebbende als de schoonheyt van haer persoon, hadde door haer aenlockende gelaet het beleydt, dat een jong en rijck jongeling, noch onder voogdye staende, met haer een howelick hadde gesloten.... De saecke komende voor het hoog gerichte van Parijs... het howelick is verklaert, niet te mogen bestaen; de Vryster ter nauwer noot, soner straffe op haer persoon, ontkomen: maer de Moeder en haer helpers, en de Notaris selfs, die de Houwelickse voorwaerde hadde geschreven, alle verwesen in een merckelicke geldt-boete. Tot besluyt seyt de voor-schreven *Jean Papon*, dat hier uyt blijktt, dat een mans-persoon soo wel ontschaeckt kan werden als een vrouwe..." Cats, *Alle de Werken*, v. II, 90.

banning of Maria van der Horst from communion for becoming pregnant by a man named Borlemachi even though she told them that he “dragged [her] with violence and forced [her]” to sleep with him.⁶¹ The council punished her for two reasons: firstly, “she already had a bad reputation” and secondly, because she “had been in Borlemachi’s house at other times.”⁶² These reasons are connected. Maria’s frequent presence in Borlemachi’s house, surely caused her to have a bad reputation. This source does not explain the reasoning behind Maria’s punishment, but if we apply Cats’ logic to this story, we can surmise that the council believed that Maria, regardless of her original intentions and even if they were entirely pure, was complicit in the sexual impurity. This was true in part because of her likelihood of succumbing to the temptation of rape, or in Cats’ own words, her “likelihood to fall” when she is near men. Like Cats’ story of the girl who just wanted to have fun, played with the bee, and consequently was stung, the council also blamed Maria. Even if she went to Borlemachi’s house only with the intentions of having a little fun, she had to expect the painful consequences.

Maria van der Horst was not the only woman the council held accountable in the case of her alleged rape. They also found that Hester Martens, whom Maria claimed lured her into going to Borlemachi’s home or brought her there under false pretences, was an accomplice in this case. When Hester “appeared before the assembly,” she “tearfully and steadfastly... denied betraying Maria and having any role in provoking the foul work with Borlemachi.” But she did recognize “the very careless and wrong nature of going into the home of Borlemachi with Maria and staying there also so long.” The council did

⁶¹ Gereformeerde Kerkeraad van Amsterdam records No 13, 132, 28/11/1675: “...met geweld getrocken en geforceert te zijn...”

⁶² No 13, 136, 12/12/1675: “... onder een quaet gerugt en meermalen ten huijse van Borlemachi geweest waren.”

not excuse Hester, but rather was “saddened by this very scandalous and awful event” because “she was present in the same place and did not make noise or in any other way help Maria.”⁶³ The council also banned Hester from communion because just like Maria, by going into a man’s home she increased the likelihood of sexual immorality.⁶⁴ Whether this immorality manifested itself in rape or sex is unimportant. Again using Cats’ explanations to fill in the blanks left in the church council’s records, Maria’s and Hester’s roles were more consequential than Borlemachi’s alleged use of force. Preceding the alleged rape, Maria and Hester made this case of sexual impurity possible by both going to Borlemachi’s house. Just as in the biblical case of Dinah and in the story of the girl who plays with the bee, according to the Church council these women must expect ill consequences when they talk to men and allow themselves to wander into dangerous places.

Legal sources also suggest that women can be held responsible or complicit in a case of sexual abuse. Although the language of municipal legal records suggest that the violation of sexually immature girls is a serious offense perpetrated by men, their descriptions of mature women suggest that the latter play an active role in their own sexual violation. Men seduce and seek women to participate in illicit sex. A case from 1620 demonstrates the difference in the description of the violation of women and girls. This record charges Boudewijn de Grave, a spinner, with fornicating with his own

⁶³ No 13, 134, 5/12/1675: “Hester schrienselijk en standtvastighlijk met hooge betuijinge ontkent Maria verlocht en tot het vuijle werk met Borlemachi eenigsints aenleijding gegeven te hebben bekennde seer onvoorsichtigh en qualijk gedaen te hebben datse met Maria ten huijse van Borlemachi was ingegaen en so langh gebleven sich oock daer over seekende te excuseren doch niet tot genoegen der E(?) vergadering datse in het selfde vertrek was present geweest en Maria door gerugt te maken en andersints niet geholpen en onset te hebben. De E. vergaderingh sigh over dese seer schandelijke en ergerlijke voorval ten hoogsten bedroevende...”

⁶⁴ No 13, 136, 12/12/1675: “... beide Maria vander Horst en Hester Martens...dese aenstaende bedieninge des Avondsmaels aen de H. Tafel des Heere niet sullen hebben vervoegen...”

daughter, Madijken, who was either twelve or thirteen years old, and committing adultery with his daughter-in-law. The record tells us that with Madijken he had “conversed in a fleshly manner many times in their home.”⁶⁵ In this statement, Boudewijn performs all the action. On the other hand, in the description of the sexual intercourse with his daughter-in-law he “urgently seeks his son’s wife to have fleshly conversations with him.” The difference is that Boudewijn fornicates using Madijken, but he seeks his daughter-in-law to have sex with him.

This difference becomes more marked when one examines the text more closely. Following each charge against Boudewijn there are sections of the text crossed out, but still legible for the most part. These crossed out sections describe the violence that Boudewijn enacted upon his daughter and daughter-in-law, and even the charge of rape that is nowhere else to be found in the seventeenth-century Leiden municipal documents. With Madijken, he worked “...contrary to her will... with blows and threats and sometimes force and violence...”⁶⁶ With his daughter-in-law, he “...sought to persuade her to do this with threats...”⁶⁷ The text that follows is more difficult to make out, but seems to say that the threat is of both violence and of destroying the life she has with her husband. In both of these cases, Boudewijn uses threats and violence, but again Boudewijn used the girl against her will and tries to persuade the woman. This difference

⁶⁵ “...verscheijden malen toe 't sijner woon plaetse vleijsschelichen te converseren met sijn eygen dochttertgen genomt Madijken sijnde tusshen twalfen ende xiii jaren out...” 8-12-1620 Boudewijn de Grave, geboren Belle, spinner. Register 10, Folio 51. See also Heuvel, H.M. van den. *De Criminele Vonnisboeken van Leiden, 1533-1811, Rijnland, Tijdschrift voor Sociale Genealogie en Streekgeschiedenis voor Leiden en omstreken*. Leiden: Rijnland, 1978, 147.

⁶⁶ [crossed out = 't welcke hij daer toe tegens wille ende danc met slagen ende verdere dreijgementen/ ooc somtijts met force ende geweld/ende(?) sonder vers aenter (?) ende wederstant van t'zelve sijn dochttertgen gebracht heeft/] 8-12-1620 Boudewijn de Grave, geboren Belle, spinner. Register 10, Folio 51.

⁶⁷ “... sijn eijgen soons huijsvrouwe wels gesolliciteert heeft omme met de selve Vleijsschelic te converseren/ [crossed out = hebbende ooc gesocht (zulc info matien vande voorse Offichier mede brengen) haer daer toe mit dreijgementen te persuaderen/ seggende dat sij met de geweld sijn soen hem en mag geen goet leven soude hebben/ ten waerd sy hem in gevangen en in sijne begeerte willich man] 8-12-1620 Boudewijn de Grave, geboren Belle, spinner. Register 10, Folio 51.

could simply imply that Boudewijn was unsuccessful in his attempts to have intercourse with his daughter-in-law or it could suggest that a girl's body is not susceptible to seduction through violent sex, but a woman's is. The violence may have been crossed out in this case because of its irrelevance. The charge of fornication with a minor is punishable regardless of the violence later eliminated from the text and the charge of adultery, or attempted adultery, with his son's wife seems to be too unimportant to merit clarification as to whether or not it even happened. Boudewijn's punishment for these crimes is far more gruesome than the usual banishment for those who commit adultery, which signals the seriousness of his crime against the young girl. He is strangled, his body burned, and his goods confiscated.

In contrast, in the examples in which men violate girls, the former are punished and latter are not expected to play any active role in the violation. For example, the Leiden court banished Denijs Grebril, a textile worker, in 1647 for eight years for fornication with a four or five year old girl, Maritge Pieters. The accused apparently took the girl by the hand, led her to lane and "dishonestly attacked her honor and intended to engage in further immorality."⁶⁸ The case against Frans Claesz, a button maker, in 1686 does not give any details of his fornication with a young girl, but does state that the accused engaged in "foul acts and godless horniness" and that his punishment was to be tied to a pole and whipped and banned for life from Leiden.⁶⁹ In 1695 Pieter van der Tas confessed that he placed his daughter of "ten or eleven years...on a stool and pushed up her dress...and striking his manliness against [her] womanliness, he sought to bring the

⁶⁸ "...oneerlijck heeft aengetasten ende meerder wulpsheden met haer soude hebben gepleecht." 7-5-1647 Denijs Grebril geboren Spa, lakenwerker. Register 15, Folio 11. See also Heuvel, 226.

⁶⁹ "...vuijgheden ende goddeloosen geijligheijt..." 1-2-1686 Namen van, Frans Claesz, 30 jaar, knoopmaker. Register 22, Folio 50. See also Heuvel, 290.

former into the body of [his daughter].” Unable to do this, he confesses that he “stuck his finger in the body of his...child.”⁷⁰ Van der Tas is mercifully subjected to public whipping, brand marking, and forced labor for thirty years perhaps because of his contrition and confession of his acts. The description of these cases demonstrate the belief that the sexual abuse of young girls is a serious offense and the language of the charges make it clear that the girls themselves are in no way complicit. While men encourage women to participate in their sexual violation, they simply violate innocent girls. Mature women could be considered responsible for or complicit in their own rape as a result of the widespread belief that women exercised incredible sexual power over men.

Man-killers

The preeminent playwright, Vondel, describes the power of women in even starker terms. He accredits women with the figurative power of killing men. Vondel describes Ursula as capable of killing Attila in his play, *The Maidens*. Attila explains Ursula’s power over him:

She made herself innocent when she appealed to me through her eyes, Or when she had unknowingly with words, Wounded My majesty, yes truly fatally wounded, With that eloquent tongue, and its coral mouth. This mermaid [siren] did not want me to avoid this particular shore, So that I should suffer this shipwreck, even on dry land.⁷¹

⁷⁰ “...tusschen de tien en elft jaren out sijnde...op een stadt(stoel?) geset ende de rocken opgeraapt(?) heeft/ ende vervolgens hij gevangen met sijn manelijkheid tegen de vroulijkheijt van sijn voorsc dogtertie aanstotende besogt heeft/ oft hij sijn voors gemagt [member] jn het lijff van her(?) selve konde brengen/ dog dat hij gevangen sulcx ondoenlijk omme dende(?)/ 't selve losgelaten heeft/ Dat wijders hij gevangen daarop ten selven tijde sijn vinger jn het lijff van sijn maagdenomde kint keer gesteecken...”

⁷¹ “Z’ontschuldigde zich zelf, toen d’ogen mij bekoorden, Of zij mijn majesteit onwetende met woorden Gewond had, ja voorwaar wel dodelijk gewond, Met die begaafde tong, met dien koralen mond. Die meremin wou juist dees oevers niet vermijden, Om mij, op’t vaste land, dees schipbreuk te doen lijn. Vondel, *Maeghden*, eds. J.F.M. Sterck, H.W.E. Moller, C.G.N. de Vooys, C.R. de Klerk, B.H. Molkenboer, J. Prinsen J.Lzn. en L. Simons 2004, 24 October 2006.

<http://www.dbnl.nl/tekst/vond001dewe03/vond001dewe03_0141.htm, 734.

Ursula's eyes are the first to convert and control Attila. Her words and other beautiful features also play a part in subduing him to the point that she physically wounds him. This claim is of course only an exaggeration of his feelings for her, unlike the literal manner in which he fatally wounds her. Vondel conflates seduction and murder here. Attila will not die from the so-called fatal wounds he suffers at Ursula's hands. Vondel again shows how Ursula wounds Attila, as the latter says:

I harm no enemy's breast, but feel mine own injured, A deadly wound
from the pleasing bows of her eyes/ Through which this Diana strikes
souls through her eyes, That neither art nor herb can heal these wounds.
What I suffer for this city! Men flee, men leave this place. The virgin army
holds the male army besieged... My flagging courage, defeated by love,
Gives itself up willingly to this queen. She binds me with a tie, woven
from her braids, And transports me thus through the city. I give up without
a fight.⁷²

Attila's soul is struck by the bending arrows that emanate from the bows of Ursula's eyes. The virgin army defeats Attila's and Ursula takes him captive, binds him and displays him thus to the city. But unlike Ursula's dead body, Attila's soul is not an object, his army's defeat is not tangible, and his capture and humiliation is only mental. Ursula's power has no concrete effects.

Vondel manifests the difference between Ursula and Attila's power when he equates her actual heart, as in the organ, with Attila's metaphoric heart, as in the seat of his emotions. Again Attila is the speaker:

O hand, would you dare to plunge this dagger in/ That bosom and the
chest of your dear enemy? Would you mix that white snow with crimson?

⁷² “[Ik] kwets geen vijands borst; maar voel mijn borst gekwetst, En dodelijk gewond van d’aangename bogen, Waarmede dees Diaan de zielen door haar ogen/ Zo treft, dat kunst noch kruid die wonden helen kan. Wat suf ik voor dees stad! Men vlie, men trek er van. Het maagdenleger houdt het mannenheir belegen... Mijn kwijnende gemoed, verwonnen van de min, Geeft zich gewillig op aan deze koningin. Zij bind’ me met een snoer, gevlochten van haar vlechten, En voer’ me zo in stad. Ik geef het zonder vechten.” Vondel, *Maeghden*.

Can love witness this cruelty? Or henceforth is she permitted/ To shut her eyes? Two suns, where the sun, On the clearest of the day, cannot look up against. Can love tolerate, that cold death defrosts/ This snow of the face? That with care sprinkles/ The roses on the cheek, and closes the red mouth, Full of fragrance? Just as a courtyard, when the morning/ With pleasant dew and flowers and herbs/ Are wetted, and brought to live, and breathe from the South. No, Attila, your love is not yet so cooled, That you could wound her heart, and feel no wound yourself. You would, in Ursula's breast, pierce your own heart.⁷³

Attila cannot pierce Ursula's heart, as in the organ, without piercing his own heart, as in the seat of his emotions. Attila's power has physical effects, whereas Ursula's power has only emotional effects. While using the same language of violent penetration, men are not made into objects. Unlike women, men are not described as fragile objects such as earthenware jugs or grapes. When they are pierced it is a mental or spiritual event that does not result in a visible, physical wound. While women are their pierced bodies, and thus are destroyed when their bodies are pierced or broken, when authors use the language of rape and abduction for men, they describe an abstract penetration that leaves no physical signs or lasting damage.

In the above examples, Cats and Vondel grant women the figurative power to rape, abduct, and kill. Even though these powers are figurative, they nonetheless encouraged fear of women's sexuality, which in turn justifies strict patriarchal control over female bodies and conferred responsibility upon women to stop their beauty from causing sexual assaults. Seventeenth-century Dutch authors also told a handful of stories featuring actual man-killers possibly to make the figurative male rapes and murders more

⁷³ "O hand, zoudt gij dien dolk wel durven domplen in/ Dien boezem en die borst der lieve vijandin? Zoudt gij dat witte sneeuw met purper durven mengen? Kan min die wreedheid zien? of immermeer gehengen, Dat zij haar ogen luik? twee zonnen, daar de zon, Op't klaarste van den dag, niet tegens opzien kon. Kan min gedogen, dat de kille dood ontdooie/ Dit sneeuw van't aangezicht? dat die met rijp bestrooie Die rozen op de wang, en sluit dien roden mond, Vol geurs? gelijk een hof, wanneer de morgenstond Met aangenamen dauw de bloemen en de kruien/ Bevochtigt, en verkwikt, en ademt uit den Zuien. Neen, Attila, uw minne is zo nog niet verkoeld, Dat gij heur harte wondt, en zelf geen wonde voelt. Gij zoudt, in Ursuls borst, uw eigen hart doorsteken." Vondel, *Maeghden*, 755.

plausible. Vondel used the biblical story of Judith to warn that female beauty can lead to physical as well as spiritual death. Judith is the Jewish widow who sneaks into the camp of the Assyrian army that threatened her town in order to seduce and kill the Assyrian military general Holofernes. Vondel writes:

A widow was secretly and craftily sent out to go/ To the army camp and to seduce the General in his tent... She radiated beauty [and] was made-up very well, ...His hope danced, in love, and expected his sweet one in bed. That evil one, because she saved herself and the citizens of her town, After a little delay, and when Holofernes snored, Finally she grabbed so criminally and unafraid, With one hand the sword, that hung on the bedstead, With the other hand his hair, And cut his head from his body, and trod toward the city, With this rich booty...What frame of mind makes [virgins] ...put themselves in harm's way? Whatever it is, this troop of virgins cannot be allowed to attack me. Did ever womenfolk fall so strongly upon man's army? This Ursula spells out war to me with her crossed banner. Wake up, before she surprises your tent with arms.⁷⁴

Unlike the biblical account of Judith who has God on her side, Vondel's character Beremond, general of the Huns, sees Judith as an "evil one" who acts like a criminal when she murders Holofernes and equates her actions against the general of the Assyrian army to Ursula's attack on his army. In so doing, Beremond likens Judith's intentional decapitation of Holofernes with Ursula's unintentional and figurative piercing of Attila's heart. Simply because Ursula is beautiful and desires to live a virgin life, she is a danger to Attila and Beremond's army. Regardless of their intentions, all women can and do kill. Female power has its own negative agenda.

⁷⁴ "...Een uitgemaecte Weeuw komt listigh uit in 't end/ Naer 't leger, en bekoort den Veldheer in zijn tent...Zy munt in schoonheid uit. z' is prachtigh uitgestreecken, ...Hy moe gedanst, en heet, verwacht zijn lief in 't bedde. Die schalcke, op datze zich en hare burgers redde, Na 'et samlen, grypt in 't end, zoo schelmsch, als onvervaert, Daer Holofernes ronckt, met d'eene hand het zwaerd, Dat aen de bedsteê hangt, met d'ander hand de locken, En houwt hem 't hoofd van 't lijf, en zoo naer stadt getrocken, Met dezen vetten roof...In wat verstand zy staen met dees beneepe wallen? Hoe 't zy, dit Maeghdenheir my geensins kan gevallen. Trock vrouwvolck oit met mans zoo sterck op legers aen? Dees Ursul speltme krygh, met haer gekruiste vaen. Waeck op, eer zy u tent gewapent overrompelen." Vondel, *Maeghden*, 743-4.

In an exchange between Attila and Ursula, Vondel provides other examples of literal man-killers and explains why all women should be feared. While Ursula is shocked that Attila would fear “weaponless women” and “maidens without power,” Attila explains why:

One may neither believe nor trust your entourage. One worries, one fears...
Of what women are capable by their nature has made itself evident in
earlier times/ Such as that of the Amazons, who with violence of knives,
Were the masters of Europe and Asia, They each battled with more than
manly militancy, They severed breasts, and hacked open/ The stream of
Thermodon, and our Tanais, In the heart of the ruler; they destroyed
everything through pillaging, Stifled male children before they were
scarcely born; That I keep silence about Lemnos [where according to a
wise Greek man, the women of the island killed all the men out of
jealousy and lived as Amazons]; where such a great lake/ Of blood was
pooled by daughter, and by mother, Who spared no male, neither child,
nor father, nor brother. For a day came Cyrus, Hercules, and Jason, They
personally witnessed what womenfolk can do.”⁷⁵

Attila argues that one should fear women solely because they are capable of horrible things according to Antiquity. Vondel lists Cyrus, Hercules, and Jason as more examples of men destroyed by women. Queen Tomyris enticed Cyrus into an ambush and killed him, Deianira; Hercules’ consort, killed him with a poisoned cloak; and Medea, the cast-off wife of Jason, undertook a bloody vengeance upon his family which prompted his suicide. Vondel’s Attila rails that these stories of women who were violent murderers were in fact not exceptional. He claims that all women are capable of murder as a result

⁷⁵ **Attila:** “Men magh uw’ aenhang noch gelooven, noch vertrouwen. Men zorgt, men vreest.
Ursul: Voor wie? voor wapenlooze vrouwen? Voor Maeghden zonder maght? voor mans, berooft van
zwaerd? **Attila:** Wat vrouwen kunnen doen, bleeck eertijds aen dien aerd/ Der Amazonen wel, die met
geweld van schaeren, Europe, en Asien zoo verre meester waren, Bekrijghden elck met meer dan
mannelijcken stijl, De borsten zetten af, en beetten met de bijl/ Den stroom Thermodoön, en onzen Tanais
open, In ’t hartje van den vorst; bedorven ’t al met stroopen, Verstickten ’t manbre zaed, eer ’t naeuw
geboren was; Dat ick van Lemnos zwijgh; daer zulck een groote plas/ Van bloed vergoten werd, door
dochter, en door moeder, Verschoonende noch man, noch kind, noch vaêr, noch broeder. Quam Cyrus,
Hercules, en Jason voor den dagh, Zy tuighden levendigh wat vrouwvolck al vermagh.” Vondel,
Maeghden, 729-30.

of the power of female beauty and nature. According to Attila's reasoning, because a few women have shown themselves capable of murdering men, all women should be feared.

