

'PRIVATE VICES, PUBLIC VIRTUES' REVISITED: THE DUTCH BACKGROUND OF BERNARD MANDEVILLE¹

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During the last half century the English writer of Dutch origin, Bernard Mandeville (1670–1733), has come to be one of the better-known authors of the early eighteenth century. His name is cited in the same breath as Hume, Swift and Defoe, and he is recognised as having influenced both Adam Smith and Voltaire.² His works are being reprinted and dozens of studies have appeared in recent years.³

This growing popularity is partially due to the reevaluation of the literary genre that Mandeville practised: satire. Mandeville also benefits from the attention being given to less prominent figures in the history of ideas. It is true that his humorous poems, dialogues and essays are not high-minded philosophical treatises, but their contents are nonetheless striking. His slogan 'private vices, public benefits' has made him immortal, for it represents a highly original view of the economy. Failings such as greed, lust, vanity, extravagance and even crime, are given a positive value by Mandeville, in contrast to earlier authors, since in his opinion they stimulate the economy. In this way private sins add up unintentionally to strengthen society. This moral of the 'Fable of the Bees' makes Mandeville a forerunner of economic liberalism. In religious matters, among others, Mandeville also expressed a very tolerant point of view. His message had important consequences for ethics. He settled accounts with the idea of earlier moralists that personal virtue was a condition for being a good public servant.

But the question is whether we should always take Mandeville literally. The recent tendency is toward an increasingly nuanced view of his ideas. It is much too simple to see him as a sarcastic misanthrope with an extremely pessimistic view of human nature. His works contain a double meaning in many places that makes his message compatible with classical opinions on honor and virtue after all. Mandeville may have made use in many places of a stylistic device with a long tradition: inversion. A recent biographer therefore speaks of 'the two Mandevilles', describing him on the one hand as 'a pious Christian, an ascetic, and an unusually austere moralist, who finds corruption even in apparently laudable or at least innocent activities', and on the other as 'a cynic, a scoffer of all virtue and religion...'.⁴

Mandeville remains a puzzle for modern scholars. The titles of studies devoted to him speak volumes: 'The Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville', 'Mandeville: Cynic or Fool', and 'Paradox and Society'.⁵ Mandeville research still has to fill many gaps, the greatest of which is the relationship between his ideas and his

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personal life. The background for his thinking has until now been exclusively sought in literary and philosophical influences, pointing to among others Montaigne, Hobbes and Bayle. The lack of a connection with his personal life is explainable: until today we have only had a handful of facts available. The social context, which is so important in the modern history of ideas, is completely missing. This is true in particular for the possible influence of his Dutch background. We know so little about his life before his settling in England in 1698, and indeed before the publication of his first English pamphlet in 1704, that the description of this period in biographies occupies at most two pages. As we will show, however, this gap can be partially filled. It seems that Mandeville also had literary aspirations in his mother tongue, and that he was involved in a rebellious movement. More knowledge about Mandeville's Dutch background can lead to a better understanding of his later work.

His family background is essential in order to place Mandeville properly. In contrast to what Voltaire and later writers assumed, the Mandevilles had no connection whatsoever with France despite the sound of their name. The first ancestor of Mandeville we can trace, his great-great-grandfather Joannes, lived in Lecuwarden in Friesland around 1580.⁶ His son Michael, Bernard's great-grandfather, was born there and registered as a student of medicine at the nearby University of Franeker in 1595.⁷ In 1601 he married Maria van de Rade, daughter of a printer from Antwerp who had settled in Franeker. In the same year he was appointed city physician in Nijmegen and rector of the Latin school there. Such a combination of positions was not unusual in the sixteenth century; Michael evidently still fit the humanistic ideal of the universal scholar. In any event, he gave up his rectorship in 1607, receiving in exchange a salary increase as physician. In 1617 he acquired citizenship in the city and a year later was accepted into the city council [*vroedschap*] and appointed alderman [*schepen*], positions that he would continue to fill until the year before his death. The couple had ten children, four of whom died before the age of ten; high infant mortality was not unusual in that period. The only daughter married an advocate. The five surviving sons all went to university, four of them studying at Franeker. The oldest studied theology and law and became a minister in the Reformed Church; the second studied law, the third medicine and the fourth Latin. Bernard's grandfather, Immanuel, studied law at Leiden. Presumably the sons were consciously spread over different academic disciplines by their father since this was a fairly common educational strategy. In 1635 and 1636, the family fell victim to an epidemic of plague in Nijmegen, both the parents and the second son died. Immanuel Mandeville was appointed to his father's vacant position. In addition he also became inspector of the Latin school, thus continuing the tradition of universal learning. In 1656 he was appointed professor at the city academy. He died in 1660. He and his wife had eleven children, four of whom did not survive past four years; two others disappear from the sources after their baptism and presumably also died young. One son studied medicine in Leiden and succeeded his father as city physician and professor in 1661. Two other sons did not go to university; one made a career in the army of the States General and the other became chief surgeon in the Dutch East Indies Company.

The fourth son, Michael, Bernard's father, was born in Nijmegen in 1639. In 1666 he went to study law in Leiden. It seems he also qualified in medicine since in

that same year he was named 'plague doctor' in Nijmegen.⁸ Two years later he established himself as a doctor in Rotterdam.⁹ There he was appointed city physician and an administrator of the municipal hospital. In 1681, 1684 and 1685 he was also appointed to the aldermen's court of Schieland, a legal jurisdiction that had been purchased by the city. It was a relatively modest position in the judiciary, but in any case his law studies were of use there. Further he acquired the rank of lieutenant in the citizen's militia in the years 1673–1675 and 1686–1690. This was the third-ranking officer after colonel and captain. We know he had a flourishing medical practice from—ironically—the many mentions of his name in the debt records of deceased.¹⁰ In 1667 he married Judith Verhaar, daughter of a naval captain of the Admiralty of Rotterdam, at Beek, a village near Nijmegen. They had four children. For two of them there is only a mention in the baptismal registers and they probably died young. The only information on a daughter born in 1684 is that she married in 1709. Only Bernard, born in Rotterdam in 1670, followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. He went to study in Leiden at the age of sixteen and obtained his doctorate in philosophy in March 1689. Afterwards he lived for a while in his parents' house. Together with his father he was closely involved in the sensational events that took place in Rotterdam in the fall of 1690. We will see in what follows how much these events left their mark on the young Mandeville.

