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Jan Steen as family man: Self-portrayal as an experiential mode of painting*

H. Perry Chapman

Eavesdropping in the Rijksmuseum, I overheard a Dutchman and his American guests, a father and his adolescent son and daughter, reacting to Jan Steen's *As the old sing, so pipe the young* (fig. 1). The father excitedly inserted himself and his family into the picture: 'Look kids, that's me at the head of the table. (The father did indeed have a beard.) And, John, that's you on the table. Sarah, you're the girl smoking a pipe. Oh, and there's mom....' Meanwhile their Dutch host, though it took him three tries to get a word in edgewise, eagerly explained the painting's proverb. And he pointed out Steen himself playing the bagpipes, which delighted the father all the more. Steen's *Self-Portrait* in the Rijksmuseum (fig. 2) confirms that this man, who appears as a fool, profligate, or merrymaker in many of Steen's paintings, is indeed the artist himself.¹

These viewers' response was strikingly empathic. Who knows how often a father, especially a seventeenth-century father, would so readily identify his family with that in the picture or so fondly attribute their comic antics to his own children. Still, that a viewer's immediate impulse can be to thrust himself into this *gezellig* picture suggests that its capacity to prompt protean emotional engagement merits examination. That *As the old sing, so pipe the young* invites such a connection between image and viewer is surely due in part to its combination of familiarity and familiarity. What could be more real and more accessible than the family? Which is not necessarily to say that Steen's notion of the family reproduces reality. While Dutch genre painting is by nature selective and convention bound, Steen's households, whether dissolute or pious, are especially artificial and theatrical. They represent a contrived and fictional notion of family life, an accessible semi-reality, a world of possibilities. In seventeenth-century Holland, it was rare to have relatives beyond the nuclear family living at home.² Steen's extended family, with children, grandparents, aunts, and uncles feasting in a kind of eternal holiday celebration, must have represented, and subverted, an ideal, like a farcical Norman Rockwell Thanksgiving dinner with moralizing overtones.³

Generally speaking, Steen's representations of the family engage us in an experiential mode of viewing by presenting comic narratives to flesh out, lessons to explain, consequences to imagine, puzzles to challenge our wit, and situations real enough to prompt our participation. The moral of *As the*



I

Jan Steen, *As the old sing, so pipe the young*, 1668,

oil on canvas, 110.5 x 141 cm,
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
(photo: Rijksmuseum-Stichting).

old sing, so pipe the young was crucial to these viewers' empathic response. The host's identifying the proverb inspired animated discussion. I can imagine the foursome working together to decipher the painting's meaning, pointing out that the adults singing and children piping illustrated the proverb literally and, then, uncovering the ways adults misbehave and children imitate them. The father clearly relished the opportunity to talk about values (and art) with his children: I recall him asking jokingly, 'Get that, kids?' as if to make sure they had understood the message.

The artist's presence was also crucial to the viewers' experience of the painting. How Steen positions himself as comic transgressor vis-à-vis the proverb makes the picture both funny and challenging.⁴ Possibly these viewers got the comic inversion of Steen's ironic treatment of himself: he allies himself not with the singing grown-ups but with the piping children, and he has the biggest, basest pipe of all – the bagpipe was a rustic instrument with low connotations – which he blows the hardest.⁵ Perhaps their enthusiasm was the satisfaction of being in on the joke that we get from spotting

the artist, like catching Alfred Hitchcock's cameo appearances in his films. Perhaps it stemmed from a sense of familiarity and intimacy, as if they had been allowed a glimpse into his real life, which would have been enhanced by recognizing Steen's family members, who are also there. Or maybe it extended to the realization that the artist's presence in his picture necessarily raises the question of the unrepresented Steen.

In an age when many artists painted self-portraits or included themselves in their history or genre paintings, Steen stands out as a master of comic self-portrayal.⁶ Yet, despite his repeated insertion of himself into his paintings and the public's endless fascination with seeing him there, which is documented to the early eighteenth century, art historians have dismissed his self-portrayal as beneath serious scholarly consideration, the prattle of tour guides.⁷ Some even go so far as to say that, while we may recognize him, his contemporaries would not have.⁸ One argument is that, since there were no reproductions, few would have known Steen's face. But this fails to take into account that he lived in a society that operated on a face-to-face basis and that the systems for marketing paintings, especially those of high quality, routinely involved contact with the painter himself.⁹ Above all, it fails to acknowledge that Steen's presence in his paintings amounts to a persona, a role playing that is at once in keeping with but also a unique variation on seventeenth-century artistic self-fashioning.¹⁰

While identifying Steen was, and is, by no means essential to appreciating his paintings, it could especially enhance a viewer's experience of his pictures about the family. Steen personalized his art to an unusual degree and this must have affected different viewers in different ways. His closest audience would have been his family. Jacob Campo Weyerman, one of his early biographers (1729), says that Steen's wife was irked by his repeated portrayal of her as a loose woman.¹¹ We can only guess at how his children would have reacted to seeing themselves or at the extent to which Steen painted with them in mind.

Recognizing Steen and his cast of familiars must have amused his immediate circle of clients and connoisseurs, the *cognoscenti* who knew him by sight or reputation and who could delight at being in on his game. Steen lived in a highly competitive capitalist society in which mercantile values fostered cultural traits based on knowledge, wit, challenge, and exchange. To compete in the art market, Dutch painters, conditioned by their mercantile milieu, adopted innovative strategies not only for producing and selling their works but for differentiating themselves creatively.¹² The games of verbal one-upmanship prompted by the visual plays on the word 'pipe' in *As the old sing, so pipe the young*, like the witty references to earlier art, to proverbs and emblems, to jokes and plays in many of his paintings, must have given Steen an advantage among an urban audience that prized clever exchange. Steen's comic persona would also have distinguished him from his fellow artists and presented a unique commodity to those viewers and collectors sophisticated enough to know his oeuvre and appreciate the witty challenge of spotting the artist. Arguably, it was for this most demanding segment of his audience that Steen painted his best pictures, regardless of who actually purchased them.¹³ For those informed viewers who were in on the mythology or culture of the paintings, their sense of engagement with

real family life would have been enriched by Steen's repeated inclusion of himself and his familiars.¹⁴

This essay, then, explores a particular aspect of Steen's self-representation, his role as family man. It examines how Steen's presence functions in his pictures of the family and suggests that he employed the family as a vehicle for masking because it was a subject particularly suited to blurring the edges of art and life.¹⁵ It also explores Steen's portrayal of his wife and children and it takes the locus of Steen's domesticity beyond the home to the tavern, for Steen, who was himself an innkeeper and brewer, characteristically merged the tavern with the home.¹⁶ And, because the representation of identifiable individuals impacts the viewer's response, it touches on crucial aspects of portraiture. In titling this essay 'Jan Steen as Family Man' I recognize the irony, for to him the role is double-edged. Steen the father in his paintings repeatedly subverts the role of good family man by acting as transgressor, by marginalizing himself, by calling paternal authority into question. But Steen the artist never fails to remind us of the consequences of such folly.