Conclusions

We have seen that, based on a common inheritance of images of sexually powerful women, the seventeenth-century Protestant Dutch authors describe beautiful women as capable of ravishing men, capturing men's hearts, and fatally wounding them. Male writers use abstract language to render women sexually dangerous. Through the use of abstraction, these authors create a language of female sexual violence against men. They blur the line between actual rape, abduction, and murder perpetrated by men with their figurative equivalents assigned to women. Women's objectification and transformation into non-humans, their figurative powers, and fusion with mythological murderers make them powerful, feared, and chiefly responsible for sexual impurity that occurs. The destructive tendencies of uncontrolled female bodies justify the defensive structures maintained by the Dutch patriarchy to sexually subjugate women. The tone of both the advice to women and the warnings against negative female powers is pessimistic. The question is not as much if women will fall, but when. Women will play, be curious, get stung, and break their water vessels because of some female failing. Even when women try to follow Cats' advice to be entirely passive, like the objects he uses to describe them, they are easily pierced, cannot refuse or accept the way they will be used, break easily and are worthless once broken. The next chapter turns toward Dutch Catholic advice for women, which provides women with a more optimistic outlook on their potential to control their sexuality.

Chapter 5: Catholic Advice Manuals and Violent Virgins

Although Catholicism was a minority religion, it held a special symbolic position in the religiously pluriform society of the Netherlands. There were of course similarities between Catholic and Protestant ideas of human sexuality, and thus rape, because of their long, shared tradition of Western Christian thought. But Catholicism also was associated with forces some Dutch thought to be evil, such as the pope and the religious abuses arising from the sale of indulgences and more importantly, the Spanish Habsburg regime. Because of their possible allegiance to the Habsburg enemy, Calvinist authorities treated Catholics with more suspicion than other religious groups, such as the Mennonites and the Lutherans. They allowed no Catholics to hold public office, forbade Catholic public services and preaching after 1581, closed all cloisters, and occasionally prosecuted and deported Dutch priests.¹

This being said, Catholics were never systematically removed as the Remonstrants, who challenged a number of strict Calvinist views, had been. There were still large minorities of Catholics even in the Protestant stronghold of Zeeland, the villages around Leiden and Alkmaar, in the Eastern provinces, and the Southern provinces of North Brabant, Maastricht, and Overmaas.² Protestant authorities allowed Catholics to meet in private homes, which served as hidden churches, with little interruption. There was also greater tolerance of the ministry of a group of loosely

¹ Some historians focus on Catholic repression, such as L.J. Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme in Noord-Nederland in de 16^{de} en 17^{de} eeuw* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1964) while others focus on Dutch toleration.

² Huizinga, 50.

affiliated religious women called Spiritual Virgins or ‘kloppen’,³ who were able to take over many tasks once fulfilled by priests. These women undertook the Catholic religious duties of catechizing, helping the poor and the sick, housing priests, housing religious services, and maintaining altars. According to one estimate, there were over 5,000 of these women in the Northern Netherlands in the seventeenth century, living on their own, with family members, or in small groups with spiritual sisters, who ensured the continuation of Catholic services despite the conversion of large swaths of the country to Protestantism and the limitations placed on priests.⁴

Jesuit priests wrote a large number of advice manuals in Dutch for these religious Catholic women and often published them in the Southern Low Countries, frequently in the city of Antwerp. This activity meshed perfectly with their founding purpose. As the most important force behind the Catholic Reformation, members of the Society of Jesus focused on preaching and missionizing throughout Europe and the world. They encouraged some areas to remain Catholic, won others back for Catholicism, and suffered martyrdom in yet others. They converted people in India, and Spanish and Portuguese America, went on preaching tours through Italy and France, and established Catholic missions in Protestant territories including the Netherlands, North Germany, and Ireland.

³ Although there is some disagreement, it seems that the term ‘kloppen’ was a vulgar nickname that originated in Protestant circles for a “‘horsey’ type of woman or ‘virago.’” Mathieu G. Spiertz, “Priest and Layman in a Minority Church: The Roman Catholic Church in the Northern Netherlands 1592-1686,” in W.J. Sheils and Diana Wood, eds., *The Ministry: Clerical and Lay* (Cambridge, Mass.: Basil Blackwell Inc., 1990), 298. It seems that Catholics did not shun this insult, but then claimed that it meant they were women who ‘knock’ on heaven’s door.

⁴ See Marit Monteiro, *Geestelijke Maagden: Leven tussen klooster en wereld in Noord-Nederland gedurende de zeventiende eeuw* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1996), 120. For more on the lives of these Catholic women see Eugenia Elisabeth Agnes Josepha Maria Theissing, *Over klopjes en kwezels* (Utrecht: Dekker & Van de Vegt, 1935) and Elizabeth Schulte van Kessel, “De Geestelijke Maagden van ‘De Liefde,’” in *Geest en Vlees in godsdienst en wetenschap. Opstellen over gezagsconflicten in de zeventiende eeuw* (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1980), 51-91.

⁴ Jo Spaans, “Religious Policies in the Seventeenth Century Dutch Republic,” in Ronnie Po-chia Hsia and Henk van Nierop, eds. *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 72-86.

As the Jesuits missionized, their main goal was to educate their converts. They established colleges at a rapid rate: by the time of the death of their founder, Ignatius Loyola, in 1556, there were some thirty-five colleges and by 1626, there were 444 colleges plus 100 seminaries and schools. Their focus on education and the foundation of schools led them to produce a great number of works for their students.⁵

Within this tradition, some eighteen priests wrote devotional guides for the Spiritual Virgins of the Netherlands, of whom at least nine were Jesuits. These books include handbooks on behavior, early Christian and Medieval saints' lives stories, tiny combinations of advice and exempla, huge multi-volume martyrologies, and the life stories of two, recently deceased, Spiritual Virgins from just across the border in the southern Netherlands. In addition to the advice books written by Catholic priests for the Spiritual Virgins, this chapter will also make use of Vondel's post-conversion *Letters of the Holy Maidens*. It fits well with the sources written by priests for a number of reasons. Firstly, according to Gerard Brom, this work was based on the Jesuit Heribertus Rosweydeus' *The Lives of the Holy Maidens* from 1626, which was itself written for the Spiritual Virgins. Secondly, it has been speculated that Vondel wrote this work for a particular community of Spiritual Virgins who lived in the Amsterdam beguine community due to his connection to and correspondence with its rector, who was influential in Vondel's conversion. Thirdly, it is also likely that this particular group of religious Catholic women were the intended audience because the *Letters of the Holy Maidens* was published in an edition with the *Song of Praise of Maria, the Magnificent*,

⁵ R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), chapter two.

which the rector of the Amsterdam beguine community also used as “model thanksgiving for his beguines.”⁶

Catholic advice books are preoccupied with advising women to fight sexual attacks, their own sexual urges, and others’ sexual urges, often with a seemingly odd confusion of all these things. At first glance it appears that priests were primarily concerned with teaching Spiritual Virgins to avoid rape and its effects. Several of the priests explicitly mention the threat of rape and tell the Spiritual Virgins how to prevent it. Other priests make it clear that consent is an important factor in distinguishing rape from other forms of sex. However, under closer scrutiny, it becomes clear that present-day categories of force and consent do not correspond to the Dutch priests’ understanding of sexual impurity. This chapter will examine the priests’ understanding of the relationship between forced sex and other forms of undesirable sexual contact by studying their advice to the Catholic Spiritual Virgins and the effects this advice had on the possibilities open to Spiritual Virgins.

Advocating Violence and Murder

Focusing on the capacity of a particular group of Catholic Dutch women to maintain their spiritual or mental virginity was particularly attractive for priests in part because of the Catholic Church’s loss of authority in Dutch society. Priests had to empower the Spiritual Virgins because the latter were needed to perform many of the tasks priests could no longer do in the Netherlands. The priests felt that since the spread

⁶ Alice Doek, Doctoraalscriptie: “Joost van den Vondel: Brieven Der Heilige Maeghden, Martelaressen,” Oktober 1991; M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen begeleider aan de Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht. See also Gerard Brom, *Vondel’s Beking* (Amsterdam: E. van der Vecht, 1935) 20, W. M. Frijns, *Vondel en de moeder Gods* (Bilthoven, 1948), 196, 330.

of Protestantism, the situation of these Catholic Dutch women was analogous to the early Christian women who had had to defend their chastity against pagan impurity. Spiritual Virgins no longer lived in the Christendom of the central and late medieval periods in which Christianity was universally practiced, but were adrift amid a sea of non-Catholics. In order to legitimate the actions of the Spiritual Virgins, the priests who wrote their devotional works did two main things. Firstly, priests advised the Spiritual Virgins that they should use force to defend themselves against attackers. Secondly, priests advised Spiritual Virgins that they could maintain purity even if they were raped so long as they did not consent. While it may initially seem that with this priestly support, the small group of Catholic Spiritual Virgins lived uniquely empowered lives, their status was anything but straightforward.

The very existence of the Spiritual Virgins attests to the fact that Catholic priests continued to believe in a spiritual elite that could transcend human nature, be sexually pure, and not marry. The Council of Trent conferred spiritual authority to celibate Catholics, who were meant to be a small minority of the Dutch Catholics in the seventeenth century. The majority accepted the conditions and requirements of their supposed natures and lived a married life. The Catholic hierarchy was characterized by a “celibate priesthood, which solemnizes marriage and makes it a sacrament” at the top, followed by “women who have eschewed a sexual life, either virgins or widows;” and subsequently followed by “married persons.”⁷ Perhaps because of the inability of priests to be very visible in contemporary Dutch society, the priests who wrote for the Spiritual Virgins granted these celibate women an exalted position. For example, Arnoldus Steur, a Dominican who began to work as a missionary to the Netherlands in 1616, was taken

⁷ Weisner-Hanks, 107.

prisoner by the Protestant authorities in Groningen, and after his release preached in Friesland and later the Hague, declares that all those who are able to “deny their very nature” “more closely resemble angels” than they do married humans and are blessed with a “glorious and exceptional virtue.” Steur also clarifies why more do not seek the angelic virtue of virginity” by saying that people are generally more likely to “follow the inclination and affection of their flesh rather than the counsel and the witness of the spirit.”⁸ The ability of a few Catholic women to transcend their human nature granted them extraordinary power.⁹

Being a spiritual elite allowed Spiritual Virgins to reject the negative stereotypes associated with most women. These religious women were in many ways similar to medieval beguines; both groups were allowed to live religious lives outside of cloisters because priests believed that they could overcome their supposed female weakness and inconstancy and even surpass men.¹⁰ For example, according to her biographer Huysmans, Joanna of Randenraedt, who lived in the Southern Netherlands in the seventeenth century and whose life story would be read by Spiritual Virgins living in the northern Low Countries, did “not only exceed other women, but also the strongest men...”¹¹ Like other Spiritual Virgins, Joanna is an exception to the rule that women are weak, inconstant, and drawn to impurity. The priests believe that God brings about this

⁸ “Soo en wordt ons niet bevolen dwelc ons Nature heel is contrarien maer ons wordt gheraeden/ dat wy dden Enghelen door ghelijck worden. Daerom soo moet die Maecghdelijcke reynigheydt wel wesen een glorieuse deucht/ ende sonderlinge deucht...” Arnoldus Steur O.P., *De lelie der maeghdelijcker suyverheydt, seer nut ende profijtelyck voor alle godtvruchtighe maeghden die de suyverheydt zijn beminnende* (Antwerpen: Guiliam van Tongeren 1622), 2.

⁹ Especially considering Cats’ subjection of raped women to their rapist, their parents, their fellow countrymen, and their state that we examined in the last chapter, the Catholic Spiritual Virgins living in the northern Netherlands seem relatively empowered.

¹⁰ Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to woman Christ: Studies in Medieval Religion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995).

¹¹ “...niet alleenelijck andere vrouwen, maer oock de sterckste mannen te boven ghegaen.” Huysmans, *Kort Begryp*, 334.

change in female character. Wilhelm Schoenius, a pastor of several areas in the Dutch Republic during his career, including East and West Blokker, Zandaam, Edam, and the heart of Amsterdam, for example, writes: “When [a virgin] is bonded to her promise to such a strong God... she will not be weakened, because she knows that holy help will come to her from all sides to preserve her Purity.”¹² When a Spiritual Virgin promises to live for God she will not be weak like a woman any longer, but will have the power of God to sustain her. Schoenius explains that on the first step toward purity a virgin “is still uncertain of victory, because with the help of grace she has to fight the fire of the flesh, the appetite of desire, the world’s instigation of impurity, and the impetus of the Evil Spirit.”¹³ It is with God’s grace that a Spiritual Virgin can overcome what makes her like other women, her lusty flesh. Once she has successfully fought the flesh with the help of God, she can be more certain of her resolve to maintain her purity and live out her life as a Spiritual Virgin.

However beneficial elite spiritual status may be, Catholic priests also emphasize that maintaining this status is very trying. For women, the chief concern is maintaining sexual purity. Priests considered it more difficult for a woman to maintain her virginity than to marry. As the Catholic priests saw it, Spiritual Virgins fought a life-long battle. Protestant women married to order to insure their purity. They had visible proof that their sexuality was channeled in an acceptable way. Young girls had their visible youth, which was proof of their purity. Even religious Catholic males had a shorter struggle with purity. The seventeenth-century Dutch evidence supports the assertion by historian Caroline Bynum that Catholic “male lives are complete when virtue is won, evil defeated

¹² Wilhelm Schoenius, *De Weg der Suyverheyt van d’Hollantse Maegden* (Antwerpen: voor Philippus van Eyck [Amsterdam] 1676), 78.

¹³ Schoenius, 87.

or restitution made.” These men conquer impurity during specific moments of self-chastisement. But “women’s lives can be complete only when death has assured perpetual virginity.”¹⁴ Joachum van de Putte of the Society of Jesus in Antwerp shares this gendered explanation: “As long as we are weighted with this brittle, mortal body [and] so long as we carry this costly treasure of purity in brittle earthenware vessels, there can be no certain victory.”¹⁵ Although he uses “we,” his subject is the heavenly reward of the Spiritual Virgins and therefore he uses the metaphor associated with their bodies, earthenware vessels. In the end, van de Putte is suggesting that the only safe virgin is a dead one. Vondel tells the many maidens who “fought and attained their goal” that “neither death nor foe can harm [them].”¹⁶ Only in heaven can maidens be safe from the enemies to their purity. Even though priests recognize the Spiritual Virgins as an exceptional group of women who overcome their female flesh, they still continually tie these women to the problems of female sexuality.

Catholic priests taught Spiritual Virgins that sexual attack was something they might face. Wilhelm Schoenius, a priest in Edam, for instance, in his *Way of Purity of the Maidens of Holland* of 1676, tells Dutch Spiritual Virgins that they have to protect themselves from others who are out to get them:

¹⁴ Bynum “Female Body and Religious Practice in the Later Middle Ages,” in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body I*, ed. Michel Feher, Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi (New York: Zone, 1989) 161-219: 175.

¹⁵ “Also lange als wy met dit sterffelijck broosce lichaem behangen sijn / so lange als wy desen costelijcken schat der reynicheyt in broosce aerden vaten dragen/ so en macher geen sekere victorie sijn.” Joachum van De Putte, *Eenen claren Spiegel der warachtigher christelijcker maechden, waer inne zij volcomelijck muegen mercken, hoe zij dat inwendige aensicht haerder zielen moeten verciereen begeeren zij dat Christo Jesu haren bruydegom sal behagen* (Antwerpen 1551), 3 recto.

¹⁶ “Zoo gaet het Christus uitverkoornen. Zoo groeit de leli onder doornen; De roos op scharpe doornehaegen...Men vind geen kostelijcker bronnen, Dan die uit 's Martlers adren springen. Dees sluiers passen hovelingen, Die tot het hemelsch hof behooren....Het Maeghdenheir, nu doorgestreden, Daer zy het al ten hemel wencken. Noch dood noch vyand kan u krencken...” Vondel, *Brieven der Heilige Maeghden*, ed. Lector B.H. Molkenboer O. P., Year, 24 October 2006
<http://www.dbnl.nl/tekst/vond001dewe04/vond001dewe04_0069.htm> 766.

Beloved Reader, condemn the venom-suckers. Be on guard against nasty teeth, evil lips, slanderous tongues, malicious eyes, darkened desires, noble dispositions full of self-conceited wisdom, as you consider going on this spiritual Path of Purity.¹⁷

He alerts his audience to the many threats against their physical purity. A wide range of evils exist to deter them from their spiritual path. Schoenius also describes how God preserves virgin purity when other people threaten it. He writes:

We are able to assemble many beautiful examples of Virgins who were sought to partake in unchaste actions through promises, fears, threats, and violence; yes even directed to do it openly; and that they nevertheless were not dishonored through the help of God their Bridegroom and his Holy Angels.¹⁸

Schoenius tells Spiritual Virgins that there are evil men who want to take women's chastity through promises, fears, threats, and violence, but God is able to save them.

The most shocking advice priests wrote for the Catholic 'Spiritual Virgins' is that when they are threatened by a rapist, they should fight to kill him. Several priests explicitly instruct Catholic virgins how to fight off attackers. Valentinus Bisschop, a Jesuit sent to the Netherlands as a missionary in 1621, in his *The Praise of Purity* (1626), tells the stories of two model virgins and then proceeds to give specific instructions on how Catholic virgins should violently oppose their attackers:

One virgin...struck a priest who wanted to kiss her with the back of her hand in the face drawing blood and thus fended him off... [The second virgin] who came into the same danger by a Sergeant, dashed him on the head with a pestle (with which she was busy working) in order to drive him away from her... [Of the ways to protect your purity] the very best of all is to do what the two aforementioned Maidens...did; drive the foul flatterer away from you

¹⁷ "Beminde Leser versmaedt the venijn-suygers. Wacht u voor nijldige tanden, boose lippen, lasterige tongen, arge oogen, verdonckerde verstanden, hoovaerdige geesten vol eygen goetdunckende wijsheydt, als ghy door dese geestelijcke Weg der Suyverheydt denckt te gaen." Schoenius, 6 in section entitled "Tot den...Leser."

¹⁸ "Wy souden hier noch konnen stellen veel schoone exempelen der Maegden/ die van de Tyrannen door beloften/ vreesen/ dreygementen/ en geweld/ tot de onkuysheydt versocht zijn geweest; ja openbaerlijck daer toe verwesen; en dat sy nochtans niet onteert zijn geweest/ door hulpe van Godt haren Bruydtgom/ en sijnder H. Engelen." Schoenius, 85.

...with a backhand, or with a short stick. Hear this Maiden, whoever you are. Immediately use all your fingers as rapiers/ your hands as swords, your arms as iron clubs your feet as poles, and all that you can seize. With spears and lances defend yourself and bravely chase away your challenger with all weapons. But if it happens that you cannot do it like this, take a knife and hurt him. Yes, stab him dead if that is necessary and if it is the only way to get out of his power. This is permitted in such a case: all the [Church Fathers] teach this: because I am allowed to kill a thief in the night who steals my money, how much more so a rapist, considering the value of the thing stolen in this case.¹⁹

While traditional teachings tell Christians to metaphorically arm themselves with the armor of God as Ephesians 6:10-20 exhorts, it is difficult to imagine early modern Catholic women expecting to have to kill attackers. Yet this is precisely what Bisschop advocates. He encourages them to contemplate rape, to plan how they would react if attacked, and to be ready to hurt and even kill an attacker. Bisschop reassures the virgins that this is not wrong and that it is the best way to ensure their purity. The level of violence is justified by the extraordinary value of their virginity.

Other priests advise this as well, especially Daniel Huysmans, Joannes Lindeborn, Schoenius, and Johannes Fredericus Lumnus. Huysmans, a Jesuit who wrote the life stories of two seventeenth-century Spiritual Virgins just over the border in the Southern Low Countries, tells how one of them, Agnes of Heilsbach, either enacted or intended to

¹⁹ “...twee diversche Maegden/ van de welcke d'eene (na 't schrijven van Cantipratanus) heeft eenen sekeren Priester/ als hy haer wilde kussen/ met eene averechte-handt voor 't aensicht gheslagen to den bloede toe/ ende soo vanhaer gheweyrt... maer de andere in't selve perijckel ghekomen zijnde by eenen Sergeant/ heeft hem met den stamper (daer sy mede in't werck besigh was) op 't hooft te smij ten/ van haer verdreven...het alder-beste noch van allen/ als dit niet en helpt/ is te doen dat die twee voornoemde Maeghden... dusdanighe vuyle pluymstijckers oft pluymstrijcksteren met eene averechte handt/ oft met eenen korten kluppel van u wegh te drijven. Hoort ghy Maghet/ wien ghy zijt: in sulck eenen stont dat al uwe vingeren u zijn voor poignaerden/ uwe handen voor sweerden/ uwe armen voor ijsere knodsen/ uwe voeten voor hant-boomen/ ende al't ghene ghy kont aengrijpen/ voor spicie ende lancien weyrt u hier mede kloeckelijck ende wilt uwen aen-vechter met alle wapenen verjaeghen. Maer is't dat ghy 't soo noch niet al kont ghedoen/ neemt een mes/ neemt ende quetst hem/ ja steeckt doot is 't dat van noodigh is/ ende ghy niet anders sijne macht kont ontgaen. Het is gheoorloft in sulck een gheval dit te doen: soo leeren alle de Doctoren: want is 't dat ick magh den nacht-dief vermoorden/ die mijn gelt stelt/ hoe veel te meer den verkrachter mijnder Suyverheydt/ aengesien het goet 't welck hier ontrooft wordt...” Valentinius Bisschop S.J., *Den Lof der Suyverheydt (...) Van Nieuws overseen ende verbeterd, Het Tweede Boeck* (Antwerpen: Hieronymus Vedussen 1626), 197, 199.

enact these teachings. He writes, “If someone indicated by words or by other means suggested he had impure intentions, Agnes unexpectedly punched that person in the face.”²⁰ According to her biographer, this Spiritual Virgin is in a situation in which she feels threatened and she responds by punching the offending man. Agnes seems to have a penchant for violence, even more so than Bisschop’s example of the virgin who backhanded the priest. At one point when Agnes is chastising herself on the roof, a nobleman comes “searching for her with evil intentions.”

