Counting Out Their Money. Money and Representation in the Early Modern Netherlands[1]

Elizabeth Alice Honig

Consider the hands of Anna Codde and Pieter Bicker, as portrayed by Marten van Heemskerck in 1529 (Figures 1 and 2).[2] They are the hands of people who are not idle, captured forever in their moments of typical occupation. Anna's hands are kept busy with her spinning, balancing the wheel and guiding the thread. Like the ideal housewife of the biblical Book of Proverbs, as cited endlessly by sixteenth-century writers, Anna Codde toils to supply her household with its material needs.[3] She follows the principles of early modern *oeconomia*, treating her household as a self-contained unit which should include within its compass the production as well as the consumption of all necessary goods.[4]

Meanwhile, however, her husband Pieter is not at home: although our first impression is that the space he inhabits is an extension of that occupied by his wife, architectural details inform us that this is not so. Hers is entirely simple, his has the subtlest of classical ornamentation. But it is his hands, massive and strong, that identify the nature of this space. The left one props open an account book, its fingers spread apart, trestle-like, solid against the material of weighty business matters. The right hand has been in motion and is suspended only for an instant, its veins standing out with the effort of an important task: counting coins, two sorts into two piles.[5] According to the account book so carefully held open, a payment is being made to, or has been made by, one Hubrecht.[6] Pieter Bicker, then, is in his office attending to business with other businessmen. And as his wife's task is to be careful with the thread, so his is to be careful with the money, to count the coins and keep the records.

The commercial space Bicker inhabits is more dynamic than his wife's domestic one. She is silhouetted against a flat wall parallel to the picture plane, while he sits in a receding space where table and wall lock his body into position along their diagonal axis. Hanging behind him, a small rectangular mirror refuses to give the expected view of the back of his head, presenting him instead, impossibly, in profile. A willful visual error on the part of the artist, the mirror's mis-reflection suggests that, in the spaces of commerce, things are not as they seem and appearances may be deceiving. All the more reason, then, for Bicker's

Figure 1. Marten van Heemskerck, *Portrait of Anna Codde (?)*, 1529 (Courtesy Rijksmuseum Amsterdam)

Figure 2. Marten van Heemskerck, *Portrait of Pieter Bicker (?)*, 1529 (Courtesy Rijksmuseum Amsterdam)

insistence on the haptic qualities of his coins, their feel between his great fingers as he counts while looking not at the money, but at us. It is a somewhat mistrustful gaze from an untrustworthy place, but the coins and their counters are certainties that can safely pass between any Pieter and any Hubrecht. So at least the painting tells us, though the truth is that coinage, in the early sixteenth century, was notoriously unstable, imprecise and problematic.[7] But paintings, like painted mirrors, can lie: and the lie of this painting is that Pieter Bicker counts and controls money which is solid and immutable.

Marten van Heemskerck's paintings tell us not only about a pair of wedded individuals, and about their notions of what it is to be man and wife; they also inform us about a certain idea of economy and where money enters into it. There are two subtly conjoined areas of existence for this couple, the home and the world outside of it, and both are sites of production -of goods, of wealth- at which wife and husband labor for the sake of the household. The wife's task is to manufacture and to conserve, to provide the items the household needs and to manage them well within the home's confines. The husband is responsible for dealing with money, which passes between himself and other men. Presumably this activity will generate some sort of wealth which will accrue to the family unit -hence the visual impression that the two spaces are contiguous- yet that accumulation is in some sense separate from the essentially independent nature of the home world.[8]

A century later, when Jean Pellicorne commissioned a pair of portraits from Rembrandt, his familial relationship with money was conceptualized rather differently (Figures 3 and 4).[9] Like Pieter Bicker, Pellicorne chose to show himself with his hands occupied with money, his gaze turning to meet ours. His money, though, is no longer the visible coinage of the sixteenth-century painting: it is instead money in bulk, weighty in a sack. And it passes not between anonymous business acquaintances, but between Jean and little Casper Pellicorne, who rushes to his father's side.[10] The innocence of the child's face, the trustfulness of the tiny hands that support the great bag, deny this money any problematic character; and it can now be handled in a space shared, in the pendant painting, by his wife and daughter. Susanna van Collen, though, is not the modest and demure housewife Anna Codde had been. She gazes at us with a look sharper and more penetrating than that of her husband, and too she is in control of money- not bags of wealth, but the hard coin that can be grasped and fingered and counted. In one hand she holds a green purse, while with the other she hands a single coin to her daughter Anna.

In the recent catalogue of the Wallace Collection, where these paintings now hang, the author finds this gesture hard to interpret.[11] He is perplexed by a composition that places money at the center of an image presumably expressive of femininity, of wifely virtue and daughterly potential. It is therefore suggested that the coin represents the dowry Anna will eventually receive from her parents, a suggestion which reflects a twentieth-century embarrassment about riches but not a seventeenth-century one. The coin here is in fact simply an indicator of future expenditure. It will be used to buy in goods for the household: this is Susanna van Collen's socially-sanctioned, proper housewifely task, one which she also trains her daughter to perform.[12] And in this, the gesture is the feminine counterpart of the husband's, the other side of a new economic equation for the family which has superseded the sixteenth-century one. It goes something like this: as men accumulate wealth, so women disburse money. What we are witnessing is a subtle means of picturing the social roles engendered by the development not just of a market economy, but of a consumer society. In it, women will be the counters of money and the sharp-eyed inspectors of value, and coins will be pictured at the center of their world. Men will not be pictorially associated with money as a tangible, visible entity, but rather with that intangible, conceptual thing, 'wealth'.[13]

I have begun this essay with the Bicker and Pellicorne portraits because they illustrate so clearly a shift in the social position of money as expressed through society's cultural productions. Money, as naturalized through its depiction in art, has changed its location, its nature, its function. It has been absorbed into the domestic realm, only to leave it again in the form of feminine expenditure. Coinage has reversed its gendered alliance, and at the same time the range of problems associated with it has altered. For instance, while artists still produce the age-old imagery of male misers, the stereotype now has its opposite in the female spendthrift -she who parts with her coins too easily, as opposed to he refuses to part with them at all.[14] In the field of representation, then, a different cast of characters has been mobilized around money in order to articulate this society's new concern about its measurer of value, its marker of material prosperity.

