

***Neat Concepts and Messy Realities:
On Local Schools, Tastes and Identities***

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* Numbers between brackets refer to slides in the power point.

Neat concepts and messy realities is the title I gave this lecture, but I am afraid that my talk will be more about the messy realities than the neat concepts. The first part of the title refers to the fact that – surprisingly, in the more recent literature especially – one has the feeling that the concept of local schools (the Haarlem school, the Delft school, the Leiden school, the Utrecht school, etc.) seems to be considered a self-evident phenomenon in Dutch art that requires little explanation.

Let me start with an example that presents the impression of a neatly outlined display of a local school, but which, upon closer inspection, discloses quite a mess.

A few months ago I visited the exhibition *The Golden Age begins in Haarlem* at the Frans Hals Museum [2]. The title refers directly to the familiar art historical commonplace that painting in Haarlem was of decisive importance for the development of Dutch painting in the Golden Age, which stems from the presupposition that Haarlem artists produced an art displaying characteristic elements of crucial impact; this includes, for example, the notion that in Haarlem the ‘Dutchness’ of 17th-century Dutch art – the innovative representation of the burgher’s realistically depicted environment in landscapes and interiors – began.

To my great surprise, the painter who was represented by the largest number of paintings in this exhibition – other than Frans Hals – was Jan van Goyen: no less than seven paintings dating from different periods of his career were on display [3]. I always thought that Van Goyen worked first in Leiden until 1632, moved then to The Hague and stayed there until his death in 1656, and that his only ties with Haarlem date to 1617, when in the last stages of his long apprenticeship, he studied there for a short time with his sixth master Esaias van de Velde. Only once again is he mentioned in Haarlem, when Isaac van Ruisdael, who worked as an art dealer, was fined in 1634 because Van Goyen was said to make paintings illegally in his shop. But to my knowledge, Van Goyen lived and worked in The Hague at that time; he might have come to Haarlem now and then to produce paintings that were sold through the workshop of Isaac van Ruisdael. So I wondered if new information had come to light about a period of residence in that city.

When I consulted the accompanying book nothing of the sort was mentioned, however, and Van Goyen's works were blithely discussed as if he were a Haarlem painter. Among the dunescapes, the river scenes and the winter landscapes his work took pride of place, and his great importance for the development of landscape painting – of which we are told that the innovations in this field took place in Haarlem – is extensively emphasized, although Van Goyen lived and worked all his life in Leiden and The Hague.

Inventories have informed us that Van Goyen's work was popular with a Haarlem clientele, but this is just as true, and even more so, for Leiden, The Hague and Amsterdam. However, Van Goyen, obviously the market leader in this field, fit nicely into the commonly held idea of Haarlem as the town where the native landscape was invented and developed. A few weeks later I even heard students talk about Van Goyen as a Haarlem painter! This led me to have a closer look at the image of Haarlem painting that was represented in the exhibition and the book. Jan Porcellis was also claimed for Haarlem, although he lived there only for a few years between 1621 and 1624. Apart from these two years, he was active in Rotterdam, Middelburg, London, Antwerp and Amsterdam, and he worked near Leiden, in Zoeterwoude, during the period in which most of his known paintings were produced. The painting by Porcellis that was exhibited in fact, dated from that time [4].

Esaias van de Velde, coming from Amsterdam, worked in his early career (between 1612 and 1617) in Haarlem and undeniably played an important role there. But the two paintings with which he was represented in the exhibition [5, at the left], as well as the two supporting illustrations in the book [5, at the right], were all painted in The Hague, where he moved in 1618 and remained for the rest of his life.

The famous merry companies by Buytewech, who also worked in Haarlem as a master for only six years, were probably all painted after his departure for Rotterdam in 1617 [6].

So, where does this leave us? It urges us to have a closer look at the questions of what developments happened where, and especially, what this movement of artists may tell us about stylistic and thematic developments with respect to local circumstances and certain audiences in the cities of Holland.

To be sure, something special happened in Haarlem between 1612 and 1618, but two of the main actors that consistently play a crucial role in this success story, Esaias van de Velde and Willem Buytewech [7], only worked there for four to five years in the beginning of their careers. Why did they move to Haarlem and leave again as soon as they gained a reputation? And did they ever work specifically for a Haarlem audience?