The Mandeville family was one in which four generations of sons pursued as a rule a university education, whether in law, medicine or another field. They entered such professions as medical doctor, minister, or lawyer, professions that more or less enjoyed the same status.¹¹ The family's daughters married as a rule men in these same professions. The practitioners of such professions belonged to the middle class. Their status was less than that of the nobility and town patricians and their financial position much more modest than that of big merchants or high civil servants. Yet an academic training could be a step upwards in further status seeking. For medical doctors, the positions of city physician and professor increased status, and in that respect the direct ancestors of Bernard Mandeville had certainly been successful. Holding government offices that were not directly related to one's profession, such as acquiring a seat in a city council, a place in an aldermen's bench or an officer's commission in the citizen's militia, was even more important. The best example of a successful doctor in this period was Nicholas Tulp, who made it to the council, alderman's and mayor's office of Amsterdam.¹² The Mandevilles knew that such offices were profitable and Bernard's grandfather took advantage of his place in the city council of Nijmegen to let two of his sons study at municipal expense. Political considerations probably also led him on more than one occasion to choose a mayor, an alderman and a high city official as witnesses at his children's baptism, an indication of a conscious striving to climb socially. Bernard's father also had two of his children baptised by someone who later became a member of the Rotterdam city council.

On 17 September and 5 October 1690, events took place in Rotterdam that must have had a profound influence on the life of father and son Mandeville: violent events that have entered history under the name of the 'Costerman riot'. The instigation had taken place a few weeks previously. Tax farmers' agents had caught several men with a cask of wine on which no excises had been paid.

During the ensuing struggle one of the taxmen was stabbed to death with a sword. The investigation revealed that those involved were no ordinary smugglers, but rather respectable members of the citizen's militia who had gone in search of refreshment during their night watch. One of them, Cornelis Costerman, was arrested. He confessed to the fatal thrust. The city's bailiff, Jacob Van Zuijlen van Nievelt, demanded the death penalty. The aldermen's court upheld this punishment, which was imposed in public on 16 September.

The sentence provoked much resistance. To be sure, the death penalty was applied regularly in the Republic, but normally only to members of the lower classes. It was unusual for a citizen to receive such a harsh punishment. His citizen's rights only provided that Costerman be executed by the sword and not on the gallows. The crime that had led to the fight was also not counted heavily against Costerman. Tax evasion was widespread and increasing pressure of taxes led at the end of the seventeenth century to riots and uprisings in several places, among them Haarlem in 1690 and Amsterdam in 1696.¹³ Many taxes were farmed out by the government. Whoever bid the most during a public auction obtained the right to collect the tax. Whatever he collected above the price of the lease was his profit. These tax farmers and their agents were universally despised. Moreover, there were rumors circulating that Costerman was innocent and that the bailiff had disregarded a pardon that the stadholder had granted.

On the day of the execution the tension in the city increased substantially. The fact that the executioner was so nervous that he had to strike five times before he succeeded in severing the head from the body exacerbated the situation. Such clumsiness had in the past led to riots at executions. But the tension only broke the next evening when a crowd assembled at the house of the farmer of the wine excise tax. The city government did not have many means to restrain an unruly crowd. There was no police force except for a few sheriff's deputies. Maintenance of order was a task for the citizen's militia. Their performance was not very effective. During other tax riots in Rotterdam and elsewhere the militia were sometimes also often lax in their action; the taxmen were not persons one readily defended. In this case, the occasion was, moreover, the execution of a fellow militiaman, which cannot have heightened their enthusiasm. The crowd therefore had a free hand and plundered the house completely in several hours.

Calm returned after the plundering. The city government took no further measures, but the news had reached the Hague, the center of government, that same day. The States of Holland sent soldiers and a commission of inquiry to the city. Such interference by the provincial government in municipal affairs always led to conflicts. As usual in the Republic a compromise was reached. Besides the commission only part of the soldiers were admitted to the city.

Not everyone thought that the sacking of the tax farmer's house was sufficient revenge for Costerman. Pamphlets appeared with calls to settle matters too with the bailiff. Bailiff Van Zuijlen van Nievelt was already a despised figure, both among the ordinary people and patriciate of the city. Many old grievances surfaced, the chief of which was that he had abused his office. He had allegedly extorted money from people under threat of initiating criminal proceedings against them and personally pocketed money from fines.¹⁴ In the early morning of 5 October a broadside in verse was posted at the Merchants Exchange in which the bailiff was denounced as a 'sanctimonious atheist' and other ugly things. The