Agnes becoming aware of this and having no better ideas, closed the attic trapdoor. This was scarcely done before the Nobleman tried to overpower it. Noticing the trapdoor had no lock, Agnes stood on top of it, saying to him that he should not be so bold as to come any further, unless he wanted his eyes in his hands. He did every violent thing he could to open the trapdoor, but through the help of God... and his Holy Mother... [Agnes was] so heavy that the impure person could not open the door in the least [and so] he left.²¹

She does not threaten to punch him when he comes through the door, but even worse: she threatens to rip his eyes out. In both cases, Agnes is either extraordinarily fierce or makes violent physical threats, which her biographer records as an example for other Spiritual Virgins in order to be certain that they do not lose their virginity if sexually attacked.

Lindeborn, a priest trained in Cologne and a pastor in Utrecht during the second half of the seventeenth century, also encourages Spiritual Virgins to preserve their virginity by violent means when attacked. He compares the virgin to a soldier who must

²⁰ “Als haer jemandt door woorden oft andersints eenighe onsuyvere genegentheyt te kennen gaf, kreegh dien van Agnes onverwachts eenen kaeck-slagh.” Daniel Huysmans S.J., *Leven ende Deughden vande weerdighe Agnes van Heilsbagh gheestelycke dochter onder de bestieringhe der Societeyt Iesu* (Antwerpen: Michiel Cnobbaert, 1691), 36.

²¹ “Agnes dit gewaer wordende, en vondt geen en anderen raedt, als de valdeure vanden solder te sluyten. Dit en was quaelijck gheschiet, of desen Edelman tracht de valdeure t’overweldigen. Ghemerckt dat dese valdeure gheen slot en hadde, stont Agnes daer boven op, hem segghende day hy sich niet en soude verstouten van voorder te komen, ten waere saecken hy sijn twee oogen in sijn handt wilde hebben. Hy dede alle geweld om de deure op te lichten: Maer door de hulpe van Godt...ende door...sijn H. Moeder...scheen ick soo swaer te wesen, dat desen onsuyveren mensch niet in’t minste de deure beroeren en konde. Hy vertrock.” Huysmans, 35-36.

“bravely deter the enemy if he attacks” by “fighting away scandalous and dishonorable lust and foul images.”²² The virgin “should not only offer an enemy opposition, but even clamp onto and attack him.”²³ Lindeborn suggests that the best way for a virgin to maintain her purity is to take the offensive. Schoenius concurs with this and echoes Bisschop’ admonition to the virgins to use their bodies and any weapon available: “Strike without hesitation even though he be severely injured or remain dead; you do not sin here...”²⁴ Schoenius, like Bisschop, also stresses the right of the virgin to kill when threatened with rape because of what is at stake, namely the “costly treasure, which once lost cannot be regained in eternity...[and] in order to forgo the greatest danger of all [which is] consenting to the fleshly sensuality with sin, that is embedded in such a stealing of Purity.”²⁵ These priests advise the Spiritual Virgins to undertake extraordinarily violent means to fight off sexual attacks.

Priests also provided Spiritual Virgins with biblical examples of violent women in the advice manuals. While I have not found any images of a woman who wounds or kills a man trying to rape her, a number of priests provide ‘Spiritual Virgins’ with examples of biblical women who save their people by murdering a powerful male enemy. I have found images of Ya’el and Judith, which the priests use as a positive expression of female

²² “Het ander officie van een Soldaet is...den vyand so als hy aenvalt/ dapper af te keren... als iemand u tot onkuische dingen aenrand/ alleens gelijk een krijgs-knegt van haer afgevaerdigt/ oft als sy u schandelijke en oneerlijke gepeinsen en vuile verbeeldingen ingeeft.” Joannes Lindeborn, *De Leeder Jacobs: De Maegden, die Godt met opzet van eeuwige Reinigheit in de Wereld dienen, toegepast* (Antwerpen: Michiel Cnobbaert voor Joachim van Metelen [Amsterdam], 1670), 256.

²³ “Het laetste officie eens soldaets is niet alleenlijk den vyand weerstand te bieden/ maer selfs hem aen te klampen en aen te vallen.” Lindeborn, 258.

²⁴ “...en slaet toe/ schroomt hem niet/ al soude hy daer door bedorven zijn/ of doot blijven; ghy doet hier geen sonde...” Schoenius, 95.

²⁵ “De Catholijcke Leeraers leeren eempaerlijck dat oock een Maget mach sonder sonde dootslaen oft doorsteecken den roover van haer Suyverheydt/ als hy haer soeckt te verkrachten/ en sy anders die kostelijke schat niet kan bewaren/ die eens verlooren zijnde / in der eeuwigheydt niet wederom gekregen kan worden: te meer/ oock om te ontgaen het alder meeste perijckel van te consenteren in de vleeschelijke wellust met sonde/ dat in soodanige beroovinge des Suyverheyds gelegen is.” Schoenius, 94.

activity and violence. This image, for example shows Ya’el killing an enemy leader by putting a tent peg through his head and thereby saving the Israelites. The caption reads:

“In this way must all your enemies be overcome saith the Lord.”



Figure 12: Ya’el killing an enemy leader²⁶

This second image is of Judith similarly killing an enemy leader. You can see in the image that she holds his severed head in her right hand. Here the caption reads: “You are the glory of Jerusalem. You are the happiness of Israel. You are the most distinguished of our people.”



Figure 13: Judith killing Holofernes²⁷

²⁶ Image in *De Lof-Sangh*, which follows Jesuit Herbertus Rosweyus, *Het leven vande heylighe Maghet ende Moeder Godts Maria, prinsesse der Maeghden. Met een cort tractaet vanden Maeghdelijcken Staet* (Leuven: Francois Fabri voor Pieter Jacobszoon Paets [Amsterdam] 1629), 31 recto. University of Maastricht, Jesuit Collection MU AAG 371 and MU AAG 355.

²⁷ Image in *De Lof-Sangh*, 36 recto. University of Maastricht, Jesuit Collection MU AAG 371 and MU AAG 355.

Again the image and text praises a woman who murdered a powerful man. In these two examples, you can see that priests emphasize the violence of biblical women to encourage seventeenth-century women to fight back violently when attacked. Particularly interesting is how different this is from the way Protestants use these same stories. When Protestant authors use these biblical images of women killing men, it is to show how dangerous women can become if they start exercising their own will. Catholic priests on the other hand, use Ya'el and Judith as role models for the violent physical acts Spiritual Virgins should undertake to preserve their purity.

Maintaining Sexual Purity in spite of Assault

Not only do priests tell the Catholic Spiritual Virgins that they are capable of fighting off rapists, they also assure the women that they can be safe from rape in other ways. Priests agree that as long as women do not consent to sex then they can remain virgin even after rape. Johannes Fredericus Lumnius, pastor and reformer of the beguine community in Antwerp, for example, instructs women that they can suffer a rape and remain pure. He offers the positive message that women can refuse to give their consent and thus rape does not sully the victim's sexual purity. Lumnius explains that the heart consents to something, according to St. Augustine, "when we praise and want it."²⁸ He goes on to explain that: "...as long as internal honor remains through which the exterior parts of the body also deserve to be venerated as holy, the violence of another's lust can

²⁸ "Angela: Wanneer consenteert het herte? Bonaventura: Dan consenteren wy dit/ seyt voorts Augustinus/ als wijt mede prijse ende willen." Lumnius, 243.

not take away the body's holiness."²⁹ When a virgin maintains her internal honor by not desiring the violent lust of another, then her body will remain holy and virgin. Lumnius explains at length that someone who "loses her honor unwillingly and with violence" will not:

...be robbed of her virgin reward...even though her being may suffer violence and be violated in such a manner...[T]rue virgin purity cannot be sullied or taken by another's lust without the lust of the one who suffers it. Just as has happened in some times of war or in the pursuit of churches that honorable daughters and Spiritual Virgins are attacked by mad people with force, who nevertheless gave neither provocation or consent and thus do not lose the reward of virginity. Because whatever the body suffers (says Augustine) with force, without preceding lust may be called more of a torment than corruption... Because if a heart neither consents nor allows it, no one can violate the honor of the body.³⁰

Lumnius is very clear that a woman can retain her "true virgin purity" as long as her "heart neither consents nor allows it." He is also clear that "no one can violate the honor of the body" except with the permission of that body.

Lumnius believes that a Christian virgin can be certain of her internal purity despite physical violation. He explains that if Lucretia had been Christian, she would not have needed to commit suicide. He writes that according to St. Augustine, Lucretia did not kill herself "...out of love of honor, but out of weakness in not wanting to be shamed." Lumnius tells us that she had to kill herself to show everyone her pure

²⁹ "...want also langhe als het propoost des eerbaerheys blijft van binnen/ waer door oock van buyten het lichaem verdient gheheylicht te worden/ so en ontnempt het ghewelt van een anders wellust den lichaem sijn heylichey niet." Lumnius, 249.

³⁰ "Angela: Maer oft yemant van ons liedens / onwillich ende met ghewelt haer eerbaerheyt quijt ghink/ soude die daerom ooc vanden maechdelijcken loon berooft worden? Bonaventura: Neen...alsoo dat die natuere ghewelt mach lijden/ ende in sulcker vueghen geschent worden/ maer die waerachtige maechdelijcke suyuerhz en can door een anders wellust/ sonder wellust des gheens/ diet lijdt/ niet besmet worden/ noch ghenomen. Ghelijck alst somwijlen ghebeurt/ in tijt van orloghe/ oft van veruolghenisse der kercken/ dat eersame dochteren ende gheestelijcke maechden met cracht van rasende menschen worden oueruallen/ die welc nochtans hier toe gheen oorsaec en gheuen noch consent: waeromme sy ooc den loon des maechdoms niet en verliesen. Want het gheen/ dwelck het lichaem lijdt (seyt Augustijn) met fortsen/ sonder voorgaende lust/ mach meer een quellinghe/ dan een corruptie ghenoomt worden: ...Want als het hertte dat niet en consenteert/ noch toe en laet/ soo en con niemant deerbaerheyt des lichaems ghevioleren." Lumnius, 241-242.

conscience. Christian women do not have to do this "...because they have the eyes of their God within them as the witness of their consciences which is the glory of Purity."³¹ Through this example, Lumnius explains that God is within the Spiritual Virgins and so they can be certain to receive their reward if they refuse to give their consent. Christian women do not have to prove to people that they did not consent. Lumnius makes this point elsewhere as well using the words of St. Augustine:

[Women and virgins should] have no sorrow and do not be disgusted with your life even if your purity has been violated or ridiculed by your enemies. You have a great and just solace that your conscience is assured that you have given no such consent.³²

Thus a woman who has suffered violation can be certain that she did not consent and this should comfort her.

The examples of saints Theodora and Agnes also show that a virgin can be sure that she will not be tempted to give consent if raped. The authors of their stories expect these saints to retain their purity despite their presence in brothels and the threat of imminent rape. Theodora's biographer, the Jesuit Heribertus Rosweyde, known as a hagiographer, Church historian, and teacher at a number of Jesuit colleges, writes specifically that she cannot be contaminated no matter what happens:

They led her to the place of impurity so the Virgin may be raped, but not sullied, because wherever she was, she was a temple of God; and in a

³¹ "...seyt Augustinus/ haer seluen ghedoot heeft/ een heeft sy niet ghedaen wt liefde der eerbaerheyt/ maer uyt crancheyt dat sy niet beschaemt en soude worde... haers selfs doots/ moest wesen een ghetuyghe haerder onnooselheyt voor den menschen/ den welcken sy haer conscientie niet en cost vertoonen. Maer dit en hebben Christen vrouwen niet gedaen / die nu noch leuen/ seyt August... Want sy hebben van binnen voor dooghen van haren God/ het ghetuyghe haerder conscientien/ dwelc die glorie der suyverheyt is..." Lumnius, 246.

³² "...hebt gheen verdriet noch walghinghe van u leven/ al ist / dat u suyverheyt van u vianden ghescoffiert oft bespot is. Een groot ende oprecht solaes hebt ghy/ dat u conscientie versekert is/ dat ghy gheen consent alsulcken en hebt ghegheuen." Lumnius, 247-248.

scandalous place her purity would not be violated, but it erases the impurity of the place and appropriates it for God.³³

Even if raped, Theodora's body would not have been violated, but rather she had the power to sanctify an unholy brothel. And elsewhere, her biographer states, "if the body suffers any disgrace, purity is not lost as long as the will did not give its consent."³⁴ Like Lumnius, Rosweyde was certain that if raped, these religious women would not consent and therefore would not suffer impurity. Vondel echoes the sentiment as well. In his *Letters of Holy Virgins*, written after his conversion to Catholicism, he explains that Agnes would be safe despite a stay in a brothel: "Whenever one violates the body, The soul remains still virgin, Through the unstained will."³⁵ Vondel concurs with Rosweyde and Lumnius that the body will not be violated if no consent is given. He has another maiden, Saint Aacht say:

And thus the cruel one rips a breast from my ribs. I cry: 'O subjugator what do you see with your eyes! You have suckled from your mother's breast, a woman breast, And now you unashamedly violate the breasts of a virgin? But this one has another breast, one which she wears internally, Consecrated to Heaven that which you will never violate!'³⁶

³³ "Sy leydden haer dan tot de plaetse der onkuysheydt / alwaer de Maghet mocht verkracht/ maer niet besmet worden: want op wat plaetse sy was/ was sy eenen tempel Godts; ende in eene schandelijcke plaetse en wordt de reynigheydt niet gheschent/ maer dese vaeght uyt d'onkuysheydt der plaetsen/ ende eyghent Gode die toe." Pedro de Ribadineira and Heribert Rosweyde, *Generale legende der heiligen: Grondt-reghel der volmaectheyt voor-ghestelt in de kennisse ende verbeteringhe der daghelijcksche sonde: aen alle die trachten near eene besondere suyperheydt der sielen*. Sixth ed. (Antwerp: Hieronymus Verdussen, 1686) 488.

³⁴ "Ende oft't lichaem eenighe schande leedt / soo en wort de reynigheyt niet verloren/ indien den wille daer in gheen consent en gheeft." Ribadineira and Rosweyde, 443.

³⁵ "Wij oogen op een Maagd en zeestar, t' effens moeder/ Van 't wonderbare Kind, den zekersten Behoeder/ Der menschen, die zoo licht zijn maagden redden kan, Terwijl uw Vesta slaapt, gelijk haar leeuwgespan; Dat nooit zijn manen schudde, of heeft bestaan te brullen, Daar nonnen, dag en nacht, de blinde lampen vullen/ Met olie, die den nacht der doling niet verjaagt. Wanneer men 't lichaam schendt, zoo blijft de ziel nog maagd/ Door d' onbevleken wil." Vondel, *Brieven der Heilige Maeghden*.

³⁶ "Zoo rukt de wreede een borst van mijne ribben af. Ik riep: „o dwingeland wat ziet gij met uw oogen! Gij hebt uw moeders borst, een vrouwenborst, gezogen, En schendt gij onbeschaamd de borsten van een maagd? Maar dees heeft nog een borst, die zij van binnen draagt, Haar Heiland toegewijd, die zult gij nimmer schenden!" Vondel, *Brieven der Heilige Maeghden*, 8-9.

Vondel has this virgin claim that there is not only an interior purity, but also an entire internal virgin body that she has consecrated to heaven and which is thereby safe from consenting to or even making contact with any human. Vondel suggests that when a virgin withholds her consent, not only her mental purity but also her interior bodily purity is maintained.

Because it is possible that a raped woman can maintain her physical purity, some priests even claim that rape can benefit a Spiritual Virgin. So long as their consciences remain inviolate, their suffering can be considered a worthy martyrdom:

These hand maidens of the Lord...who have lost their honor through force/ are made more praiseworthy by humility and shame... Since all sins originate from the will, the unwilling heart cannot be contaminated through such tarnishing of the nature.³⁷

A raped virgin's worth can be increased through her suffering and humility and thus in some sense she has benefited from the violation. Lumnius gives the example of Lucia who tells a tyrant who intends to send her to a brothel, "If you violate me against my will, the honor will make me worthy of a double crown. One I will receive for my virginity, the other for the violence that I will suffer."³⁸ Lucia's suffering earns her even more reward in heaven. Egidius Gerardi, a Jesuit since 1613 who is known for one advice manual, states this as a general principal: "the more of a struggle, the more crowns; the

³⁷ "...Die dienst maechden (seyt hy) des heeren die haer eerbaerheydt met fortsen hebben verloren/ sullen prijsbaerder door ootmoedicheyt ende beschaemptheyt worden...Want hoe wel alle sonden haeren oorspronc nemen uut den wille/ ende het herte onwillich door sulcke bederf der natueren niet besmmet en can worden." Lumnius, 248-249

³⁸ "Ist dat ghy my doet schoffieren teghen mijnen wille / ende teghen mijnen danck/ deerbaerheydt sal my een dubble croone ghereet maken. Een sal ick ontfanghen voor mijn maechdom: een voor het ghewelt dat ic lijden sal..." Lumnius, 245.

more work, the more reward.”³⁹ According to a number of priests, raped women can maintain their purity and even benefit from their sexual violation through their suffering.

Seventeenth-Century Categories of Sexual Purity and Impurity

Thus far it seems that the priests share our modern conception of rape as a physical attack in which a woman does not give her consent to a sexual act. The priests also seem to want to lessen the Spiritual Virgin’s fear of rape as well as to ameliorate its emotional effects by telling violated women that they may still be virgin. However, when one considers this priestly advice, it appears to be contradictory. Why did they encourage religious women to kill attackers if their virginity was not lost through rape? And why if a woman could spiritually profit from rape did they provide such shocking advice? The answer I found is that even though priests had to empower an extraordinary group of Spiritual Virgins to do the tasks that the priests themselves were no longer permitted to do, they still fundamentally distrusted these women’s bodies. Priests told Catholic women that outside attack was in fact not the worst of their worries. The most frightening possibility was that a woman’s own flesh would damage her and the men around her.

Although the reader of the seventeenth-century priestly advice to Spiritual Virgins is immediately struck by their concern with avoiding physical attack, priests have built in a number of mechanisms to downplay its seeming danger. Schoenius, for example, explicitly diminishes the likelihood that it may occur. He states: “not many Virgins’ purity is challenged openly by other people.” He follows his chapter on physical threats to purity with, in his words, a more important chapter on averting “the internal

³⁹ “Hoe meerder strijdt/ hoe meerder kroon; hoe meerderen aerbeydt/ hoe meerderen loon.” A. [Egidius Gheeraerds] Gerardi S.J., *Den Spiegel van Philotea, ende der Godtvruchtighen zielen* (Antwerpen: weduwe van Jan Cnobbaert, 1646), 72.

temptations of the flesh which all Pure hearts will repeatedly experience in this life.”⁴⁰

All of the priestly advice moderates the apparent danger of rape by making it only one of three types of threats. Steur, for example in *The Lily of Virgin Purity*, explicitly lists these threats to female purity:

No one should be so malicious and fearless that he should want to [impurely] burn ...the Virgin body... Because it is written: if someone defiles the Temple of God [which the virgin body is], God will destroy him. A Virgin will also well understand that she must not allow God's temple to be dishonored by her carelessness and that she must not be a stumbling block or hindrance to her brother.⁴¹

In order to remain virgin, Steur writes, and five other priests who also use this structure⁴² agree, that impurity has to be fought in three steps. Women can 1) fight against and rely on God's help to avoid physical attacks. Women must also, as all nine priests who focus entirely on purity concur: 2) be very careful in controlling any internal temptation of their own flesh and 3) not allow themselves to tempt others. Women must be wary not only of possible physical attack, but also of every sexual feeling they have and that others may have toward them.

This passage provides a rare moment in which the fearsome sources of impurity are finally clear. More often, advice for Spiritual Virgins slips between how to avoid physical attack and how to avoid the temptation of oneself and others, so much so that it

⁴⁰“Al is't dat er veel Maegden/ soo opentlijck van andere menschen tot onkuysheydt niet bevochten worden/ gelijk in 't voorgaende Capittel is verhandelt; nochtans soo sal sy al de inwendige tentation des vleeschs niet ontgaen/ van de welcke alle Suyvere herten in dit leven meermaels worden bestormt...” Schoenius, 96.