I certainly do not deny that Haarlem had an exceptionally large and important production of paintings, but I want to demonstrate the messy realities of what was – or was not – produced within specific Haarlem circumstances, and what can be considered as belonging to a Haarlem 'school'. That is, if one wants to use the concept of a 'Haarlem school' as representing certain characteristics related to the circumstances of that place.

As a matter of fact, Ampzing and Schrevelius [8] emphasize in their praise of Haarlem painters not some distinctive character or similarity in types, styles or subject matter, but, on the contrary, the huge diversity of specializations; they underline the variety. Schrevelius writes boastingly that everything one might desire is to be found in

Haarlem. In fact, this can, together with its large production, still be considered the most characteristic aspect of Haarlem painting, if one is seeking a common denominator.

From Van Mander to Schrevelius, we find that, more than in any other city, the art of painting was long represented with pride as part of Haarlem's identity. This resulted in its reputation as a center of painting, which Haarlem already possessed at the time. And such a phenomenon, which may still explain the privileged position of a Haarlem school, demands our attention.

We can certainly point to several specializations that were practiced specifically in Haarlem. Thus, we need to explain what may have caused its exceptional production and specializations. To name just one example, the stunning number of artists painting Ruisdael-like landscapes in the third quarter of the century is barely, if at all, mentioned when Haarlem painting is discussed [9]. These paintings may, however, give us reason to wonder how and why this considerable number of painters producing kindred types of landscapes came into being and flowered for a certain period in that city. (I will return to this.)

After this messy introduction I will confuse things even more by turning to the rather bewildering notions concerning a Delft school. This is a risky undertaking in this company, but nonetheless necessary for my discussion, because the concept of a Delft school is of a very different nature than that of Haarlem. Again it is the catalogue of an exhibition that informs my point of departure [10]. This catalogue, however, concerns a magnificent exhibition, deservedly the most-visited exhibition ever mounted in the field of Dutch art, which was put together with extreme care and thoughtfulness, and accompanied by a beautiful, thorough, and exemplary scholarly catalogue.

Walter Liedtke writes in this catalogue on the one hand that he refers to the concept of 'school' with a small 's', meaning that it only refers to artists who happened to work in the same town. He is entirely aware of the problematical nature of schools as referring to local traditions that can be distinguished from those of other cities, and he emphasizes with wonderful examples the close proximity of the cities to each other and the easy intercity transit at that time by *trekschuit* (towing barge) – almost as easy as taking the train today. Nonetheless he answers the question whether one can speak of a Delft school with certain unifying characteristics with 'a qualified yes'.

Liedtke not only looks at Gerard Houckgeest, Emanuel de Witte, Carel Fabritius, Pieter de Hooch and Johannes Vermeer [11], but he takes a broader view of Delft art. He includes the first half of the century and underlines that his image of the Delft school is not that of 'the popular image of maids pouring milk, cleaning courtyards, and conversing with cavaliers' [12], adding that Pieter de Hooch, on whose art this image is mostly based, is more of a Rotterdammer, who moved on to Amsterdam after his six years in Delft. His qualified yes implies the following characterization: although much of its art could have been made in other places, he states, there is in Delft a tradition of exceptional craftsmanship, refined and often conservative styles, and of sophisticated subject matter and expression, all of which reveal a tendency towards understatement, a certain reserve. Comparable qualities – and he stresses time and again the relations with the court in The Hague – are less easy to find in other cities. And this appears to reflect the character of Delft society, he maintains. So, he does discern unifying qualities and his description even contains traces of essentialism because he connects them with the

character of Delft society. But can we generalize the art of this city in terms of exceptional craftsmanship and a sophisticated expression and a tendency towards understatement and a certain reserve? To be sure, I see nothing understated, no sophisticated expression and little noteworthy craftsmanship in the works of Leonard Bramer [13] and Christiaan van Couwenbergh [14], undoubtedly the two most important history painters in Delft. Even with his tentative and qualified yes, we run into difficulties.

Remarkably, the characteristics he mentioned are not that different from those formulated by Max Eisler, the author of *Alt-Delft: Kultur und Kunst* of 1923. Eisler mentions precise drawing, good taste and measure, clarity and coolness of arrangement, which are, in Eisler's Hegelian view, 'the form and expression of correct burgher-noblesse.' According to Eisler, this reflected the atmosphere of the city, which had neatness and dignity, restraint and stateliness as its virtues and thereby as hallmarks of its art. In fact, the familiar image of Delft art is connected here to an established self-image and reputation dating to the period itself. Already in the 16th century was Delft described as the cleanest city in Holland, and Van Bleyswijck [15] characterized its citizens as neat, restrained and dignified.