closing lines called literally for 'tripping the man up', in other words ousting him from office. The Rotterdammers congregated to read the broadside. The major in charge of the States' troops and one of Van Zuijlen's sons also went to read the pasquil, as the former later testified. The major called it a 'godless pasquil'; Van Zuijlen Jr's reaction was: 'I pray, have a good look, such devilish things are posted, that does not come from the rabble, but from other people', meaning high-placed foes of his father. The major was able to steer Van Zuijlen Jr to a nearby coffee house for his own safety.¹⁵ Bystanders prevented sheriff's deputies from tearing down the bill. Afterwards contemporaries pointed out this broadside as the 'trumpet of alarm'. That same afternoon violence broke out again, fiercer than before. A crowd assembled at the bailiff's house. The participants got hold of a cannon and shot the door to pieces. After smashing the furniture to smithereens, they even pulled down the facade. In the meantime the bailiff had fled his house with the soldiers who had tried in vain to repel the crowd. The rioters' victory was complete since the following day the city government dismissed Van Zuijlen from his office. Just how jubilant the mood was among the citizenry of Rotterdam is illustrated by the fact that a medalist found it profitable to cut a commemorative medallion with the text 'Ubi interficere fas est, ibi destruere' (Where murder is permitted, so is destruction) (Fig. 1). One side of the medallion showed Costerman's severed head (Fig. 1b) and the other the bailiff's devastated house (Fig. 1a). Furthermore, another entrepreneur had the riot depicted on china porcelain, so-called chine-de-commande (Fig. 2). It was a substantial investment since the design had to be sent to China first and the porcelain imported from there.¹⁶ All the same, the plates and cups sold briskly. It was not uncommon to set down an uprising in a print, but this type of portrayal was unique in the Republic and confirms the involvement of the highest levels of the Rotterdam citizenry.

The Costerman Riot generated an extensive written reaction. In addition to accounts in the press, the archives contain several linear meters of reports, interrogations, testimony of witnesses, sentences, letters and so forth. The names of Michael and Bernard Mandeville are cited in several places as being involved. The most damaging is the statement by a married couple that Bernard Mandeville was generally regarded to be the author of the pasquil that had so stirred up feelings on 5 October: the 'Sanctimonious Atheist'. They said that he 'was definitely considered to be the author of the above-mentioned pasquil'.¹⁷ Another witness confirmed this with the words: 'The son of Dr Mandeville, made the pasquil that was posted during the night'.¹⁸

There is more testimony pointing in the same direction. Various people related that the opponents of Van Zuijlen came together in the home of the former mayor Pieter de Meij. His maid at the time later stated that the group usually met in the evening. They were so busy that when she announced that dinner was served, De Meij said: 'There is no time for eating here, but for writing about Jaap van Zuijlen'. She knew for certain that the poem, the 'Sanctimonious Atheist', had been written in the house. She had recognised Dr Mandeville and his son among those present. The poems were copied over extensively and distributed in the city by a woman called Anna the Seamstress. She herself had heard or read several of the pasquils four days before the sacking.¹⁹ According to the couple cited earlier, Mandeville senior had announced in public that even more scathing



(a)



(b)

Fig. 1(a and b). Medallion by Johannes Smeltzing (1690). From: G. van Loon, *Beschryving van Nederlandsche historipenningen ...* ('s-Gravenhage 1723-41, 4 vols).



Fig. 2. China porcelain, 1690, with the Costerman Riot, Rotterdam, 1690. Museum Booymans van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

broad­sides than the ‘Sanctimonious Atheist’ were in preparation.

Accusations against Michael Mandeville went even further. He was said to have been among the rioters on 5 October and to have boasted of it in public. Perhaps he realised later that this had been unwise for that would explain why he went to a notary on 23 November with eleven members of his company of militia to have a statement recorded. The militiamen stated that they had faithfully reported for duty and that a number of them had posted watch at public buildings until five o’clock in the morning.²⁰ Did Michael Mandeville want to provide himself with an alibi, or in any case proof of good conduct in this fashion?

If Mandeville was the author of the ‘Sanctimonious Atheist’, then his Dutch work is in any case in keeping with his later work. His first English publications belong to the same genre of the satirical poem and like his Dutch work were also published anonymously as cheap pamphlets. In the only personal testimony about Mandeville, the meeting in later life described by Benjamin Franklin, we also recognise the young Bernard. Franklin met Mandeville in an inn where the latter, in a jocular mood, was the heart of a group of like-minded spirits that

gathered together regularly, thus approximately in the same way we must imagine the company in De Meij's house.²¹

Although only one copy has survived, the 'Sanctimonious Atheist' was printed in great quantities. The printer was identified later as Johannes Borstius, a well-known printer, publisher and book seller. Two witnesses had seen him posting the broadside. According to other witnesses he was also part of the group that met at mayor De Meij's. The remarks of Ericus Walten, a contemporary publicist in Rotterdam, are also interesting. He wrote several commentaries on the riot in which he attempted to show that it was instigated by a faction within the ruling regents of the town. Walten wrote that in a conversation with his printer—evidently Borstius—the latter told him 'not only open-heartedly, but also casually, that he had printed the well-known pasquil, that started 'Sanctimonious Atheist' (which was the trumpet of alarm...), and that it had been given to him to print by persons who were subordinate to some regents of the city of Rotterdam, who he was sure also knew about it...'²²

Mandeville's 'trumpet of alarm' read as follows:

To the Honor of Jacob van Zuijlen van Nievelt, bailiff of Rotterdam.

- 1 Sanctimonious atheist, loving whore's skin
- 2 Money-grubbing tyrant, spawn of hell,
- 3 Disturber of the peace, ruiner of the community,
- 4 Who spares neither widow nor orphan, but sucks from their bones,
- 5 The marrow and life's juices, so that the body dries,
- 6 That is the real target, that you oh scoundrel aim at,
- 7 Reflect your fall draws near, you will surely be punished
- 8 For all your evil deeds, be deservedly hanged
- 9 On the highest gallows, for all men to see
- 10 You in the middle, oh knave: a son on either side
- 11 How wonderful that heaven's law has been awakened
- 12 Since you have raped the law, and carried justice off
- 13 Salvation you must forego, if you do not repent
- 14 So end this evil-doing, before you are claimed
- 15 By the underground pit, eternally there to burn
- 16 For all such scum of hell, must surely end up there.
- 17 Oh, Citizen Fathers, trip this scoundrel up
- 18 Before one of your children does it himself.²³

The 'Sanctimonious Atheist' was not the only satire circulating in October 1690. Some thirty in all have survived, some printed, others in manuscript. Some authors betray their educated background by the use of Latin mottos. They must have come from the narrow circle of the Rotterdam elite. On the other hand, there are popular songs, such as 'A new farcical song on the life and works of Jacob van Zuijlen', a street song that was put to the tune of a well-known ditty ('The Squinter from Delft'). The broadsides also differed in their outward appearance, those aimed at the people were printed in traditional Gothic letters, while the others were in Roman type.

