On "Swelling" the Hips and Crossing the Legs: Distinguishing Public and Private in Paintings and Prints from the Dutch Golden Age

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An Unwilling Little Neck

In 1632, Constantijn Huygens and his wife, Suzanne van Baerle, noticed much to their alarm that the head of their eldest son, Constantijn jun., inclined a bit to the left. The boy was then four years old. At first, the parents decided to refrain from interference, though the mother had considered the possibility of bringing the child to a "famous peasant, probably a bonnetier, in the village of De Rijp. For the moment, the parents turned to other, more genteel methods. They gave the boy a stiff collar, attached ribbons to his bonnet, and also steamed his little neck. It was only in 1637, when all these efforts had proved in vain, that Huygens decided to have his son operated on by a physician from the city of Utrecht. It was probably not a very pleasant experience. The physician made an incision two inches long in the poor boy's neck, separating (according to his own report) the many entangled sinews there and greasing the whole machinery with some oil.1 It is a weird and rather dismally sad story, but there is no reason to doubt its veracity. I have taken it from Huygens's own notes on the childhood and adolescence of his children. The charming little anecdotes contained in these entries and also the parents' feelings, their love and concern, seeing their children grow up, make these recollections one of the most vivid and important documents in the history of Dutch family life. We learn, for example, about the illnesses of the children and the apprehension of their parents at such moments. We also learn about the first cautious steps of the children, the first words they uttered, their early presence of mind, and their first lessons in reading, writing, Latin, mathematics, and music. Clearly, Huygens had ambitious plans for his children, especially for his sons, who received a broad, humanist training, preparing them for professional careers in the highest circles of the Dutch Republic.2

Considering these high hopes it comes even more as a surprise that the parents exposed their eldest son to such a risky operation. Of course, in the years preceding the operation they had tried other solutions. Moreover, feeling "horriﬁed" about the "incision," Huygens had asked the physician for a detailed description of the operation before he ﬁnally consented, but it remained a drastic intervention. Constantijn was away from his family for months and would even miss the birth of his little sister, Suzanne. Eventually, things took a very tragic turn, when the mother contracted a fatal fever in childbirth and died a few months later. In the meantime, Constantijn's neck had deﬁnitely improved, the operation was a great success, but he would not see his mother again. The physician had deemed it better that he stayed in Utrecht.

The Importance of an Elegant and Upright Posture

Taking a closer look at the events, the seeming contradiction between the parents' plans and the hazardous operation quickly disappears. Indeed, it seems quite likely that it was those same ambitious plans, the parents' wish to prepare their children for promising careers, that had made them so alarmed about Constantijn's neck. During most of the early modern period, it was one of the most important requirements that well-mannered people keep their bodies and their heads erect. The elite had to know how to move, not only ﬁguratively but also operatively and elegantly. Adopting an elegant and upright posture was a central tenet of the prevailing codes of behavior.

Of course, the contemporary manner books dealt with many more requirements than just that of an erect posture. For example, in his pathﬁnding study on the "civilizing process," Norbert Elias particularly emphasized the rules concerning the essential activities of life. He discussed the more psychoanalytically signiﬁcant prescriptions about urinating, defecating, or hiding one's nudity and also the less serious ones about blowing the nose, sneezing, coughing, or spitting. In short, all those activities which "we share with the animals," as the author of one of the most important manner books, the Frenchman Antoine de Courtin, explained. However, the manuals are much richer than Elias, from his strongly Freudian point of view, suggested. Generally speaking, they established codes of behavior, if only among the elite, for all sorts of "relations in public."3 In fact, the insights and explanations set forth in these treatises constitute an early, though already highly accomplished, example of the study of nonverbal communication. Thus, many of the manuals deal at length with phenomena, such as posture, gesture, facial expression, or even "paralingual phenomena" (the emotional intensity of the voice). Attention to such details, so readers were told, was a prerequisite for "conversing agreeably," and for successfully moving in the upper walks of life. To explain the rules, the authors included all sorts of blunders and faux pas. We may rightly say that the manuals are teeming with all the larger and smaller social mistakes that for our own society were analyzed so carefully (and almost lovingly) by Erving Goffman.4