Art and money are paired on so many levels in the Dutch Republic that it was difficult for me to decide what level I ought to address in this essay. Recently, for instance, Neil de Marchi and Hans van Miegroet have written about the way paintings acquire value on the art market;[15] Michael Montias has discussed ways in which the art market affected pictorial style itself;[16] and Marc

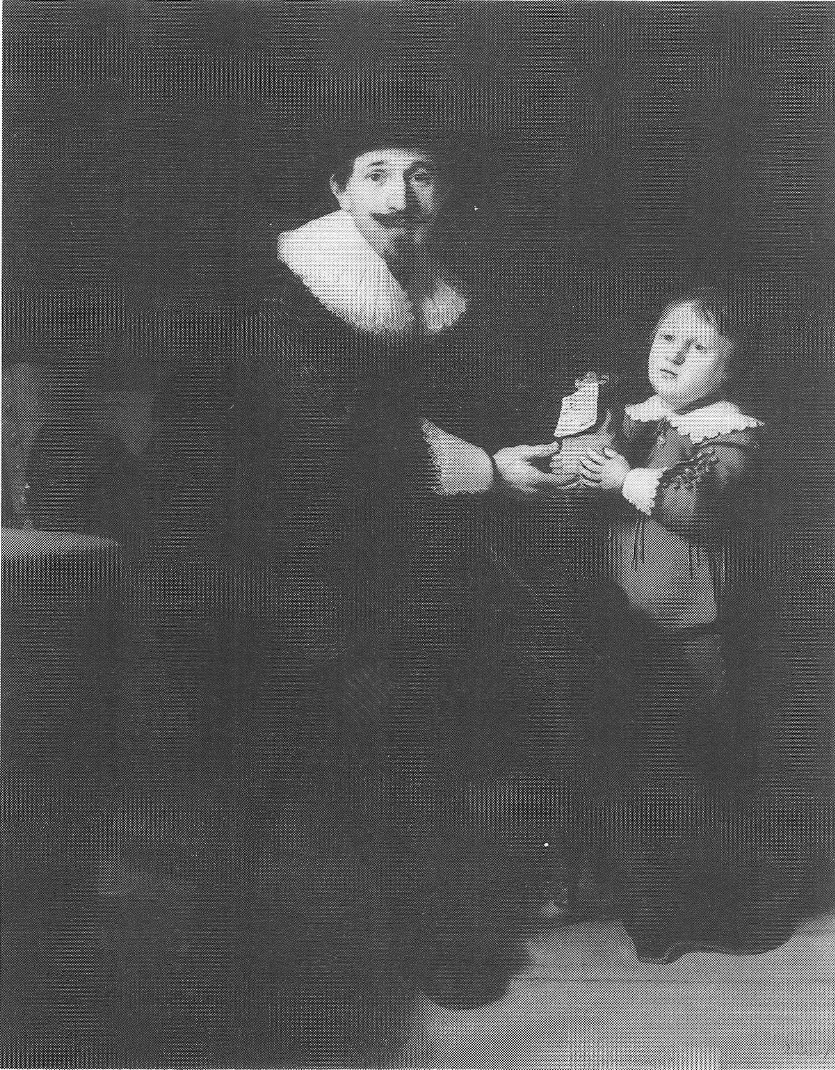

Figure 3. Rembrandt workshop, *Jan Pellicorne and His Son Casper*, ca. 1632 (Courtesy The Wallace Collection, London)

Figure 4. Rembrandt workshop, *Susanna van Collen and Her Daughter Anna*, ca. 1632 (Courtesy The Wallace Collection, London)

Shell and Brian Rotman have explored the signifying functions of money and painting in the early modern period.[17] While keeping in mind larger questions about the comparative natures of money and painting, I have chosen to concentrate on more visible phenomena. I am concerned with money's visuality, *when* it is insistently present in a painting and why, what function the sight of money might serve. This essay will therefore focus on instances in which painters themselves chose to place money -coins- in such a position in their paintings that we *must* confront the nature of money in order to make sense of the pictorial image as a whole; for I hope that such images may inform us about the interrelation of monetary and pictorial imagination in the early modern Netherlands.

1.

No painting more forcefully places money at its conceptual center than Quinten Metsys' *Money-Changer and His Wife* (Figure 5).[18] Painted in Antwerp in 1514, over a decade before Heemskerck separated Pieter Bicker's monied world from his wife's domesticity, it nonetheless presents a scene in which both members of a couple act together in their care for money. Oddly clad in garments from the era of Jan van Eyck, they sit in silent concentration upon a pile of gold coins before them.

What holds their gazes so enrapt is not the counting of coins but the weighing of them. The man holds a balance composed of one pan, in which official weights are placed, and one tray upon which a coin is laid. At issue in this delicate act of judgement is the value of the coin on that tray. For the coin, so critical to commercial life as the measure of value, actually has itself two types of value which must be seen to coincide. On the one hand the coin, stamped with a mark by its minting authority, signifies its own *official* value. On the other hand, coins had a *real* value according to the precious metal they contained, a value which would be altered by fraudulent clipping or general wear.[19] The question, in semiotic terms, is one of whether the referent (that is, the real metal) is adequate to the sign (the stamp).

Figure 5. Quinten Metsys, *The Money-Changer and His Wife*, 1514 (Courtesy Louvre, Paris)

In any given place, the varieties of coinage in use were manifold: coins did not obey geographical boundaries, but circulated freely and were drawn in particular to trade centers like Antwerp. There, it was the business of men like this one to judge the actual and relative value of different coins in a manner scrupulously honest: the performance of their work was to be visible to public scrutiny, and they had to allow clients all possible opportunities to fairly judge their own judgement.[20] Hence the Biblical inscription which, evidently, adorned the painting's original frame: 'Let the balance be just and the weights be equal' (Leviticus 19:36).[21] And hence too the presence of a second figure in the scene,

the money-changer's wife. She has been reading a book of hours. As her husband's hands are busy with his weighing, so hers are occupied with turning the pages of the book. One hand rumples the lying leaves, while the other delicately grasps the corner of the velum that she moves across. This action is just as important to the image as her husband's, is indeed a parallel to it. Although her eyes are turned aside, toward the money, her gesture exposes something else to *our* eyes: a picture of the Madonna and Child. In a neat visual pun, their unquestionable divinity is signified by golden disks, which echo the gold disks strewn about the opposite side of the table.[22] The woman's gaze moves from one to the other, from halo to coin, testing the ability of the earthly gold to measure up to what it promises.

Meanwhile, in the center of the painting, another golden roundel enframes a convex mirror. In its reflecting surface the mirror captures 'our' world -the world outside of the painting- and brings it into the painted scene. A man reading a large book, perhaps the Bible, and through a window the glimpse of a church tower: again the religious intrudes into a scene which we in the twentieth century take to be secular, commercial. But in Metsys' era no activity was separated from the church's moral authority, and the honesty and justice of gold-weighing occurs within a world permeated by that authority.[23] More doubtful, though, is the authority of the mirror-image itself. A convex mirror does not tell a simple truth: the image reflected in it has a distorted relationship to material reality. Yet here its inclusion of ourselves -our world, our religion, our values- is so critical that we are called upon to judge the degree of truth it offers.

I would suggest that at one level Metsys' painting is posing questions about the judgement of a sort of representation we would now call 'realism', that style wherein a claim is made that mimesis can attain a level of perfect exactitude. The work as a whole, with its reminders of Eyckian manner in dress and in facture, presents one sort of 'realism': the immaculate precision of the fifteenth-century masters, whose uncannily intense renderings of the world endowed figured substance with the shimmer of spiritual meaning.[24] And within the painting, across the foreground counter of the money-changer's office, our eye is focussed on three more claimants to pictorial duplication: mirror, holy image, money.[25] One of these, the mirror, is visible only to us; one, the illuminated page, is ignored for the moment by the painted couple; and only the third, money, is presented as a major focus of concern. Yet the judgement of money is thereby endowed with a significance which far exceeds the concerns of

local commerce, a significance which is at once religious, aesthetic, and epistemological. Money becomes not only the measure of value, but the measure of Truth. It is as if the entire validity of this painting's aesthetic, its assertion of maintaining a tight fit between representation and reality, rests upon the coin's conformity to the value it claims to represent. Hence the reverence with which attention is concentrated upon the moment of judgement; hence the painting which suspends action at the point where the page turns, the scales balance.