Only a few of these broadsides have been included in the large public pamphlet collections, such as the Royal Library's in the Hague. More can be found in the files assembled by the judicial authorities. The largest collection, however, was

amassed by the victim himself, the bailiff Van Zuijlen van Nievelt. Presumably he was not collecting for his own entertainment but gathering ammunition to be used against his opponents. This collection is still in the family archive.

For the 'Sanctimonious Atheist' we have three contemporary handwritten copies and one printed version. The latter is a quarto sheet on which is also printed an 8-line verse entitled 'On the death of Kornelis Kosterman'. This second poem does not appear in the surviving handwritten copies and the witnesses did not say anything about this combination either. It is probably a later rather than the first printed version. We know that other poems were also printed in various editions.

Shortly afterwards the poem achieved a much wider, in fact national, circulation when it was published in full in the monthly news survey *Europische Mercurius*. In its comprehensive account of the Costerman Riot the journal printed four satires completely. According to the article's author, the satire in the 'Sanctimonious Atheist' was not even the 'bitterest'. That was a poem that came to be known as 'The Echo' and was one of the few in which another name than Van Zuijlen's was mentioned, that of alderman Johan Steenlack, cited by his initials in the version printed there.²⁴

When we look more closely at the poem, we see that it forms a powerful indictment of the bailiff Van Zuijlen van Nievelt. It is noteworthy that the reason for the popular fury, the execution of Costerman, is not mentioned at all. Obviously, the action against the bailiff had in the meantime become an end in itself.

The 'Sanctimonious atheist' in the first line refers to Van Zuijlen's religious opinions. He was an adherent of the orthodox current in the Reformed Church and since 1680 an elder. According to his enemies, however, his piety was only a front. In other pamphlets this element also recurs. In another poem, for example, we read:

... oh alas
 who once has fallen out of grace
 both with citizens and such gentlemen as
 go about in black clothes
 he may thrash about or root
 he stands on round and slippery feet
 and whoever stands on such pillars [suilen = zuilen = pillars: a pun on the bailiff's
 name]
 falls easily to the ground

The ministers, the 'gentlemen... in black clothes', were divided between latitudinarians and the more orthodox, who were supporters of Van Zuijlen. In the poems, the latitudinarians are taken under protection, for example against the accusation of Socinianism:

Those who teach us God's truth accurately
 are abused as Socinians

In Holland the charge of Socinianism was a usual invective and commonly levied to put someone in a bad light. The same poet goes on to denounce the 'ostentatious little licentiates', protected by Van Zuijlen.

Elsewhere we find the lines:

Go preachers, comfort
your elder, and shed
many tears on his cheek.

Religious conflict at times coupled with disturbances occurred repeatedly in the Republic, the greatest outburst being the struggle between Remonstrant and Counter-Remonstrant around 1620. The religious dissension was stronger and lasted longer in Rotterdam than elsewhere. The Remonstrants remained numerous there and even continued to exercise influence in the city government. More than once Dutch ministers were directly involved in disturbances since politics and religion were inseparable in the Republic. The historian D.J. Roorda counted ten ministers who had directly incited to riot during the Orangist uprisings in the towns of Holland in 1672.²⁵ We have no evidence of this for the Costerman riot, but it was said that afterwards two ministers and gone about the city to look for guilty parties at the behest of the city government or—according to another witness—precisely to ‘divert’ those who wanted to give ‘truthful testimony’.²⁶

The ‘loving whore’s skin’ in Mandeville’s text (first line) refers to the charges made more explicitly elsewhere that the bailiff was a frequent visitor of whore houses and that he sexually abused female domestics and prisoners.²⁷ Five years earlier there had already appeared a pamphlet about Van Zuijlen’s sex life, ‘The bailiff of Rotterdam exposed’²⁸ in which we read the lines:

A Spanish pox-bitch, who gives himself to vice
’tis Nyvelt, are there any who can doubt it?
His own wife will surely prove it with his shirt

In other words the bailiff was being accused of suffering from syphilis. The stains that this illness left behind on clothing formed a popular theme in farces. According to another source, he even tolerated ‘sodomy’, homosexuality, which was a crime punishable by death. He was even accused of practising this himself. Constantine Huygens Jr noted in his diary that the bailiff was accused of ‘horrible things that one cannot repeat’, an allusion to the ‘crimen nefandum’, as sodomy was also called.²⁹ The bailiff’s death in 1695 again led to a boom in pasquils and in one of the poems circulating at the time are the lines:

Champion of the cursed evil
Redeemer of the sodomite’s money³⁰

The ‘money-grubbing tyrant’ in line 2 of the poem refers of course to his extortionary activities. We come across this accusation in other broadsides as well. Even beggars were not safe from Van Zuijlen; they had to pay heavily for a permit to beg, as we see in a stanza from a song aimed at the common people:

The beggars it must be understood
May not go begging about

Before they've fetched their ticket
Twelve pennies to be paid.

The desire to see his two sons swinging from the gallows (line 10) came from the fact that he had illegally obtained city offices for them. In other songs his wife was also smeared:

A sorceress on the outside
Is what she is indeed
Evil to her very bowels.