Steen's self-portraits

Steen's two known independent self-portraits, the formal *Self-portrait* in the Rijksmuseum (fig. 3) and the strikingly casual *Self-portrait as a lutenist* in the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection (fig. 4) provide insight into the comic nature of his persona. In the past, critics have regarded one as representing the true Jan Steen and the other as him playing a role, depending on whether they viewed the 'real' Steen as the rakish wastrel in *Easy come, easy go* (*Soo gewonne, soo verteert*) (Westermann essay fig. 19), or as a respectable painter who was only play acting in his paintings.¹⁷ More recently, it has been recognized that any portrait presents an image and that the cultivated seventeenth-century individual was a product of self-fashioning.¹⁸ So, instead of asking which is the real Steen, it makes more sense to see each as a role that contributed to Steen's construction of his persona. Though his two self-portraits seem quite different, each participated in Steen's formation of his identity as a comic painter by subverting pictorial convention and by pushing the limits of self-portraiture. For in crafting these two self-images Steen drew on two different artist-portrait traditions and transformed them in ways that the informed viewer would have seen as deflating more pretentious, grander notions of the artist.

The Rijksmuseum painting is Steen's only self-portrait proper. With the exception of two recently rediscovered pairs of portraits, it is Steen's only extant formal portrait.¹⁹ Perhaps because of its seeming conventionality – it employs a traditional portrait format and Steen wears fashionable attire and adopts a dignified pose – this picture has received little attention. Yet through it Steen comments on a self-portrait type that was then associated with artistic emulation. In his etched *Self-portrait leaning on a stone sill* of 1639 (fig. 2) and a painting (London, National Gallery) of the following year, Rembrandt had drawn on well-known portraits by Raphael and Titian to initiate what immediately became the Dutch self-portrait type *par excellence*.²⁰ That it inspired so many imitators, including Ferdinand Bol, Aert de

2

Rembrandt, *Self-portrait leaning on a stone sill*, 1639,

etching and drypoint, 210 x 168 mm, Rosenwald Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington (photo: National Gallery of Art).





3
Jan Steen, Self-portrait (before cleaning),
 oil on canvas, 73 x 62 cm,
 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
 (photo: Rijksmuseum-Stichting).

Gelder, and Frans van Mieris, suggests the type's success derived not only from its visual heritage but also from its association with the conceit of emulation. Emulation, or imitation with the aim of surpassing the model, was theoretically sanctioned artistic competition through which artists demonstrated their knowledge, wit, and virtuosity.

For his Rijksmuseum *Self-portrait*, Steen invoked the artist portrait format, transformed the type, and so had his playful part in the game of emulating past masters. Instead of *antiek* costume he wears the same contemporary *burgerlijk* attire that he wears in *As the old sing, so pipe the young* (The Hague, Mauritshuis; fig. 15) and the *Dissolute household* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Linsky Collection; fig. 18) and in place of the Italianate stone ledge he rests his arm on an ordinary chair and poses before a landscape. He rejects Rembrandt's imaginary guise with its allusions to the grand painting tradition of the past and its pretensions to grandeur in favor of a down-to-earth, local, and, relatively speaking, mundane self-image.²¹

Recent technical study of the Rijksmuseum self-portrait has revealed that Steen adjusted his image in a precise way. Infra-red reflectography shows that originally he was smiling more broadly and that he repainted his face.²² That Steen modified his smile suggests he carefully and deliberately crafted the mischievous twinkle in his eye and wry smirk, which hold the



potential for his expression of self-congratulatory debauchery in the Linsky *Dissolute household*. In portraits, which generally conformed to conventions of civility and decorum, laughing or even smiling was too expressive and regarded to be outside the bounds of propriety.²³ Steen's cunning hint of a smile belies his dignified formality, undercuts his decorum, and attests to his comic character. It also suggests he is fully conscious of his role-playing and of his subversion of the portrait tradition.

Steen's *Self-portrait as a lutenist* (fig. 4), in which he portrays himself laughing broadly, seated with his legs indecorously crossed, in the garb of a comic actor, pushes the limits of self-portraiture even farther.²⁴ Steen's actor's guise, which is reinforced by the curtain, and the genre-like informality of the image have led some to question whether it is a self-portrait at all.²⁵ Yet Steen characteristically merged pictorial types and tested their limits. Melding genre painting with portraiture was not unusual in seventeenth-century Dutch art: it represented an extension of the *portrait historié*.²⁶ However, Steen was unique in the extent to which his genre paintings rely on aspects of portraiture and his portraits, for example the *Baker Oostwaard and his wife*, the *Burger of Delft*, and the *Poultry yard* (Westermann essay, figs. 1, 10 and 12), invoke aspects of the sitters' daily lives.²⁷ Indeed, Arnold Houbraken, his first biographer (1721), illustrates Steen's tendency to mock the pretensions of formal portraiture with a story about how he dressed-down a portrait of his wife by adding a basket of sheep's heads and feet, props that identified her as the proprietress of a meat stall at the market.²⁸ In both genres, in other words, he tended toward the real, the experiential. It was above all in portraying himself that he created a persona that at once corresponded to real experience and displayed his role-playing.

Steen's guise in the *Self-portrait as a lutenist* relates in several ways to his artistic identity. It was then a topos of artistic invention, derived from ancient poetic theory, that to represent human emotion convincingly the painter should be able to transform himself into an actor.²⁹ Karel van Mander advised that one way to depict the passions well was to have characters 'act according to the Art of Histrionics [theatrical gestures], and clearly perform such gestures as if they were set on the stage, be it in a comedy with gladness or a sad tragedy'.³⁰ Rembrandt had put this into practice when he studied his expressions in his early etched self-portraits and when he inserted himself into his early biblical paintings.³¹ In 1678 Samuel van Hoogstraten would recommend:

If one wants to achieve honor in this most noble part of art [the passions] one must reform oneself totally into an actor... the same benefit can be derived from the depiction of your own passions, at best in front of a mirror, where you are simultaneously the performer and the beholder. But here a poetic spirit is necessary in order to imagine oneself in another's place.³²

Steen represents himself specifically as the comic actor. His image corresponds remarkably closely to the personification of the sanguine or jovial temperament in the 1644 Dutch edition of Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*.³³ And his actor's garb and extroverted personality accord with Ripa's explanation that 'the power of communication is very strong in the sanguine.... [who is]

4

Jan Steen, Self-portrait as a lutenist,
oil on panel, 55.3 x 43.8 cm,
Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, Madrid
(photo: Fundación Colección Thyssen-
Bornemisza).

clever at all the arts'. Though the melancholic temperament was more often associated with artists, Steen here claims to be governed by a humor more suited to his comic bent. He is the down-to-earth, comic painter of ordinary people who is inspired by Bacchus and Venus. Some forty years after the artist's death, Houbraken would echo this sentiment near the beginning of his biography when he said of Steen that he 'whose nature inclines to farce' is better equipped than the 'dry spirited', or melancholic, to represent the whole range of 'physical movements and facial expressions that spring from the many states of mind'.³⁴

Moreover, as in the Rijksmuseum *Self-portrait*, Steen's image deflates a more elevated convention for portraying the artist. Through his coarse jocularity, aggressively informal pose, archaic stage costume, rustic chair, and tankard of beer and through his broad, Haarlemesque painting technique, Steen subverts a tradition, associated above all with the Leiden *fijnschilders*, of portraying artists playing musical instruments for poetic inspiration.³⁵ By removing himself from the studio setting and recasting the refined music-making artist as a bawdy comedian, Steen invokes a proto-bohemian alternative to the dominant ideal of the *pictor doctus*, the learned gentleman painter of noble subjects.³⁶ He thus allied himself with Adriaen Brouwer, Pieter van Laer, Caravaggio, and Rembrandt, painters who fashioned themselves, in one way or another, as rogues, as breakers of rule in art and life.³⁷