Erasmus's De civilitate morum puérilium, published in 1530 and one of the most inﬂuential manner books of all times, is a case in point. Elias discussed this little treatise at length, but Erasmus also cautioned his readers—a point not mentioned by Elsasser—that the mere adoption of a well-bred posture should always keep their bodies upright. Of course, they should not exaggerate: "It is a sign of conceit to bend the body backwards." Instead, they should strive for a graceful and natural posture, a certain casualness that was also stressed by Baldassare Castiglione in his Cortegiano of 1528.5 "It is becoming," as Erasmus explained, "that the body is gently raised." Equally important was the way one carried one's head: "Let the neck hang nor to the left nor to the right side," it was a sure sign of "hypocrisy." Since his book was written for a young boy, he even added a fatherly admonition, "those who have become used to holding their heads to one side grow ﬁxed in that habit, with the result that their efforts to alter it in later life are to no avail."6

We can trace the popularity of Erasmus's book not only in the numerous editions and translations all over Europe but also in its impact on manners books published later under the ancient regime. An interesting example is a booklet that was written in Antwerp in 1587 and that, for the purpose of memorizing its contents, was written as a series of questions and answers. One of the questions the schoolboys had to answer was who are "used to bend the neck to the shoulders and to rest the head on them?" The answer was brief and to the point: "rude and lazy dreamers and those who ﬁll their stomach so much that they desire only to dream."7 Many years later, in the Groot ceremonie-boeck der beschaving of 1654, the author cautioned his readers that they should adopt the upright posture and thereby avoid that one's "head was constantly hanging to one side or the other."8

Unfortunately, it is still unclear when and especially, in what tempo the rules of civility, of courtoisie and civilité, were adopted in the everyday public. Erasmus's ideas on the courtly gentleman were written in the middle of the seventeenth century hardly any manual on civility was translated into Dutch. Even Erasmus's little treatise, popular as it may have been in other European countries, was not widely read in the northern Netherlands.9 Judging from such data one would almost say that in the seventeenth- and eighteenth century Dutch these treatises (lit. "blunt mouths") as they were cheerfully labeled by the Flemish, were hardly set on any courtiers or civilitén and that their manners were still as "unfeigned" and "plain" as Erasmus described them jokingly in his Praise of Folly of 1509.10 We should remind ourselves, however, that the elite, the classes that were most interested in adopting the norms of the courtly gentleman and who had a reasonably command of languages. Many of the regents and other wealthy citizens read French, had access to the French manuals on civility, and
could then discuss, the rules among the family's acquaintances and relationships, indeed, there were many oral and extralinguistic channels for learning social deportment. In the course of the seventeenth century, it became more and more habitual for the sons of the elite to make the "Grand Tour." They traveled to France and Italy and thus could observe the rules of civility as they were practiced by the French and Italian elites. At the same time, it increased more common for the daughters of the Dutch upper classes to attend the so-called "French schools." There they received a general cultural education (including learning French), but they were also instructed in the rules of cortousie and civilité. In addition to these classes, there was also the education provided by private instructors and dancing masters and, of course, by one's own parents.11

An early, and for us quite interesting, example is the education that Huygens received from his father, Christiaan Huygens.12 From 1578 to 1584, this extraordinary man had served at the court of William of Orange as one of his secretaries. In memoirs, so Bloemot tells us, that he had observed the manners "deemed proper for young people of rank" and had apparently decided "to put this behaviour into practice at home with his children."13 Perhaps this was also a way of teaching them the complexities of greeting and leaving-taking: "in the covering and barring of their heads, in offering their hands, grasping the knee, lowering the head and raising it for a did look, and stretching the leg backwards." The father deemed it of the utmost importance that his children would be able to move in an easy and exemplary manner, even in the company of their superiors: "In meeting with people of higher rank we were not allowed to be more nervous than in meeting with people of equal rank, provided of course that the standards of civility and due respect were observed."14