The last two lines of the 'Sanctimonious Atheist' refer to the patriarchal model of authority current at the time in which administrators were considered to be 'fathers' and the people 'children'. This is a traditional justification for revolution: where fathers fail, children must intervene. In other songs the idea is expressed more simply:

Jaap van Zuijlen must leave town
The soldiers show their heels
He's a whore-hopper to be sure
And vexes people too

All the poems tell of the bailiff Van Zuijlen's bad character and dirty tricks, often concluding with a call to do something about it. Public sins, such as his corruption, are cited in the same breath as his personal sins, such as his sexual escapades. In other words the satirical verses reflect the traditional view of a direct connection between personal and public virtue. One poem, moreover, opens by laying a link to the general decline of the country:

When the Golden Age turned its nether side up
Just like a wobbly wheel, with sorrow and misery . . .

The 'Sanctimonious Atheist' belongs to a long satirical tradition in the Republic. In the sixteenth century the revolt against Spain was accompanied by a voluminous production of pasquils and satires. The allegory of the beehive that Mandeville used in the 'Fable of the Bees' may very well have been inspired by the most famous satire of that period, 'The Beehive of the Holy Roman Church' by Marnix van St Aldegonde. This pamphlet published in 1569 was reprinted eleven times in the sixteenth century and twenty times in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.³¹ In later periods too political and religious conflicts repeatedly pumped blood through the Dutch poetic veins. The works that have found their way into pamphlet collections and judicial files attest to this phenomenon. Lampoons were often posted on church doors, on other public buildings or on the home of the victim. It was not uncommon to write them on slips of paper and put them in the collection box at church, in the assurance that they would find their way further.³² Poets of repute also practised the genre. In the 1620s the great poet, Vondel, wrote several satirical poems that have become classics. To be sure, they are more civilised than those of 1690, but sprout

nonetheless from the same family tree.³³ There was also a long tradition in Holland of collective composition of poems, in particular, 'occasional poems' for weddings and other events. This tradition was rooted in the Chambers of Rhetoric. The writing of pasquils could be a social event, and the gatherings at De Meij's home must be viewed in this light. Many of the poems aimed at Van Zuijlen could have had a collective authorship.

The government repeatedly forbid the writing of pasquils. In 1601 in the Hague, for example, a prohibition was issued against 'making and setting to verse lampoons, pasquils, refrains, songs or other writings about persons, and making them public by posting them on doors, windows or other places, by handing them out or by strewing them in the streets, writing them or singing them'. In Brielle in 1613 the authorities forbid the making and distributing of pasquils and lampoons. In the same year circulating and singing 'infamous songs' about the tax farmers were prohibited in Schoonhoven. Amsterdam published a ban on 'defamatory lampoons' in 1649.³⁴ The States of Holland, the provincial government, also issued decrees on this subject frequently.³⁵

Only a relatively small number of such satirical songs and verses, especially of those circulating in manuscript, have been preserved. We are dependent here on chance. Thus several of the notes with satirical poems that were deposited in a collection box in a church in Dordrecht in 1651 have turned up in the files of the provincial court of Holland. A poem against a tax farmer posted on the door of the Old Church in Zaandam in 1679 was copied by the minister into his almanac.³⁶

In terms of their contents the poems of 1690 recall earlier ones, fitting into the tradition of the pasquil in which accusations in the sexual, religious and political realms logically complement one another. We find, for example, the same charges in the 1679 verse from Zaandam mentioned above. There too the accused is said to have enriched himself at the expense of widows and orphans. He is attacked as a 'scoundrel', an 'extortionist, and a 'secret whore-hopper'. There too he is called a 'citizen vexer' and a call to plunder is made:

Come Pluto from your hall, and help us move it
Or you, thunder god, smash it for us.

Here again the author makes a threat at the end:

So shall I act as his executioner.

The Dutch tradition of satirical verses can be compared to the Italian one studied by Peter Burke. There too the genre was subject to set patterns despite the apparently great freedom of form found in both countries. There too personal insult flowed easily into political protest.³⁷ The Dutch word 'pasquil', used frequently in the seventeenth century, derives directly from the Italian 'pasquillo', after the statue of Pasquino on which the inhabitants of Rome used to post their lampoons.

A typical Dutch element in the seventeenth-century lampoon is perhaps the greater emphasis on the idea of corruption. The concept of corruption acquired its modern connotation earlier in the Republic than elsewhere; public officials

were subject to a stricter code from a relatively early date. They were prohibited from accepting gifts or retaining part of the proceeds of their office, and their salaries were correspondingly raised in compensation. This process can be clearly discerned in the case of the highest public office, the Grand Pensionary. Before 1650 an important part of the income of this official still consisted of presents, for example from foreign rulers, but in mid-century accepting such gratuities was strictly forbidden. For that reason Grand Pensionary Johan de Witt, who took office in 1653, could be regarded as the international paragon of incorruptibility. At the same time the Dutch public servants were subjected to better monitoring. Between 1572 and 1810 there were no fewer than 143 cases brought by the provincial court of Holland against bailiffs accused of corruption, of which Van Zuijlen's was only one. Earlier historians have seen this as evidence of the large-scale corruption that was thought to have characterised the Republic, but it is on the contrary a sign of its increasing containment and of changing views of the subject. In other words, the rise of a modern conception of public morality proceeded more rapidly in the Republic than elsewhere, and this can be traced in the lampoons written in 1690. This strict morality by European standards must also have found an echo in the thinking of Bernard Mandeville.³⁸

For a good understanding of the Costerman Riot, however, we must also go back in the history of the city of Rotterdam to the 'Disaster year' 1672 when the Republic was invaded by combined forces from France and England. In that year Prince William III was appointed as stadholder thanks to a popular movement. In the cities of Holland, regents sympathising with the States General lost their positions, at times, as in Rotterdam, through the intervention of a popular movement. In that year too pamphlets were used to influence public opinion in Rotterdam. One of the printers was Johannes Borstius, who played the same role as 18 years later. The new regents rewarded him with an appointment as secretary of the Orphans Chamber, which administered the property of orphans until their majority. His father, the minister Jacob Borstius, also played a role in the disturbance of 1672, just as he had in the events in Dordrecht in 1651 cited above. Van Zuijlen's appointment as bailiff was also a direct result of the new political wind, involving in his case direct patronage from the new stadholder William III. It is likely as well that Michael Mandeville owed his officer's commission in the citizen's militia in 1673 to the fact that officers hostile to Orange had had to step down.