⁴¹ “Niemant en sy soo boos/ en onghereest/ dat hy den Tempel des Heeren / dat is/ het Maeghdelijck lichaem/ ende daer in die alder-costelijste siele/ d'alder H. juweel dat in Godts Tempel is/ met den Brant der wellusten ende dertelheydt/ als een ongeloovich mensch soude willen verbranden. Want daer staet geschreven: ist dat jemandt den Tempel Godts schent, dien sal Godt schenden. Een maeghet sal oock wel voor heur sien/ dat sy deur heur onachtsaemheydt den Tempel Godts niet en laet onteeren: ende dat sy heuren broeder gheen struycksel oft arghernisse en stelle [I Corinthians 3:17]. Steur, 220-221.

⁴² The remaining five authors who focus on purity, but do not include how to fight off external attacks are Gerardi, Kemp, Lindeborn, Smidt, and Steur.

is impossible to examine priestly advice on how to avoid rape separately from their advice on how to avoid temptation. By blurring various forms of sexual temptation with rape, priests subtly construct physical sexual attack as a long-term process of mental and physical temptation that the Spiritual Virgins, despite their efforts to fight impurity, may not have the power to withstand. The priests provide Spiritual Virgins with a long list of ways they need to try to prevent sexual impurity, starting with maintaining their internal purity.

Preserving Internal Purity

The priests told Spiritual Virgins that to preserve their purity they had to try to control both their bodies and their minds. Priests based these ideas on the Church Father Augustine's definition of virginity in which he included a number of mental or spiritual factors. The priests concur with his emphasis upon an idea of "total virginity," or "*integritas*," which included "the interior disposition of the virgin, as well as her physical incorruptibility."⁴³ Several of the priests explicitly discuss the significance of intentions in maintaining purity. Lumnus explains "whoever has a virgin body must also work to have a virgin soul."⁴⁴ Steur agrees that a virgin body is not enough. There is more to purity than physical virginity. He writes: "...out of pure and holy thoughts comes purity."⁴⁵ Schoenius makes the same point: "The description of a virgin is one who has a

⁴³ Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, "The Heroics of Virginity: Brides of Christ and Sacrificial Mutilation," in *Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Literary and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Mary Beth Rose (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), 50.

⁴⁴ "...hy naden lichaem maghet is/ die moet arbeyden ooc nader sielen maecht te zijn." Joannes Fredericus Lumnus, *Van dleven der christeliicker maecheden, vier dialogi, dat is tsamenspreckinghen van twee personen: Ghemaeckt by Ioannem Fredericum Lumnium Pastoor des Beghijnhofts T'Antwerpen. Noch een Boecxken vanden H. Doctoer Ambrosius Bisschop tot Melanen, ghescreven aen een Maghet die tot val ghecomen was, door den selven nu eerst in duytsch overghesedt* (Antwerpen: Plantijn 1571), 261.

⁴⁵ "...wt suyveren ende heylighen gedachten/ comt die Reynicheydt voorts." Steur, p. 72.

holy body and soul, because it is not useful to have a Virgin body if one marries in thought.”⁴⁶ Pure thoughts and a virgin soul are necessary for a ‘Spiritual Virgin’ to get her heavenly reward.

Spiritual Virginity is also much less certain than physical purity. Schoenius, for example, states that a person is impure if she has so much as an “impure and unchaste thought, knowingly and intentionally.”⁴⁷ How can one be certain whether or not one had an impure thought intentionally? The author of *A Rule through which like a Mirror Christian Virgins...May Come to True Internal Beauty*, echoing the admonitions of many others, exacerbates the uncertainty. He encourages Spiritual Virgins to “...investigate your conscience twice a day.”⁴⁸ A virgin must continually search for any impure thoughts or intentions. The belief that virgins may have intentions that are not obvious to themselves must have instilled them with, if not constant, then at least prevalent doubts as to their own sincerity. Joanna of Randenraedt for example, believed that she suffered great pain because she had not fought an “affection for a young man” hard enough. As soon as she realized the problem, Joanna pledged herself only to God and He taught her in a fatherly manner how carefully “she must protect her heart from the love of all creatures.”⁴⁹ The text does not recount any details of Joanna’s physical temptation. It

⁴⁶ “De beschrijvinge eener Maget is: Heylig zijn aen lichaem en ziel, want het en baet niet met het lichaem Maget te zijn, als men met de gedachten trouwe.” Schoenius, 100.

⁴⁷ “Als den mensch onsuyvere en onkuyssche gedachten, wetende en willens overdenckt, om dat hy daer genoegten in heft, sonder wedestrijdinge des consents... So wie een Vrouw aensiet om haer te begeeren, die heft met haer overspel bedreven in sijn herte.” Schoenius, 99.

⁴⁸ “Ondersoect u conscientie tweemael sdaechs...” *Een regel waar duer als een Spieghel, die Christelijcke maechden met Gods gratie soude moghen comen tot waerachtighe inwendighe schoonheyt, om also haer Bruydegom Jhesu Christo te behagen, ende van hem die Croon des levens te ontfangen* [ca. 1583], 8.

⁴⁹ “...sy een invallende genegentheyt tot eenen Ionghman, die nochtans niet ontuchtigh en was, te seer inghevolght, en niet terstont verstooten en hadde. Sy liet haer dan voor-staen, dat dese mensechelijke genegentheyt, al-hoe-wel sonder mengeling van eenigh quaedt, waerlijck en met reden de oorsaecke was van soo bittere, ende langh-durende pijnen: ghemerckt dat sy wist, dat Godt alleen haer herte gheheelijck besitten wilde. Sy heeft...haer slevlen plichtich bekendt voor sijne ooghen; ende hem ghelooft ende

could simply be that she questions her own intentions so obsessively that she blames herself for no fault. Priests encourage this kind of self-doubt. Cornelius Musius, whose original Latin text *Institution Foeminae Christianae*...of 1536 was translated into Dutch in 1690 by an elusive figure with the initials R.H., advises religious women to have a “complete mistrust of yourselves, and realize that without God’s mercy, a small wind of temptation will smite you underfoot and play with you just as the wind with some dust.”⁵⁰ Musius explains that women were capable of internal virginity only through the help of God and without that help, women are likely to give in to temptation.

Though more difficult to preserve and rather uncertain, according to Catholic priests, this mental and spiritual virginity is controllable and redeemable. Schoenius tells maidens how to control their thoughts: “When a maiden is tempted by internal temptation of the flesh, even if it be through an impure movement of the body, she does not have to shake her head or ridiculously wave her hands or feet so that others notice.”⁵¹ She should, according to Schoenius, count the floor tiles, think of heaven and hell, or of Judgment Day and pray. This will take her mind off of the temptation and allow her to maintain her mental purity. Schoenius and Lumnius also explain “whomever lost their virginity through their thoughts can get it back.”⁵² The way a virgin can regain her (or his) internal purity is “through penitence, changing the will, renewal of the intention to henceforth live

ghebenedijdt, dat hy soo Vaederlijck, en soo ghenaedelijck haer gheleert hadde, hoe neerstelijck dat sy haer herte bewaeren most van alle liefde der schepselen.” Huysmans, *Kort Begryp*, 17-18.

⁵⁰ “Hebt een volkomen mistrouwen van u selven, en houd voor gewis, dat, ten sy God u door sijn genade vast houd, een klein windeke van bekoring u onder de voet sal smijten; en met u sal spelen gelijk de wint met een hoop stof.” Cornelius Musius, vert. R.H., *Maagde pligt, ofte de ware maagd* (Antwerpen: voor Hendrik van Rhijn te Delft, 1690), 26.

⁵¹ “Als een Maget dan door inwendige bekoringe des vleeschs wort bevochten/ al is ’t oock met onsuivere beweginge des lichaems/ soo behoeft sy haer hooft niet te schudden/ noch handen ofte voeten belachelijck te roeren/ dat en ander het merckt...” Schoenius, 96.

⁵² “...die met syn ghedachten den maechdom verlooren heeft, mach die vvederom vvercryghen.” Lumnius, 252.

always serving God as a Virgin. And [they] can also receive the crown [rewarded to] Virgins [in heaven]... after [starting] a new pure life.”⁵³ Spiritual Virgins who commit unwanted sexual acts in their minds can chastise themselves and return to virginity once again. This is not true for those who engage in real physical sexual acts. Surprisingly, Schoenius spells out the idea that:

...through natural communion of the flesh of a Man and a Woman and through the voluntary contamination of the body virginity is also lost...although God can do all things, he cannot restore a Virgin after she falls. He can deliver her from the punishment, but he will not crown what has been spoiled.⁵⁴

According to Catholic priests, physical sexual sin, while redeemable, precludes a virgin reward in heaven, while mental sexual sin does not.

Priests make it clear that you can be sure of a Spiritual Virgin’s purity by viewing her exterior. The passageway between the exterior and interior is so direct that the interior can be seen on a person’s face in the same way that the exterior can easily penetrate a person through the senses. According to Wilibrord Kemp, a priest writing in the early eighteenth century, “A Maiden should be so demure that anyone who lays eyes upon her directly thinks of God, and is encouraged to love virtue.”⁵⁵ When a maiden’s eyes are on God, he will reflect out of her eyes. Franciscus de Smidt, a Jesuit who preached, taught grammar, and translated and wrote a variety of religious texts during the

⁵³ “...dan kan die weder gekregen worden van de Maget door penitentie/ en veranderinge der wille/ en vernieuwinge des Propoosts om in de Maegdom voortaan altijd Godt te dienen: kan alsoo de kroon der Maegden...na een nieuw suyer leven ontfangen...” Schoenius, 102.

⁵⁴ “...natuerlijke gemeynschap des vleeschs van Man en Vrouws-persoon/ en door vrywillige besmettinge des lichaems wort de maegdom alsoo verlooren...al vermach Godt alle dingen, hy en kan een Maget, na den val niet verwecken. Hy kan haer wel verlossen van de straffe, maer hy en wilt niet kroonen die nu bedorven is.” Schoenius, 101.

⁵⁵ “Een Maeght behoort soo zedigh te zyn, dat den genen die d’ooghen op haer laet vallen, aenstonts op Godt dencke, en aengeleyt worde om de deughden te beminnen.[quote s. Basil de virg].” Willibrord Kemp, *Zede-lessen voor de Maegden, die, haer zelve aen Godt opgedragen hebbende, trachten volgens de plichten van de maegdelijcke staet te leven: Vergadert uit Gods Woord, en uit de Schriften der heilige Vaderen; En tot een t’zamspraek tusschen Christus en een Maegd, opgesteld door W.K* (Utrecht: Theodorus van den Eynden 1710), 111.

first half of the seventeenth century, also makes this point, addressing Spiritual Virgins and employing the oft-used image of a mirror: "...you have loved the beauty of purity so much, that you have been a beautiful mirror... to many others."⁵⁶ Their interior purity and focus on God is externally visible through the passageway of the eyes making the Spiritual Virgin a mirror of God for others. Fulgentius Stevins, an Augustinian who became a missionary to the Northern Low Countries in 1692 and worked after 1695 in Amsterdam, states that if a Spiritual Virgin must still speak to men, she should not "boldly look at them, smile at them, or show any friendliness, because that is a sign that she does not sincerely preserve the Virgin shame and honor in her heart."⁵⁷ By her behavior and the look on her face, a Spiritual Virgin is able to manifest a sincere interior.

Priests told Spiritual Virgins that they had a mutually exclusive choice: allow only God to penetrate their interior through all the five senses, or allow only the outside world. Above all, priests advised women not to let impurity enter the portals of the eyes.

Lindeborn, for instance, admonishes virgins to:

...keep your eyes pealed and be alert concerning the senses ([or] gates of the soul) so that nothing can sneak in to lead [you] away from purity by clever deception: as through broken windows, the five senses are the entrance to the soul: only when the enemy army breaks through the gates can the city of the soul be taken.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ "...ghy hebt de schoonicheyt vande suyperheyt soo bemint, dat ghy aen vele andere eenen schoonen spiegel ende verwecksel gheweest zyt." Franciscus de Smidt S.J., *Van den salighen staet der genen die in de werelt Reynicheyt beloven* (Antwerpen: Cornelis Woons 1650), from 'Vermaen tot de Devote Maeghden, folio 6 verso and 7 recto following the numbering from the preceding section 'Dedicatie'.

⁵⁷ "Indien 't nochtans gebeurt, dat sy nootsaekelyk met ongelyke persoonen moet handelen en aenspreken... sy sullen dan haer oogen wel bewaeren, en geene soodanige stoutelyk aensien, of ook die toe lacchen, of eenige vrindelykheyt bewysen: want dat is een teeken, dat sy de Maegdelyke schaemte, en eerbaerheyt des herten niet opregt bewaeren." Fulgentius Stevins, *Regel voor de geestelyke Dogters, voornamelyk in de Hollandsche Sending, van de Derde Orden der Ereymten van den Heyligen Vader Augustinus, met verscheide Gebeden, Litanien ende eenige levens der voornaamste Heyligen van't selve Orden* (Amsterdam: Willem van Bloemen, 1705), 22.

⁵⁸ "...op de wacht staen en staeg een wakend oog hebben op de sinnen (poorten van de ziel) dat niets insluypen mag/ waer van de suiverheit listen geleit werde: Door vijf Sinnen even als door sekere veinsters gebreken is den ingank tot de ziel: niet een kan de hooft-stad oft slot der ziele ingenomen worden, 't zy dan dat het vyandelijke heirleger door de poorten van dien inbreke..." Lindeborn, 252.

Virgins should not let evil enter their eyes or it seeps into their soul as if they were broken windows. Schoenius makes this same point, repeating many earlier works written for spiritual virgins. He explains that by “misusing the senses, death climbs through the windows to destroy your soul; immediately turn your face and senses away...”⁵⁹ Do not let evil sights and sounds penetrate your eyes and ears or they will penetrate your soul. Because the seventeenth-century Dutch understood the eyes and other senses to be the passageway between the human exterior and interior. The senses served as a direct way for both evil and good to enter a person.

Priests directed Spiritual Virgins to pay particular attention to keeping their eyes only on God so that only He can penetrate their souls. Lindeborn uses the words of Bernard to tell virgins to “...raise your face to no one, only to your God.”⁶⁰ Gerardi, a Jesuit since 1613, makes this same point: “...always have God before your eyes... and do not ask too much from the eyes of people.”⁶¹ In these sources it is always one force or another that enters a maiden. If she does not keep God in her eyes to close off this gateway, then it is likely that some worldly temptation will enter her in the same way. Once again, the language that describes women is solely of bodily penetration. A thought or feeling does not arise in a woman except by the penetration of her flesh. Lindeborn also uses the words of St. Ambrose to paint an image that women must alter their experience of the flesh by closing herself: “A closed courtyard, O daughter you are...that

⁵⁹ “... misbruyckinge der andere sinnen met haer, klimt de dood op door de vensteren/ om uwe ziele te vernielen; terstondt soo treckt uwe gesicht en sinnen...” Schoenius, 98.

⁶⁰ “...verheft ook u aensicht tot iemand niet als alleen tot uwen God.” Lindeborn, 253.

⁶¹ “...hebt Godt altijd voor ooghen/ die alleen verdiendt ghepresen/ gheacht bemindt te zijn : en ghy en sult naer d'ooghen der menschen niet veel vragen.” Gerardi, 256.

no one take away the walls of your honor...”⁶² He is instructing virgins to close their senses to all but God so that their honor will remain intact, so that no one will sully their purity. The priests believed that Spiritual Virgins had a special responsibility to keep men out of their bodies, not only their sexual organs when attacked, but also all other possible entry points, especially their eyes.

Internal impurity, like purity, is visible because of the close connection between the interior and exterior. One priest writes that according to Saint Augustine, “An unchaste eye is a sign of an unchaste heart” and “impurity in a woman shall be known in the raising of her eyes...”⁶³ If a woman simply raises her eyes, she is suspected of impurity. It does not matter whether or not she has undertaken any impure actions. For example, according to Musius:

She is not a Virgin who would rather be on the street, Than praying or reading, Who is afraid of Churches, And would rather dance or talk... She is no Virgin, who can be commonly found/ Wondering the streets, Or who puts herself on display daily, By binging without moderation. She is no Virgin, who does not listen/ To the reason of her Confessor/ And who does not serve God in peace, But who deafens herself with sin.⁶⁴

Musius explains that a virgin who misbehaves by being out of her home, dancing or talking, displaying herself and sinning is showing outward signs of inward corruption. Subsequent rape hardly matters when virgin intentions are gone. When a woman’s eyes are not on God, her body is no longer pure. Rape is impossible, or at least irrelevant, when a young woman has sullied her own body with impure thoughts and behavior.

⁶² “Een geslooten hof O dochter bent gy (dus luid de stem van S. Ambroos) dat niemand den heining van uw eerbaerheit weg neme.” Gerardi, 72.

⁶³ “...Hier van seyt sint Augustijn: Een oncuysche ooge / is een bode van een oncuysch hert... Want/ seyt de wijse man (Eccli 26) / die oncuyscheyt eender vrouwen zal ghekent worden in t’verheffen der oogen.” *Een Regel Waer Duer*, 14.

⁶⁴ “’t Is geen Maagd, die bid of leest, Maar liever was op straat, Die voor Kerken is bevreest, En liever danst, of praat... ’t Is geen Maagd, die is gewoon/ Te swieren langs de straet, Of sig daaglijks stelt ten toon Door slempen sonder maat. ’t Is geen Maagd, die na reden/ En Biegt-Vader niet en hoort/ Die God niet dient met vrede, Maar sig in sonde smoort.” Musius, 11.

Musius believes that such a virgin is actually “asking for it” as evidenced by her attitude and actions. Lumnius agrees with this:

The sincere virginity of the heart is not only lost and violated by the realization of lust, but also by thoughts, an evil intention, and through wallowing in excess, and through immodesty, that is carried out in splendor or shown through frivolous behavior. When such light, inconstant, carnival dolls hobble about hung with all sorts of lust nets, [they may] appear very honorable [but] found and seen on all the streets, who could ever believe that these are unwilling virgins? Therefore, whoever does not respect the internal honor of the heart deserves to be in danger of losing their external purity.⁶⁵

A virgin who partakes in excessive and immodest behavior shows that she has sullied her own internal purity and “deserves to be in danger of losing” her physical purity as well. Through impure thoughts a woman can destroy the “virginity of the heart” and justify her subsequent rape, as she is no longer an unwilling virgin. Priests taught Spiritual Virgins that virginity was both a physical and mental state and encouraged them to constantly examine their own role in instigating the sexual acts of others. Furthermore, they taught that sexual impurity could come from within and if left uncontrolled, could cause Spiritual Virgins to forfeit their physical purity.

Preventing Sexual Impurity

Priests provide the Spiritual Virgins with a great deal of additional advice on how to prevent sexual impurity. Priests tell them to call out, run away, mutilate and cover themselves to protect men from their beauty, limit what they see, avoid men altogether,

⁶⁵ “...den oprechten maeghdom des herten en wort niet alleen verloren ende ghevioleert/ door het wtwercken der wellusten/ maer oock door ghepeysen/ door een quaet voornemen/ ende door andere brootdronckenschap/ oft ongheschietheyt/ die ghedaen wort in cieraet/ oft in wulpse manieren ghetoont wort. Wanneer dan dat alsulcke lichte wispeltuyten/ ende kermispoppen tontomme met alderley lustnetten behanghen zijnde die deerbaerheyt veyl schijnen te draghen/ ouer alle straten worden ghesien ende gheuonden/ wie soude ander van hen connen geloouen/ dan dat sy onwilligh maechden zijn? Daeromme wie dinwendighe eerbaerheyt des herten niet en achten/ zijn weert in het perijkel te comen/ van dwtwendighe suyuerheyt te verliesen.” Lumnius, 241.

stay at home, and even contemplate committing suicide if threatened by sexual attack. I will examine these in turn. Each of these injunctions demonstrate the priests' failure to distinguish between force and temptation, women's responsibility for preventing all types of sexual temptation and attack, and tensions between the limitations these responsibilities placed on spiritual virgins and the power it granted them.

When the priests advise Spiritual Virgins to call out for help to preserve their purity, they most often use the example of St. Bernard, who was not threatened with being overpowered as in our conception of rape. A matron in whose house he was a guest, however, threatened his purity by overpowering him through temptation. She "impurely loved" him, so she came to his room three times during the night seeking him to be unchaste. But Bernard summoned members of the sleeping household by yelling "murderers, murderers." When they all came to pursue the murderers, "the woman became ashamed and he was left with his Purity."⁶⁶ Bernard's desire to maintain his chastity is not a simple matter of consent. He does not consent to any sexual activity and yet he has to call out for help in fighting her advances. Bernard can control neither the matron, nor his own self. By explicitly using a religious male as an example that women should call out when their purity is threatened, Schoenius and Bisschop conflate sexual attack and sexual temptation and demonstrate that both men and women can be victims of sexual coercion.