The Uses of Corsets and Physical Exercise

Before discussing other aspects of Huygens' education, let us first have a look at another source that may inform us about the significance of an upright posture. After all, it was not only the practice of the doctor's willingness to perform the operation that had subjected the little Constantijn to the knife. Indeed, doctors were quite interested in the carriage of the body and in the furthering of a good and healthy posture. As the French physician Georges Vigarello argued, it was especially from the end of the sixteenth century that the role of parents and physicians in keeping watch over a child's growth, in monitoring, shaping, and straightening its body, was heavily emphasized.15 Vigarello based most of his case on France, but even there, as we can easily verify, there were few data from the Dutch Republic. Quite telling is a letter written in 1733 by Count Willem Bentinck to his future wife, Charlotte von Aldenburg. Apparently, the girl, who was then seventeen or eighteen years old, had some problems with her spinal column. For a couple of years, she had worn a stiff leather corset that covered her body from the hips to the armpits, but the count was still dissatisfied with her ungraceful pose. He advised her "to carry herself upright, with her shoulders backwards." When walking, the count continued, "put your feet outwards, draw in your bottom, carry your head high and lofty, throw out your chest and let your arms hang loosely: that is how it should be." Not surprisingly, the message was not successful.16

According to the doctors, the first months of life were already important. It was then that the desired uprightness should be established, especially in the children's postures. As a prominent contemporary Dutch physician, Johan van Beverwijck, observed that the children in his country were swaddled "from head to foot," because in this way the limbs were "best protected and kept straight." Clearly, the straitjackets that the children of the elite had to wear until they were five or six years old served a similar purpose. In the middle of the eighteenth century, when opposition to such habits began, an opponent commented that most mothers put their children into straitjackets, "because it is common practice and also, as they say, to keep them upright and to lend them a good posture."17 The eighteenth-century physician, Petrus Camper, shared his criticism. He opposed the general opinion that little children could only develop an erect posture with the help of such applications and he objected in particular to the stays that girls had to wear even after the age of five or six. "If the boys can grow upright without them, why not the girls," he wondered. It was an "abuse" that he had mostly observed in the towns, particularly "among the rich."18

Almost simultaneously with corsets for children, women's corsets had become popular as well. Unfortunately, our knowledge of its history is still scattered and the changes in the style of stays, but it seems likely that the fashion originated at the French court and then spread to the courts and elites of other countries.19 The French poet, Henri Estienne, spotted the new practices in 1709: "the ladies now use the whalebone corset," he wrote, and they do so "in order to keep straighter.20 From the French court and upper classes, the corsets must have found their way to the towns of Flanders, where the wealthy ladies were equally known for their fondness of the stays.21 These same ladies may have introduced the new fashion in the Dutch Republic, particularly after the fall of Antwerp in 1585, when so many refugees, even of the richest families, had fled to the north.22 Of course, a similarly erect posture was required from the sons of the elite, though most of them were freed from the corsets after the age of five or six. Instead, they were urged to practice physical exercises, such as dancing, riding, or fencing, to develop the desired uprightness.23 Looking at the Southern Netherlands, we encounter such notions in a widespread pamphlet.24 There the education of princes and nobles written by Philips Marnix van St. Aldegonde. As it happens, Marnix and Christiaan Huygens were close acquaintances, which makes the contents even more interesting.25 It was written around 1583 at the request of Jan van Nassau, the elder brother of William of Orange. Though the text was known to a closed circle, it was only published, well after Marnix's death, in 1615. What strikes one directly is Marnix's emphasis on reenacting mental exercise with physical exercise. Because the author tells us, but no is relaxation. Boys should exert their limbs and thereby develop an elegant gait and posture.26 At the same time, they should be "reduced to the same in manners and appearance," as they should also avoid the "stowing frivolity, which is currently often in fashion at the courts of monarchs."27 It is not unlikely that Christiaan Huygens was one of those acquaintances who were allowed to read the manuscript, as he obviously shared his friend's ideas on the uses of physical exercise. He provided his sons with lessons in fencing and horse-riding and also attached great importance to dancing.28 In 1610, he even decided to give the boys riding lessons himself. Interestingly, when Mack was another friend, the Amsterdam minister Werner Helmichius, had reproached him for doing so, he had answered that he did not understand why the monarchs made such a fuss about it. To him it was important that his children "from early on would get used to those things that create beauty in appearance and posture and make the gait elegant and unconstrained."29 It is again his son who recorded this event. In another part of his recollections, he also tells us that he loved skating with his friends, for example, when the meadows were under water. We are subtly informed that his skill drew everyone's attention, also that he used to adopt "a graceful posture, because my father was also in this sort of relaxion very particular about this."30