But were the paintings considered distinctive for Delft actually made for a Delft audience in particular, and do they reflect characteristic traits of a Delft society? The works of the best-known artists always associated with Delft art in particular, such as the brothers Palamedes, Emanuel de Witte, Gerard Houckgeest, Carel Fabritius, Pieter de Hooch, and Hendrick van Vliet, are not among the 20 most often-cited artists in Delft inventories. (Vermeer is also missing, but he was a special case.) We do find their work in other cities, foremost in The Hague. If we consider this list of artists most often found in inventories of Delft citizens – with Hans Jordaens, Leonard Bramer, Jacob Vosmaer, Pieter Vromans, Evert van Aelst, Pieter Stael, Herman van Steenwijck, Pieter van Asch, Jan van Goyen, Cornelis Delff, Pieter van Groenwegen and Gillis de Berg as the twelve artists with the highest numbers – this does not at all correspond with the current image of what is typically 'Delft' art [16 and 17].

Of those whom we generally do consider as typical for the Delft school, that is, those who are thought of as having created the pinnacle of Delft art in the 1650s, the majority worked there for only a few years in the style that is deemed typical for the city – Gerard Houckgeest from 1650 to 1652, Emanuel de Witte 1650-1652, Carel Fabritius 1650-1654, and Pieter de Hooch 1657-1662 (not including the earlier period when he painted soldiers in inns) [18].

Indeed, what we consider to be special about Delft art, in which perspective, geometrical compositions and the play of natural daylight are considered central issues, was certainly developed there. As soon as these artists gained success, however, they generally left the city, except for those who had strong family ties there, like Hendrick van Vliet and Johannes Vermeer, as John Michael Montias observed. And, remarkably, those artists who remained, including Vermeer and Van Vliet, did not have any followers in the city. Still, it is preeminently Delft with which the notion of 'school' is most closely connected. Even Montias, from whose immensely important study all this information derives [19], maintained that with those painters 'at last a genuine school had come into existence.'

What a mess you are making of it, you are thinking by now! Let me try to create some order in this mess. First some historiography of the concept of geographical schools with supposed similarities in types and styles, and of the perceived causes of such distinctive qualities.

One can certainly state that geography is at the heart of many concerns in the history of art. It has functioned as a system of classification since the beginning of art history, and it is entirely integrated into connoisseurship. Each art historian begins with learning to localize a work of art, which means that notions and assumptions about a distinctive character of the art in a certain place are taken for granted.

We find distinctions of place already in classical times. Pliny the Elder, for example, distinguished between Helladic and Asiatic, and within Helladic between Ionic, Sycionian and Attic. In sixteenth-century Italy, this was taken up again by Giorgio Vasari. And Karel van Mander picked it up and compared Sycionia to Haarlem. But it was Italy where place became a key tool of the history of Italian art. In 17th-century art literature one began to distinguish not only between Roman, Tuscan and Venetian, but also Lombard, Parmesan, Bolognese, Neapolitan, and so on, simultaneously defining certain qualities and the artist who best represented them. Outside Italy one only distinguished between German and Flemish art in treatises. Late in the 18th century one began to distinguish between Flemish and Dutch art.

The causes of geographical differences were, since antiquity, mainly located in climate and soil, which defined the temperaments of a people and thus the art. This would harden in the 19th and early 20th centuries through such concepts as *Volksgeist* and race. Those were, especially in the first half of the 20th century, also applied to a national Dutch school but not to local schools. The only one who made local distinctions was, I believe, Aloys Riegl, who discerned a different *Kunstwollen* in Amsterdam and Haarlem.

In fact, in the histories of Dutch art written in the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries one finds surprisingly little about stylistic and thematic distinctions between local schools. Wilhelm von Bode does not talk about a Delft School, but he places – to our surprise – Vermeer and De Hooch under the influence of Rembrandt. He does not try to define local schools and is of the opinion that the distinctions are vague because of the ‘Wanderlust’ of the artists. Bredius also wrote that Holland was too small to distinguish local schools. And I would like to quote extensively from Wilhelm Martin’s great survey of 1935 because he makes, as is so often the case, some very acute observations [20].