Steen's family

Steen's portrayal of himself as a carefree, jovial actor can be connected to his propensity for featuring himself in his own pictures. Inserting oneself into one's paintings was by then a convention with classical and Renaissance roots. Originally, portraying oneself in a major, usually religious, commission was a way of asserting authorship.³⁸ The 'participant self-portrait' endowed the artist with the status of a witness and so testified to the truthfulness of the event depicted. By the seventeenth century, what had begun as a practice in history painting, had been transferred to genre painting and expanded frequently to include members of the artist's family. Indeed, some of the painters to whom Steen was most indebted – van Mieris, Molenaer, ter Borch, Rembrandt, Jordaens, Brouwer – featured either themselves or their family in genre-like imagery.³⁹

Using real models enhanced the true-to-life quality of a genre painting because the figures both looked individualized and attested to the painter's experience of what he painted. The late seventeenth-century theorist and painter Gerard de Lairese criticized as indecorous the practice of using real models, especially family members, in what he called the *burgerlijk* mode of genre painting, for he regarded such slavish naturalism as appropriate only in peasant scenes.⁴⁰ Though out of keeping with Lairese's classicist taste, painting one's familiars in scenes of middle and upper-class life accentuated specificity and verisimilitude. Seventeenth-century literary theory, drawing on classical antiquity, defined comedy as the mirror of everyday life or the lifelike imitation of common or ordinary people for the purpose of moral instruction. Applied to painting, this notion of comedy manifested itself first as peasant genre and then broadened to include the ranks of society

painted by Steen.⁴¹ Related to this was the notion that first-hand experience was essential to representing the comic. A precedent for predicating the truthful representation of daily life on the artist's experience was provided by van Mander's exemplar of the comic, Pieter Bruegel, who supposedly made incognito forays to peasant fairs and weddings for the purpose of observing peasants' manners and customs in order to draw them *nae 't leven*.⁴²

Steen claimed, by acting in his middle-class household and tavern scenes, to be portraying his own life. Compared to Bruegel's legendary peasant impersonation, Steen's consistently employed middle-class persona was much more plausibly like the life he really lived. Houbraken certainly suggested as much when he wrote that Steen's 'paintings were like his way of life, and his way of life like his paintings'.⁴³ While Steen was not alone in using himself and his kin, he was exceptional in the way he capitalized on



5
Jan Steen, The punishing schoolmaster,
 oil on canvas, 110,5 x 80,2 cm,
 National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin
 (photo: National Gallery of Ireland).



6

Jan Steen, *The effects of intemperance*,
oil on panel, 76 x 106.5 cm,
National Gallery, London
(photo: National Gallery).

7

Jan Steen, *Wine is a mocker*,
oil on canvas, 87.5 x 104.5,
Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena
(photo: Norton Simon Art Foundation).



the practice as a hallmark of his comic mode and in the extent to which he personalized it by creating a persona for himself and by centering it on the family. In Steen's case, reference to self and family not only takes on a distinctive comic moralizing cast, it also becomes the vehicle for witty play on the boundaries between life and art, reality and artifice. While enlisting identifiable actors attests to the experiential veracity of his comic paintings, it also raises the possibility that his actors are dissembling.

In light of Steen's tendency to personalize his art, it seems hardly coincidental that, at just the time he had a house full of children himself, in the early to mid 1660s, he painted a number of ambitious works in which he used his own family as a vehicle for moral instruction. These works, which center on children and the family and revive didactic pictorial types from the previous century, are responsible for Steen's reputation as a comic moralist. It seems to be Steen's children who repeatedly appear in comic pictures about pedagogy, as for example *The Punishing schoolmaster* (fig. 5) and *Children teaching a cat to dance* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), which is about the futility of teaching the ineducable.⁴⁴ Even Steen's *Drawing lesson* (Malibu, The J. Paul Getty Museum), which features his son, adapts the theme of the artist's studio in a way that emphasizes instruction.⁴⁵ Whether these are his real children is ultimately unverifiable, though some are the image of Steen. Skeptics might maintain that they are just as likely to be fictional visages, or, assuming they are his children, they were just the most convenient models. But the familiarity that arises from their repetition and their individualization suggests that, to whatever extent they are based on his real kin, they comprise a pictorial family that functions analogously to Steen's repeated inclusion of himself as a kind of serialized protagonist.

The thematically related *Effects of intemperance* and *Wine is a mocker* (figs. 6 and 7) exemplify how Steen used his children in highly didactic pictures. Steen's art is often consciously archaizing in its reliance on Bruegelsesque themes and symbolic or allegorical pictorial strategies. In painting these two works, Steen revived a moralizing subject from sixteenth-century prints: Maerten van Heemskerck had treated intemperance in an erudite humanistic way, while Jacob Matham had genrefied it.⁴⁶ The *Effects of Intemperance* is a variation on the drinking theme that distills the workings of Steen's comic didacticism. Here, he conflates two pictorial types, allegory and genre, which sets the image's humorous tone and also mitigates the idealization and distancing of traditional allegory as a way of driving the point home. He gives the subject of intemperance bite by representing a mother lost to a drunken stupor. She is also lost to her children, who run quietly and emblematically amuck, picking her pocket, giving wine to the parrot, wasting pie on the cat, and, as the proverb goes, throwing roses before swine. The basket over their heads that reminds of the consequences of such immoderate behavior is characteristic of Steen's symbolic pictorial language.

In contrast, in *Wine is a mocker* Steen renders the Biblical proverb more naturalistically, as a scene from daily life. It is set in front of a tavern, Steen's quintessential realm of temptation and transgression, for here his personal circumstances meld with his pictorial world in a way that was unique to him.⁴⁷ (Especially when wife and children are present as they so often are in his curious confluences of inn and home, the tavern represents

8

School of Thomas de Keyser, Portrait of a family,oil on canvas, 85.5 x 107.5 cm,
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest

(photo: Budapest Museum of Fine Arts).



9

Hendrick Sorgh, Portrait of Jacob Bierens and his family, 1663,oil on panel, 52 x 71 cm,
Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst, The Hague
(photo: copyright Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst).

the ultimate threat to the family.) Now he vividly renders the consequences of intemperance as children – his own – about to haul their drunken mother home in a wheelbarrow under the disapproving eyes of the neighbors. I suspect this would have been a sharply biting image to Steen's contemporaries: Gerard de Lairese, in describing how to represent good and bad households, writes that, in a family in which one parent goes astray, it is far worse if it is the mother, for then the children will be corrupted.⁴⁸



It comes as no surprise that Steen implicates himself and his kin in pictures that are specifically about the family. Despite the recent interest in domesticity, the family as a carrier of meaning in so many of Steen's paintings has hardly been considered and critics have resisted analyzing Steen's enlistment of his family members.⁴⁹ This is an understandable reaction to the literal reading of such pictures as autobiographical 'Jan Steen households' that prevailed in the nineteenth century. But it has blinded us to how the practice worked as a pictorial device and to how Steen's images of families participated in prevailing social ideals and concerns.

In *burgerlijk* Holland, the family was the microcosm of the moral order, the emblem of civic virtue, the site for imparting society's values or, in Beverwijck's words, 'the seed of a common state'.⁵⁰ Much was written about the family in seventeenth-century Holland. Jacob Cats' *Houwelijk* (1625) and Petrus Wittewrongel's *Oeconomia Christiana ofte Christelicke huyshouding* (1655) exemplify the popular manuals for household conduct that valorized a selective, ideal version of family life. Schama argues that there

10
Jan Miense Molenaer, Family Making Music, c. 1636,
 oil on canvas, 62.5 x 81 cm,
 Frans Halsmuseum, Haarlem
 (photo: Frans Halsmuseum).



11
Crispijn de Passe the Elder, Concordia,
 engraving, 22.4 x 24.1 cm,
 Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam
 (photo: Rijksmuseum-Stichting).