Interestingly, Huygens conveyed these same attitudes to his children. We have no information on skating, but in 1644, he provided his eldest sons, Constantijn and Christiaan, with dancing lessons "in order that the body was put so much the better into good shape."31 It is possible that some thirty years earlier, the period in which Huygens received his own dancing lessons, dancing and especially its importance for developing good manners and a graceful posture may have been influential. In 1643, the famous minister, Gisbert van Beverwijck, had complained that he was often fobbed off with such arguments. The art of dancing, so many parents had told him, would enhance the beleheyst der manière, the civility of manners.32

The Elegance of a Swelling Hip

So far, using examples from various sources, I have tried to indicate that the carriage of the body was regarded neutral within the Dutch Republic. In a wide range of sources, in manners books, in medical and educational writings, in memoirs, letters, and in treatises on dancing, we have found statements suggesting that this behavior, this physical "presentation of self," was extremely important to the regent and other wealthy families of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As a result of the gradual strengthening of social hierarchy, the body was more and more subjected to a growing discipline and formality of manners. Compared to the developments in France and England, this process may have started relatively late. It also seems likely that...
the rules of courtliness and civility, due to the nature and restrictions prevailing in the Dutch Republic, were taken somewhat more lightly in comparison with other countries. But it is beyond any doubt that the ruling classes, certainly those in the towns of Holland, were keen on distancing themselves in their "relations in public" from the lower classes. They readily adopted the new rules of civility, including the formalization and stylization of their own bodies, their physical presentation of self.  

In some instances, we even encounter remarks on a slanting neck that remind us immediately of the views expressed in the manuals on civility. We have seen how Erasmus spoke of hypocrisy and how the author of the little manners book, published in 1567, could only think of a lazy or a dreamy character. The verdict passed by the schilderboeken was hardly less severe. In 1678, Samuel van Hoogstraten concluded, "The head pushed backward over the neck points to coarseness of the human body; the head down, to humility, and hanging sideways to faintheartedness."  

Four years later, his feelings were copied almost word for word by Willem Goeree. First, he stated as a general principle that "head and neck together reveal many states of our inner feelings." Again and in accordance with the prevailing psychology of the time, outward traits were interpreted as a direct and infallible indication of a person's inner nature. For example, a head "carried backward and stiffly on the neck" indicated a "proud and haughty heart"; a head hanging headfirst pointed to a "humble, meek and dejected" nature, just as a head hanging sideways could only indicate an "unmanly faintheartedness." The addition "unmanly" makes one suspect that all these observations, not only in the schilderboeken but also in the manners books and other sources, applied primarily to men. As a matter of course, this impression when he discusses the portrayal of women and explains that a slightly slanting neck can only enhance a woman's gracefulness and gentlemanly behavior, points to an aspect that was already touched upon by Castiglione—that the rules of civility applied to women were different from those applied to men. Although this difference was never to neutralize the social distance between a well-born lady and a woman from the lower classes. Of course, in using the term "unmanly," Goeree may also have alluded to effeminacy, at least in its seventeenth-century connotation of the shaky skirt chaser. 

De Lairesse, however, takes a special position because he went into a full consideration of the social status of the figures he depicted. For example, in discussing contrapposto, he cautioned his readers that as a rule they should never render peasants in this way. Before him, Van Mander had already made an exception for the portrayal of old age. If an old man or woman was depicted standing, they should hold onto something. In general, Goeree pointed to the old, sick, and weak; it would be risky for such people to rest their weight on one hip only. If they did not need a cane or "third leg," they would definitely need their two legs. In fact, De la Laurens is not so much interested in the physical defects of the peasants but in their social defects, in their "boorishness" or lack of manners. 