In this early Netherlandish painting, mimicking the aesthetic of still earlier Netherlandish painting, money functions as a medium of representation. It represents value -that is its true function- but the problems of this representative function have become so central in contemporary society that they can in turn be made central to a more general questioning of representation. Metsys' painting is the relic of a moment of mistrust: mistrust of the new mercantile economy, its supposed transparency, its Christian ethics; and mistrust of the type of painting that claims the ability to embody it. But while the transparency of representation may be in doubt, the *possibility* of it is not. Metsys' image proposes, quite forcefully, that careful individual judgement will be able to establish where the truth lies within a broad economy of representations. It calls upon the beholder to scrutinize images with an eye trained in moral certainties, and to take responsibility for metaphorically weighing their claims to truth.

2.

Metsys' painting of a money-changer stands at one moment of artistic transition, between Eyckian realism and a new kind of art -what we might call the realism of individual responsibility- which became characteristic of sixteenth-century painting in Antwerp.[26] A hundred years later, in the early years of the Dutch Republic, Jacob Cuyp's painting of a fishmonger (Figure 6) stands at the inception of its own tradition: that of a certain strain of 'realistic' Dutch genre painting in general, and of imagery of commerce in particular.[27] True, the market scene as a genre had first been established in sixteenth-century Antwerp, with the paintings of Pieter Aertsen and Joachim Beuckelaer.[28] But Cuyp's paintings does something different, something critically new and typically Dutch, and that something has to do with money.

Figure 6. Jacob Cuyp, *Fish Market*, 1627 (Courtesy Dordrechts Museum, Dordrecht)

Cuyp treats not high finance now, but grocery shopping. A woman has come to buy fish, accompanied by her maid who carries the fish pail. The lady is neatly but not ostentatiously dressed, her costume dominated by her long black *huik*. She points to the fish she wishes to purchase with a finger on which her wedding ring is carefully shown, and she looks directly at the fish seller. He returns her gaze, resting one hand on a tub of fish which is tilted up so we can see, clearly and without obstruction, what is for sale. Equally clear is the rendering of the coins, held in the man's other hand which nearly touches that of the woman. A contemporary viewer could have identified each coin, could have calculated the value of the purchase being made at the fish-stall. It is this handful of money that is the focal point of the transaction between man and woman, and the focus of the painting's composition.

Market imagery was sparse at this period in the northern provinces, and the design of Cuyp's painting is unique among those early works which do exist.[29] It is, however, comparable to a type of market scene being produced in

contemporary Antwerp, one typified by Adriaen van Utrecht's *Fish Market* (Figure 7). Here the fish stall is tended by a young woman whose rolled-up sleeves reveal muscled arms. With one rough hand she grasps a fish, and with the other she reaches out to her customer, an elegantly-dressed lady standing on the far side of a great, chaotic mound of fish. This lady returns her look and makes a languid gesture of acceptance, while her other hand remains immobilized inside her muff. Although she has a basket over her arm, it is not for carrying fish: that task is delegated to her serving-boy who stands with his back to us at the left edge of the composition. Also at the fish stall are two men. One, a gentleman in a feathered hat, joins the boy in watching the transaction between the two women. The other, a fish-carrier, looks out at the beholder and invites us to join in witnessing the scene.

Cuyp's painting too has a cast of supporting characters, but they are not observing the main transaction; rather, they are engaged in transactions of their own. A central couple talk, while behind them more commerce occurs. People in this image are neatly paired: that, rather than center-and-spectators, is the primary system of socioeconomic organization that it posits. The exception occurs along the image's right edge where, caught at the margin, a gentleman looks out at the beholder: this is a self-portrait of the artist, challenging us from the periphery of his own painting.[30] In front of him, closest to us, the attractive young maid with her red-lined fish pail echoes his outward gaze. Unpaired amongst pairs, the maid and the artist solicit from the beholder some sort of pairing for their completion (erotic? aesthetic? economic?), so that the logic of the painting incorporates our presence within its field of transactions. This, then, is the first way in which Cuyp's image differs from its Flemish counterpart: instead of allowing us to be spectators of a scene, like Van Utrecht does, Cuyp insists that we define ourselves as participants in its dynamic.

Second, Cuyp ties social and economic interaction together. His market is a site of encounters and conversations. Man meets woman, buyer meets seller, wealthier meets humbler. I use that last, awkward distinction rather than the easier 'rich meets poor' because that is an opposition Cuyp's work evades, in contrast with that of Van Utrecht. In the latter, the class division between buyer and seller is even overstated. Elegant costume versus rumpled, worn garb; subtle gesture versus awkward, uncivilized one; the discretion of the muff versus the indiscretion of the naked arm: these are two people who have no real meeting-point.

Figure 7. Adriaen van Utrecht, *Fish Market* (Courtesy Koninklijk Intstituut voor het Kunstpatrimonium, Brussels)

Cuyp's central pair, while distinguished from one another, are nonetheless very much able to meet. What joins them together, easily forging the link between their difference, is money. And in observing this, we realize that money is pointedly absent from Van Utrecht's painting. There is no indication at all that his wealthy woman will give anything in exchange for her fish: on the contrary, their extreme abundance is that of nature's gift, not man's provisions; their seller's gesture one of proffering, not bargaining. In this Van Utrecht follows an absolutely standard pattern in Antwerp market scenes, which uniformly lack evenness, equality or exchange. And this model is what Cuyp's Dutch painting rejects at the same time that it accepts, indeed focuses upon, visible money.[31] So how does money function, what does it mean, in this context?

I would say that the presence of money in Cuyp's painting recognizes an actuality of both aesthetic and economic practice, which is the *bilateral* nature of exchange. Flemish paintings like that of Van Utrecht promoted a socially conservative illusion of possession which was one-sided: those who should have

(us, the rich) simply have; goods come to us. In a society undergoing the considerable socioeconomic retrenchment that the Southern Netherlands were then experiencing, such an illusion was no doubt a pleasing one, confirming as it did the naturally hierarchical arrangement of the social order.[32] But the introduction of money throws that assurance off balance. In Cuyp's painting, money has indeed already made its shift, has passed from the hand of the buyer into that of the seller. This distributes power and possession in a new way: two people have agreed on a fair exchange, each gets what they want from it, and each is, in fact, a consumer -she now, he when he in turn will use his money to satisfy his own wants.

It is money which, in the course of its circulation, translates the commodities of the market into values.[33] Its structuring function at the hub of this painting reminds the beholder that in every transaction, *both* parties must agree on those values, must desire what the other has, must exchange *equally* through money's medium. Hence the artist's challenge, and the maid's, to us -to take a position relative to them, to desire, to engage in some sort of traffic. This unlocking of the field of the image to the presence of the beholder is crystallized in the central presence of money, the leveller of the marketplace, the material whose exchange brings people together in an endless chain of trade while always, at the same time, remaining a mere measure and hence an impersonal barrier between them.[34] Cuyp's painting, from the early years of the Dutch Republic, thus makes visible a way of thinking which was increasingly to divide the culture and the economy of the Republic from those of its former compatriots in the south, one which is based upon a particular understanding and acceptance of the workings of money.

3.