12
Crispijn de Passe the Elder, Discordia,
 1589,
 engraving, 22.7 x 24.1 cm,
 Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam
 (photo: Rijksmuseum-Stichting).



was considerable anxiety about the family and the values it represented in the seventeenth century.⁵¹ The tremendous demand for imagery centering on the family and the home suggests that domestic virtue had become emblematic of the civic virtue aspired to by the society as a whole.⁵²

Family portraits reinforced values of domestic order, familial harmony, and the continuity of generations. In a *Portrait of a family* by an artist from the circle of Thomas de Keyser (fig. 8), the father, who stands with his arm assertively akimbo, is the image of authority; the wife, who sits regarding her husband while pointing to the youngest child in the highchair, proclaims her housewifely virtue by holding Cats' *Houwelick* open to the chapter 'Vrouwe'.⁵³ Though set in the interior of a fine home, the portrait is otherwise conventionally stiff and posed. But family portraits also took on aspects of genre paintings that made them look more informal. Hendrick Sorgh's unusual *Portrait of Jacob Bierens and his family* of 1663 (fig. 9) is an image of humble industry, expressive of the sitters' Mennonite faith, in which the whole family is busy in the kitchen: the father and son bring home fish, the wife peels apples, and the daughter pluck a fowl, all to the harmonious accompaniment of the son playing the viola da gamba.⁵⁴ Other family portraits incorporated aspects of merry or musical companies to convey domestic harmony, as for example Jan Miense Molenaer's *Family making music* of about 1636 (fig. 10) with its ten live sitters and just as many portraits, which Weller has identified as a portrait of Molenaer and his family.⁵⁵ Molenaer, who came from Haarlem, was a colleague for whom Steen must have felt a particular affinity, for both were comic painters who derived aspects of their style from the theater and both used their family members in their paintings.

Genre paintings and prints also served to instill familial values either by valorizing domesticity or, less often, by warning of the consequences of the breakdown of such values. In the sixteenth century, the themes of the good

and bad households could be represented as two sides of the same coin. Crispijn de Passe's pair of prints, *Concordia* and *Discordia* of 1589 (figs. 11 and 12), for example, contrasts a pious family praying before their meal with a dissolute family that has succumbed to luxury. In the early eighteenth century, Gerard de Lairesse wrote, under the heading '*Van de Deugd*,' about the suitability of the good and bad families – 'whether in antique or the modern taste' – as subjects for painters, confirming that a retrospective viewer of seventeenth-century domestic scenes regarded them as didactic or value laden. After describing an allegorical personification of Virtue, De Lairesse goes on to say:

if curious men desire further scope (want more information) let them consider only, for instance, in what a good and a bad family consists, and they will find, that there are four sorts of people. Namely, in a good family, a prudent and respected father, a careful and good-natured mother, obedient children and humble and honest servants. The father gives law, the mother enforces it to the children, and both they and the



13
**Adriaen van Ostade, *The Pater Familias*,
 1648,**
 etching, 127 x 95 mm,
 Rosenwald Collection, National Gallery of
 Art, Washington
 (photo: National Gallery of Art)

14

Jan Steen, Prayer before the meal,
oil on canvas, 99 x 84 cm,
Duke of Rutland, Grantham
(photo: Duke of Rutland).



servants obey. Moreover, the father punishes, the mother reconciles, and the children love and fear. A good father is also liberal in the support of his family, the careful mother manages with frugality, yet with honor. All is in peace and order, because they have a God, a law, salvation and honour, and virtue is their aim.⁵⁶

Countless middle to upper-class interiors by Pieter de Hooch, Vermeer and Gabriel Metsu, to name a few, celebrate domestic virtue or affirm the centrality of family life.⁵⁷ Painters in the low genre mode, as they became more sympathetic and less satirical toward the rural peasantry over the course of the seventeenth-century, also presented an idyllic image of the family. The peasant father lovingly spooning pap into his baby's mouth in Adriaen van Ostade's heartwarming *Pater Familias* of 1648 (fig. 13) makes an illuminating foil for Steen's wayward fathers, especially since Steen had presumably apprenticed with Ostade in the 1640s.⁵⁸

Steen represented a full range of families, from the good to the bad. His relatively few pious families appear in his several sober pictures of the



15
Jan Steen, As the old sing, so pipe the young,
oil on canvas, 134 x 163 cm,
Mauritshuis, The Hague
(photo: Mauritshuis).



16
Jan Steen, The Cat Family,
oil on canvas, 150 x 148 cm,
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest
(photo: Budapest Museum of Fine Arts).

Prayer before the meal, which, notably, do not feature the artist himself. The version of this theme in Sudeley Castle characteristically is limited to three humble figures at prayer before a simple meal and includes the text of a prayer on the wall.⁵⁹ But even in treating this subject, which in pictorial tradition was the quintessential good family, Steen's tendency is to subvert: in the version belonging to the Duke of Rutland (fig. 14), the father sneaks a peek at the buxom maid servant.

Most often Steen treats the family as neither pious nor dissolute, but somewhere in the middle, much like real life, as for example his versions of *As the old sing, so pipe the young* in Amsterdam and The Hague and *The cat family* in Budapest (figs. 1, 15 and 16). It is in these boisterous families based on proverbs that Steen features himself and his kin. This specificity verges close enough to the portrait-like to suggest that Steen here toys with and comically subverts the family portrait tradition by creating works that are at once portraits and not portraits. In the Mauritshuis *As the old sing, so pipe the young*, Steen laughingly teaches a boy to smoke a pipe, thus implicating himself as the mischievous, punning embodiment of the proverb. Like the pictorial tradition on which it is based, this picture relies on a text to convey its message to the viewer.⁶⁰ Steen's several paintings of this proverb and the thematically related *Cat Family*, which illustrates this and a similar proverb, 't wil al muysen wat van katten komt' (all those born of cats are inclined to catch mice), concern the continuity of behavior within families or from generation to generation.⁶¹ In his *Spiegel van den ouden en nieuwen tijd* (1632), Jacob Cats used these two proverbs in a series of sayings about the innate instincts of animals, from which he concludes that, since human nature, too, is inborn, it is futile to try to change it.⁶² In contrast Adriaen Poirter, a Jesuit from the southern Netherlands writing in 1646, also cited both proverbs but in verses that admonished parents not to indulge themselves or misbehave, for it was their responsibility to set good examples for their children.⁶³ That the same proverbs could express both the inevitability of human nature and the importance of teaching one's children suggests the nature versus nurture debate was current in Steen's time. Indeed, Constantijn Huygens had pondered precisely this question when he wrote about his childhood, at the beginning of his manuscript autobiography of 1631:

One can only discern the factors that determine one's later character from humble indications in the first years of childhood. Yet, I would first like to mention some of the things that I, according to the perception of my parents, did during my first two years of life. What I did after that, when I got older, will, when one makes a comparison, show clearly in what ways I was loyal to my nature and to what extent I was influenced by my education.⁶⁴

Not surprisingly, it seems futile to try to pin Steen's pictures of *As the old sing, so pipe the young* to one interpretation of the proverb or the other. Certainly his images of children drinking and smoking in direct imitation of their elders are negative exemplars, meant to admonish parents to provide proper models. Yet one cannot help but wonder about the effectiveness of this warning in the face of Steen's mischievous self-display and the possibi-



lity that his natural temperament will be inherent in his offspring. By making himself the punning embodiment of the proverb, by implicating himself and his children as comic transgressor, does Steen also imply that Steens will be Steens?