As a rule, he states first that a painter should always portray his figures in accordance with their state, office, or dignity. He can express such differences in their "posture, being, color and movement," in other words, relating to the body, showing that figures are firmly on the ground. De Lairesse knew, of course, that they had a range of social distinctions and individual characteristics, that they were "not all copy one another." Interestingly, he goes on to explain that painters can exploit such differences, especially in introducing certain parts of the body. To make himself clear, De Lairesse included a couple of illustrations showing men and women from various social backgrounds. Using one of these prints, he tells us that a "rude peasant" not only stoops but also "rests and stands simultaneously on both legs, the toes being parallel to one another, the knees somewhat bent and the feet turned inward." In the same print, he also showed a "better educated" peasant, a wholly different man: "The other one stands upright, resting his body most on one leg, . . . he and his social position in the front, will stay the painted stomach slightly outwardly; displaying a more graceful posture than the first one."

In other words, in depicting this second, more cultivated peasant, De Lairesse actually allowed to apply the rules of contrapposto: the man might be given a more elegant and upright stance to distinguish him from the other man with his short and slouchy posture. Such an elegance should not be overdone. The painter had to take care, "if some gracefulness had to be noticed, that it would be equally in the peasants' way." This attitude was exemplified by those figures of higher rank were inserted among the peasants. As the author put it, "if one has to put an office holder (ambtman) or fine citizen (frowzy burger) among them, this man ought to be known among them all by his well-bred gait and civil manners."

Besides these rules in the handling of contrapposto, De Lairesse also established other rules regarding posture and gesture, including the different ways of sitting (sitting erect or hunching over) or holding a spoon, cup, or glass (using two or three fingers or using one's whole hand, etc.). Obviously, it would lead us too far afield to go into all these details as well, but it should be evident that there were general considerations between the instructions of the schilderboeken and the numerous rules of civility as they were encoded in the manners books. Historians and art historians working on the history of body-image, in association with the rules and norms of bodily behavior, have often mentioned the influence of Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo. De Lairesse, in dealing with the unbecoming posture of crossing the legs, referred to a well-known manners book by Giovanni Della Cia, published in 1558. De Lairesse even pointed to the civility one could observe in the streets and other public spaces. He urged his readers not to move in their own region: "In the streets, and in the quarters only. They should also mingle with the upper classes, with the delftje geslachten. Of course, not every painter had access there, but then they could always use their eyes: in church, in the theater, or on making a promenade. There they had enough opportunity to see frawje lieden and to watch their elegant manners. Before he himself was accepted in those circles, he always used to carry a notebook and sketching, for example, a frawje juffer pass by, he would analyze why she looked to him more graceful than another."

It is rather surprising that the problem of how to illuminate this issue in 1707 when De Lairesse's schilderboek was finally published. Indeed, for many decades, such paint-
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Adriaen van Ostade, Festive Peasants, 1630s, Mauritshuis, The Hague.

ers as Adriaen Brouwer, Adriaen van Ostade, Jan Miense Molenaer, or Cornelis Dusart had put on canvas what De Lairesse so much later was to put in writing. Obviously, as one of the most prominent adherents to French classicism he was hardly an admirer of their work. They depicted life "as it is presented to them" or, even worse, "one sees them imitate it even more unsightly than nature created it."52 Clearly, Brouwer, Van Ostade, or Molenaer (Bamboccio is another one of De Lairesse's targets) did not adhere to any hoger trant. They did not render life at its most elegant, but that does not alter the fact that in applying contrapposto or rather in not applying it in the depiction of peasants, they had created a pictorial tradition upon which De Lairesse could fall back in his discussions of posture and gesture.53 After all, in many of their paintings, we almost never encounter any upright postures. Most of the figures depicted are stocky and hunched over even when sitting, and most of them twist their heads to all sides. Van Ostade's Festive Peasants is a case in point. The comic effect of all these scooping peasants is heightened by the remarkably high ceilings. A sardonic viewer might even wonder what these silly men and women were afraid of. Even when peasants were depicted standing, their postures were invariably nonerect. The man at the front of Van Ostade's Skaters is a good example. First, he keeps "both his hands at his arse," a gesture that was deemed "more boorish than respectful." In the words of Coerx,54 second, he has planted both his legs firmly on the ground. For him no graceful "swelling of the hip," no contrapposto; this is unmistakably De Lairesse's "crude" and not his "better educated" peasant.