While Cuyp's image was directed at the uniting force of money and of commerce, money's divisive nature is the concern of my next subject: Gerrit Dou's *Grocery Shop* of 1647 (Figure 8). Painted twenty years after Cuyp's *Fish Market*, it depicts a different type of business and does so in a different pictorial mode. Both of these are what I will term *mediated.* For the type of business shown, the shop, involves an extra level of mediation between production and acquisition of goods. And the painting marks, once again, the inception of a new pictorial form: the so-called 'niche-piece', where a fictive window mediates between the beholder and the scene viewed.[35] In Dou's image of doubled

mediation, money plays a peculiar role. It is not part of the central transaction between the shop-keeper and the diminutive child-woman opposite her, where we would expect to find it. Instead, money is being counted, slowly and methodically, by the old woman whose shadowed form intervenes between us and them.

Figure 8. Gerrit Dou, *The Grocery Shop*, 1647 (Courtesy Louvre, Paris)

Around her, the objects in the shop are loaded with written references to the circumstances of the painting's making: Dou's name (on one of the boxes), the date, 1647 (on the mortar), and the location, Leiden (LEYDE//YDEN), on the paper cone lying on the counter. Dou, 1647, Leiden. In that time and place, Gerrit Dou's position was a remarkable one. So successful was the 35-year-old painter that his compatriots looked to him as a model for their professional aspirations.[36] Particularly impressive were his sheer financial success and his unusual ways of achieving it. On the one hand he had a maecenas, the Swedish diplomat Spiering Silvercroon, who paid an exorbitant yearly sum just for the right to refusal of his paintings;[37] on the other, in very businesslike fashion he calculated the hours spent on each work and charged for the final product based on a generous hourly wage.[38] Dou had thus found outstanding ways of exploiting the old art system (working for a patron) and the new one (working for the open market), and consequently he controlled his own income to a degree unknown to most of his fellow painters. This control was part of what made him such a paragon for his colleagues who, in 1647, were trying to obtain permission from the city of Leiden to form a Sint-Lucas Guild.[39] The rationale for their request was primarily an economic, value-oriented one: a guild would provide a way of regulating the volatile art market, of controlling the commodity circulation through which value was produced, of managing their own incomes.[40]

As the marketing of art was so much on peoples' minds in the 1640s, it was appropriate that the painter Philips Angel should emphasize that aspect of an artist's career in a famous lecture which he delivered in Leiden in 1641. Having touted Dou's commercial success, Angel recounts a story (borrowed from Jacob Cats) in which a painter and a poet vie for the hand of a maiden.[41] The painter upends his rival's boasting by stating that his own profession is superior because it provides a sure income. Not content with dismissing the poet, the painter goes on to compare himself to a merchant, and again proves his occupation the better one. I too, he brags, can do business -but mine is more secure because I am the *maker* of the very goods I market.

Gerrit Dou, chosen in 1648 to be the standard-bearer of the new guild, is the perfect example of the businessman-painter, the maker-marketer; and this role is not only evident from his documented business strategies, but is incorporated into the aesthetic of his made-to-be-marketed wares. At every level, his paintings are crafted in such a way that they declare themselves to be fine objects, objects of value. Painted in his famously meticulous technique, some

Figure 9. Gerrit Dou, *Niche with Ewer, Basin and Towel* (two panels originally covering another painting) (Courtesy Louvre, Paris)

works were even provided with painted covers, protective shields whose presence announced the extreme value of the object they revealed when opened (Figure 9). Typically, a *trompe l'oeil* niche covering like the one illustrated here delighted the connoisseur's eye with its trickery, and then opened to expose an image, like the *Grocery Shop*, in which *trompe l'oeil* and the niche were again deployed. But those devices were used differently in outer and inner images, a

difference I would describe as one between presentation and mediation. The cover-niche is a presenter: it serves to delimit a shallow space which prevents a visual trajectory of any great depth while carefully defining a space for illusionism. Objects -the gleaming metal pitcher and plate, the soft cloth- are not allowed to fit entirely within the niche's compass but are articulated by it as belonging, in part, to our world.

The window-niche, on the other hand, is no niche at all, nor is it a truly effective *trompe l'oeil*. Rather, the window niche is like a rhetorical device whose function is to signal that what is beyond its frame is 'like life', like the view through a window. Dou's art was esteemed by his contemporaries for its closeness to life, and yet in fact an image like the *Grocery Shop* is not 'like life' at all. Neither the scene shown, nor the figures, nor our perception of them are a close match with visually experienced reality. But the rhetoric of the so-called niche creates within its compass a powerful claim that what we see is 'life': enframement mediates, controls and organizes the way we view and value Dou's painting. What it shows us as being reality, though, is very unlike the clear, brightly visible worlds of a Metsys or a Cuyp. Dou's worlds are more comparable, I think, to contemporary *pronkstillevens* (luxury still lifes) in which precious items emerge from darkness into light, hover between a mysterious depth and a graspable presence. It is a function of Gerrit Dou's aesthetic to transform a genre subject into a fetishizable object whose contents are equally fetishistic: that is the 'reality' it gives us.[42] And the context in which this happens is the grocery shop.

Grocery shops were, at this time, a relatively recent phenomenon in urban life, and were not a common subject in Dutch art. No painting of one predates Dou's, and those that followed, all by his associates in Leiden, were window-niche scenes like this originating one.[43] Their manner of presentation thus matched their subject. The grocery shop itself is a site of mediation, where goods bought for money are resold for money. In other words, while the ideal market trade between two people (like that shown by Cuyp) proceeds thus:

goods - money - goods

exchange in a shop is schematized as:

money - goods - money

In the early modern period, this second type of trade was regarded as something of a problem. A less 'natural' manner of commerce, it had the potential to corrupt the process by which the value of commodities was determined.[44] The double passage through the medium of money meant that that agreement about value which two people - Cuyp's fisherman and housewife - made at market was less direct. Mediation problematizes value. This was true in the case of any commodity, including paintings, and this was one problem which the Leiden artists were trying to resolve by forming a guild in the 1640s.

Dou's *Grocery Shop* addresses this problem of mediated value directly, commenting upon it and at the same time trying to control it. One indication of this is the unexpected location of money, that mediator of exchange and marker of value, which is so separated from the commercial activity of the shop. A second signal is the role of the fourth figure in the painting, one not involved with either money or commerce: the boy at the left edge. Although far from the image's geometric center he is in fact at its perspectival focus, and clear compositional lines draw our attention to his visage, his eyes returning our glance. As in Jacob Cuyp's *Fish Market*, this look that answers ours from the painting's margin belongs to the painting's author. Dou had made his own features well known to the public by a series of self-portraits, and so would easily have been recognized in this instance. He appears to be a young boy, but this is just an instance of Dou's typical way of diminishing the customers in his shop scenes- like the girl-woman beside the painter in this work. There is, I think, something very unnatural, self-consciously artificed, in this as in so many other aspects of the image. Dou looks out at us from the edge of a painting which has denaturalized our assumptions about reality as well as those about value.