In the 1680s, however, the Rotterdam regents again became divided, one faction coalescing around Van Zuijlen and the other around mayor De Meij. Michael Mandeville also chose sides. It is clear that he was not content with his medical practice as can be seen by his appointment as alderman of Schieland and his officer's rank in the citizen's militia. His position as alderman of Schieland is interesting since it throws light on the relationships in the city. In the bailiwick of Schieland, a legal jurisdiction outside the city, the lawcourt consisted partially of well-born men appointed by the bailiff and the mayors of the city jointly, and partially of aldermen appointed by the mayors alone.³⁹ As an alderman therefore Michael Mandeville owed his appointment exclusively to the mayor's party and logically belonged to the opponents of Van Zuijlen from an early date. Both Mandevilles must have realised that in 1690, just as in 1672, there were attractive spoils to be divided. The bailiff would undoubtedly bring down a number of his

supporters in his fall: aldermen, government officials and probably even city councilmen. Who knows what sort of career was in store for the young Mandeville? Events, however, took another course.

As we have seen the riot in Rotterdam promptly led to intervention by the provincial government. The States of Holland sent soldiers to help maintain order and the provincial court declared its jurisdiction in the matter. The investigation into the participants produced little, only three hangers-on were convicted. The court, however, also opened a case against the former bailiff. When a year later his conviction for abuse of office looked inescapable, it became clear how important connections in the Republic were. Prince William III intervened to remove jurisdiction from the provincial court of Holland and have the trial continued by the High Council of Holland and Zeeland, where the stadholder exercised more control. And indeed, Van Zuijlen's acquittal followed in 1692, without any grounds given.

After Van Zuijlen was reinstated in his office of bailiff, he celebrated in grand fashion with his supporters, as Constantine Huygens reports in his diary.⁴⁰ He had good reason to, since in addition to his reinstatement he had received exorbitantly high compensation for damages and his sons and son-in-law were given lucrative employment. But this was not enough, Van Zuijlen took revenge. His major opponent De Meij and a number of other regents were dismissed from the council and other positions. Van Zuijlen's favorites took over the vacant offices; for example, Johan Steenlack, mentioned earlier, made a lightning career, becoming city councilor and mayor. The many names crossed out in the register of municipal offices for that year graphically illustrate the upheaval.⁴¹ Even minor enemies were hit. At the start of 1693, several people, including Dr Mandeville and the printer Borstius, were banished from the city without trial. Michael Mandeville settled in Amsterdam, where he died six years later. In the church the orthodox triumphed, which had important consequences for the intellectual life of Rotterdam. Among others, the latitudinarian Pierre Bayle lost his chair at the city's 'Illustre School'. This dismissal had the unintended effect that Bayle devoted himself to writing the philosophical works that would later exert such a great influence on Mandeville.

After the riot in 1690 Bernard Mandeville returned to Leiden, according to some people because he realised he had been a bit too visible in the affair. He actively went back to his studies and earned his doctorate in medicine in 1691. Then he probably traveled in Europe for a couple of years, for his education and conveniently beyond the reach of Dutch justice. The journey took him to England, where the land, people and political climate evidently appealed to him so much that he settled there for good.

Mandeville refers now and again in his later works to Holland, but never to the events in Rotterdam. When he writes in passing that his father was a 'leading physician at both Rotterdam and Amsterdam', the statement is to be sure not formally wrong, but neither is it completely in accordance with the truth.⁴² In any case he had learned a few good lessons from his youth in Rotterdam. This is demonstrated by his poem 'The grumbling bee-hive' published in England in 1705 and later reworked as 'The Fable of the Bees'.

The poems that were produced in 1690 in Mandeville's circle all still reflect the traditional morality: they connect personal sins to public evils. From the

perspective of the history of ideas it is therefore not so important whether Bernard Mandeville was really the sole author of the 'Sanctimonious Atheist'. What is essential is that he played an active part in the, perhaps collective, creation of this and other poems. At that point it is certain that the 'private vices' of Van Zuijlen were not yet 'public benefits'. Why were the sins decried by Mandeville in the 'Sanctimonious Atheist', the object of his praise fifteen years later? The answer is simple: practice had shown that crime pays, that the biggest crook draws the longest straw. Bailiff Van Zuijlen, the personification of evil, in the end had become the big winner, his moralistic opponents had gone down to defeat. But the lesson of 1690 was more complicated than it at first glance seemed. It had not—whatever may have been written in the pamphlets—been a struggle of good and evil. On closer inspection it appears that the opponents of Van Zuijlen were far from blameless themselves. The printer Borstius, for example, had been accused of embezzling donations to the Orphanage; mayor De Meij was also entangled in shady dealings.⁴³ In other words: ultimately everyone was acting out of self-interest.

For the Mandevilles the Costerman Riot marked the abrupt end of their upward social climb. That certainly contributed to Bernard's decision to settle abroad. More importantly his personal experience makes the pessimism about human nature he later exhibited more understandable. At any rate one of the many paradoxes in his work can now be explained: despite all his pessimism Mandeville also remained the moralist of the 'Sanctimonious Atheist'.