Martin states that in Holland, no city had a leading position comparable to Antwerp in the Southern Netherlands. On the contrary! In Holland there were many cities in which first-rate works of art were produced, he says. Moreover there were groups of painters who, working in different cities, followed the approach of one successful master, thus producing in different places interrelated works of art. And in a city one often finds many entirely diverging types next to each other. Styles and themes did not remain restricted to one place, Martin maintains, because the Dutch artist was not at all bound to his hometown. Many worked for some time in one city and then moved to another. Often they brought new manners of painting to places where they settled, he observed. Thus, according to Martin, a division in schools (Amsterdam, Delft, Leiden, The Hague, etc.), as some art historians have tried to apply after the history of Italian art, makes no sense, except for a few groups with a very specific stamp, like the Utrecht academicians, the circle of Hals, the Leiden fine painters, and Rembrandt and his pupils.

Thus, there is no need to group by location as far as Martin is concerned. He goes on to say that there are concentrations in certain artistic centers that are mainly caused by economic reasons, while certain artistic milieus or a particular artist may have attracted others, as was the case around Bloemaert, Hals, Rembrandt and Dou. Often this is temporary, such as for the purpose of training, after which the artists return to their hometowns or settle in some other place where they hope to make a living, Martin observed. Well, after this, I almost have the feeling that everything that could be said has been said and that I can end my lecture here. I will move on, but we will revisit many of these points again.

Neither did Seymour Slive emphasize local schools in his survey in the 1960s. But then, in 1984, comes the still hugely influential survey by Bob Haak [21], who divided his monumental book on 17th-century Dutch art into three chronological blocks, and further subdivided those blocks into chapters on the art of the different cities. Haarlem, Amsterdam, Leiden, Delft, Utrecht and The Hague appear in all three blocks, while Middelburg, Dordrecht, Rotterdam and Leeuwarden figure in some of them. In the introduction he only writes that it was a valid way of tying things together for him, but he gives no justification of why he considered this a valid approach. So, subdividing the book according to cities functions primarily as a tool for organizing the material. I get the impression that it was foremost a way to avoid any discussion of the Dutchness of Dutch art, and thus any nationalist notion about Dutch painting, a concept that had become thoroughly discredited by the time he was writing. His division fragmented this art into many little pieces, and he avoided giving unifying characterizations. When reading his book, we do find some notions of coherent groups, such as Amsterdam history painting, Utrecht Carravaggism, landscape and portrait painting in The Hague, fine painting in Leiden, innovations in landscape and genre in Haarlem, and stables and peasant kitchens in Rotterdam, but that's about all.

Because of the arrangement of this book, it is difficult to gain insight into the interlocal cross fertilizations, which are, as we heard from Martin – and I agree – as significant when presenting a survey of Dutch art as local characteristics. Insight into the chronological developments of themes, styles and techniques is thus severely hampered. Such an organization of the material is all the more disturbing because especially artists at the top end of the market – and they are the subject of surveys – worked not only for a local audience but also for connoisseurs and art dealers elsewhere. Moreover, they always appear to have been very aware of what their colleagues in other cities were doing.

Haak's survey, although it does not give unifying characterizations, certainly did suggest, if only through its organization, that there indeed existed distinctive local schools of painting, as appears from a recent article by the historian Maarten Prak. Referring to Haak [21], he takes this as his point of departure for his argument that the local guilds were an important factor in creating these distinctive schools, an idea to which I will return. Since the appearance of Haak's book, notions about local schools have been enhanced and consolidated by the many interesting exhibitions over the last two decades on the art of certain cities, mostly organized by municipal museums: Delft, Dordrecht, The Hague, Haarlem, Leiden, Middelburg, Rotterdam, Utrecht, even Enkhuizen, Groningen, Gorcum and Zwolle [22]. In fact, in many cases, the most striking aspect that came to the fore in these exhibitions was the wonderful variety of the art produced within each city.