These two issues come together, in Dou's painting, in a series of items which fit but do not fit in the scene, which are acceptable but somehow slightly off or at least unexpected. The boy-Dou, himself already a unsettling subject, carries in his hands a mustard-pot, a most uncommon item in genre scenes. Contemporary proverbs associated mustard with expense and payment: 'dat is duure mostaard', he paid too much for it.[45] And in fact Dou, an artist particularly inclined toward the inclusion of playful verbal associations in his works, has loaded this one with odd items that refer to value and its judgement or misjudgment.[46] For instance, the plate of butter on the table is, in realistic terms, out of place here, for butter was sold at markets and not shops. But butter was

the subject of several sayings concerning a kind of savvy in daily commerce: 'hij weet wat de botere ter maerct mach ghelden', he's sharp in his business, knows how to get good value for something.[47] Most importantly, in the image's central action, a woman is dropping tiny black grains into the pan of a balance. The gesture echoes that in Metsys' painting, but here it is not money being weighed: the wrapped bundle on the counter indicates that what is sold at this shop is pepper, for paper cones were the traditional way of packaging pepper as can be seen in scores of 'breakfast' still lifes.[48] *Peperduur* is one common expression about pepper and value that has survived in the Dutch language, but in Dou's day there were many more: to 'pepper' a person was to make them pay dearly, and other sayings about pepper, like those about butter and mustard, concerned high prices and the ability to judge value.[49]

These verbal elements merely form a secondary level of commentary on a picture whose meaning is directly conveyed by its very mode of presentation - or mediation - and by the response it evokes. The force of Dou's new aesthetic is directed here toward forcing the beholder to face a problem of mediation and the judgement of value. Recall that Dou was an artist who went to some lengths to assure that the value of his paintings was calculable in terms of his own labor, rather than being set through the workings of the open market. Yet as soon as a painting left Dou's hands it became simply another commodity, its value determined by that capricious market. In recognition of that fact, Dou's image challenges us to recover its own 'truer' value, its proper worth. The niche separates us from the scene, but at the same time provides access which it claims is immediate. It declares the scene's value as 'reality', whereas the image's *visual* structure promotes its fetishization as object. Within its alluring world, money, the measure of value and the mediator in exchange, is separated from the precious commodity whose worth is weighed, judged, agreed upon in the central action. The contract that remains is that between depicted artist and present beholder who, if he 'weet wat de botere ter marct mach gelden', will attribute to the work of art the high value with which its maker originally endowed it. Dou uses fictions of visual mediation, finally, to work *against* realities of economic mediation in a bid to control the value of his products.

4.

In the paintings by Metsys, Cuyp and Dou, the presence of money was a complicating factor which called upon the beholder to resolve it. In the first and last cases, the problem had to do with pictorial representation itself: Metsys' money spoke to issues of 'realism' in images, Dou's to concerns about mediation in the aesthetics and economics of painting. Cuyp's work, on the other hand, concerned the way in which money functioned as a leveller and a connector in market transactions. A picture with money at its center was therefore opened up along its edge to necessary connection with and completion by the image's beholder. In Dou's scene too, the presence of money was part of an appeal to the beholder to agree about the value of the work. In all these cases, I have been assuming that the beholder, the person who understands about money and who interacts with the painted image, is male - a savvy connoisseur who is also prone to commodity fetishism in Dou's case, a man who responds to both erotic and economic allure in Cuyp's.

And yet, in both paintings, the buyer depicted in the image is a woman; in Dou's work, so are the seller and the person who counts her coins so methodically at the table. And I began this essay by arguing that in the seventeenth century it was women, not men, who were particularly associated with money, both in social ideals and in their pictorial reflections. Women like Susanna van Collen were the controllers of 'real' money - money, that is, that could be seen and counted, was embodied in metal coinage. As the movers of the micro-economic world, provisioning households and distributing foodstuffs, they came into the greatest contact with small change. It is clear from Susanna van Collen's portrait that the ability to deal wisely with these financial responsibilities was a matter of pride to a wealthy burgher woman. But Cuyp's painting, I believe, suggests that the new positioning of women in the economic realm was not unambiguously a good thing, not an easy thing for society to absorb. For while money enables the transaction between housewife and fishmonger (Good), it also could potentially enable another sort of transaction between the viewer and the maid (not so Good): the painting's dynamic posits this equivalency.

Figure 10. Quirijn Brekelenkam, *Fish Stall.* Also attributed to Hendrick Martensz. Sorgh (Courtesy Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

Women's association with money has two facets to it, positive and negative, and both are - in seventeenth-century terms - manifestations of women's essential nature. A contradiction? Consider the range of imagery of women fascinated by coins, a common theme in Dutch painting. Metsys' young wife and Dou's aged crone were entranced by the sight of money, and so are both young and old women in Quirijn Brekelenkam's *Fish Stall* (Figure 10).[50] The young woman here, dolled up for her trip to market with a red bodice and a

beauty-spot on her forehead, concentrates on counting out the payment for her salmon steak; the old one, meanwhile, eyes her watchfully. That counting and watching are the only 'actions' of the image, representing two feminine forms of visual concentration.

Now, if we were to place this image within the context established by Susanna van Collen's portrait, we would assume the young woman's fixation on money to be entirely positive, an example of household management to be admired. Yet if we placed it within the context of Cuyp's painting, a different narrative would emerge, one where the woman's concern about money was perhaps more problematic. Or rather, the problem is that one reading does not exclude the other. For instance, we might like to suppose women's care for money to be virtuous or suspect according to her class, burgher women being less open to its evil temptations than their maids. But of course this is not the case - or at least, the seventeenth-century imagination suspected it not to be the case. For behind every genre painting of a woman's virtue tempted lies the premise that even the most elegant or most domestic woman may be accessible if approached by way of coins (Figure 11).[51] Gerard ter Borch's wealthy young lady shares with Brekelenkam's maid a fascination with the sight of money, and the drama of the painting depends upon our sensing in her a desire to hold those coins herself, to count them in her hands - a desire which may or may not outweigh the moral lessons society has taught her. Caught in paint at the moment when a handful of coins transfixes her gaze, she too is counting, reckoning the costs and benefits of forsaking her domestic virtue. She values herself in the vision of money.

Women, in other words, have a particular visual relationship with money which is not shared by men. They count it, they consider it, they know what it means. Women understand, as men in pictures do not, what part money really plays in the roles and rules society makes for them. They not only know 'what the butter costs', and the fish; they know what *they* cost; their lives are measured out in money.

Figure 11. Gerard ter Borch, *The Proposition* (Courtesy Louvre, Paris)

Figure 12. Johannes Vermeer, *The Procuress* (Courtesy Gemäldegalerie, Dresden)

So when the young woman in Vermeer's *Procuress* holds her hand out to receive a coin, a decision has been made, a value assessed by two parties, a price agreed upon (Figure 12). For this is another instance where visible money is at the center of a painting which insists that we understand and accept money's terms. Or not quite at the center: at true center is a gesture, a hand that waits for money to drop into it. Cuyp's seller of fish, money already in his hand, had obtained his side of the transaction, but Vermeer shows a transaction *both* of whose parts are still unrealized.