The second example of how Spiritual Virgins should cry out to preserve their

⁶⁶ "...dese wierdt van de Matroone/ daer hy te gaste was/ onsuyverlijck bemint/ en tot onkuysheydt versocht: sy quam tot driemael toe /s nachts in sijn kamer/ om hem daer toe te brengen; maer hy riep elcke reyse met luyder stemme: moordenaers/ moordenaers/ maeckende het gantsche Huys-gesin wacker/ dat daer quam gelooopen om de moordenaers te vervolgen; waer voor de vrouwe beschaemt en hy in sijne Suyverheydt is gelaten. Roept luydt/ en tiert: stelt het huys en buurte in oproer. Roept moordt/ brandt/ dieven/ moordenaers/ help/ Etc." Schoenius, 95. See also Bisschop, *Het Tweede Boeck*, 196.

sexual purity is more straightforward. Prolific hagiographers Pedro Ribadineira and Heribertus Rosweyde tell the story of thirteenth-century Iuetta from the land of Luyck (in modern Belgium), a widow who had been forced into an unwanted first marriage by which she had borne three children. As she fights to avoid a second marriage, she is made to stay at a friend's house "against her will," where a young man who is in love with her is also staying. The young man secretly gets up in the night:

...to rape her or to have her concede to being unchaste...She could not flee, nor could she resist him (as [he was] stronger); she did not dare to call out/ fearing the disgrace that would befall herself as well as him; she was extremely afraid; she sighed heavily...

She began to think of and pray to the Virgin Mary, who then appeared to save Iuetta. Mary made a noise as Iuetta saw her on the stairway, which scared the young man back to bed.⁶⁷ There is no distinction of whether the young man "intended to rape" or tempt Iuetta "to concede to being unchaste." Her biographers' usual certainty makes it unlikely that they used ambiguous language to suggest that they did not know the young man's motivation. Much more likely is that the lack of distinction between rape and seduction is due to the uncertainty of the woman's reaction. Ribadineira and Rosweyde did not know what would have happened because it did not happen. Even though Iuetta did not want to marry or be unchaste, she might have given into the temptation that the situation provided. However, before that could happen, the Virgin Mary interrupted the act and saved Iuetta so that she did not even have to call out. Regardless of the differing levels of force that Bernard's matron and Iuetta's young man may have intended to use, both

⁶⁷ "In de staadt Hoey/ in het landt van Luyck ghelegghen" "teghen haren danck moest blijven slapen... den jonghelingh stont des nachts heymelijck op/ meynende haer te verkrachten/ oft tot onkuysheydt te verwillighen. Sy en wiste wat doen/ sy en knode niet vlieden/ noch hem (als stercker zijnde) niet wederstaen; sy en dorste niet roepen/ vreesende de schande/ die soo wel haer als hem soude overkomen; sy was seer benauwt; sy versuchtete swaerlijcken: ende beval haer seer aendachtelijcken aen de glorieuse Maghet Maria..." Ribadineira and Rosweyde, v. I, 141.

Bernard and Iuetta feared the loss of their sexual purity. They both contemplated calling out for help (although Iuetta does not have to in the end) so that they could avoid the situation in which they may be tempted beyond their ability to refuse.

By examining the advice to run away, we again see that the threat to a virgin's purity is just as much temptation as it is physical attack. The repeated example of a chaste virgin fleeing unwanted sexual advances is of Joseph fleeing the advances of Potiphar's wife, taken originally from Genesis 39. Just as in the advice to call out when threatened with impurity, a number of priests use male role models to teach Spiritual Virgins to run away. Bisschop for instance, admonishes Spiritual Virgins to act as Joseph did:

...hurry away, cut off the sentence you have started, turn your back on your tempter, run quickly, flee with all speed; just as the young man Joseph did; in this danger he ran from his lady's room, leaving her with his cloak and thereby preserved his Purity.⁶⁸

As in the story of Bernard and the matron, it appears that Joseph is escaping from a frightening physical attack. Potiphar's wife most likely cannot force him with her physical strength. However, the words that Bisschop uses suggest that the threat is likely to become a dangerous sexual threat: "...turn your back on the person who tempts you..." Bisschop seems to believe that Joseph has to fear his own desire when seduced by Potiphar's wife. Steur similarly writes:

Therefore, O Maiden, flee sin and all the causes of sin, through which the temptation and agitation of the flesh is more surely won by fleeing than by fighting back. Joseph escaped by his flight from the hands of Potiphar's wife, who worked to stir up his sensuality.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ "...hast u/ snijt af het begonst woort/ keert uwen tenteerder den rugghe/ loopt te poste/ vlieght door met aller snelhey; soo heeft gedaen dien suyveren jonghman Iofeph; in dit perijckel heeft hy met het laten afnemen van sijnen mantel/ uyt de kamer van sijne vrouwe ghelooopen/ ende heeft de Suyverheydt bewaert." Bisschop, *Het Tweede Boeck*, 197-8.

⁶⁹ "Daerom o maget vliedt die sonde/ ende alle oorsaeken der sonden : voorwaer die tentatie ende beroerlickhyt des vleesch wordt sekerder ende beter door 'tvlieden verwonnen/ dan door tegen-strijden. Iofeph is deur die vluchte ontcomen wt die handen van Putifhars huys-vrouwe, die hem arbeyden tot wellusten te beroeren." Steur, 221.

The tie between the physical threat and internal desire is even tighter here. Despite Joseph's unwillingness to lose his physical purity to Potiphar's wife, his flesh may begin to desire her advances. He runs in order to escape his own sensuality, which she incites.

Schoenius also sees Joseph as avoiding a situation where he may otherwise become complicit in an unwanted sexual act. Addressing the Spiritual Virgins, he writes:

If someone comes seeking to tempt you or to steal your Purity, shun him, if he comes upon you in surprise, break off from what you were planning to do. Don't question or answer him. Close your door and your windows, and let him stand there. Leave that place; run away if he comes: because all your welfare is dependent on your flight... Imitate the pure Joseph, who ran out of the room of his lady, leaving his cloak behind, to preserve his Purity.⁷⁰

Again, those wanting to remain pure should avoid situations that may lead them to temptation and sexual sin. By placing this example of Joseph tempted to sin in the same section with women fighting sexual attacks, it is clear that neither Bisschop, Steur, nor Schoenius distinguishes between forced sex and a strong temptation to give in to sexual attraction. Since the end result of sexual impurity is the same for both, they elide the sources of impurity. The danger is that a person may give into the temptations provided by either physical attack or seduction. In such situations, both men and women can be overpowered and should call out and run away to avoid them. This advice shifts the object to be feared to women's own bodies. Much less frightening than the sexual advances of others, a woman is in constant danger of the sexual betrayal of her own flesh.

⁷⁰ "...soeckt u iemandt te tenteren ofte van uwe Suyverheydt te beroove/ schuwet die/ komt die u overvallen/ breeckt af uw propoost. Wilt hem noch vragen noch antwoorden. Sluyt uwe deure en vensters dicht/ en laet hem staen. Treckt van daer; loopt weg als hy komt: want al uwe welvaren is hier in 't vluchten gelegen... Volgt de suyvere Joseph na/ die uyt de kamer van sijn vrouwe liep/ achterlatende sijnen mantel/ om sijn Suyverheydt te bewaren." Schoenius, 94

Priests also advise Spiritual Virgins to control what they can see so they will suffer less temptation. Occasionally the clerics proscribe a general rule. The author of the *Instructions for the Spiritual Daughters*..., for example, explains that the absence of tempting sights allows a woman to maintain purity because "...so long as the eye does not see, the heart is in peace." He also explains that it "is impossible to drive impure thoughts out of the mind so long as the impure sight of a person of the opposite sex remains."⁷¹ More interesting perhaps are Bisschop's examples of men who despite their great strength must control their eyes which he includes to teach the Spiritual Virgins to do so. Alexander the Great, for example, does not even want to see the wives or daughters of his defeated enemies so that he may avoid temptation. King Cyrus of Persia avoids the sight of his beautiful captive Panthea to protect himself. Charles V, "the always victorious glory of our Netherlands [who] did not fear any enemy more than his eyes," closes his "window if any beautiful woman should pass by, because he did not want to be taken prisoner."⁷² Even Job who is "...like a marble column to all temptations" also guards his eyes against women, saying "I made a covenant with my eyes, not to look lustily at a girl."⁷³ Steur agrees and adds that King David commits both adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband as the result of "an improper sight."⁷⁴

⁷¹ "Zo lang als d'ooge niet en ziet, is het hert in vrede...daerom is 't onmogelyk d'onzuivere gedaenten uyt het verstandt te dryven, zoo lang als d'onzuivere aenschouwinge van een ongelyk persoon niet en wort weg-genomen." *Onderwijzingen voor de geestelyke dochters, behelzende de voordeelen, de plicht en oeffeningen van haren staet, met eene voor-afgaende verdeelinge van ___ oeffeningen door den dag en door het jaer*, (Gent. s.d. (Ieper): Mauritius van der Ween, 1709), 59-60.

⁷² "Carolus den Vijfden/ de glorie van ons Nederlandt altijdt overwinnelijc/ heeft oock geen en meerderen vyandt ghevreest dan sijne ooghen/ die hy niet en betrouwde; waerom hy seer dickwils de venster toe-sloot/ als daer eenighe schoone vrouwen soud en voor by passeren/ op dat hy niet en sonde ghevanghen worden." Bisschop, *Het Tweede Boeck*, 212.

⁷³ "Alexander den Grooten/ naer ontallrijcke victorien/ ende het verwinnen van Darius en heeft niet willen eens aensien de huysvrouw ende de dochters van sijnen vyant.... Cyrus den Koningh en heeft noyt willen Panthea aensien/ ... Job selve/ die teghen alle tentation was als eene Marmer Colomne... heeft dit nochtans gedaen/ dat hy een verbondt heeft gemaect met sijne ooghen/ o dat hy niet en soude peysen van eene

After this list of powerful men who had to limit their own ability to see certain women, Bisschop explains why he uses these examples of men to teach women how they should behave:

...if even these great men who were the fear of nations and ruled the world... protected their eyes [so much more so should]...the virgin who is weak and tender... and likely to fall if she does not observe this. Therefore St. Clara, who never looked a man in the face should be praised here ... Follow these examples, virgin, and protect your eyes.⁷⁵

Weak virgins have all the more reason to limit what they see if strong men have to do the same. Spiritual Virgins should follow St. Clara's example and protect their eyes from all people, especially men. Fransiscus de Smidt, the translator of the Life of Virgin Aloysia De Caravaial Y Mendoca, provides Spiritual Virgins with a very strict example to follow. He writes that Aloysia "maintained an angelic purity... and was very careful to never look at a human face, not even her housemates'."⁷⁶ Ideally, Spiritual Virgins should keep their eyes down and never look at anyone.

Again, priests stress that women are responsible for the temptation of others in addition to their own temptation, Bisschop provides shocking examples of how the responsibility for controlling their eyes falls far more heavily on women:

Maghet." See also *Een Regel Waer Duer*, 13. This story is taken from Job 31. Bisschop, *Het Tweede Boeck*, 212.

⁷⁴ "...alst wel in David heeft ghebleken/ die door een onbehoorlijck gesichte in over-spel, ende in doot-slach is ghevallen...." Story found in 2 Samuel 11. Steur, 236 (misnumbered 326).

⁷⁵ "Doen dit die groote mannen/ die de vreesse waren der natien/ die de wereltdt gouverneerden ende deden beven/ hebben sy segghe ick soo hunne ooghen bewaert/ soo voor die besorght gheweest/ veel meer moet doen de Maghe die alesins kranck is ende teerder/ swack ende genegen tot vallen/ als sy haer niet en wilt gade slaen. Daerom wel magh hier gepresen worden de H. Clara a Monte falco, die noyt man in 't aensicht ghesien en heeft...Ghy dan Maghet/ sult uwe ooghen bewaren/ ende dese exempelen na-volghen." Bisschop, 213.

⁷⁶ "...een enghelsche Suyverheyt bewaert...ende dit met sulcken voorsichticheydt/ datse noyt eenen men schint aensicht oock niet haere huysghenoten en besagh." Ludovicus Munnos, *Het Stichtbaer leven van de Doorluchtighe ende Weerdighe Maget Dona Aloysia De Caravaial Y Mendoca: Spiegel der sielen welcke in Suyverheyt in de werelt leven. In het spaensch, door den Licentiaet Lydovicvs Mynnos beschreven, Ende in Duyts door R.P. Fransicvs de Smidt der Societeyt IESV ghestelt.* (T'Antwerpen: Cornelis Woons, 1649), 49-50.

What happened to Dinah, the daughter of Jacob? She used her eyes frivolously. She curiously wanted to see others and alas she was also seen. An impure young man took her honor and so she learned and taught the world through her accident how dangerous it is not to keep your eyes at home.⁷⁷

Bisschop explains that Dinah was raped because she looked around and was seen by a man. Just as in Cats' account of this story discussed in chapter three, Dinah is responsible for her rape because she did not control her curious eyes. Both Cats and Bisschop use her example to teach young women that it is their responsibility to avoid rape. Schoenius and Bisschop provide another example. When an unnamed holy virgin found out that her eyes have seduced a young man, "...she gouged them out with a sword..." The young man is saved and becomes a much-respected monk.⁷⁸ This unnamed holy virgin is exemplary because she takes responsibility over her eyes before any harm can come to her or to the young man. She thereby avoids tempting him and saves them both. Not only are individual men tempted by the straying eyes of women, according to *The Instructions for the Spiritual Daughters*, all sin entered the world because of a woman's eyes. "Eve fell into sin because of the curious use of her eyes."⁷⁹ The imperfection of the entire world could have been evaded had Eve controlled her eyes. Women are thus responsible to avoid tempting others by controlling their eyes as well as for the consequences if they fail to do so.

⁷⁷ "Wat is gebeurt aen Dina de dochter van Jacob? Sy heeft willen hare oogen lichteveerdelijke bebruycken/ sy wilde nieus-gierichlijck andere sien/ ende eylaes/ sy is oock gesien gheweest: hare eere heeft eenen onsuiveren jonckman genomen/ ende soo heeft sy geleert met haer ongheluch haer selven ende de werelt/ hoe vol perijckel dat is sijne ooghen niet t'huys te houden..." Story from Genesis 34. Bisschop, *Het Tweede Boeck*, 211.

⁷⁸ "Een andere Maget verstaende dat een jongeling door haer oogen bekoort wierde/ en daerom haer moeyelijck viel/ heeft met een sweert die selfde uytgesteecken; waer door de jongeling beweegt zijnde van herten/ is na Schiti gegaen/ en een treffelijcke Monick geworden." Schoenius, 93.

⁷⁹ "Eva door het kurieus gebruyk der oogen in zonden gevallen zyn." *Onderwijzingen voor de geestelyke dochters...*, 59.

Once again we can see that the consequences for disobedience are more life altering for women. Bisschop's example of a religious man who did not adequately control his eyes allows us to compare St. Bernard and Dinah:

St. Bernard, an extremely pure human, did not adequately protect his eyes one time: he looked intensely into a woman's face, but coming to himself, he punished this by jumping into a lake and stayed there a long time, until he was almost frozen by the bitter cold water and had extinguished the fire of impurity. The face is too precarious. It is a thief of the soul and of Purity.⁸⁰

Like Dinah, it is Bernard's responsibility to control his eyes and therefore avoid the temptation, but unlike Dinah, he is not attacked for simply looking about. As in the other cases of men facing external threats to their purity, such as Joseph when confronted by Potiphar's wife, religious males' examples are given to show the importance of running away, calling out, or simply not looking at others. But these religious males are able to rectify the situation by, for example, jumping into a pool of ice-cold water, or sticking a hand into a flame. Dinah's so-called misfortune had consequences that she could not remedy. These differences show yet again that while men are responsible for stifling their own temptation, they are not their bodies, and there are no permanent consequences of physical sexual sin. Women, on the other hand, are responsible for both their own temptation and that of others and for the permanent physical consequences if they fail.

The priestly advice for the Spiritual Virgins makes it clear that women are not only responsible to protect themselves from temptation, but that they are also responsible to undertake many actions to ensure they do not tempt any men. They must cover

⁸⁰ "Den H. Barnardus eenen uytermaten suyveren mensch/ als hy noch Jonghelingh was/ heeft eens sijne ooghen qualijck bewaert: hy sagh eene vrouwe aen sterckelijck in 't aensicht/ maer tot sijn selven komende/ heeft dit ghestraft met te springhen in eenen poel/ ende daer langen tijt in te staen/ tot dat hy door de bitter koude van het water nu by na vervrosen hadde/ al het vyer des onkuyscheyts in 't herte uyt-gheblust. 'T gesicht is te perikuleus / het is eenen bespieder vande ziele ende de Suyverheyt." Bisschop, *Het Tweede Boeck*, 212.

themselves and their faces, protect what they see and protect men from seeing them; they must destroy their beauty, avoid men, not touch anyone, and stay home as much as possible. Priests tell the Spiritual Virgins that as women, it is their responsibility to prevent temptation because of the power their bodies exude. Lumninus, for instance reveals the way in which women's bodies can completely control men:

...a woman, in her entire physical being is so saturated, that she can draw a man to her from far away just like a magnet draws iron, not only when she speaks or looks about, but also [simply when she is] sitting or going somewhere. This is because her body has within itself an amazing power against men by which she attracts his body (without meaning to I almost added from him) to do with as she wants.⁸¹

This quote repositions the woman as the one who draws the man to her through her power and is therefore responsible for the sexual temptation of men. It is because women can take the control of men's flesh away from them that priests hold women responsible to do all that is in their power to prevent themselves from tempting men. Schoenius also makes this point: "from the woman stems the wickedness of men and from the man comes the impurity of Virgins."⁸² It is ultimately women who cause men's wickedness and cause them to sexually sully virgins.

To ensure that Spiritual Virgins do not entice men into a love-crazed state or become a distraction to herself, the priests counsel them to dress in a particular way. Completely different from Cats' advice that women make themselves attractive to men while remaining demure, Lumninus writes that a 'Spiritual Virgin' should: "...cover herself with much care and vigilance and cover all sides, so that she will not only remain

⁸¹ "Want eene vrouwe/ in het geheel wesen haers lichaems/ also gesaetsoeneert is/ dat sy niet alleen sprekende ende siende/ maer ooc stil sittende oft gaende/ van verre tot haer kan trecken den man/ gelijc een magnet-steen tot hem treckt het yser. Want haer lichaem in hem heeft een wonderlijcke krachte tegen den man/ waer door sy sijn lichaem treckt (sonder wetentheyt hadde ick benaest geseyt van hem) tot haeren believen. Tot noch toe Basilius." Lumninus, 225.

⁸² "...van de Vrouwe [komt] de boosheydt des Mans, en van de Man de onsuyverheydt des Magets." Schoenius, 104.

inviolable and unstained, but also so that all those who see her will not be injured by her face.”⁸³ Lumnius believes that women should use clothing to cover not only their bodies, but also their faces in order to save others from the impurity that particularly the latter may cause. Philippus writes that a maiden “should have a head covering with which to properly cover her face when she leaves her house.”⁸⁴ Firstly, this is so that they “not become pleased with [their] clothing and thereby forget” the attention they have to render to God’s temple and secondly, this is so that they not become “stumbling blocks for their neighbors.”⁸⁵ Yet again, we see that women are responsible for covering themselves to decrease others’ risk of encountering temptation. Bisschop agrees that according to Hieronymus a woman’s face is dangerous for others: a virgin is like the Ark of the Covenant, because like virgins, the Ark “...must be covered when it is carried from a place, because anyone who sees it bare will be lost. So also should you be covered, so that no one shall receive disgrace by seeing your face.” The face of a maiden, with no ill intentions can cause others to fall. Bisschop again admonishes spiritual women to protect others from being tempted by the sight of them: “Still others say the Virgin is a hidden treasure; if someone was to carry this about openly and uncovered, I think that he would like to be robbed by scoundrels on the road.”⁸⁶ Purity is a valuable asset that must be

⁸³ “...maer sy sal haer met alle sorchvuldichheit ende toesicht/ aen alle canten bedecken: op dat sy niet alleen ongeschent ende onbevleekt en blijue/ maer oock/ op dat die gene/ die haer besien/ uyt haer gesichte gheen letsel en nemen.” Lumnius, 235.

⁸⁴ “Als sy buyten huys moeten gaen, sullen sy eene saye faillie op het hooft hebben ende daer mede hun aensicht taemelyck decken.” Thomas Philippus, *Den Godvruchtigen Regel van de Geestelyke Dochters der Vergaederinge van de Onbevleete Ontfangenisse van de Alderh. Maghet ende Moeder Godts Maria genoemt Apostelinne Eerst opgesteld in het Jaer 1680 door de seer Eerw. Ende Godt-minnende Geestelyke Dochter Agnes Baliques* (Mechelen: Laurentius vander Elst, 1724), 18.

⁸⁵ “1. Op dat sy niet en soudon bekomen wesen in hun kleedtsel, waer door sy lichtelyk soudon vergeten de schuldige aendagtigheit, die se aen Godt verschynende is den tempel moeten bewysen. 2. Op dat sy hun selven hier door soudon bevryden van stronkelsteenen te wesen aen hunnen even-naesten...” Philippus, 226.