In addition, stimulated by a chapter in the highly important socio-economic study on artists and artisans in Delft by John Michael Montias, much valuable research has been done about local art markets using residents' inventories. Sometimes we find the results in essays in those exhibition catalogues, such as the important article by John Loughman for the Dordrecht catalogue, and sometimes they also appear in separate studies, like those of Marten Jan Bok (Utrecht), Marion Boers-Goosens (Haarlem), Montias himself (Amsterdam) and recently Piet Bakker for Leeuwarden [23]. Through all this, we have gained significantly more insight into the art production of separate cities than ever before.

So, how to proceed from here? Before I consider the possibilities that all this recent research – especially in the socio-economic field – offers, I want to say a few words about a direction which seems to me both misguided and interesting.

I mentioned that the causes for what one considered as geographically unified styles or types of painting were located for ages in essential characteristics, ranging from climate and soil, to *Volksgeist*, regional spirit, regional *Kunstwollen* and race; but these had always been applied to the art of a nation. However, in post-modern, 'new' art history, such essentialism has been used to explain local Dutch styles and types of painting, as seen in three publications of Elizabeth de Bièvre on, respectively, painting in Haarlem, a comparison between painting in Leiden and Delft, and painting in Amsterdam [24]. She argues that the urban subconscious causes the similarities in style and types of painting. With the urban subconscious she means a sense of priorities shown by all inhabitants of one town, caused by the sum of physical circumstances (natural and manmade), historical events and an experienced collectivity. Thus, a dominant atmosphere which pervades the subconscious, even of the newcomers in a city – especially defined by the natural and manmade geographical circumstances and the local history – play an important role in her argument.

For example, in the cases of Delft and Leiden, these well-known paintings are her point of departure [25], and it is especially the local geography to which she turns. The straight lines, regular grid and open spaces of Delft, as opposed to the compressed urban environment of Leiden, with its irregular and crowded plan without an open central space [26], are invoked to explain both the spacious, light, refined, harmonious, carefree, elegant and clean art of Delft, and the sense of reflection, doubt, hours in dark studios, and the depiction of vanitas, tronies, people at work and shopkeepers, all in restricted spaces, which one finds in Leiden. We see such things already reflected in the medieval city seal of Delft with its simple vertical and horizontal lines [27], and later in the square symmetry of the Delft town hall [28], she maintains. Nobility, aristocracy and courtliness are other catchwords, as opposed to the dominant factors of Leiden's circumstances, like a traumatic siege, overcrowding, an industrial as well as academic character, and a place where everybody thinks in terms of attention to minute detail – from the mazelike ground plan to university learning, and from the inspection of the quality of fine cloth to the art of fine painting. She argues that 'the roots of the styles of Dou and Vermeer lie in the distant past of their two cities, in their soils, in the collective experience of their citizens – often shaped and reinforced by the decision making of their rulers – in short, in their urban subconscious.' Thus, the painting by Dou 'is witness to centuries of enclosure in an

industrial city and the ineradicable memory of a traumatic siege. Vermeer's evokes the pride of the Delft ruling classes in the past and a leisurely enjoyment of the present.' [29]

I certainly do not want to jettison this work because all three articles are full of stimulating ideas, especially where they bring forward many aspects of the self-image and reputation of a city, which I do think important for certain types of painting. I am convinced that certain paintings produced in Delft are related to oft repeated notions, notions that are emphatically underlined in descriptions of the city of Delft and echoed by foreigners, such as Delft as the cleanest city of Holland [30], Delft as exceptionally pious [31], Delft as a city of exceptional charity [32], and Delft as the centre of the revolt which ended in liberty [33]. And that *vanitas* images with books and other accoutrements of scholarly pursuits has something to do with a Leiden reputation is also quite clear [34]. And, for that matter, the connection of Haarlem's reputation for its pleasant environment, a Dutch *locus amoenus*, with the remarkable production of native landscapes, as Huigen Leeftang has demonstrated in a wonderful publication [35]. These are all notions emphasized in city descriptions and repeated by many others.

However, if one assumes as an *a priori* that there is some essential core out of which all cultural phenomena spring and which explains all forms and contents – in this case the urban subconscious defined by geography and history – then it becomes only a matter of finding the right words to connect things to each other, which is often done in an associative and highly selective way, like straight and spacious for Delft, and crowded, compressed and fine for Leiden, without having to argue in what way these are connected and ignoring everything that does not fit into such neat images.