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NOTES

1. This article is a revised version of a lecture given to the Historisch Genootschap Roterodamum on 16 October 1990. I am grateful to Estelle Cohen for pointing out the importance of Mandeville's participation in the Costerman Riot to me. I thank Marina Warner for her comments.
2. See for instance Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment. An Interpretation*, 2 vols (London: Wildwood, 1973), II, p. 15.
3. Recent literature is mentioned in: Maurice M. Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits: Mandeville's Social and Political Thought* (Cambridge, Cambridge U.P., 1985). In his country of birth, however, Mandeville remained unknown, despite a plea from J.R. Evenhuis and a translation of 'The Fable of the Bees'. See J.R. Evenhuis, 'Bernard de Mandeville (1670–1733). De sociaal-macchiavellist uit Rotterdam', *De Gids*, 145 (1982), 187–197; Bernard Mandeville, *Fabel van de bijen*, trans. Jean Schalekamp (Weesp: Heureka, 1985).
4. Hector Monro, *The Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 1.
5. M.J. Scott-Taggart, 'Mandeville: Cynic or Fool', *Philosophical Quarterly*, 16 (1966), pp. 221–32; Louis Schneider, *Paradox and Society. The Work of Bernard Mandeville* (New Brunswick-Oxford: Transaction Books, 1987).
6. There is now a good genealogy of the Mandevilles: P.A. Christiaans, 'De Mandeville', *Jaarboek Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie*, 33 (1979), pp. 118–125. For the genealogy

- of Mandeville's mother's family, the Verhaars, we still have to turn to F.B. Kaye, *The Fable of the Bees* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), II, pp. 382–385.
7. For the Mandevilles as city physicians of Nijmegen, see: H.D.J. van Schevichaven, 'De genees- en heekunst in Oud-Nijmegen', in: *Idem, Penschetsen uit Nijmegen's verleden. Tweede bundel* (Nijmegen, 1901), pp. 234–248; L.J. Rogier, 'Uit de geschiedenis van de beoefening der geneeskunde, inzonderheid te Nijmegen', *Numaga*, 7 (1960), pp. 160–163.
 8. Gemeentearchief(=GA) Nijmegen Oud Stads Archief(=OSA) Resolutie vroedschap dated 3 August 1666. The decision was made 'on the request of Michael Mandeville, doctor of medicine, asking to be admitted as plaguc doctor with a reasonable remuneration'.
 9. The first trace of Mandeville in the Rotterdam archives is the will dated 6 September 1668. (GA Rotterdam Notarieel Archief 1037/156.)
 10. See the indexes to the Notarial Archives of Rotterdam and those to the registers of the Orphans Chamber.
 11. Willem Frijhoff, 'Non satis dignitatis... Over de maatschappelijke status van geneeskundigen tijdens de Republiek', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 96 (1983), pp. 379–407. The Mandeville family is mentioned on p. 391, n. 41.
 12. Johan E. Elias, *De vroedschap van Amsterdam 1578–1795*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: N.Israel, 1963), I, pp. 348–351.
 13. R.M. Dekker, *Holland in beroering. Oproeren in de 17de en 18de eeuw* (Baarn: Ambo, 1982): *Idem*, 'Het Kostermanoproer in 1690, complot of spontane beweging?', *Rotterdams Jaarboekje* (1981), pp. 192–207.
 14. Paying a sheriff or bailiff with part of the proceeds from fines was for the rest customary. See L. Hovy, 'Schikking in strafzaken in Holland tijdens de Republiek', in: *Scrinium et scriptura. Opstellen betreffende de Nederlandse geschiedenis aangeboden aan professor dr. J.L. van der Gouw* (Groningen: B. van der Kamp, 1980), pp. 413–430. See also: R.M. Dekker, 'Corruptie en ambtelijke ethiek in historisch perspectief', *De Gids*, 194 (1986), pp. 116–121.
 15. Algemeen Rijksarchief, Den Haag (ARA), Hof van Holland (=HH) 5984, f.79.
 16. A.O. van Kerkwijk, 'De Costermanpenning', *Oude Kunst* 1 (1915/6), pp. 159–163.
 17. GA Rotterdam OSA 1151 (Files of the commission of enquiry of William III). The witnesses were Cornelis Waers and his wife.
 18. ARA Den Haag, Archief Hoge Raad van Holland en Zeeland, 'Crimineele papieren rakende den bailluw Zuijlen van Nieveld te Rotterdam 1690'. Portef. A 3, No. 129. Anonymous letter to fiscal Ruijsch. Quoted in G. Mees, 'Het Rotterdamsche oproer van 1690', *Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Academie van Wetenschappen, afd. Letterkunde* (1869), pp. 11–121, p. 107. The letter in question could not be located.
 19. GA Rotterdam OSA 1151, statement dated 6 May 1691.
 20. GA Rotterdam Notarieel Archief 1206 f.115, attestation dated 23 November 1690. Mandeville did not, however, belong to those who explicitly said they had been on watch until five o'clock.
 21. B. Franklin, *Autobiography*, in: *Works*, ed. J. Bigelow (New York: Putnam's, 1904), I, p. 92.
 22. Ericus Walten, *Remonstrantie* (n.p., n.d.[1692?]). See: W.P.C. Knuttel, 'Ericus Walten', *Bijdragen voor Vaderlandsche Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde* (1900), pp. 345–455. According to Knuttel, Walten wrote his pieces at the instigation of the mayor, Bartholomeus van de Velde. Van de Velde's position is unclear, perhaps he followed a middle course. Walten's writings were intended to show that a faction of regents had organised the riot, but at the same time they were less than positive with regard to Van Zuijlen. Van de Velde was expelled from the council in 1692.
 23. GA Rotterdam Bib. XII F 40 (printed sheet); handwritten texts: GA Rotterdam OSA

1931; ARA II Collectie Van Zuijlen van Nievelt (109) 27, no. 448.

Dutch text:

Ter eeren van JACOB ZUYLEN van NIEVELT, Officier van Rotterdam.