Jan Steen's *forté* was, of course, the bad family: indeed, he was unique among his contemporaries in reviving this theme from the sixteenth century. Houbraken acknowledged it to be Steen's subject when he described a picture much like the *Dissolute household* in the Wellington Museum (fig. 17) in which Steen featured himself:

The first [painting] he made was an emblem of his disorderly household. The room was a topsy-turvy mess, the dog eating from the pot, the cat making off with the bacon, the children tumbling around on the floor, mother sitting comfortably in a chair watching all this, and, as a farce, he painted himself there too, with a rummer in his hand, while a monkey on the mantle viewed the goings on with a long face.⁶⁵

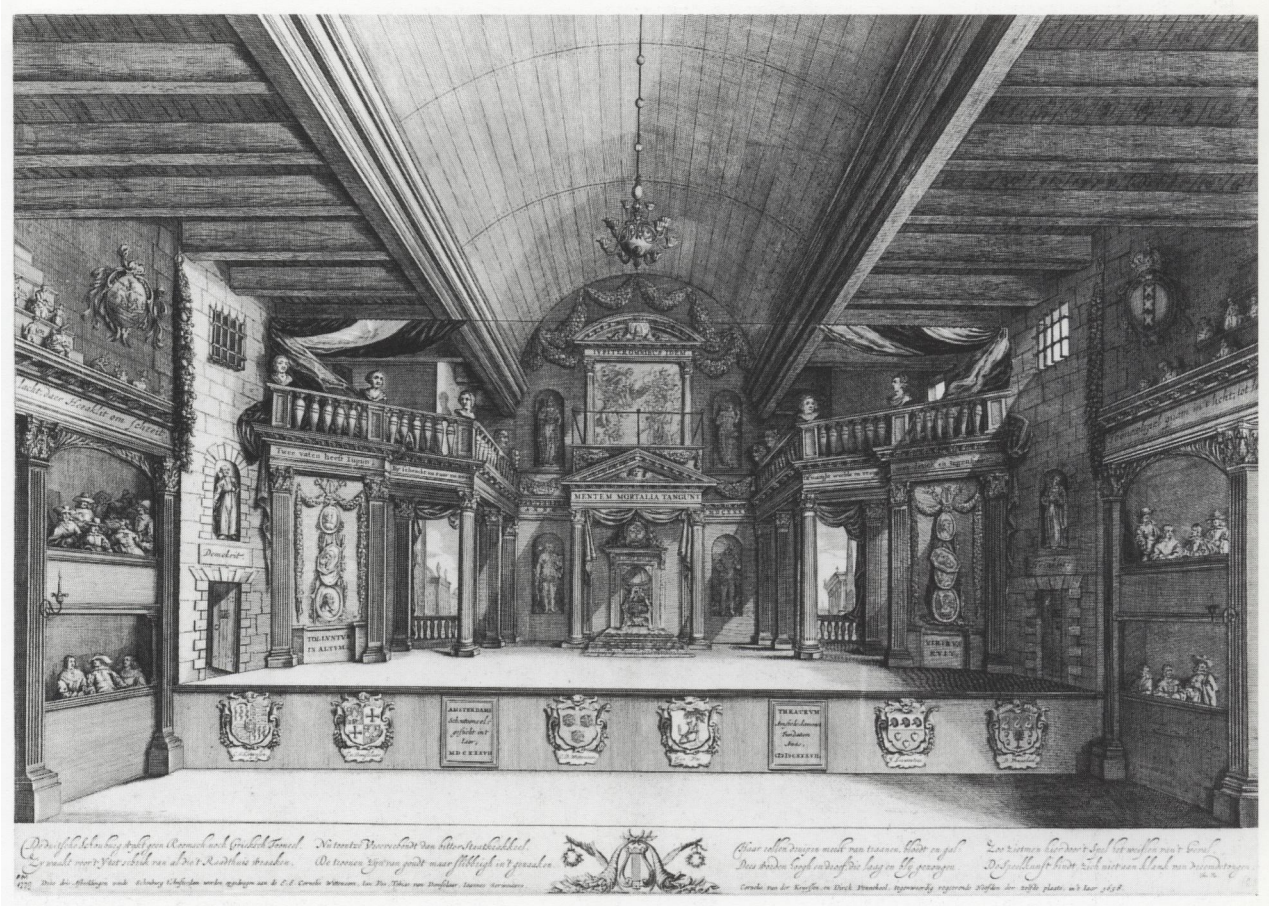
17

Jan Steen, *The dissolute household*,

oil on canvas, 80.5 x 89 cm,
Wellington Museum, London

(photo: Courtesy of the Board of Trustees
of the V&A).





Salomon has clarified the pictorial heritage of this picture and the related *Beware of Luxury* in Vienna, which corresponds closely to van de Passe's print *Discordia* (fig. 12).⁶⁶ Gerard de Laresse, who recommended both the good and the bad family as suitable subjects for painters, must have had Steen's paintings in mind when he wrote that:

In a bad family...we see the father careless [*zorgeloos*], the mother lavish, the boys wanton, the girls pert and the servants idling and dishonest. The father does not rule, the mother gives the children whatever they want, the girls are fancy and proud, the boys are romping and gambling, and the servants catching at what they can hold on to, thinking it is best to fish in troubled water. Servants and maids snuggle up together, tittle daily, all at their master's expense, until finally one finds the dog in the pot.⁶⁷

The *Dissolute Household* from the Linsky Collection (fig. 18) gets its edge from Steen's brazen implication of himself as the *zorgeloos* father. Now an especially dishevelled and scoundrelish threat to the domestic order, he locks fingers with the maidservant, who plies the wife with wine. All are

18

Jan Steen, *The dissolute household*, oil on canvas, 108 x 92.2 cm, The Jack and Belle Linsky Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art).

19

Salomon Savry, *The auditorium of the first Schouwburg, Amsterdam, 1658*, engraving, Nederlands Theater Instituut, Amsterdam (photo: Nederlands Theater Instituut).

unaware that suspended above their heads is a basket filled with symbols of the consequences of their folly – a crutch, a switch, and a leper's rattle. We may laugh at this wickedly funny, lewdly suggestive scenario, but we are also taken aback by its dangerous misrule. The *Dissolute Household* is disconcerting, too, because of its mix of the theatrical and the real, the artificial and the natural. Stage devices enhance the picture's performative aspect: gestures and expressions are overblown; Steen takes himself out of the action to address us, as in a theatrical aside; and the semi-symmetrical banner and suspended bed curtain evoke rudimentary stage curtains like those visible in Salomon Savry's 1658 engraving of the Amsterdam Schouwburg (fig. 19). Other aspects persuade us that this is reality: the rendering of materials, foods, and things is naturalistic; the disarray seems accidental; the domestic subject is practically by definition real life; and Steen's troupe of actors is his family. Constancy and familiarity conspire to convince us that Steen and his kin are actors who play themselves. Simultaneously, to both seventeenth-century and contemporary viewers, notions of masking and personae leave open the possibility that their roles are just that.