Of course, Brouwer and Van Ostade were not the first painters who played these jokes on the peasants. One of the best examples of the distinctions involved are two drawings attributed to

Standing Men and Women, from Gerard de Lairesse, Het groot schilderboek (Amsterdam, 1707), University Library Amsterdam.
Theodorus de Bry and dating from the end of the sixteenth century. The first one shows a court dance and the second a country or peasant dance. In the first, the figures are almost static, elegantly upright, and almost fully vertical in posture. By contrast, the second shows a group of violently swirling figures, whose movement tends almost to be horizontal. We can even discern a couple of bare women's legs among the dancers. Almost the same comparison may be made with two later examples, the *Dancing Lesson* by Pieter Codde, dating from 1627 and the...
Looking for such contrasts, other painters, such as Hans Bol, Jan van de Velde, or David Vinckboons, spring to mind. In some cases, the elegant postures of the rich were even contrasted in a single scene with the stooping postures of dumb peasants. An enlightening example is a title print taken from one of the editions of *Bacchus Wonder-wercken*, written by Dirck Pietersz. Pers. The print (of which the etcher is unknown) shows us both rich and poor crowding round the as-ever merry-looking god. To the left we see the rich, easily recognizable both by their expensive clothes and their elegant “swerving out of the hip.” To the right, we see the peasants and the poor. Their dress is simple or shabbily, and they keep their feet firmly on the ground.

As with all caricatures, these peasant scenes certainly contained a grain of truth. Farmwork was hard and strenuous, straining the body to the utmost. However, when we compare this pictorial tradition with the ideals of elegance and uprightness as they were expressed in manners books, medical and educational writings, in the *schilderboeken*, and other sources, we rather suspect that these scenes offer us more than a caricature of lower-class life. Intentionally or unintentionally, they show us the exact opposite, a convincing mirror image of the elegant manners required, at least in public, from the Dutch upper classes. To put it differently, the postures we encountered in many seventeenth-century paintings were far from neutral. On the contrary, the expressiveness, the “feeling value,” as I have termed it, of these particular symbols must have been directly accessible.
In the previous pages, we approached the manners books primarily as documents written for the court, one aspect of which was the importance of an elegant, upright posture. We have seen how the manners books can enlighten us on the manners, especially the negative examples, of behavior that was deemed unseemly for any well-mannered man or woman. We have also seen how the manuals on civility were only concerned with "relations in public." They dealt with the formalities of formal encounters, not with those of a more informal and private nature, which, of course, raises the question of whether these same manuals, in mentioning behavior that was deemed improper in public, might not also inform us of the elite’s behavior in private. In other words, if a painter could select some specific postures and gestures as social markers, as a sort of shorthand to indicate high and low, could be also dispose of specific postures and gestures to mark the dividing lines between public and private?

This is a difficult question, as so often with questions of public and private, but let us concentrate on one posture only, that of crossing one’s legs. In fact, this was one of those acts that was condemned in almost any manners book. Erasmus already disapproved. In his eyes, it was a posture only to be associated with "rude people." Della Cosa took a similar view and, as mentioned previously, was referred to by Lombazzo when this author advised his readers never to paint a highborn person with his legs crossed. Again, in the Goede manerlycke zeden, the little manners book published in Antwerp in 1533, the posture was called "ugly" and deemed more befitting to the so-called stonuers or cattle drivers. Much later, in the Groot Ceremonie-boeck, it was still condemned as behavior that no gentleman should display. Of course, a lady would not even think of doing this.

It is interesting to compare these condemnations with two portraits of a Dutch gentleman, the Haarlem merchant Willem van Heijthuysen, painted around the middle of the seventeenth century by Frans Hals in an "ugly" and very ungentlemanly way. Or was it not that ungentlemanly? Should we not consider the well-known fact that postures and gestures tend to be polysemous, that their meaning may vary from one context to the other? In other words, was this second portrait perhaps part of a special portrait genre in which the elite could have itself depicted according to other, more informal codes than the ones established in the manners books?