⁸⁶ “...Arcke des Ouden Testaments: dese/ soo wy weten/ als sy van eenighe plaetse verdragen wierdt/ moest gheduerigh ghedeckt zijn/ op dat niemant die bloot siende/ soude hebben verloren gegaen: soo oock dan / behoort ghy gedeckt te ajn/ op dat niemant in u aensicht schandael en soude ontfangen. Wederom de

hidden by clothing because good people will be tempted by it and bad people will want to take it.

Transforms political outrage against Spain into the personal violation of a beautiful, vulnerable he following two frontispieces demonstrate the priests' message for the spiritual virgins, who are pictured in the center third of both images. One can see here that they are pictured as safe and out in the world, but this requires many prerequisites. These women are isolated from all other humans and completely encased in clothing.



Figure 14: Schoenius, *The Way of Purity*.⁸⁷



Figure 15: Bisschop, *The Praise of Purity*.⁸⁸

Maghet/ segghen andere/ is eenen verborghen schat; nu dan wilt iemant desen gaen bloot dragen ende onghedeckt/ my dunckt dat hy over den wegh van alle rabaut wilt berooft wesen." Bisschop, *Het Tweede Boeck*, 4.

⁸⁷ Frontispiece of Wilhelm Schoenius, *De Weg der Suyverheyt van d'Hollantse Maegden* (Antwerpen: voor Philippus van Eyck [Amsterdam] 1676). Leiden University Library, Western Printed Books, Gesloten Magazijn 5 - 737 E 1 Titel.

⁸⁸ Frontispiece of Valentinius Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheyt...* (Antwerpen: Hieronymus Vedussen 1626). Leiden University Library, Western Printed Books, 1156 G 29 Titel.

In the image on the left, the virgins are cordoned off by a hedge. In the image on the right, worldly people are kept at bay by armed angels. This includes prosperous people on the bottom right and a prostitute and a drunk on the bottom left. The spiritual virgins are outside but they are isolated from all dangerous forces. Catholic priests empower these religious women to save their people through meaningful activity, but only if they keep their bodies from hurting themselves and others by keeping themselves carefully covered.

In the cases in which a spiritual virgin fails to prevent her beauty from tempting a man in this way, priests advise her to destroy her beauty in order to end the temptation of men. In Rosweyde's hagiographical volumes, Gertrudis' mother, Idelberga, wanted to protect her daughter's vows of chastity from a beautiful, young prince who had been "infected with love" for her. Idelberga was "greatly afraid" that "through the inspiration of devils," he and his soldiers would "abduct her violently and marry her [daughter] against her will." To prevent this, Idelberga "took up her scissors...and cut her [daughter's] hair, which was beautiful and long." The "ugliness of [Gertrudis'] shaven head" "deprived her of her beauty" and immediately ended the prince's lust for her. "The holy mother had scarcely cut the hair from her daughter's head before the tempest was immediately stilled."⁸⁹ Rosweyde also mentions Itisberga, daughter of Pipin, who was able to avoid the advances of a prince of Portugal because she was disfigured by leprosy.⁹⁰ The saints' lives stories also include two saints who pray for ugliness. Both Saint Brigitta (1 February 518) and St. Lidwina of Schiedam, who lived in the province

⁸⁹ "...onsteken met hare liefde...door 't ingeven des duyvels haer die met gewelt soudén ontvoeren/ ende teghen haren danck trouwen...Hierom nam sy...de schare inde handt/ ende sonder langhe te vertoeven/ sneedt haer 't hayr af/ t'welck sy seer schoon ende langh hadde...d'eenin ontsagh haer niet 't cieraet van een sulcke schoonheyt te benemen:...de leelijckheydt van haer gheschoren hooft...De heylighe moeder en hadde nauwelijcks 't hayr van haer dochters hooft af-ghesneden/ oft dit tempeest wiert terstont ghestilt." Rosweyde, 371.

⁹⁰ Rosweyde, 573.

of Holland in the fifteenth century, wanted to be made ugly so that no one would seek to marry them. God grants this to both of them: one of Brigitta's eyes temporarily "runs out of her like water," but God restores it after she takes up residence in a cloister because he did not want "the one who was willing to lose her beauty to save her purity, to remain ugly."⁹¹ God granted Lidwina many "pains and accidents" which dissuaded anyone from marrying her, starting with breaking her rib in an accident on a frozen canal and continuing with innumerable other illnesses.⁹² Destroying and praying for the loss of their beauty are ways for a religious woman to maintain her vows of chastity when pressured to marry a physically, financially, and socially attractive man. Men of high status will not tempt these religious women once the power of their beauty is broken. Gertrudis', Brigitta's, Lidwina's, and Itisberga's loss of beauty or disfigurement releases the male figure threatening to marry these women against their will is from his love-crazed state. The religious female figure is subsequently freed from the temptation presented by the attentions of these idealized men. The priests agree that women are responsible to end their beauty because they cannot otherwise control its power over men.

Catholic priests suggest a more personally active approach in other cases. They suggest that the Spiritual Virgins follow the example of early medieval nuns who mutilate themselves to extinguish the passions of their would-be rapists and thereby escape impurity.⁹³ Both Bisschop and Schoenius tell the story of St. Ebba Abbatissa and her nuns of the cloister of Collingam who mutilated their faces. St. Ebba Abbatissa fears for her own and for her nuns' purity as the Danes fall upon Scotland because these

⁹¹ "...een van haer ooghen verstedde en liep uyt gelijk water... Want onsen Heere en wilde niet ghedooghen/ dat de ghene / die om niet te verliesen hare reynigheydt/ hadde willen verliesen de schoonheyt des lichaems/ leelijck soude blijven." Ribadineira and Rosweyde, 247.

⁹² Rosweyde, 461.

⁹³ Schulenburg, 29-72.

attackers were known to “violate Virgins.” So she “...takes a knife and cuts off her nose and top lip down to her teeth” and encourages her sisters to do the same.⁹⁴ Schoenius continues the story by telling us “the Danes do not touch them because of how ghastly they look” but instead burn down the entire cloister, leaving them pure and making them martyrs.⁹⁵ Both Ebba Abbatissa and her fellow nuns take violent actions against their own faces to avoid the threat of tempting others to attack or desire them. Schulenburg tells us that self-mutilation demonstrates that the nuns or virgins’ “did not share the guilt as willing accomplices in the loss of their virginity.”⁹⁶ According to these sources, this is a good way to avoid rape because it precludes any man from being tempted or seduced by a woman’s beauty. In turn, the nuns escape male sexual advances and the ensuing sexual temptation as well.

Schoenius provides two stories of males who damage themselves, although in a very different way than the nuns of Collingam. Actually, the first three examples Schoenius uses in his chapter “what a virgin shall do if *her* Purity is threatened” are of males. The first example is of a hermit who does not mangle himself, but keeps a death cloak of a woman who once tempted him to remind himself of the “foulness and puss of the dead body.”⁹⁷ The second and third examples are of religious men tempted by living women. One fights his temptation by sticking his hand in a flame until he burns off his fingers so that he may have a foretaste of hell. The other is Dominic, who makes himself a bed of coal upon which he lies naked after a loose woman tempts him.⁹⁸ While Brigitta,

⁹⁴ “...neemt sy een mes/ ende snijt haer af den neuse met de bovenste lippe tot de tanden toe.” Bisschop, *Het Tweede Boeck*, 189.

⁹⁵ “...de Denen... aensiende hoe afgrijsselijck die persoonen in ’t aenschijn waeren gestelt/ en hebben haer niet aengeraeckt; maer haer allegader met haer klooster verbrandt.” Schoenius, 93.

⁹⁶ Schulenburg, 60.

⁹⁷ “...de vuyligheydt en etter van het doode lichaem.” Schoenius, 92.

⁹⁸ Schoenius, 92-93. Italics mine.

Lidwina, Ebba Abbatissa and her nuns take action to make themselves unattractive to men and thereby avoid physical attack, the men in these stories do things to make physical temptation less attractive to themselves.

As the above examples show, men and women experience sexual threats differently. The men are tempted by women: Bernard calls out when tempted by the matron, Joseph runs away when tempted by Potiphar's wife, one man smells a death cloak, another burns his hand in a lamp and Dominic lays on coals, all in order to avoid their own temptation. The males in these examples are not under threat of being physically overpowered as we understand it, but the women are. Physical threats manifest themselves differently for men and women, but both sexes are in danger of being overpowered. They both fear their own physical consent against their will. They fear corruption or the possibility of giving into temptation. Like the stories in which men are tempted, when religious women are faced with sexual coercion, they are primarily faced with a great temptation in the minds of these authors. Men are tempted to give into unwanted sex when they see women; women are tempted to give into unwanted sex when they are raped.

In each of the discussed cases it is not rape that is feared. As we have seen, a virgin can theoretically be raped and still retain her virginity. While the Catholic priests agree with the Augustinian teaching that "all sin originates in the will and the heart can not be infected unwillingly with [force],"⁹⁹ they also believe that it is unlikely a virgin will not want sex when they are forced to have it. When the priests tell the Spiritual Virgins to call out, run away, mangle and violently protect themselves, they do so not

⁹⁹ "...alle sonden haeren oorspronc nemen wt den wille/ ende het herte onwillich door sulcke verderf der natueren niet besmet en can worde." Lumnius, 249. The 'verderf der natueren' he refers to is the loss of a virgin's "eerbaerheyt met fortsen" from the preceeding page.

because they believed that every instance of rape destroyed a woman's purity, but because every instance of rape carries the danger and the likelihood that women will consent and thereby cost them their virginity and heavenly reward. This explains why they encourage Spiritual Virgins to fight back with such violence.

Many priests discussed and provided examples of another self-destructive possibility for preventing rape, namely suicide. For example, the author of *A Rule through which like a Mirror Christian Virgins...May Come to True Internal Beauty* tells his readers that:

[Many] holy Virgins...preferred to spill their blood, to suffer various tortures, and to die a hard, cruel death rather than consent to the violation of their purity which they had offered to Christ: such as Agatha, Lucia, Agnes, Cecilia, and...others.¹⁰⁰

This author assumes that even these Holy Virgins could not be sure to withhold their consent and thus needed to die. Schoenius also states this explicitly, as he tells Spiritual Virgins to:

Prefer to die as a martyr for Purity rather than give consent to be robbed of it...Although according to the Catholic Fathers, that if a Virgin does her best...with yelling, flailing about with her body, and consenting in no way to such or being made willing, but hindering it in so far as she can, and being of a constant will to not consent, then she does not commit a mortal sin if she is dishonored... nevertheless this is sorrowful and dangerous. To not give consent to sin of fleshly lusts at such a time is like being in a fire and not burning. O Pure Bride of Christ! Prefer to die for the Purity as all the Holy Virgins and Martyrs. Think that there is no more glorious death as dying for Purity.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ "...andere heylighe Maechdekens...lieuer gehadt hebben haer bloet te storten/ verscheyden tormenten te lyden ende een harde wreeden doot te sterven/ dan sy wilden haer maechdelijcke reynicheydt Christo opgeheoffert met haer consent laten schennen: als zijn Agatha/ Lucia/ Agnes/ Cecilia/ ende meer anderen." *Een Regel Waer Duer*, 30.

¹⁰¹ "Sterft liever Martelaresse voor de Suyverheyt/ eer ghy consent geeft om daer van berooft te worden." "...Al is 't gevoelen der Catholijcke Leeraers / dat een Maget die haer beste doet...met reopen/ en haer lichaem te roeren/ en op gender maniere tot sulcken wreck te consenteren/ of bereydt te maecken; maer belettende soo veel als sy kan/ en een vaste wille hebbende van niet te consenteren/ geen doodtsonde doet als sy also wordt onteert...nochtans soo is 't droevig en periculeus. Oop sulcken tijdt geen consent te geven tot de sonde in de vleeschelijck welusten / is in't vuer te zijn en niet te branden. O Suyvere Bruydt Christ!

According to Schoenius, when a woman is raped, withholding consent is next to impossible. Lust naturally consumes flesh just as fire burns the flesh. It is their belief that the flesh desires sex that leads Schoenius and the author of *A Rule Through Which like a Mirror Christian Virgins...May Come to True Internal Beauty*, along with many other seventeenth century Dutch, to be suspicious of a woman's ability to withhold consent when raped. This is a great obstacle in judging a virgin innocent and worthy of a greater reward after rape. The words Schoenius uses to describe what is lost when a maiden is raped again shows that the thing to be feared is not the overpowering of the flesh in rape, but the overpowering of the will that consequently occurs. When a maiden is raped, paraphrasing Schoenius, the greatest danger is that she may consent to the flesh and thereby sin. Rape is thus a likely opportunity for a woman to give into a sin for which she has a particular inclination. Through this reasoning, the woman attacked becomes the accomplice without whose cooperation the illicit sex could never have occurred.

Vondel propagates the story of Pelagia, which also suggests that women cannot keep from consenting to sex when raped. In a letter, Pelagia tells how her family encourages her to kill herself rather than suffer rape.

Now daughter! [her family] said, go, where no violators can force you. We will follow on this path, and choose to jump/ In a cold stream, rather than to singe/ That which the nature of women teaches us to preserve
In the glowing fire of an angry soldier, Or of Caesar's body guard.¹⁰²

Sterft liever voor de Suyverheydt met al de H. H. Maegden en Martelaressen. Denckt dat er geen glorieuser doodt is/ als voor de Suyverheydt te sterven." Schoenius, 95-96.

¹⁰² "Nu dochter, zeitze, ga, daer u geen schenders dwingen. Wy volgen op die streeck, en kiezen, eer te springen/ In eenen killen stroom, dan in den gloenden brant/ Van eenigh woest soldaet of Caesars lyftrauwant/ Te zengen, 't geen natuur de vrouwen leert bewaren." Vondel, *Brieven der Heilige Maeghden*, 522.

Vondel means that Pelagia and her female family members want to prevent the violation of their honor and that they would rather die than give into the temptation provided by rape. Pelagia's story suggests that the only way many women can prevent their flesh from burning with lust if they are raped is by preventing it by killing oneself. Just as with Pelagia, her sisters, and her mother, suicide can keep a virgin from giving into temptation and thereby allow her to gain martyrdom.¹⁰³

On the other hand, a number of priests assert that suicide is not an ideal response to rape. Most priests explain that it is more useful to wonder at the early Christian virgin martyrs than to follow their example. Bisschop writes that all laws forbid hurting or killing yourself. The virgin martyrs are the only exceptions to these laws because the Holy Spirit very clearly prompted them.¹⁰⁴ Schoenius agrees that only the Holy Spirit can incite a virgin to commit suicide and stresses that these examples exist predominantly to show the great value of virgin purity.¹⁰⁵ Lumnius explains that Pelagia is not an example to be followed because a virgin who tries to kill herself is risking the sin of murder. He suggests that it is better to wait to see whether the physical attack will take place, rather than certainly commit murder before anything happens. "Is it not better to await an uncertain act of adultery...than to commit certain murder now?" By an uncertain act of adultery he means to "commit adultery by consenting in some sensuality per chance after

¹⁰³ Cats also suggests that women can and even often do enjoy rape through his dialogue of Jokaste and Tryphose in which the former accuses the latter of not despising the rape for its own sake, but because the rapist subsequently abandoned her for another woman. See Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrouwt," ed. Koppenol, 54, lines 421-428.

¹⁰⁴ Bisschop, 194.

¹⁰⁵ Schoenius, 94.

the fact.”¹⁰⁶ A physical threat against purity is again seen as capable of tempting a virgin to consent, thereby making the raped virgin impure.

In addition to destroying their beauty, covering their bodies and faces, controlling what they see and who sees them, priests also advise Spiritual Virgins to avoid men as much as possible. They want the Spiritual Virgins to evade the threat of tempting one's self and others in this way. Bisschop is particularly adamant about this point. He tells maidens to avoid the company of men:

...if [a man and a woman] find themselves together often, a wind will rise up, a temptation which shall rush them toward impurity and utter decay. The examples of this are too great and too numerous: rarely will you see anyone travel this sea without shipwreck.¹⁰⁷

It is rare that men and women would not suffer temptation from the company of the other sex and it is this temptation that rushes “them toward [sexual] impurity.” Bisschop believes that men and women cannot even speak together for very long without whipping up temptation. Similarly he writes, “Truly, if a Maiden allows herself to be visited by a man, I do not know how they can avoid impurity.”¹⁰⁸ He unequivocally tells the Spiritual Virgins that it is their responsibility to avoid rape by avoiding conversations with men:

Why then was Tamar, the daughter of David, raped by her own brother Ammon when she visited him? The madness of impurity makes no exception for virginity if it can grasp a place in the human heart. Escape from this situation, run away and shun lengthy conversations.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ “Laet ons nu eenen dootslach doen/ ons seluen vermoordende/ Op dat sy by auontueren naderhant consenterende in eenighe welluste/ geen ouerspel en doen: En ist niet beter onseker ouerspel te verwachten/ dwelcmen niet en weet oft gheschieden sal/ oft niet: dan nu van stondenaen een dootslach te doen/ die seker is?” Lumnius, 247.

¹⁰⁷ “...is 't dat sy dan veel hun vinden by malkanderen / daer sal eens eenen windt oprijzen/ eene tentatie/ diese sal in onkuyscheydt jaghen/ ende gheheel bederven. De exempelen sijn hier al te groot ende te veel: nauwelijcks een sult ghy sien die desen poel sonder Schip-brake heeft over-ghevaren.” Bisschop 213-214. See also Schoenius, 104-105.

¹⁰⁸ “Voorwaer is't dat de Maget haer laet dickwils besoecken van eenige mans-persoon/ ick en weet niet hoe sy sal kunnen ontgaen de onsuyverheydt.” Schoenius, 269.

¹⁰⁹ “Ende waerom dan heeft de Dochter va Davidt Tamar verkracht gheweest van haren eygen broeder Ammon/ als sy hem alleen besochte? De dulligheydt van de onkuysheyt en onderscheyt geene maeghschap/

Thamar created the situation in which she was raped by visiting too long with her brother. She should have shunned the conversation to avoid her own rape. It is not clear if the “extreme madness of impurity” “grasp[ed] a place” in her heart or just in her brother’s. Bisschop does not find it important enough to make the distinction. Thamar and other maidens must avoid conversations with men to avoid overwhelming the latter with temptation. Other priests tell the Spiritual Virgins to avoid rape through Thamar’s example and to know that they are not safe with any man, not even their brothers or with older men. Kemp, for instance, advises maidens to “never keep excessive company even with male blood relatives” because “the good name of a Maiden and her conscience are in danger.”¹¹⁰ Kemp is more specific than Bisschop in asserting that the woman herself may just as likely suffer temptation if she converses with a man.

Additionally, Schoenius writes about many old men who were tempted by the presence of women to show that no man is exempt from the women’s power to tempt him. They overcome such temptations by sticking their hand in a flame of a lamp, through prayer, tears, staying awake, and even by telling women to leave. For this last example, Schoenius quotes the bedridden spiritual man: “Get away from me woman, the fire still burns; take away that straw.”¹¹¹ The woman had to take herself away from the spiritual man, because it was she who made his flesh burn with desire. Bisschop also writes about Jacob the hermit who raped his own niece when he was seventy.¹¹² The priests were adamant that women are not safe around men, even elderly men, and most

als sy in’t herte van den mensch kan plaetse grijpen. Vliet dier occasie/ loopter wegh af/ wacht u van te groote conversatie.” Bisschop, 215-216.

¹¹⁰ “Wat d’ongelijcke personen aengaet, ghy en moet noyt met die, al waeren ‘t bloedt verwanten, overgroote gemeensaemheydt houden.... ‘want voorwaer den goeden name van een Maeght, en haer conscientie loopen gevaer, als eenen ongelijcken persoon haer dickwils comt begroeten.” Kemp, 107.

¹¹¹ “Gaet van my Vrouwe, het vierken left noch; neemt weg dat strooy.” Schoenius, 105- 106

¹¹² “...dat hy oock sijne eyghen nichte heeft misbruyckt.” Bisschop, *Het Tweede Boeck*, 217.

importantly the priests continually highlighted women's responsibility for removing themselves from these potentially dangerous situations.

If merely talking to men could have such terrible consequences, it makes sense that the priests tell the Spiritual Virgins never to touch a man. The reason for this is, according to Bisschop, "...the body...is a giant inextinguishable fire which burns just as hell does down to the legs...[and] down into the soul so that any good and virtue is changed to ash." Addressing the Spiritual Virgins, he explains that when such a man touches you, he "touches your entire soul and your entire body progressing from top to bottom with a stirring of impurity."¹¹³ Bisschop explains that it is the nature of the flesh to burn with impurity and that a virgin's body can be set on fire by a simple touch, which can lead to the impurity of one's entire soul. With this conception of human desire, it is easy to see why priests warned the Spiritual Virgins that they may be tempted when raped. It does not seem to matter how much you do not want the sex at first, the female body is likely to respond with consent.