Yet, while Steen's complicity may seem to subvert his critique, ultimately his singularly wry take on the family is a strategy of comic moralizing. However much his dissolute households mocked the Calvinist ideals of domestic harmony and moderation, paternal authority, and filial responsibility that were preached in sermons and conveyed through images of the exemplary family saying grace, there are limits to Steen's subversion. It is the technique of a comedian to make the unacceptable irresistible and only then provide cues for making proper moral judgments. If these pictures make us laugh, they also instruct in a variety of ways, through cautionary examples: they do, indeed, fit the *tot lering en vermaak* topos. In this, as in their references to older pictorial traditions, they are consciously archaizing. But Steen updates this satiric didacticism and gives it particular efficacy by putting himself and his kin on display. By testifying to a true-to-experience version of what purported to be his own messy life, he blurred customary distinctions between art and reality. With characteristic self-reflective irony, Steen personalized his view of the family by insisting on the familiarity of the experience. By casting himself and his family members in his paintings he heightened his capacity to convincingly portray real life; by portraying himself as a comic actor he asserted his ability to imitate nature. Claiming experience to be his own was what made Steen so effective as a comic painter.

Notes

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- 1 H.P. Chapman, 'Jan Steen's household revisited', *Simiolus* 20 (1990/1991), 183-196; *idem*, 'Persona and myth in Houbraken's life of Jan Steen', *Art Bulletin* 75 (1993), 135-150; *idem*, in: H.P. Chapman, W.T. Kloek and A.K. Wheelock, *et al.*, *Jan Steen: painter and storyteller*, cat. exh. Washington (National Gallery of Art)/Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum), Washington 1996, 00-00; M. Westermann, 'How was Jan Steen funny? Strategies and functions of comic painting in the seventeenth century', in: J. Bremmer and H. Roodenburg (eds.), *A cultural history of humour from antiquity to the present*, Cambridge 1996.
- 2 D. Damsma, *Het Hollandse huisgezin (1560-heden)*, Utrecht 1993, 34-41.
- 3 Such an ideal must have then, just as today, meant different things to different viewers, each of whose response would be colored by his or her own experience of family (and of representations of the family).
- 4 On transgression as a comic strategy, see P. Stallybrass and A. White, *The politics and poetics of transgression*, London 1986; Westermann, *op.cit.* (n. 1).
- 5 On the bagpipe as a low instrument with erotic connotations, see E. Buijsen and L.P. Grijp, *The Hoogsteder exhibition of music and painting in the golden age*, cat. exh. The Hague (Hoogsteder & Hoogsteder), Zwolle 1994, 202-205, 242-247, with additional bibliography.
- 6 H.-J. Raupp, *Untersuchungen zu Künstlerbildnis und Künstlerdarstellung in den Niederlanden im 17. Jahrhundert*, Hildesheim 1984; C. Brusati, 'Stilled lives: self-portraiture and self-reflection in seventeenth-century Netherlandish still-life painting', *Simiolus* 20 (1990/1991), 168-182; H.P. Chapman, *Rembrandt's self-portraits: a study in seventeenth-century identity*, Princeton 1990; E.J. Sluijter, *De lof der schilderkunst. Over schilderijen van Gerrit Dou (1613-1675) en een traktaat van Philips Angel uit 1642*, Hilversum 1993.
- 7 Since the early eighteenth century, critics, inventories, and sales catalogues have identified Steen and members of his family in his pictures. See Chapman 1990/1991, *op.cit.* (n. 1), 183.
- 8 E. de Jongh in: Washington 1996, *op.cit.* (n. 1).
- 9 N. de Marchi and H.J. van Miegroet, 'Art, value, and market practices in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century', *Art Bulletin* 76 (1994), 459-460, for evidence that experienced and talented masters ('extraordinaire meesters') sold their paintings from their own houses or studios.
- 10 P.C. Sutton, 'The life and art of Jan Steen', in: *Jan Steen. Comedy and admonition*, *Bulletin Philadelphia Museum of Art* 78 (Winter 1982/Spring 1983), 3; Raupp, *op.cit.* (n. 6), 258-262; Chapman 1990/1991, *op.cit.* (n. 1), 185-196; Chapman 1993, *op.cit.* (n. 1), 135-136, 141-150; Westermann, *op.cit.* (n. 1).
- 11 J.C. Weyerman, *De levens-beschryvingen der Nederlandsche konst-schilders en konst-schilderessen*, The Hague 1729, 362.
- 12 For ways of thinking about innovative competitive strategies prompted by the art market, see M. Baxandall, *The limewood sculptors of Renaissance Germany*, New Haven 1980, 120-122; S. Alpers, *Rembrandt's enterprise: the studio and the market*, Chicago 1988; De Marchi and van Miegroet, *op.cit.* (n. 9), 452-454.
- 13 On Steen's clientele, see the essay by Westermann in this *Jaarboek*. M.A. Sullivan, *Bruegel's peasant paintings: art and audience in the northern renaissance*, Cambridge 1994, 5-7, 67-69, discusses the appeal of Bruegel's paintings to a small and discriminating audience.
- 14 For the notion of the 'informed viewer', see A. M. Kettering, 'Ter Borch's ladies in satin', *Art History* 16 (1993), 113-115.
- 15 It also suggests that recent notions of Dutch genre painting have failed in significant ways to accommodate essential aspects of the art of Jan Steen. Neither E. de Jongh's [*Tot lering en vermaak*, cat. exh. Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum), Amsterdam 1976, 233-249] decoding of emblematic and didactic meanings nor S. Alpers' [*The art of describing*, Chicago 1983] description of surfaces and cataloguing of behavior address the aspects of representation or pictorial strategies that prompt a viewer to assume the role of a figure in the picture. That Steen's works can invite such immediate empathy, despite their artificiality, also seems to call into question recent rehashings of the realisticness, or lack thereof, of Dutch genre painting, as for example, L. de Vries, 'The changing face of realism', in: D. Freedberg and J. de Vries (eds.), *Art in history/history in art: studies in seventeenth-century Dutch culture* (Issues & debates series, 1), Santa Monica 1991, 209-244; and P. Hecht, *De Hollandse fijnschilders. Van Gerard Dou tot Adriaen van der Werff*, cat. exh. Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum), The Hague 1989; and compare E.J. Sluijter, 'Over fijnschilders en "betekenis": naar aanleiding van Peter Hecht, *De Hollandse fijnschilders, Oud Holland* 105 (1991), 50-63. It also suggests that A. Blankert's ['What is Dutch seventeenth century genre painting? A definition and its limitations', in: H. Bock and T. Gaechtgens (eds.), *Holländische Genremalerei im 17. Jahrhundert. Symposium Berlin 1984*, (Jahrbuch Preussischer Kulturbesitz Sonderband 4) Berlin 1987, 11] definition 'A genre piece is a painting featuring human figures who are all anonymous and intended to be anonymous', misses the point that it is the very familiarity of Steen's characters and situations that makes his images so compelling.
- 16 Steen was the son of a brewer. In 1654 he rented the brewery 'de slange' in Delft; in 1656 and 1657 he is mentioned as a brewer in Delft; and in 1672 he was granted permission to open an inn in Leiden. See M.J. Bok in: Washington 1966, *op.cit.* (n. 1). N. Salomon, 'Jan Steen's formulation of the dissolute household', in: Bock and Gaechtgens (eds.), *op.cit.* (n. 15), 315-317, discusses Steen's merger of tavern and home.
- 17 On the historiography of Jan Steen studies, see L. de Vries, 'Achttiende- en negentiende auteurs over Jan Steen', *Oud Holland* 87 (1973); M. Westermann, 'Jan Steen and the making of Dutch identity', paper, College Art Association Annual Meeting, San Antonio January 1995; Chapman in Washington 1996, *op.cit.* (n. 1).