It is again Samuel van Hoogstraten who provides us with an interesting clue. In his schilderboek, he tells us that a painter in depicting a listening crowd may enliven it with such postures as crossing the legs, leaning the head on the hand, and "other acts of sitting comfortably."

Clearly, crossing the legs in the anonymity of a listening crowd was something different than adopting this posture in a more or less formal encounter, the type of situation that was dealt with primarily in the manners books. Indeed, it seems plausible that crossing one’s legs indicated first and foremost a state of comfort and relaxation, just as in our own time. In other, more formal contexts, especially when in the company of one’s equals and superiors, it could also be interpreted as a serious lack of respect, a blatant breach of decorum.

In the case of Van Heijthuysen it was undoubtedly the first and more informal context. Van Hoogstraten’s "sitting comfortably," that was depicted. Of course, portraits had their own requirements of decorum depending, among other things, on the functions they fulfilled and the location where they were hung. As it happens, we also possess the probate inventory made after Van Heijthuysen’s death in 1650. It emerges from this document that the large standing portrait was not only different in size and subject, they had different functions as well. They belonged to different sections of the house.
Frans Hals, Willem van Heijthuysen, ca. 1625, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich.

Frans Hals, Willem van Heijthuysen, ca. 1638, Koninklijke Musea van Schone Kunsten van België, Brussels.
the larger one to the public, representational part, the smaller one to the more private and secluded part of the house. Indeed, this smaller painting may have been a celebration of Van Heijthuyzen's other, more informal side. The fact that he is also holding a whip and wearing spurs might refer to his love for horse riding and to the country house where he kept his horses. Similarly, the book on the table might refer to his love of reading. The probate inventory also mentions a comptoir, a study or private office, where this wealthy merchant kept some 140 books, including 76 music books.

Interestingly, such portraits were not exceptional in the seventeenth century. A fine example is Ter Borch's *Man in His Study*. The identity of this other worthy citizen is unknown, but judging from the writing desk, he was probably portrayed in his comptoir. Sitting there with crossed legs, he obviously felt at ease and at home. What we may surmise is that this posture was just as much a marker as bunched over or having both feet firmly on the ground. In this case, however, it was a convenient sign to mark the private sphere as different from the public sphere with all its requirements of civility. Another interesting example is Van de Venne's *Gentleman at His Toilet*. Obviously, this is not a high-
61. Godert Verschuur, “Een kort tractaetie van de dansen, tot dernst van de eenzaamouders” (Utrecht, 1644), 79. The same title was originally written as a disputatio held in 1643 at the University of Leiden, in the presence of Pieter Cornelis van der Doncker, professor of divinity and theologian in Leiden. The text is available in the Leiden University Library. For more information, please consult the bibliographical notes.

62. For a comprehensive overview of the cultivation of friendship in seventeenth-century Dutch literature and society, see Jan Huisman, “The Origin of Friendship” (Amsterdam, 2008).

63. For the purpose of this study, the term ‘friendship’ is used generically to encompass a wide range of relationships, including but not limited to...

56. I owe this reference to Elizabeth Weykoff.

57. For a helpful study of such contrasts, see Paul Van den Broeck, Over wilde en narren, boeren en bedelaars: Beeld van de andere, vertoog over het self (Antwerpen, 1987), esp. 63-116.


59. Erasmus, Boecyk, 18. As he phrased it, it was characteristic of the neptorium or, in the Dutch translation, engelschieten (meaning rude or unruly).

60. Quoted after School, Volkboeken, 1: 207. For the term "stouter," see the Woordenboek der Nederlandische Taal, 15: 2002-36.

61. Van Laar, Ceremonie-boek, 204.

62. In a modern study of nonverbal communication, crossing the legs is a sign of relaxation and thus of a certain carelessness, if not indifference, toward the other person. Cf. A. Mehradistant, Nonverbal Communication (Chicago and New York, 1972), esp. 133.

63. Municipal Archives Haarlem, Notariële Archief 153, fols. 329v-334r. The room is described as "de caser boven het groot salen," the painting as "het conterfeit van den overleden int cloijn in swarte lijit."