Schijnheyligh Atheist, Liefhebbent hoere vel,
 Geltsughtigh dwingelandt, uytbroedsel van de Hel,
 Verstoorder van de rust, bederver der gemeente,
 Die Weeuw noch Wees ontsiet, maer suigt uit haer gebeente,
 Het merg en levens Sap, op dat het lichaem droogt,
 Dit is het rechte wit, dat gij O schellem beoogt,
 Gedenckt u val genaekt, gij sult haest straf ontfangen
 Voor al u boos bedrijf, zijt waerdigh op gehangen
 Aen d'alderhoogste Galg, voor alle man ten toon
 Gij in het mid', o Guyt: aan yder zijd een Soon
 Wat wonder dat het recht, des Hemels komt ontwaken
 Om dat gy 'tReght verkracht, gerechticheyt doet schaken
 Het heyl gy derven moet, soo gy u niet bekeert
 Daerom dees boosheyt staekt, eer dat gy wert begeert
 Van d'onderaertsche Poel, om eeuwig daer te branden
 Want al sulck helsgespuys, dat moet daer seker landen.
 O Burger Vaderen ligt dees Schelm de voet,
 Eer dat het iemant van u kinderen self doet.

24. *Europische Mercurius* 1690, pp. 79–91.
25. D.J. Roorda, *Partij en factie. De oproeren van 1672 in de steden van Holland en Zeeland, een krachtmeting tussen partijen en facties* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1978), p. 107, note 4; Cf. D.J. Roorda, 'Party and Faction', *Acta Historiae Neerlandica*, 2 (1967), pp. 188–221. On the religious situation in the Dutch Republic: Andrew C. Fix, *Prophecy and Reason. The Dutch Collegiants in the Early Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton U.P. 1991).
26. ARA HH 5984, pp. 123 and 170.
27. *De waarheyt naakt ten toon gestelt: Behelsende de voornaamste schelmstukken die Jacob van Zuylen van Nievelt, gewesen bailjuw tot Rotterdam bedreven heeft* (Dordrecht: Jacob van Lingen, 1690). The place of publication and printer are made up; before coming to Rotterdam Van Zuijlen had held the position of judge in the county of Lingen. The specific Dutch situation of prostitution may have influenced Mandeville's important ideas on the subject, as is suggested by Lotte van de Pol in 'Whores and Burghers. The Relationship of Prostitution with Society in Seventeenth Century Amsterdam', unpublished paper Seminar for Early Modern History Princeton and Rutgers Universities, at Rutgers State University of New Jersey, 1989. See also her forthcoming dissertation on prostitution in Holland in the 17th and 18th centuries.
28. 'Gedruckt aen de Smeer-Maeze in 't Jaer onses Heeren 1685'.
29. *Journal van Constantijn Huygens, den zoon* 2 vols (Utrecht: Kemink en zoon 1876–1877), I, entry dated 28 October 1690. Cf. R.M. Dekker, 'Sexuality and Court Life in the Late Seventeenth Century: The Diaries of Constantijn Huygens, Jr, *Eighteenth Century Life* (forthcoming). On sodomy in general: Theo van der Meer, *De wesentlijke sonde van sodomie en andere vuyligheden. Sodomietenvervolgingen in Amsterdam 1703–1811* (Amsterdam: Tabula, 1984) (English translation forthcoming).
30. ARA coll. Van Zuijlen van Nieveld 27, f.467v.
31. Marnix van St. Aldegonde, *Den byencorff der h.Roomsche kercke*, ed. W.A. Ornée and L. Strengholt (Zutphen: Thieme, 1974), p. 35.

32. This happened during disturbances in Dordrecht in 1651 and also in the affair over the professor F.A. van der Marck in Groningen in 1772, see J. Lindeboom, *Frederik Adolf van der Marck. Een achttiende-eeuwsch leraar van het natuurrecht* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1947), p. 90.
33. R.C. Bakhuizen van den Brink, 'Vondel met Roskam en Rommelpot', in: *Idem, Studiën en schetsen over vaderlandsche geschiedenis en letteren, II* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1870), pp. 1–86; See P. Geyl, 'De dateering van Vondel's Roskam', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsche Taal- en Letterkunde*, **30** (1911), pp. 308–313; A. Kluijver, 'Vondel's Roskam', *Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen Afd. Letterkunde* 53 serie A (1922), pp. 311 ff.; Kluijver's thesis that Vondel was imitating classical authors is certainly true, but does not justify his conclusion that for that reason the poem had little to do with what was at that time happening in Amsterdam. Cf. M. de Jong, 'Het beeld des hekeldichters', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsche Taal- en Letterkunde*, **48** (1929), pp. 276–319. See also: Karel Bostoën, 'Vondels hekeldichten', *Vondel! Het epos van een ambachtelijk dichterschap*, ed. Marja Geesink and Anton Bossers ('s-Gravenhage: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1987), pp. 61–72.
34. GA Den Haag OSA 611, 173–174; GA Brielle OSA Keuren 1596–1644, ff. 68–69; Streekarchief Krimpenerwaard OSA Schoonhoven 208, ff. 22v.; GA Amsterdam OSA Keurboek M, statute dated 20 May 1649.
35. In the *Groot plaetboeck* ('sGravenhage 1658 and later volumes) much can be found through the index entry 'libellen'. Herman Roodenburg prepares a study on local decrees on this and other subjects.
36. Zaanlandse Oudheidkamer, Zaandam, Verz. J. Honig 1159.
37. Peter Burke, *Historical Anthropology in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1987), pp. 121–139.
38. R.M. Dekker, 'Corruptie en ambtelijke ethiek in historisch perspectief', *De Gids*, 149 (1986), pp. 116–121.
39. J.H.W. Unger, *De regeering van Rotterdam 1328–1892* (Rotterdam, 1892), p. XXXVI.
40. *Journal Huygens*, II, p. 137, entry dated 18 October 1692.
41. GA Rotterdam OSA 800.
42. Kaye (ed.), *Fable*, II, 384.
43. H.C. Hazewinkel, *Geschiedenis van Rotterdam*, 4 vols (Zaltbommel: Europese Bibliotheek, 1974), I, p. 262.