- 18 E. Goffman, *The presentation of self in everyday life*, New York 1959; N. Elias, *The civilizing process*, New York 1978; S. Greenblatt, *Renaissance self-fashioning. From More to Shakespeare*, Chicago 1980; D.R. Smith, *Masks of wedlock. Seventeenth-century Dutch marriage portraiture*, Ann Arbor 1982; Chapman 1990, *op. cit.* (n. 6); essay by Westermann in this *Jaarboek*.
- 19 J. Belonje, *Het huis Dampegeest bij Limmen*, Arnhem 1983, 22-24, figs. 10-13; Washington 1966, *op. cit.* (n. 1). Two of these small but elegant portraits, which were painted in 1665, represent a father and son who were wealthy brewers in Haarlem.
- 20 E. de Jongh, 'The spur of wit: Rembrandt's response to an Italian challenge', *Delta* 12 (1969), 49-67; Chapman 1990 *op. cit.* (n. 6); S.S. Dickey, 'Prints, portraits, and patronage in Rembrandt's work around 1640', (ph.D. diss.) New York University, Institute of Fine Arts 1994, chap. 1.
- 21 The Rijksmuseum *Self-portrait* is currently undergoing conservation treatment. For an illustration of the cleaned painting, see Washington 1996, *op. cit.* (n. 1). On the Netherlandish origins of the portrait type with a landscape view, see Dickey, *op. cit.* (n. 20).
- 22 Infra-red reflectography reveals that originally Steen represented himself smiling by painting his left eye higher and making his left cheek bulge out more than it does in the visible contour. In the area of his mouth, two dark curves suggesting smiling corners, which are visible in the infra-red photograph, belong either to the monochrome sketch or a very early paint layer. My thanks to Gwen Tauber of the Rijksmuseum and E. Melanie Gifford of the National Gallery of Art for their assistance.
- 23 On the impropriety of laughter in portraits, see E. de Jongh, *Portretten van echt en vrouw: Huwelijk en gezin in de Nederlandse kunst van de zeventiende eeuw*, cat. exh. Haarlem (Frans Halsmuseum), Zwolle 1986, 15, 18; Westermann, *op. cit.* (n. 1).
- 24 Raupp, *op. cit.* (n. 6), 221; I. Gaskell, *The Thyssen-Bornemisza collection. Seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish painting*, London 1990, 162-167, cat. nr. 32; Washington 1996, *op. cit.* (n. 1).
- 25 Gaskell, *op. cit.* (n. 24), 165-166, reviews the scholarly opinions on this work's status as a self-portrait.
- 26 Traditionally, in a *portrait historié* the sitter was represented in the guise of a biblical, mythological, or historical figure. See R. Wishnevsky, 'Studien zum *portrait historié* in den Niederlanden', (diss.) Munich 1967. On the merging of genres, see D.R. Smith, 'Irony and civility: notes on the convergence of genre and portraiture in seventeenth-century Dutch painting', *Art Bulletin* 69 (1987), 407-430; L. de Vries, 'Jan Steen zwischen Genre- und Historienmalerei', *Niederdeutsche Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte* 22 (1983), 113-128.
- 27 Westermann's essay in this *Jaarboek*.
- 28 A. Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, The Hague 1753 (1st ed. 1718-1721), vol. III, 25-26.
- 29 Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 99-104, in: Horace, *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*, trans. H.R. Fairclough, Cambridge, Mass. 1967, 23-32.
- 30 K. van Mander, *Den grondt der edel vry schilderconst*, (ed. H. Miedema), Utrecht 1973, vol. 1, 159: 'Op dat al onse personnagen speelden/Nae *Histrionica* Const, en ontgorden/Sulcke gesten, daer sy toe sullen worden/Op de *Scena* ghestelt, 't zy in Comedy/Met blijshap, oft in droeflijcke Tragedy'.
- 31 Chapman 1990, *op. cit.* (n. 6), 19-21.
- 32 S. van Hoogstraeten, *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderconst*, Rotterdam 1678, 109-110: 'Wilmen nu eer inleggen in dit allerdelste deel der konst, zoo moetmen zich zelven geheel in een toneelspeeler hervormen.... Dezelve baet zalmen ook in 't uitbeelden van diens hartstochten, die ghy voorhebt, bevinden, voornaemlijk voor een spiegel, om te gelijk vertooner en aenschouwer te zijn. Maer hier is een Poëtische geest van noode, om een ieders ampt zich wel voor te stellen'. See, also, Chapman 1990, *op. cit.* (n. 6), 20.
- 33 C. Ripa, *Iconologia of uytbeeldinghe des verstands*, trans. D. Pers, Amsterdam 1644, 75-76.
- 34 Houbraken, *op. cit.* (n. 28), 12.
- 35 Compare Joris van Swieten's *Lute-playing Painter* (of about 1660) (Leiden, Lakenhal). H.-J. Raupp, 'Musik im Atelier. Darstellungen musizierender Künstler in der niederländischen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts', *Oud Holland* 92 (1978), 106-129.
- 36 J.A. Emmens, *Rembrandt en de regels van de kunst*, Utrecht, 1968, passim.
- 37 H.-J. Raupp, 'Adriaen Brouwer als Satiriker', in: Bock and Gaechtens (eds.), *op. cit.* (n. 15), 225-251.
- 38 J.L. Koerner, *The moment of self-portraiture in German renaissance art*, Chicago 1993, 63-246; P. Barolsky, *Michelangelo's nose: a myth and its maker*, University Park 1990; Chapman, *op. cit.* 1990 (n. 6), 15-16, 19-21, 109-114.
- 39 Rembrandt, *Self-portrait with Saskia* (Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie); Adriaen Brouwer, *The Smokers* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art).
- 40 G. de Lairese, *Groot schilderboek*, Haarlem 1740 (1st ed. 1707), 173-174.
- 41 H.-J. Raupp, 'Ansätze zu einer Theorie der Genremalerei in den Niederlanden im 17. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 46 (1983), 401-418; Westermann *op. cit.* (n. 1).
- 42 K. van Mander, *Her Schilder-boeck*, Haarlem 1604, fol. 233r; J. Muylle, "'Pier den droll". K. van Mander en P. Bruegel. Bijdrage tot de literaire receptie van P. Bruegels werk ca. 1600', in: *Wort und Bild in der niederländischen Kunst und Literatur des 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, H. Vekeman and J. Müller Hofstede (eds.), Erfstadt 1984, 137-144; W. Melion, *Shaping the Netherlandish canon*, Chicago 1991, 64-65, 181.
- 43 Houbraken, *op. cit.* (n. 28), 13: 'zyn schilderijen zyn als zyn levenswyze, en zyn levenswyze als zyne schilderyen'.
- 44 According to the documents, in 1649, Steen married Griet van Goyen, daughter of the painter Jan, and the pair had three sons, born in 1651, 1656 and 1659, and two daughters, born in 1653 and 1657. (A third daughter born in 1662 lived just three weeks.) Steen had another son, by his second wife, in 1672. For the documents on Steen, see A. Bredius, *Jan Steen*, Amsterdam [1927]), 78-98; and for an updated biography based on these and more recent archival findings, see M.-J. Bok, in: Washington 1966 (n. 1). On the iconography of pedagogy, see J.B. Bedaux, *The reality of symbols. Studies in the iconology of Netherlandish art 1400-1800*. The Hague 1990, 109-170.
- 45 The boy in the *Drawing Lesson* also appears in the *Baker Oostwaard and his Wife* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), on the back of which is an early eighteenth-century inscription identifying him as Steen's son.
- 46 I. Veldman, 'Elements of continuity: a finger raised in warning', *Simiolus* 20 (1990/1991), 133-135, figs. 15-16;