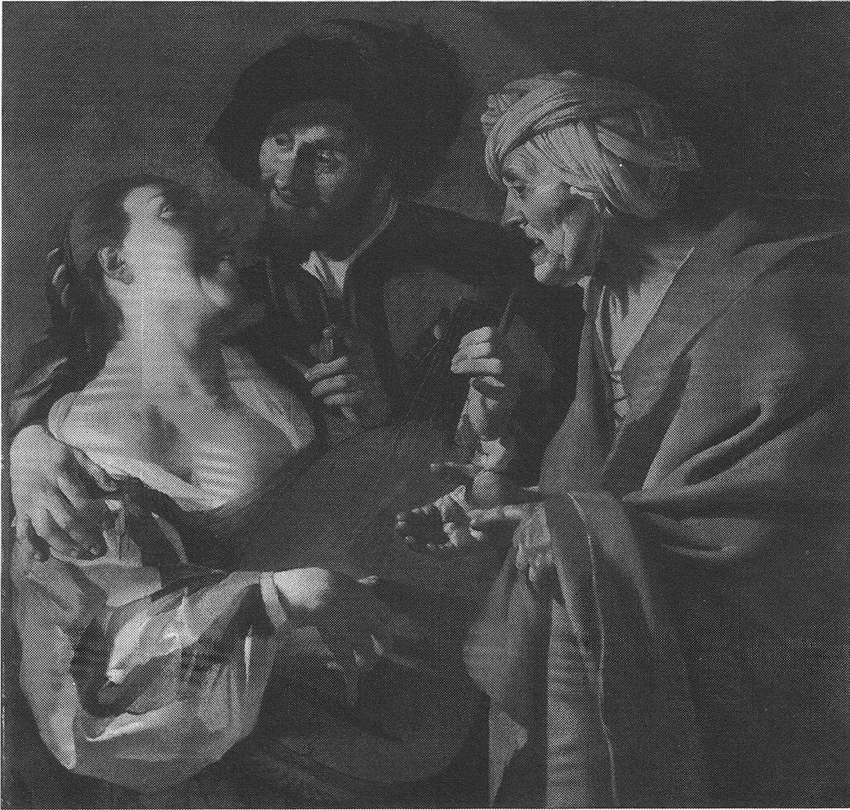

Figure 13. Dirk van Baburen, *The Procuress* (Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

One of the ways in which Vermeer revises his point of departure for this image, Dirck van Baburen's *Procuress*, is precisely in the role played by visible money (Figure 13).[52] Baburen too had placed a coin at the picture's center, but the couple for whose commerce that money matters do not look at it. Their attention is all for one another, while the procuress stares at the coin and points to her own hand as its anticipated destination. So in Baburen's painting, like in Dou's *Grocery Shop*, coinage is visually detached from the exchange it mediates. This split serves a very different function within the dynamic of the prostitution scene, though, for by separating male love of looking at feminine sensuality from female love of looking at solid money, Baburen eases the crucial line of vision between beholder and painting. The object of desire (woman/painted woman/painting) accepts attention without the intervention of

her own monetary longings. Quite unlike this ready receptor is Vermeer's painted woman, whose visual interest is all for that critical coin; but then, the gaze of Vermeer's man is equally fixed upon the money, payment superseding the object purchased as the focus of gazes. Curiously, however, we as beholders do not see Vermeer's coin as we saw Baburen's. Nothing but a line of paint, it almost vanishes between the thumb and finger that grasp it tight. It is a gleam of light, itself only a potentiality, visually unrealized until the moment when it will fall into the woman's hand which is, already, so eager to close over it.

In Vermeer's art, the element which is unstable and elusive is usually the feminine one: women who are spatially distanced from the beholder, whose features are unarticulated, who are left perpetually elusive as the painting at once records and disavows their visible presence.[53] *The Procuress* is unique in his *oeuvre,* for in it a pictured man is granted the ability to touch the woman he desires, her tactile availability affirming the visual evidence of her existence. But that touch is strangely inadequate. Unexpectedly congealing and coagulating around the man's fingers, the paint itself seems to thwart the man's (and our) assumption about what he grasps - physical essence (paint) contradicting visual claim (woman). In this contradiction lies the woman's *self*-possession, a value held, but only very contingently. At the same time, both the gaze of longing and the problem of its satisfaction are displaced onto money, woman's mark and measure, her medium of understanding and control.

Vermeer's painting stands near the end of, and forms a comment upon, an aesthetic tradition of 'realism'; Quinten Metsys' *Money Changer* stood near its beginning, and commented upon it too. Both images make their comments through a scene in which a couple, man and woman, are transfixed by the sight of money, an object whose physical essence (precious metal) may or may not match its visual claim (as signs of value). The coin is always already the sign of something else beyond itself: that is its essential nature as money. And hence Vermeer's coin, in its perpetual invisibility, becomes the perfect sign of that which is really valued, that which is desired, and that whose attainment is finally so problematized by Vermeer's manner of painting. For that happy possibility of representational certainty which is still deeply upheld by Metsys' painting is undone by Vermeer's slash of paint, which is not adequate to its final meaning and yet which must be adequate to the *potential* for satisfaction. Art and money are, it seems, really in the same business: that of translating wants into their own medium, while remaining nothing but the signifiers of those wants.

Notes:

1. My thanks to Margaret Carroll, Louis Kaplan and Alison Kettering for their suggestions about the material presented in this article. The section on Cuyp derives from a section of my study *Painting and the Market: Pictures of Exchange and Display in Early Modern Antwerp*, in preparation; the section on Gerard Dou is based on an essay written for a seminar taught by Eric Jan Sluijter, and was presented previously at an Association of Art Historians meeting in the session 'Authorship and Anonymity' chaired by Evelyn Welch. The present essay as a whole was given as a lecture at the Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden in the context of the Masterclass 'The Republic's Money'. Its intention was merely to provoke students to think further about issues of value and representation, and I hope that readers will take it in that suggestive, exploratory spirit.
2. I am referring to the sitters of these portraits by their traditional identification: this has been questioned and is currently rejected by the Rijksmuseum, but no alternative has been proposed. The identity of these two individuals is not important to my argument, however; only the fact that they are a married couple.
3. The passage in the Bible (Proverbs 31:10-31) stipulates that the ideal wife earns a cash income by selling off the excess goods manufactured by the household at high prices, and always knows what market commodities are worth. This was not taken to be part of the perfect housewife's role in the 16th century, although it is closer to 17th-century ideals as will become clear below.
4. On 16th-century writings about household economy see Otto Brunner, 'Das "ganze Haus" und die alteuropäische "Ökonomik"', in: *Neue Wege der Verfassungs- und Sozialgeschichte* (2nd ed. Göttingen 1968) 103-127.
5. When I presented this talk in Leiden, several members of the audience suggested to me that Pieter de Bicker must be counting not real coins but reckoning-chips, as the objects he handles are too regular to be 16th-century coins. But I have looked carefully at the painting again and believe that Heemskerck plainly intended these as coins: possibly they appear so regular because De Bicker is sorting them into piles according to type of coin.
6. Rainald Grosshans, *Maerten van Heemskerck* (Berlin 1980) 91-93 and n.1.
7. It was only shortly after Heemskerck's work was painted that a first attempt was made to mint a coin (the *Karolusgulden*) that would embody the abstract, reckoning money, the *gulden*. Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *Nederland 1500-1815. De eerste ronde van moderne economische groei* (Amsterdam 1995) 107.