Priests are adamant that spiritual daughters should not even touch another spiritual person, because impurity can be ignited without bad intentions from either one. According to her biographer, Ludovicus Jacobi, Lidwina believed this, which is why she rarely let anyone touch her.¹¹⁴ The example Bisschop uses is Mary of Oignies. When conversing with a religious man, his hand touched hers "out of spiritual affection and

¹¹³ "Het lichaem des mensch is voor den onghelijcken persoon een groot onblusschelijck vier/ 't welc brant gelijc een helle tot in de beenderen...van die tot in de ziele toe /daert al het gene goet en deugelijck is in asschen doet verkeerren...die u geheel ziele raect/ ende t'gheheel lihaem van boven tot beneden beroert tot eenen onsuyveren voortganc." Bisschop, 278-279.

¹¹⁴ "...want sy wist wel dat de schaemte een stercke borst-weiringhe is voor de suyverheydt." Ludovicus Jacobi S.J., *Den Spieghel der Maeghden, Die inde werelt de godvruchtigheyt met de suyverheydt paren uytghebeeldt in twee H.H. Maeghden, te weten de H. Isabella van Vranckrijck [door N. Caussin S.J.] ende de H. Lidwina [door J. Brugman O.F.M.]*, In welcke de weerdigheyt, vruchtbaerheydt ende eyghendommen vanden gheestelijcken staet inde wereltd bewesen worden, overgheset in onse Neder-duytsche tale door E.P.L.J. Priester der Societeyt Jesu (Antwerpen: weduwe van Jan Cnobbaert, 1657), 63.

with a pure heart, nevertheless he felt the rising of the flesh within him.” Mary was meditating on God and so did not notice, but suddenly God made her say ‘Do not touch me’ in Latin, which she did not understand.¹¹⁵ The spiritual man understanding that God saved them both without embarrassing him in front of the spiritual woman, leaves her immediately, but the example instructs maidens that even two spiritual individuals with pure intentions are not safe from impurity. It is not that the spiritual man wanted to feel desire for Mary. It is simply that the very nature of men and women’s bodies leads to sexual temptation. Maidens are even told that their clothing cannot touch a man’s clothing. When a man must sit near, Bisschop advises that the Spiritual Virgins to make sure there is space between herself and the man:

...so that also your clothing does not touch... Even clothing can rouse impurity because... just as flax bursts into flame as it touches the fire, so also do men and women who through a natural heat are drawn to one another if they draw very close to one another they are quickly ignited and set on fire.¹¹⁶

Because men and women “are drawn to one another” “through a natural heat,” a maiden intent on maintaining her purity must make sure that neither she nor her clothing touches a man, especially a worldly one. Male and female bodies are like flames of lust and spread their fire quickly and easily.

¹¹⁵ “...tot haar quam: een seker geestelijc persoon/ de welcke in t'samen spreken de hant van haer altemet raeckte; dit/ al wast dat hy't dede uyt eene geestelijcke affectie/ ende met een suyver herte/ heeft nochtans gevoelt in hem de sticstlen des vleesch oprijzen: maer Maria was soo diep in haer propoost getreden/ dat sij't niet ghewaer en wiert watter ghebeurde: nochtans Godt willende de Suyverheydt van sin vriendinne bewaren/ heeft een vois laten ouer haerlieden luyden in 't latijn/ Noli me tangere; 'twelck als maria niet en verstont...” Bisschop, *Het Tweede Boeck*, 279-280.

¹¹⁶ “...maer sult een seker spatie laten in 't midden tusschen beyde/ soo dat oock malkanders kleederen niet en worden aengheraeckt.... Oock door de kleederen verweckt worden (277) tot het bedrijf van de onkuyscheydt/ want seydt hy/ ghelijck een vlas/ als 't maer het vier en raeckt/ slaet terstont in vlamme/ soo oock man ende vrouwe/ die door de natuerlijcke hitte tot malkanderen getrocken worden/ als sy by malkanderen seer na komen/ worden haest onsteken/ ende in brande gestelt.” Bisschop, 276-277.

The priests told the Spiritual Virgins that the best way to avoid seeing, being seen, being with and possibly touching men is to stay home. Steur warns them to stay away from birthings, weddings, all banquets, feasts, and plays and to “flee everything that gives pleasure.”¹¹⁷ These events provide too great a risk that the maidens will be tempted to enjoy their flesh. One priest, using an example from early Christian author, Tertullian, elucidates why religious women should avoid the theater in particular:

...a woman who went to the theater came back possessed by a devil. When the evil spirit was conjured up and exorcized, [as to] why he had been so bold as to attack a religious woman, he replied: ‘I have acted by my very right because I found her in my domain.’¹¹⁸

There are certain places one simply cannot go without inviting a devil in or sullyng one’s purity. Steur and Bisschop also tell the Spiritual Virgins to stay off the streets. Steur writes that they “should watch closely and walk along the streets only in cases of great need”¹¹⁹ and that “Christ is not to be found on the streets or at the market, because Christ is peace. There is strife at the market and on the streets... let the foolish maidens walk outside. But keep yourself inside with your Bridegroom.”¹²⁰ Maidens should not go out much and it seems that the streets, marketplace, and theatre are particularly dangerous. Willibrord Kemp, priest of St. Gertrudis, who was excommunicated in 1712 because of

¹¹⁷ “...vliedt al dat genuchelijck is...” Steur, 224.

¹¹⁸ “...een Vrouwe, de welcke tot den Theater was gegaen, ende met eenen Duyvel beseten van daer gekomen. Als dan den boosen geest besworen wirdt ende uytgemaent, waerom hy sigh verstout hadt een geloovige Vrouw aen te vallen: soo seyde hy: Ick hebbe wel ende seer rechtelijck gedaen want ick hebben haer in het mijn gevonden.” F.V.O.C.S. Van der Weyden, *Het leven van de godtvruchtighe ende deughtsaeme Anna de Torres geestelycke dochter, salighlijck in den Heere overleden binnen Antwerpen op den 13 Januarii 1698. Uyt waere ondervindinghe, ende ghetrouwe overleveringhe, by een vergaedert, ende eenvoudelijck beschreven, ende voor-gestelt aen alle Godtminnende zielen* (Antwerpen: Hieronymus Verdussen, 1710), 58.

¹¹⁹ “...Aldus behooren u nauwe te wachten/ ende niet veele sonder grooten noodt lanckx die straeten te wandelen...” Steur, 233.

¹²⁰ “Maer Christus en wordt op straete/ oft op die merct niet bevonden : want Christus is de vrede : op die merct en straete is kijvagie... laet die dwase maeghden buyten spaceren. Maer houdt ghy u binnen by uwen Bruydegom.” Steur, 231-2.

his Jansenist views,¹²¹ stresses that too many men will see a woman who is in public.

Following his explanation that Shechem raped Dinah because she “walked away from home,” he again emphasizes the problems of women walking outdoors:

...a Virgin must necessarily be in danger, if she moves about in public, and is seen by many and unknown eyes; if she takes pleasure in the attention of others; and if people demonstrate too much civility and love to her.¹²²

According to Kemp, women are in danger simply when they are in public too long. They allow many “unknown eyes” to see them and they endear themselves to people with whom they ought not be acquainted. Public places put a virgin in danger of rape just as Dinah’s story proves.

Bisschop provides a model of staying indoors for the Spiritual Virgins. He tells the story of Maria, a religious woman who gladly stayed in her room. She was “hidden and unknown and never again came into the view of a man.” She went to the Temple only on Easter because she seldom walked outdoors. This was a warning to other women to be more “concerned with their humiliation and Purity than with Religion...”¹²³ He adds elsewhere that a Spiritual Virgin’s room is like a hospital. “Stay there, [and] your Purity will remain healthy.”¹²⁴ If a religious woman does not go out then she will avoid temptation and thus the chance that her purity will be infected. Joanne Baptista Gabriel, a Carmelite trained in Mechelen who lived in the second half of the seventeenth century

¹²¹ Monteiro, 364.

¹²² “...liep van huys” “...een Maeght moer noodtsaeckelijck gevaer loopen, als sy haer selven in ‘t openbaer begevende, van veele en onbekende oogen wort aengesien; als sy vermaeck neemt om dat op haer gewesen wort; en als men haer te veel beleeftheydt en liefde bewyst.” Kemp, 99.

¹²³ “...verborgen is/ ende onbekent/ die nimmermeer inde ooghen van de mans heeft ghekomen... ghelijck sy was/ seldom acter strate ende lande te loopen/ ‘t welc sy ooc als seer wijs wel konde mercken/ dat na den sin van de S. Schrifteure was /die schijnt dit luttel uyt loopen de vrouwe te waerschouwen/ want als sy verbindt alle mans-persoone drymael binnen den jare hun te presenteren voor den Tabernakel/ laet vry de vrouwen / als meer sorghende voor hunne beschaemheydt ende Suyberheyte/ dan voor de Religie...” Bisschop, *Het Tweede Boeck*, 265.

¹²⁴ “...ghy weet wel dat alsoo langhe als ghy hier inde werelt left/ zijt siecker-tierlijck / on-vastich in de deught ende wanckelbaer... Uwe kamer is u voor een sieckhuys/ bewaert dit wel/ wilt ghy in de Suyverheydt gesondt blyven...” Bisschop, *Het Tweede Boeck*, 265.

and wrote five instructional works, two of which he wrote for the Spiritual Virgins, also warns that their room is the best place for them.

The Virgins who live in cities and converse daily with persons of the opposite sex are in thousands of dangerous situations through which ...the slightest impure face, discourse, or touch could destroy their tender bloom of purity, which is not endangered outside in forests, deserts, on mountains, in valleys, and in all lonely places separated from the world, such as the cloisters and your room.¹²⁵

Because of their responsibility for their own purity and the temptation of others, Gabriel and the other authors of these didactic works tell single Catholic women that living in busy cities where they talk to many men is too dangerous because of the many ways they could lose their purity. Since it is so difficult in such a setting to keep one's face covered, to not converse with or to touch others, the priests advise women to stay in their rooms to avoid temptation.

Bisschop and another priest have some even more disempowering admonitions for why the Spiritual Virgins should remain home. Bisschop is against pilgrimages for virgins. He writes that young women undertake pilgrimages only out of curiosity and that they may "encounter many thieves of their Purity." He tells them, "A woman needs either a man or a square wall" and that "a virgin may visit a church or two to receive the holy sacraments and to hear a sermon and to do devotions. But thereafter, she should be satisfied and love the stillness of her room."¹²⁶ Bisschop's advice covers the possibility

¹²⁵ "Die Maegdekens de welcke in de steden woenen, en all daghen in conversatie sijn van ongelijcke persoonen sijn in duysent perickelen vandoor... de minste onkuysch ghesicht, discours, ofte aenraeckinghe te verliesen van de suyverheyt welcke bloem gheen perijckel en heeft buyten in bosschen, in woestijnen, op bergen, in valleyen, ende in alle eensaeme plaetsen, afgescheyden van het ghewoel van de wereldt, als sijn de Cloosters en u vertreck kamer." Gabriel a S. Joanne Baptista O. Carm., *Het gheestelyck houwelyck tusschen Christum en de siele onder den name van Amadea. Aen de getrouwde oft near het Vleesch oft near den Gheest hunne verbintnisse, En aen de ongetrouwde de Oeffeninghe van verscheyden deugden voorhoudende* (Antwerpen: Augustinus Graet, 1691), 300.

¹²⁶ "...veel roovers van hunne Suyverheydt al-om over den wegh vinden. Waerom ooc 't gemeyn spreek woort heeft/ Mulieri aut murus aut maritus. Eene vrouwe is noodigh eenen man/ oft eenen vierkanten

that it will not be followed fully. He tells women to never go outside, but then tells them that if you have to go outside, never go at night, but then again if you have to go out at night take a lantern. He believes women should stay inside and that this is the only way to ensure that one does not provoke sexual attack, but recognizes that the Dutch Spiritual Virgins will have to make some exceptions.

The author of *A Rule through which like a Mirror Christian Virgins...May come to True Internal Beauty* makes similarly disempowering claims that women have to stay home. He uses the example of Dinah to show that women must stay home to prevent rape.

She went out to see the women of the land where she had gone with her father. And when she saw Shechem, the son of Hemor Heueus, a prince of that land, he began to love her with an impure love...He robbed...her, raping her violently. Be on guard against going to see and being seen. Rather stay home on such days and do not go to a nearby church...to be seen, but hold your devotions alone covering yourself.¹²⁷

This author uses Dinah to tell women not to simply control their eyes as other authors had done, but that really the only way to be sure they will avoid rape is to stay home. Virgins cannot be safe even on their way to church. On some days they should be fearful of everything. The undermining message of these examples is that women are responsible to keep themselves out of and should fear all situations in which they may be raped. Even if they have the slightest doubt of their safety, it would be better for them to just stay home.

muer... Mijnen raedt dan navolghens dese H. Vaders is / dat de Maghet eene kercke oft twee besoecke om daer de H. Sacramenten te ontfanghen/ sermoon te hooren / ende de devotie te doen. Voorts/ dat sy hier mede haer te vreden houde/ ende de stilligheyt haerder kamer beminne.” Bisschop, *Het Tweede Boeck*, 263-264.

¹²⁷ “Dese was wtghegaen om te besien de Vrouwen van dien lande/ daer sy met haer Vader was. Ende als haer ghesien hadde Sichem/ die Sone van Hemor Heueus, een Prince van dien lande/ so heeft hy se gemint met een onsuvere minne/ ende heeft haer gheroofd ende beslapen/ met ghewelt haer vercrachtende. Wacht u van also te gaen sien en gesien te worden. Maer op sulcke dagen blijft by huys / ende en gaet niet dan tot een die naeste Kerck/ ende daer en sit niet ter toon om van yemanden ghesien te worden/ maer hout u devotie in eenlicheyt u selven bedeckende.” *Een Regel Waer Duer*, 33.

Superheroes of Purity

Through these examples we have seen that priests tell women that they cannot trust their own intentions, that they have to protect men from their beauty sometimes by damaging their faces, and that they have to stay home to both avoid the danger of rape and to demonstrate their unwillingness. While this advice encouraged women to hate and fear their own bodies and to see themselves as the driving force behind sexual attack and other forms of impurity, it also gave them the responsibility and power to act. Women could fight back, call out, cut off their noses, poke their eyes out, and avoid men by staying home. Through this long list of activities and responsibilities to prevent sexual impurity, spiritual virgins actually became powerful agents who could stop all sorts of sexual impurity – even sexual impurity that did not threaten them.

Like many medieval mystics, tertiaries and beguines living in the world, the Spiritual Virgins also believed that their suffering could expiate the sins of others. For the Spiritual Virgins, “ascetic suffering [and illness] is both union... with the suffering Christ and service of one’s fellows.”¹²⁸ What is different in the priests’ manuals for Spiritual Virgins is that suffering and illness helps them atone, not just for any sin, but most commonly for the sexual sin of others. Joanna of Randenraedt, for example, did penance for other people’s sexual sin. Huysmans tells us that she “punished her own body for the

¹²⁸ Caroline Bynum, “The Mysticism and Asceticism of Medieval Women” in: *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Urzone Publishers, 1991) 69.

sins of others, but no sin as cruelly as the impurity committed by others.”¹²⁹ He continues:

Hearing that a married woman lived impurely, [Joanna] violently punished her own body for these ugly sins at night... She would have killed her body and beat all of her blood out of her veins in order to wash out the impurity of her neighbors had it not been the case that she was forbidden to do this.¹³⁰

Because of the ugliness of the sin and her belief in the ability of her own blood to wash out the impurity of others, Joanna offers her body to redeem the sin of the other woman. Jesuit, Ludovicus Jacobi translated the vita of the late thirteenth- early fourteenth-century saint Lidwina of Schiedam, who was also anxious to do penance for sexual sin. She both prayed to God to mangle her so that she could avoid marriage and offered up her pure flesh as a sacrifice for the physical impurity of others. Some worldly people requested her help in curing them because they were “infected with the fire of impurity.” Lidwina “tried to help them at once with advice, prayers, and self-torment until she brought them to purity of body and soul.”¹³¹ Lidwina and Joanna take responsibility for the sexual sins of others because, though now pure, they too share the female flesh that was often seen as the cause of sexual sin.

In his book of saint’s lives, Rosweyde imparted another example of this. St. Marina dresses as a monk and calls herself Marinus, but a soldier’s daughter accuses Marina of raping her and making her pregnant. Marina does penitence for the rape she

¹²⁹ “Sy bestrafte in haer lichaem de misdaeden van andere: maer gheen misdaet soo vinnighlyck, als d’onsuyverheyt die van andere bedreven wierdt.” Huysmans, *Kort Begryp*, 323.

¹³⁰ “...horrende dat eene ghetrouwde vrouwe oneerlijck leefde, heeft sy dese leelijcke sonden in haer eyghen lichaem by nacht soo vinnighlijck gestraft... Sy soude haer lichaem ghedoodt, ende alle haer bloet uyt de aderen gheslaghen hebben, om de onkuyscheyt van haeren naesten uyt te wasschen, ten waer saecken dar dit haer verboden hadde geweest.” Huysmans, *Kort Begryp*, 198.

¹³¹ “Het ghebeurde somwijlen/ dat tot haer quamen eenighe vleeschelijcke menschen ontsteken met het vyer der onkuyscheydt; de welcke soo sy merckte hen seer te beklagen over dese moeyelijcke bekoringhe/ trachte terstondt te helpen met raedt/ gheveden/ ende pijnen/ tot dat sy die tot de suyperheyt des lichaems ende der zielen ghebrocht hadde.” Jacobi, 63.

did not commit for five years, meanwhile also caring for the son of the lying woman, and then is received back into the monastery. It is only when she dies that the other monks “realize her true nature... [by] raising her robes with which she was covered, they discovered that she was a woman...”¹³² In addition to not wanting to give the monks cause to ban her permanently from the monastery, Marina likely takes the punishment because she feels disgust both for this woman’s sin, and for her own body as well. She has to punish and kill the part of her, which like the soldier’s daughter, is capable of attracting a man and leading them both into sexual sin.

Huysmans also wrote the life story of Agnes of Heilsbach. Just like Johanna, Agnes lived just over the border in the Spanish Netherlands and she actually served as Johanna’s spiritual counselor for many years. Huysmans relates a story in which Agnes and her sister take their responsibility for the sexual sins of others to a new level. They take it upon themselves to stop a case of sexual impurity - a case that we would consider consensual sex between two adults. Agnes and her sister viewed this very differently. When they hear a rumor about “some improper behavior and fornication” that was taking place in their father’s second house by the two women that sleep there to protect it, they decide to do something about it. In order to see if this was true and put a stop to it, Agnes and her sister told the two women that their father wanted his daughters to sleep in the second house alone. Agnes and her sister then:

...took great care to close all doors and windows, entrusting themselves to God’s protection and his holy mother. And they went to bed with their clothes on so that they could quickly get up in the case that someone would come in at night, which is what she thought had occurred. They put their trust in God, but could not sleep well because of restless thoughts

¹³² “Dan dien monick die Marinus heet/ die heir dickwijls met de kerre ghelogeert is/ hy heeft my vercracht/ ende ick hebbe ontfangen...haer nature vvordt bekent.. Ende 'tcleet opheffende/ daer 't mede ghedeckt was/ sach dat het eene dochter was...” Rosweyde, 355.

caused by their great fear and anxiousness. Around midnight, they heard something rustling about the room they were in. Listening to what it was and looking through the darkness of the night, which was brightened by the moon, they saw a man come into the room. Agnes jumped up and clearly yelled: ‘Jesus, Maria, preserve us. Who is here? If you are of God, explain why you have come. If you are of the devil, go back to the abyss of hell and leave us uninjured.’ This man froze where he stood, shocked by this unexpected company, and then asked the two sisters to be quiet. Through his speech, Agnes recognized him. She flew at his head, grabbed his hair so that a part of it stayed in her hand. She threw many harsh words at him and carried herself so bravely, that this man had to leave... This impure person intending to find other company, returned to the house a second night and was fought off just as before.¹³³

He did not come back a third night. Meanwhile, Agnes and her sister also concerned themselves with the purity of the two women. The sisters encouraged them to “sincerely better their evil lives.” One ends up in a cloister and the other marries.¹³⁴ Contrary to Bisschop’s admonitions that a virgin should stay in her room, Agnes goes out to another home at night and turns herself into a superhero of purity. She puts herself into a dangerous situation in which she fears for her own purity, only to fly at the visitor’s head and pull out his hair. She turned herself from a possible rape victim to a powerful figure capable of stopping illicit sex. It seems that her responsibility for the wickedness of men and for the physical sins of women gave her the power to step in and stop impure sex in

¹³³ “... [ze] droeghen groote sorge om seer nauwelijckx alle deuren ende vensters te sluyten: bevalen sich in de bewaernisse van Godt Almachtigh ende sijn H. Moeder: ende gongen te bedde in haer kleederen, om veer ligher op te staen, waert saeke dat iemant, volgens haer achterdencken, by nacht hadde binnen gekomen: Sy stelden beyde haer betrouwen op Godt: maer en konden niet wel slapen, door de woelende ghepeysen, die haer groote bangigheyt ende benautheyt veroorsaecten: ontrent middernacht, hoorden sy wat veselen ontrent de kamer daer sy binnen waeren: luysterden wat het was, ende saghen inde duysterheyt vanden nacht, die door de maene vermindert wiert eenen man in de kamer komen; sy springen op, ende Agnes roept overluyt: *Iesus Maria bewaert ons. Wie is hier? Zijt ghy van Godt, seght de reden van uye komste: zijt ghy vanden duyvel, vaert inden afgront der helle, ende laet ons onbeschaedight.* “Desen man door dit onverwacht gheselschap verbaest staende, versocht dat sy stil-swijgen souden: ende door sijn spreken wiert Agnes hem kennende. Vlieght hem in’t hayr, soo dat een deel van sijn hayr in haer handt bleef: overgaet hem met straffe woorden ende draeght sich soo kloeckelijck, dat desen man genootsaecht was te vertrecken...Desen onsuyveren mensch meynende alsdan ander geselschap te vinden keert oock den tweeden nacht wederom: die sy wederom verjaeghden als voren...” Huysmans, *Leven ende Deughden*, 32-34.