- K. Renger, *Lockere Gesellschaft. Zur Ikonographie des Verlorenen Sohnes und von Wirtshausszenen in den niederländischen Malerei*, Berlin 1970, 71-94, figs. 53-56.
- 47 While Steen's biography is in many ways at odds with his popular image, two documented aspects of his life play out in his paintings. Steen's family and his second trade as brewer and innkeeper, though they would seem to have less immediate bearing on his artistic production, in fact contribute directly to his creation of a persona.
- 48 Lairese, *op.cit.* (n. 40), 189.
- 49 An exception to this is S. Schama, *The embarrassment of riches: an interpretation of Dutch culture in the golden age*, New York 1987, 375-480.
- 50 J. van Beverwijck, *Van de wtmentheyt des vrouwelicken geslachts*, Dordrecht 1643, 206-212.
- 51 Schama, *op.cit.* (n. 49), *passim*.
- 52 W.E. Franits, *Paragons of virtue: women and domesticity in seventeenth-century Dutch art*, Cambridge 1993.
- 53 Franits, *op.cit.* (n. 52), 5-7, figs. 2, 2a; J. Spicer, 'The renaissance elbow', in: J. Bremmer and H. Roodenburg (eds.), *A cultural history of gesture*, Ithaca 1991, 84-128.
- 54 De Jongh, *op.cit.* (n. 23), 248-250, cat. 58; Franits, *op.cit.* (n. 52), 87-89, fig. 67.
- 55 D.P. Weller, 'Jan Miense Molenaer (c.1609/1610-1668): the life and art of a seventeenth-century Dutch painter', (Ph.D. diss.) University of Maryland 1992, 16-23; B. Hinz, 'Das Familienbildnis des J.M. Molenaer in Haarlem. Aspekte zur Ambivalenz der Porträtfunktion', *Städte Jahrbuch* 4 (1973), 207-216; Smith, *op.cit.* (n. 26), 29-36; de Jongh, *op.cit.* (n. 23), cat. 69. Another example is Pieter de Hooch's elegant *Family portrait group making music* of 1663 (Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art).
- 56 Lairese, *op.cit.* (n. 40), 188: 'De zin van dit Tafereel is ligt te bevatten: en begeren de Liefhebbers meerder aanleiding tot stof, zy overweegen maar eens, by voorbeeld, waar in een goede of kwaade Huishouding bestaat; en zy zullen bevinden, dat 'er vierderley Persoonen zyn: te weeten, in een goede Huishouding, een verstandige en ontzachelijke Vader; een zorgvuldige en goedaardige Moeder; de Kinderen gehoorzaam en buigzaam; de Dienstboden eerbiedig en getrouw. De Man stelt de wet; de Moeder leert ze aan haare Kinderen; en deze; nevens de Dienstboden, gehoorzaam en ze. Daar en boven straft de Vader; de Moeder matigt; de Kinderen lieven en vreezen. Ook geeft een milddaadige Huisvader uit een onbekrompene beurs tot onderhoud zyn Gezin. De zorgvuldige Vrouw weet zuinig, doch deftig, het zelve te besteeden. Alles is daar in vrede en order, want zy hebben eenen God, eene wet, zaligheid en eer: en de Deugd is hun aller betrachtung'.
- 57 Franits, *op.cit.* (n. 52), *passim*.
- 58 For this and Ostade's etchings *Saying grace* and *The Family*, see S.W. Pelletier et. al., *Adriaen van Ostade: etchings of peasant life in Holland's golden age*, cat. exh. University of Georgia (Georgia Museum of Art) 1994, cats. 84-85, 86-87, III.
- 59 P.C. Sutton, *Masters of seventeenth-century Dutch genre painting*, cat. exh. Philadelphia (Philadelphia Museum of Art)/ Berlin (Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz)/ London (Royal Academy of Arts), Philadelphia 1984, 307-308, cat. 102; W. Franits, 'The family at grace: a theme in Dutch art of the seventeenth century', *Simiolus* 16 (1986), 36-49; P.J.J. van Thiel, "Poor parents, rich children" and "Family saying grace": two related aspects of the iconography of late sixteenth and seventeenth-century Dutch domestic morality', *Simiolus* 17 (1987), 90-149.
- 60 The song sheet held by the woman reads: 'Liet/Soo voer gesongen soo/na gepepen dat is al lang/ g(e)bleken ick sing u vo(or)/ so(o) volcht ons Na(er)/ van een tot Hon(derd) jaer'. B. Broos, *Meesterwerken in het Mauritshuis*, The Hague 1987, 355-359, cat. 59.
- 61 I. Németh, 'Het spreekwoord "zo d'ouden zongen, zo pijpen de jongen" in schilderijen van Jacob Jordaens en Jan Steen: motieven en associaties', *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (1990), 271-86; I. Németh, 'Sur l'interprétation d'un tableau de Jan Steen à Budapest', *Bulletin du Musée Hongrois des Beaux-Arts* 70-71 (1989), 93-100, 177-180.
- 62 J. Cats, *Dichtwerken*, vol. I (1843), III: Al wat van katten spruit dat is geneigd te muizen; Al wat van apen komt dat is gezind te luizen; De jongen van den uil of van de vledermuis; Zijn's nachts meest op den loop, en 's avonds zelden thuis; De jongen van den vos die will hoenders vangen; De jongen van den wolf die gaan hun moeders gansen; Al wat van zeugen komt dat wentelt in het slijk, En wat een ekster broeit dat huppelt op den dijk. Wat eischt er iemand meer? Ziet, allerhande jongen Die piepen evenzoo gelijk de moeders zongen.
- 63 See Németh 1990, *op.cit.* (n. 61), 272-273.
- 64 C. Huygens, *De jeugd van Constantijn Huygens door hemzelf beschreven*, trans. A.H. Kan, Rotterdam 1946, 17: 'De factoren, die het latere karakter bepalen, kan man slechts door schamele aanwijzingen uit de eerste kinderjaren opmaken. Toch wil ik enkele van die dingen hier vooraf laten gaan, die ik, volgens de waarneming mijner ouders, om en bij mijn eerste twee levens jaren deed. Wat ik daarna ouder geworden gedaan heb, zal, als men het vergelijkt, duidelijker laten uitkomen, in welk opzicht ik mijn natuur ben getrouw gebleven en in hoever ik de invloed van mijn opvoeding heb ondergaan'.
- 65 Houbraken, *op.cit.* (n. 28), 15: "T eerste dat hy maakte was een zinnebeeld van zyn bedorven huishouwen. 'T vertrek lag buiten orde overhoop, de Hont slobberde uit de Pot, de kat liep met Spek heen, de Kinderen buitelden ongehavent over de Vloer, Moer zat gemakkelijk in een zetel en zag dit werk aan, en om de klucht had hy zig zelf daar by afgemaalt, met een roemer in de hand, en een Aap op de schoorsteen die dit alles met een langen bek begluurde'.
- 66 Salomon, *op.cit.* (n. 16).
- 67 Lairese, *op.cit.* (n. 40), 188: 'In tegendeel ziet men van een kwaade Huishouding, dat de Vader zorgeloos, en de Moeder kwistig is; dat de Jongens baldadig, en de Dochters ligtvaardig zyn; de Dienstboden luy en ongetrouw. De Vader ziet na niemand om, de Moeder geeft aan de Kinderen wat hun lust; de Meisjens zyn dertel en hovaardig; de Jongens stoeijen en dobbelen; de Dienstboden zoeken te grypen met hunne handen van alle kanten, denkende in ontroerd water is goed vissen; Knechts en Meisjens kruypen by malkander, zuipen en slempen dagelyks, en alles teert van den hoogen boom af, tot dat men eindelyk de hond in de pot vind'.