8. It should be noted that this is an ideal, or at least a way of conceptualizing reality, rather than any accurate reflection of real economic experience in 1529. Early writings on *oeconomia* tend to promote a very nostalgic notion of the self-sufficient household, a thing which the developing complex market economy was making less and less possible.
9. The portraits are now generally agreed to have been executed by assistants in Rembrandt's workshop: this is thoroughly argued by J. Bruyn e.a., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings: II, 1631-1634* (Dordrecht/Boston/Lancaster 1986), #'s C65 and C66, 710-727. Pellicorne was a native of Leiden who, like so many others, made his fortune in Amsterdam. He married Susanna van Collen in 1626; their daughter Anna was born in that same year and a son, Casper, followed two years later.
10. It is not clear in the painting whether Caspar is rushing to bring money to his father or to receive it from him. I am inclined to think that the former is more likely. Several years later, in his etched portrait of Jan Uytenbogaert (B.281), Rembrandt used a similar solution to the problem of depicting a man as possessor of large amounts of money: Uytenbogaert, the nation's Receiver-General, was shown being handed money from all sides. In such a portrayal, money becomes an offering received rather than something for which a person labors. It is also possible, however, that Pellicorne hands money *to* his son as a sign of paternal provision for the next generation.
11. John Ingamells, *The Wallace Collection. Catalogue of Pictures IV: Dutch and Flemish* (London 1992) 292. This was also proposed, more tentatively, by Bruyn e.a., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings* 719.
12. There are other images of women disbursing money for use in household provisioning although not, as far as I know, in portraiture. A particularly good example is a genre scene by Quirijn Brekelenkam (Zurich, Kunsthaus) in which a wealthy housewife hands her maid money from a purse: the maid, holding a shopping-pail, is clearly on her way to the market. Susanna van Collen's gesture here adds to the 'good money manager' motif the notion that her daughter will be taught these skills by her: Jacob Cats, in his *Houwelyck*, emphasizes that daughters need to learn about shopping from their mothers. *Houwelyck, Dat is, De gansche gelegentheyt des Echten staets* (Middelburg 1625), fols.86 *verso* - 87 *verso*.
13. Men's association with 'wealth' is beautifully represented by paintings of the *beurs* by Job Berckheyde and Emanuel de Witte. These were studied by one of the students in the Masterclass, Peter Venema: 'Masculine and feminine

economic space: Markets and the *Beurs van Amsterdam*'. Of course in the 17th century, unlike today, large-scale business too was principally based on actual, physically extant coinage. So men did in fact come into contact with great quantities of money, but this abundance was not considered an appropriate subject for pictorial representation.

14. Among the many 17th-century miser paintings, the most famous is probably Rembrandt's *The Rich Man* (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie): like other comparable works this one has been called an allegory of avarice and an illustration of the Biblical parable of the Rich Man (Luke 12:16-21). See Christian Tümpel, 'Ikonographische Beiträge zu Rembrandt. Zur Deutung und Interpretation einzelner Werke', *Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunstsammlungen* 16 (1971) 27-30. A contemporary example of the female spendthrift image is Adrian van de Venne's captioned painting *'Seker'* (loc. unknown), which shows woman allowing shower of coins to spill from her lap; see too Van de Venne's captioned grisaille *'Het sijn stercke beenen die Weelde konnen dragen'* (Gotha, Museum), showing a man trying to carry a spendthrift woman on his back.
15. Neil de Marchi and Hans van Miegroet, 'Art, Value, and Market Practices in the Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century', *Art Bulletin* 86 (September 1994) 451-464; see too the present author's 'The beholder as work of art: A study in the location of value in seventeenth-century Flemish painting', in: *Beeld en zelf-beeld in de Nederlandse Kunst 1550-1700, Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* (1995) 253-297.
16. J. Michael Montias, 'Cost and Value in Seventeenth-century Dutch Art', *Art History* 10 (December 1987) 4, 455-466.
17. Marc Shell, *Art and Money* (Chicago 1995); Brian Rotman, *Signifying Nothing: The Semiotics of Zero* (Stanford 1987).
18. On Metsys' painting see Larry Silver, *The Paintings of Quinten Massys* (Montclair 1984) 136-138 and cat. no.16; Basil Yamey, *Art and Accounting* (New Haven/London 1989) 45ff.
19. On this and other issues of the 'real' value of coins in this period, see Cor de Graaf, 'Muntmeesters en muntschenners, vervalsers en wisselaars', in: *Gewogen of bedrogen* (Leiden 1994) 57-94, esp. 63-66.
20. An ordinance of 1535 states that the *wisselaar* must do his work where all can see it, must advertise with a sign outside that he is doing it, and must have on hand the officially published books of monies and their relative weights and values so that the public can consult them. De Graaf, 'Muntmeesters en muntschenners', 67.

21. This is recorded by Metsys' earliest biographer, A. van Fornenbegh (1658); see Silver, *The Paintings of Quiten Massys* 136.
22. Visual meanings of the parallel between halos and coins have been explored by Shell, *Art and Money*.
23. I am taking issue here with an interpretation of Metsys' painting which would claim that the business of the money-changer is being *opposed* to religious virtue, that the direction of the wife's gaze signals the evil lure of money drawing her away from religion. I believe that this and other 16th-century 'banker' paintings, notably those of Marinus van Reymerswaele, deal with the necessity of reconciling Christian morality and commercial business, rather than with their opposition. For the contrary view see Keith P.F. Moxey, 'The criticism of avarice in: 16th-century Netherlandish painting', in: Görel Cavalli-Björkman, ed., *Netherlandish Mannerism* (Stockholm 1985) 21-34. For more detailed, documented examination of the development of a Christian economic morality and its implications for artistic production see the present author's *Painting and the Market*.
24. One of the finest brief characterizations of the nature of Eyckian 'realism' and its relationship to 'meaning' is still the concluding pages of Erwin Panofsky, 'Jan van Eyck's "Arnolfini Portrait"', *Burlington Magazine* 64 (1934) 117-127.
25. The essentially pictorial nature of money was far more widely acknowledged and commented upon in the 16th century than in our own day. Particularly in debates about the status of images in the lead-up to the iconoclasm, the imagery *on* money and money itself *as* image are very often brought into the argument.
26. On this see further *Painting and the Market*.
27. For more detail on the beginnings of a Dutch tradition of market imagery, which in general begins in the graphic arts and moves gradually into painting, see the present author's entry 'Commerce and Commercial Life', in: Sheila D. Muller, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Dutch Art* (New York, Garland, 1997).
28. See *Joachim Beuckelaer. Het markt- en keukenstuk in de Nederlanden 1550-1650* (exh. cat. Ghent: Museum voor Schone Kunsten, 1986); Keith P.F. Moxey, *Pieter Aertsen, Joachim Beuckelaer and the Rise of Secular Painting in the Context of the Reformation* (New York 1977).
29. Among the few market images from the Northern Netherlands which predate Cuyp's painting are Joachim Wttewael's *Fruit and Vegetable Market* of ca. 1618 (Utrecht, Centraal Museum) and Jan van de Velde's print of a *Vegetable Market in Haarlem* of 1616 (H.244).