¹³⁴ “... om dese twee plichtighe Vrouw-persoonen tot oprechte beternisse van haer quaet leven te brengen.” Huysmans, *Leven ende Deughden*, 34.

this case. By placing herself in danger of attack or seduction so that she could actively stop it, she rejected the impossible sort of responsibility that the priests granted her by making her responsible for male sexual behavior. And instead she claims a possible sort of activity in which she can physically withstand sexual impurity whether it come in the form of attack or seduction and whether it be directed at herself or at others.

These last examples demonstrate some of the complex tensions that exist in the advice Catholic priests wrote for the Dutch Spiritual virgins. Huysmans and others condoned the spiritual virgins' active lifestyles and willingness to do the tasks priests could no longer do. They granted a number of Catholic women the capacity to fight back if physically attacked, they gave them some hope that if they were raped they could retain their physical purity, and they also provided women with a long list of ways they could prevent sexual impurity – both their own and that of others. On the one hand, the priestly advice did control the way they dressed, encouraged some self-destructive behaviors, and a complete mistrust of women's own intentions. But on the other hand, because priests made these women responsible to protect themselves and others from sexual impurity, it gave women the religious justification that allowed them to make themselves superheroes of purity.

Concluding Ideas

We have seen that priests needed to justify the inner-worldly lives of the Spiritual Virgins. They did so by granting them a range of activities that allow them to take responsibility for what happens to them and by making physical impurity not necessarily a consequence of rape. This meant that one could feel safer in the world because one has

worked to prevent physical impurity and if by chance a Spiritual Virgin was raped, she could remain pure and even benefit because of her suffering. However, priests make a distinction between the women of the spiritual elite and ordinary women. The latter do not benefit from the priests' optimism about the potential Spiritual Virgins have to maintain purity. Just as you can see the Spiritual Virgins' purity by looking at them, you can see ordinary women's depravity and, very unlike the Spiritual Virgins, ordinary women will undoubtedly give in to physical corruption. The biggest problem for the Spiritual Virgins according to the priests is that they can easily lapse back into ordinary womanhood, accompanied by all the weakness and penchant for lustiness that the lapse entails.

One can also see the belief that women show their sexual willingness through their attitude and actions in the Catholic texts in which women are actually raped. Occurrences of sexual violence are explained as a mistake the woman made at some time prior to the rape. Escaping sexual attack is one of the most important elements in the stories of many female saints' lives because "to be raped would demonstrate a lack of merit..."¹³⁵ If a woman is successfully raped, then she is not like the saints. Steur explains, "God will not forsake us, so long as we do not lack."¹³⁶ He means that if you are worthy, God will save you. But Steur also proposes that women must work hard to remain worthy: "...the glorious virtue of Purity can be easily corrupted through carelessness. Therefore a Maiden must always be wary that she is... like a Lily among

¹³⁵ Corinne Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 151.

¹³⁶ "Godt en sal ons niet verlaeten/ ten sy dat wy ons seluen niet onbreken." Steur, 17-18.

the thorns/ who cannot remain inviolate long without great care.”¹³⁷ While a woman who has not suffered rape can continue to consider herself worthy of God’s protection, a violated virgin must assume that she was not careful enough and that her purity was corrupted through her own carelessness.

Indeed, the three women who were actually raped in the priests’ stories, namely Dinah, Tamar, and the niece of Jacob the Hermit were all at fault. Bisschop blamed Dinah for curiously looking about. The author of *A Rule through Which like a Mirror Christian Virgins...May Come to True Internal Beauty*, accused her of needing to stay home. Tamar should not have conversed so long with her brother. Tamar should not have felt safe with her brother and Jacob the Hermit’s niece should not have felt safe in the company of her seventy year old, religious uncle. There is not one example of a woman who was raped who failed to do something wrong herself according to the texts. This lack of precedence of a woman who was not to blame for her own rape or sexual temptation, leads directly to the conclusion that if rape occurs, it is because of something the woman did wrong or failed to do. No matter how hard a ‘Spiritual Virgin’ worked to prevent the temptation of others and thus her own rape, she could never be sure she had undertaken all the possible or necessary steps.

Despite priests’ optimistic advocacy of the Spiritual Virgins’ sacrifices for the sexual sin of themselves and others and despite their unambiguous declarations that purity does not depend on physical intactness, their message concerning rape is ultimately disempowering for women in general and especially so for raped women. As

¹³⁷ “Alsoo die hooghe ende glorieuse deught der Reynicheydt soude lichtelick door onaachtsaemheydt worden ghecorrumpeert. Daerom moet een Maget altijdt ghedachtich zijn/ dat zy (soo langhe als sy met dit sterfelijck lichaem beswaert is) is als een Lelie tusschen die doornen/ die sonder groot neersticheydt niet langhe ongheschent en can geblijven.” Steur, 64-65.

we have seen throughout the advice for Spiritual Virgins, women are responsible for the temptation that their bodies and faces may cause men and must act to prevent all sexual temptation including rape. Even in stories priests use to tell women how they may avoid impurity, they downplay rape as a rare event and make it clear that the temptation that a case of rape provides is by far the most dangerous aspect. In addition to this, Catholic priests believe that long before rape occurs, women initiate the process. Their assertions entirely eliminate the possibility of an innocent rape victim by explaining that rape is never a sudden event, but is rather always the result of long-term corruption or temptation.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Many of the most path breaking insights of gender historians in the past twenty years stem from Joan Scott's classic formulation in the mid-1980s that gender is a primary way of signifying power.¹ As modern feminist theory has reminded us, rape is in many ways the supreme expression of gendered power. However, my research has shown that long before modern feminists began to theorize about rape, early modern men and women already understood the powerful ways in which the language of rape could be used to discuss a whole series of unresolved and highly-charged issues regarding power: power struggles between Catholics and Protestants, power struggles between husband and wives and fathers and daughters, and power struggles between the Spanish and the Dutch.

What I have tried to illustrate is the way in which members of a Dutch nation that had no historical basis and came to exist largely through military accident used the discourse of rape to generate both an emotional feeling of patriotism among its male citizens and a clear social hierarchy that favors the rights of wealthy men. But the language of rape was too pervasive and too powerful not to be used by the less powerful members of this newly constructed social hierarchy as well. Rape could also be a language of the weak used by less powerful members of society such as Catholics to ensure the survival of their religion. Far more than just a bodily, physical, criminal act, discussing rape was a way that many different groups expressed a desire for power and imagined their ideal constitution of the new Dutch social body.

¹ Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis" in her *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

Creating a Nation and Citizenry

In the preceding chapters, we have examined the portrayal of rape as both a serious crime and a natural expression of male sexuality. Playwrights, Hooft and Vondel emphasize the injustice of rape by focusing their audience's attention on raped women's bodies and anguish in two very well-known patriotic plays. They do this in order to liken the acts of rape and tyranny. In their reasoning, rape is not only a property crime against a family, but when perpetrated by an outsider, it is also the violation of the rights of a community and a disturbance of the communal order. By focusing on the violation of Dutch women and the violation of maidens who represent the Dutch nation, Hooft and Vondel forced their audiences to contemplate the late sixteenth-century Spanish desecration of married women, family bonds, and Dutch sovereignty in order to incite emotional revulsion against Spain. In so doing, they also created an ideal image of the Dutch male citizenry. The beautiful and vulnerable Hollands' Maid, which symbolized the nation, required a male citizenry to both love and protect her as they would their own wives. Rape is a story that not only allowed men to imagine an intimate connection to the otherwise abstract state, but also one that created a bond between the Dutch patriarchs who could be proud of their ability to protect Dutch women from sexual attack and the entire Dutch nation from the Spanish.

Unlike Hooft and Vondel, *Cats* shifts the focus away from female bodies and onto the vulnerable male body that is driven by desire and difficult to control. Instead of envisioning an evil rapist, *Cats* portrays a pitiful young man who is at the mercy of his own naturally aggressive male sex drive. His subordination to this drive is both painful and pathetic. At the same time that *Cats* recasts male rapists as the victims of rape, he

refuses to mention damaged female genitalia. Instead, he describes rape as plucking flowers, eating food, hunting animals, and piercing grapes. By obscuring the effects of rape on female bodies, he allows his audience to ignore the pain of rape. He also uses the Dutch words for rape and abduction synonymously, which further conceals any sexual violence behind the uncertainty of his words. Because he obscures the pain of rape and the reader's ability to ascertain whether sexual violence occurred, he is able to suggest that women are quick to forget it happened and are happy when they marry their rapists. In this way, Cats empowers wealthy men to take any available women. When perpetrated by wealthy Dutch citizens who are eligible for marriage, rape and abduction are not crimes. They are simply additional ways one may take a wife.

In spite of the very different way Hooft and Vondel on the one hand, and Cats on the other, assess the nature of rape as either harmful or inconsequential, they all agree that violated women's bodies are sacrifices necessary in helping create and sustain the Dutch nation. When Hooft and Vondel follow Livy's lead in predicating the foundation of a new republic on the revulsion of a raping tyrant, it is the rape of Lucretia's literary descendants, Machteld and Claris, whose anguished rapes are meant to incite a male drive for retribution. These symbolic violations of the Dutch nation are also intended to evoke revulsion against the Spanish for any actual rape that took place during the Eighty Years' War.

Cats also uses depictions of rape to emphasize the value of women's sacrifice for the nation. So long as women are forced by a man who is both wealthy enough and eligible for marriage, he expects them to acquiesce to marrying their rapist for two reasons. First, they should marry their rapist in order to build up patriarchal units that are

the fundamental building-blocks of the nation, instead of bringing two wealthy families to ruin. Second, in marrying their rapist, women can create alliances between peoples that can be beneficial for their nation, as the biblical women of Shiloh did when they married the Benjamites. For Hooft, Vondel, and Cats, women's bodies, both as symbols and in actuality, are ideal sacrifices for the nascent Dutch state. Vulnerable women's bodies provide the motivation for international alliances, the building-blocks of patriarchal family units, bonds between a Dutch male citizenry, who have to both love and protect Dutch women and the Dutch nation figured as female, and the means to villanize enemies, especially Spain.

Much like Hooft's and Vondel's depictions of rape, Cats creates an in-group of Dutch citizens who cannot be held responsible for rape, as well as a group of outsiders, who can be. For Hooft and Vondel, the Dutch citizenry was composed of men who could protect their wives and their country from outside attack often figured as sexual. While Hooft's and Vondel's in-crowd may have been implicitly limited to the elite audience who had the chance to witness their plays first hand in Amsterdam or read printed versions of them, Cats makes it explicitly clear who fits his definition of Dutch. This corresponds almost entirely with his list for the ideal characteristics for marriage partners, including people who are: healthy, beautiful, fertile, noble, rich, reasonable, and good. Cats excludes the wretched, ill, indecent, surly, unattractive, and unkind from the type of people who can marry and thereby create proper Dutch progeny. While Cats painstakingly excuses wealthy men and those eligible for marriage from rape in his stories, he does not provide lower-class, married, or immoral men as much leeway. In the works of Hooft, Vondel, and Cats, rapists are inherently members of outside and

villanized groups, whether the Spanish enemy, the poor, or opponents of Dutch Calvinist morality. The deciding factor as to whether violent sex is rape or not, according to these sources, is not based upon the violence involved in the sexual act, but rather the status of the man in question.

Implications for Dutch Women

The seventeenth-century Dutch depictions of rape that functioned to galvanize national identity and social hierarchies also effectively limited female activity. Despite the very noticeable distinctions between Protestant and Catholic advice, there is some agreement concerning the inevitability of rape, the role women's bodies play in instigating rape, and women's responsibility to prevent it. Both Cats and the Catholic priests advised women that rape was something all women should fear. They warned women about the power of their beauty that attracts men regardless of their own intentions. Both Cats and Lumnus, a Jesuit, likened this female power to attract men with a magnet's capacity to attract iron.² Because of their power over men, Cats and priests held women responsible for controlling their own desires as well as limiting men's opportunities to desire them. Cats and Catholic priests advised women that to avoid rape, it was their responsibility to avoid men and stay at home.

Protestant and Catholic advice also asserts that if rape occurs, it was in fact the woman's fault. Both Cats and the priests use the biblical example of Dina, who in their estimation is raped because she leaves her home. They agree that a woman suffers from internal corruption long before she is raped, which alters her way of dressing and her

² Lumnus, 225 (full citation on page 180 footnote 81 of this dissertation) and Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. II, 83 (full citation on page 125 footnote 42 of this dissertation).

behavior and actually causes her rape. When women begin to walk the streets and talk to people outdoors, Cats and Musius assert that they are inviting their own sexual violation. Rape in their estimation is not an “instant violation,” but rather the result of the woman who has sullied herself.³ In all of the Protestant and Catholic advice explored here, there is no single example of a raped woman not to blame for her rape. Priests and Protestant moralists tell stories about women who suffer rape for the sole purpose of teaching others to stay at home, avoid men, and converse as little as possible.

However, this is where the similarities cease. Catholic priests, whose own capacity to act was limited in the officially Protestant Netherlands, needed the help of devout women to maintain a Catholic presence there. They empowered these women to leave their homes in spite of the danger that that may entail by advising them that they could violently fight back and kill attackers, as well as undertake a number of other actions to remove themselves from harm. It is true that many of these actions encouraged women to fear their own bodies, see them as the driving force behind sexual attack, and required them to damage their bodies in some ways. However, it is through their creation of this long list of activities that priests allowed the Spiritual Virgins to challenge men and change the way their lives would unfold. Priests made these religious Catholic women responsible for their own sexual sin and that of others. Spiritual Virgins embraced these responsibilities as opportunities to actively save themselves, their families, their neighbors, and their Catholic faith.

Popular Protestant advice for women, on the other hand, warns women that any activities they undertake have to be instigated by their fathers or husbands. According to

³ See Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, v. I, 251 (full citation page 124 footnote 41 of this dissertation) and Musius, 11 (full citation page 171 footnote 64 of this dissertation).

Cats, young women must always subordinate their wishes to that of the men in their lives. They have to obey their fathers, hide their desire for a particular man, accept as their husband any man eligible to woo them, and to subject their own will and even moods to their husbands' once married. Failure to submit to fathers and husbands in all things leads women to become monstrous abominations with the power to rape, abduct, and kill men. When the women in Cats' stories begin to disobey and exercise their own will, their bodies actually initiate rape by depriving men of their senses and piercing their hearts. While women's capacity to rape and abduct seems figurative to the modern reader, the seventeenth-century audience conceived of women's physical power as very real and one that had legal ramifications. Cats provides legal precedents in which women are held legally responsible for the abduction of men, Protestant Church disciplinary records punish women for putting themselves in dangerous situations, and municipal judicial records suggest that women's bodies are understood as complicit in cases of rape.

In spite of Cats' popularity among Dutch men and women, Catholic priests were not the only group to challenge his ideas about rape and marriage. A few Dutch golden age women also disputed his assertions. A question for future research is precisely how important was the discourse of rape in the literary works of female authors. Initial inquiries suggest that many female authors agree with male authored works in so far as they stress their female inferiority and a need for humility, but none endow women with any kind of power to rape or murder. When they discuss rape, which is not a prevalent theme in their works, it is to challenge existing ideas about acceptable sexual behavior.

Two brief examples demonstrate how two Dutch women challenged Cats' emphasis on female responsibility for rape and his belief that abduction can lead to happy

marriages. See the example below comparing an emblem published by Cats entitled “Coat of Arms of All Honorable Maidens” in 1618 (on the left) with one published by Joanna Coomans, the wife of a wealthy magistrate from the southern provinces of the Netherlands, entitled “Coat of Arms of all honest young men” in 1623 (on the right). Cats’ accompanying poem only mentions women’s responsibilities in preventing rape. You can see this sentiment in his emblem as well. He symbolizes virgin women as the tender grapes in the basket in the center, who according to his text have to avoid the touch of a wide variety of insects, birds, and even human hands to maintain their purity.



Figure 16: Jacob Cats, “Coat of Arms of Honorable Maidens”⁴



Figure 17: Joanna Coomans, “Coat of Arms of All Honest Young Men”⁵

In her poem, Coomans does agree with Cats that women have some responsibility in limiting male sexual temptation, but she emphasizes men’s role in seduction. Coomans’ emblem features a dangerous male tongue, which is on the platter in the center of her emblem, in order to emphasize its central role in leading many women to sexual ruin. In

⁴ Cats, “Wapen-Schild alle Eerbare Maeghden Toe-ghe-eyghent,” in the *Maechden-Plicht*. Leiden University Library, Western Printed Books, Bijzondere Collecties (KL) - 1019 C 23: 2.

⁵ Image in Johanna Coomans, “Wapen-schild alle eerlicke jong-mans toe-geeygent,” *Zeeuuse Nachtegael* (Middelburg, Ian Pietersz vande Venne, 1623), 41.

the accompanying poem she asks: “Who violates the Bunch of grapes, which is more fragile than glass?” She answers: “...it is the tongue by which so many maidens come to fall...”⁶ Instead of placing sole responsibility to avoid rape on women, she stresses men’s responsibility for women’s sexual contamination.

⁶ Johanna Coomans, “Wapen-schild alle eerlicke jong-mans toe-geeygent,” in *Zeeuuse Nachtegael* (Middelburg, Ian Pietersz vande Venne, 1623), 41.

Another author, Katharyne Lescailje (1649-1711) also challenges Cats' ideas about rape and seduction. Lescailje was a single woman, who managed her own publishing firm in Amsterdam and wrote plays for the Dutch national theater as well as poetry. Her plays in particular emphasize the negative consequences of abduction and forced sex. While Cats describes maidens as always willing and that happy marriages result from abduction, Lescailjes' plays *Kassandra* and *Herod and Miriam* show that only tragedy can occur when a woman is forced to marry her family's enemy against her will.⁷ In the case of her play *Herod and Miriam*, Miriam rants about how she hates her husband and will never forgive him for slaying her brother. Herod and Miriam were married, their marriage consummated against her will, and the end result is tragedy. Coomans and Lescailje challenge some of their culture's views on proper sexual behavior through their discussions of men's responsibility for the sexual contamination of women and the impossibility of a happy marriage resulting from abduction. However, the question remains whether discussions of rape were as prevalent in women's works or is it more likely that women emphasized their roles as mothers, in order to assert some their social importance as moral instructors of children, or even their role as scholars as in the case of Anna Maria van Schurman.

While the Catholic priests encouraged a small, elite group of women to challenge men and exercise some control in particular situations, Protestant advice required all women to remain under the complete control of men in all situations. By exploring the implications of depictions of rape, we see that seventeenth-century Dutch women's movements were more constricted than is largely recognized. Even if women did ignore

⁷ Her family published a three volume collection of her works after her death: Katharyne Lescailje, *De Mengelpoezy van Katharyne Lesacilje* (Amsterdam: De Erfgenaamen van J. Lescailje en D. Rank, 1731).

these proscriptions and engage in some banned activities, they could easily be censured and blamed for any sexual violence that may occur. Because of the many rules a raped woman may believe that she had broken, as well as the lack of precedence of any innocent rape victim, it is easy to imagine that women may have believed that the consequences were indeed their fault. On the other hand, perhaps Dutch Protestants did recognize a small group of elite women, different from ordinary women and roughly equivalent to the Catholic Spiritual Virgins, who were not necessarily known for their virginity as the religious Catholic women were, but for their chaste, moral, scholarly capacities.

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Curriculum Vita

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Education

- 1999-2007 Ph.D., *Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*, New Brunswick, NJ
 Major Field: Medieval/Early Modern Europe
 Minor Field: Women's and Gender History
- 1997-1999 M.A. Leiden University, The Netherlands: Medieval History,
 Master's thesis: "Transcending Female: Spiritual Body in the
 Medieval Diocese of Liege"
- 1993-1997 B.A. Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina:
 European History, *Cum Laude*, Honors Thesis on Russian Serfdom

Teaching Experience

- Instructor, Rutgers University – New Brunswick. Shaping a Life.
 Intensive writing women's studies course. Spring 2007.
- Instructor, Rutgers University – New Brunswick. Development of Europe I.
 Summer Sessions 2000, 2003, and 2006.
- Instructor, Rutgers University – New Brunswick. Expository Writing I:
 English Composition 101. 2003-2005.
- Teaching Assistant, History Department, Rutgers University – Newark.
 Western Civilization II. Spring 2006.
- Teaching Assistant, History Department, Rutgers University – New Brunswick.
 World History. Spring 2002.
 Development of Europe I. Spring 2000 and Fall 2001.
 History of Witchcraft. Fall 2000.
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