30. *Aelbert Cuyp en zijn familie, schilders te Dordrecht* (exh.cat., Dordrechts Museum 1977/78) 28.
31. Other early Dutch market scenes also admit the presence of money: see for instance Dirck van Cats *Elegant Lady at a Produce Stall*, 1622 (location unknown) and Cornelis Delff, *The Poultry Seller* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum). These paintings were all done by artists evidently working independently of one another (Cuyp in Dordrecht, Cats in The Hague, Delff in Delft), yet all made this signal divergence from the contemporary Flemish formula.
32. A good recent study of changes in the social order in the Southern Netherlands before and after the revolt against Spain is Hugo Soly, 'Social Relations in Antwrp in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in: *Antwerp: Story of a Metropolis, 16th-17th Century* (exh.cat., Antwerp: Hessenhuis, 1993) 37-47.
33. For discussion of the way people in the early modern period understood the function of money, see Bernard W. Dempsey, *Interest and Usury* (Washington 1943) 155ff; Hannah Robie Sewall, *The Theory of Value Before Adam Smith* (Publications of the American Economic Association, 3d ser., vol.II#3, August 1901) 28-29 and *passim*; Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1971)(New York 1973), Chapter VI, 'Exchanging,' esp. 174-179. Many of the attitudes evidenced in more scholarly works can also be found in popular literature of the time: see next note.
34. 17th-century proverbs stress the levelling and uniting nature of money. A few examples: 'Boeren gheld is soo goet als Heeren Munt' - the marginal text to a speech by a farmer, in which he also tells his listener 'Onse Munt klinckt alsoo seer/ As de Penningh van een Heer.' Adriaen van de Venne, *Tafereel van de Belachende Werelt* (The Hague 1635) 189. Many more proverbs express the idea that 'money [as opposed to birth] makes a man' or some equivalent sentiment. A few are included in Johan de Brune, *Nieuwe Wyn in oude le'er-zacken. Bewijzende in Spreeck-woorden, 't vernuft der menschen...* (Middelburg 1636) 406-407 and *passim*. See too De Brune's *Bancket-Werck van goede Gedachten* (Middelburg 1660) 231; Johan van Nyenborch, *Vervolgh van het Toonneel der Ambachten...* (Groningen 1660) 208 and *passim*.
35. Dou's first dated piece using a modified 'window' format is the *Maid Chopping Onions* (London, Royal Collection) dated 1646; but the Louvre *Grocery Shop* is the first work in which the window-niche is fully developed. According to W. Martin, between 1646 and 1657 Dou scarcely painted a single work which did *not* use some form of 'niche' enframement. On this, and the origins and development

of Dou's niches in general, see W. Martin, *Gérard Dou. Sa Vie et son Oeuvre* trans. L. Dimier (Paris 1911) 54-55.

36. A good discussion of Dou's status - and self-awareness - in Leiden's art world is Ivan Gaskell, 'Gerrit Dou, his Patrons and the Art of Painting', *Oxford Art Journal* 5 (1982) 1, 15-23.
37. Philips Angel first reported this as being 500 Carolus guilders: Philips Angel, *Lof der Schilder-Konst* (Leiden 1642) 23; this was later exaggerated to 1000 guilders by Joachim Sandrart in his *Academie der Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste* (1675); ed. A.R. Peltzer (Munich 1925) 196. Clearly the refusal-fee, whatever its exact amount, was the subject of much admiring or envious discussion among painters for generations.
38. Reported by Sandrart, *loc.cit.*
39. On the formation of a guild in Leiden see Eric J. Sluijter, 'Schilders van "cleyne, subtile ende curieuse dingen": Leidse "fijnschilders" in contemporaine bronnen', in: *Leidse Fijnschilders* (exh.cat. Leiden: Lakenhal 1988) 29-33.
40. This is in contrast to cities such as Haarlem, where the formation of a guild served largely to raise the *status* of painters: this does not seem to have been necessary in Leiden, where in 1648 the successful petition for a guild stressed economic hardships and the need for protectionism. D.O. Obreen, *Archief voor Nederlandsche Kunstgeschiedenis* vol.V (Rotterdam 1882-1883) 189.
41. Angel, *Lof der Schilder-Konst* 27-30, citing Cats's *Trouw-Ring*.
42. An excellent discussion of the fetishistic aesthetic in 17th-century still life painting is Hal Foster, 'The Art of Fetishism: Notes on Dutch Still Life', in: Emily Apter and William Pietz, eds., *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse* (Ithaca/London 1993) 251-265.
43. There are a few exceptions to this rule: for instance, bakeries were depicted by Job Berckheyde and Jacob Vrel, and several later Leiden artists (Frans van Mieris, Matthijs Naiveu) painted scenes of cloth shops which are not seen through window-niches.
44. On the 'natural' determination of value see B. Gordon, *Economic Analysis before Adam Smith* (London 1975).
45. For mustard proverbs see F.A. Stoett, *Nederlandsche Spreekwoorden* (2nd ed. Zutphen 1905) 16 and F.A. Stoett, *Nederlandsche Spreekwoorden* (5th ed. Zutphen 1943) 63 and n.1.
46. In making this claim, I am not taking sides in the endless debate in Dutch art history between those who believe that 'hidden meanings' lurk beneath the apparently realistic surfaces of 17th-century paintings, and those who feel that

artists' motives were by and large purely pictorial, pursuits of visually pleasing 'realisms'. I am saying, rather, that instead of making such sweeping generalizations about *all* the artistic production of a given culture, we should return to individual artists some of the credit for deciding how pictorial meaning will be generated. I take Dou as an instance of an artist who, appealing to a small, elite audience particularly attuned to his own way of working, liked to experiment with verbal references in a way I describe as almost playful. But I would very much caution against any similar reading of, say, a *Grocery Shop* by Willem van Mieris.

47. Stoett, *Nederlandsche Spreekwoorden* (1905) 16-17.
48. In the catalogue of the Comte de Vaudreiul sale (1784) it is noted that the painting was known as '*La marchande de poivre*', the pepper-seller. It was from this sale that the painting entered the French royal collection. Information in *documentation* at the Louvre; my thanks to Jacques Foucart for helping me in my research there. The paper cones in which pepper was sold were evidently often made out of pages of old almanacs or broadsheets, which is why the word 'Leyden' can seem naturally to appear on the cone in Dou's painting.
49. See *WNT* 12.I. col. 1152. While the examples given there are not earlier than the 18th century, all rely on the fact that in the middle ages, pepper had been a particularly precious commodity: it therefore seems safe to assume that pepper had a continuous association with value in the intervening centuries.
50. This painting is sometimes attributed to Hendrick Martensz. Sorgh although it is so entirely typical of Brekelenkam in every way, and so entirely unlike any work by Sorgh, that it is hard to understand why this debate has even arisen. The suggestion that it is a singular instance of Sorgh (from Rotterdam) imitating the manner of Brekelenkam (from Leiden) seems simply capricious: Liane Schneeman, *Hendrick Martensz. Sorgh: A Painter of Rotterdam* (Dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1982) 144-145. On this painting see further *Leidse fijnschilders* (*op.cit.*) 83-85.
51. The classic article on these paintings is Frima Fox Hofrichter, 'Judith Leyster's *Proposition* - Between Virtue and Vice' (1975) reprinted in: Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, eds., *Feminism and Art History. Questioning the Litany* (New York, 1982) 173-181.
52. The relationship between the two works has long been recognized: Baburen's painting was owned by Vermeer's mother-in-law, Maria Thins, and appears hanging on the wall in two of his own genre scenes: *The Concert* (formerly

Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum) and *Lady Seated at the Virginals* (London, National Gallery).

53. The most sustained, although often problematic, analysis of this aspect of Vermeer's *oeuvre* is Edward Snow, *Vermeer* (Berkeley/L.A. 1993).