These two paintings by Dou and Vermeer [36], some 15 years apart in their execution, form the point of departure and the point of return. This is the only painting by Vermeer that De Bièvre reproduces, Vermeer who represents the Delft style. And for Dou, only one more painting is illustrated [37]. But one could as well ask why the (truly) Leiden painter Frans van Mieris, and even Gerrit Dou, painted so many refined and elegant pictures (Van Mieris earlier than Vermeer) [38], and why Vermeer started with paintings that show more enclosure and restricted space than most Leiden paintings [39]. Taking those chronologically close paintings as a point of departure one could construct quite a different story [40].

Concerning the natural and manmade geographical circumstances, I could as well take as my basic assumption the sense of wide space in Leiden, with its monumental and wide Rapenburg – the main canal, which is of a grandness and scale that is totally different from the narrowness of Delft's central canal [41] – and with its broad expanses of water within the Leiden city walls due to the two arms of the Rhine flowing through the city and meeting in its centre; and with the magnificently wide Galgewater [42], the place where Dou had his studio. These three bodies all make for wide spaces with lots of reflecting light that one simply does not find in Delft. In Leiden I could also point to the elegant, monumental classicist architecture by architects such as Arent van 's Gravesande and Willem van der Helm seen in public buildings [43] and especially in numerous private houses [44]. Having lived in both cities, I always experienced Delft as cramped and narrow and lacking a sense of space within the city (except for the large, central market place), as well as the monumentality and classicist elegance of Leiden. (And, when comparing the maps, we have to realize that they should not be reproduced at the

same size – as was done in the article – since Leiden is much larger. When reproduced at their proper scale, Leiden looks much less like a fine maze! [45]).

Ultimately, this method does not work, in my view. But to examine the construction and representation of local self-images and the, often directly related, stereotypical reputation of a city and its inhabitants can certainly be of importance for our understanding of certain types of paintings. But it seems to me quite useless to try to define essential traits of a people in a city and connect these with general characteristics of the art produced in that city.

As I remarked earlier, those cities were anything but isolated. In fact, ambitious artists almost always finished their training in a city other than that in which they were born or settled. Here you see a few fascinating graphs which show the number of artists settling in these cities, divided into artists born elsewhere and coming from other cities (the red line) and artists born in that city (the blue line).

In Amsterdam the numbers of those from elsewhere always surpass those locally born [46], while the number of the ones who died elsewhere – those who left the city – is quite significant too [47].

In Leiden the number of those born elsewhere surpass the Leiden-born in the beginning, middle and the end of the century (red line), but generally the numbers are very close [48], which is also true for the number of artists leaving and dying elsewhere [49].

In Haarlem the number of painters from elsewhere is higher only in the beginning of the century, but for the rest the number of Haarlem-born and -deceased (blue) is relatively higher than in the other two cities [50, 51]. All this is in contrast to Antwerp, where the number of Antwerp-born (blue) is much higher throughout the whole 17th century [52].

These numbers and graphs, based on the known painters in those cities, are still quite preliminary, and everything has to be checked and refined, and then carefully analyzed, but Marten Jan Bok and Harm Nijboer are working on these matters [53].

This observation leads me to an entirely different field, that of relating art historical developments to social and economic phenomena.

It might not have become clear during my digging in this mess that it is undeniable that in different cities there are certainly differences in art production and in the types produced. One can often identify a clustering of certain types of paintings in which many painters specialized in certain cities. I did some preliminary tests with the help of Jasper Hillegers in the files of the RKD. In the past, when structuring the photoarchives of the RKD, the files were organized primarily to facilitate the attribution of paintings and to find comparable works as quickly as possible. To this end the files are often arranged according to ‘schools’. However, these are never local but always schools around certain artists [54]. They give a good indication of what one felt to be groups of painters with kindred types and styles. Therefore, we made as a trial run some diagrams, with the cities in which the artists of a certain group were born and where they were active for a significant part of their career.

When doing this, it can be demonstrated that there is, for example, a truly significant clustering of Van Goyen-like landscape painters in The Hague – which might be a surprise – followed by Haarlem and Leiden [55]. Interestingly, these artists were not born in The Hague but mostly came from other places. (As an aside: it might also come

as a surprise that The Hague had, after Amsterdam, the highest number of painters and certainly by far the highest rate of painters in relation to its population, which peaks during the stadholderless period [56]).

We can also notice that there is a truly striking Ruisdael following in Haarlem (I mentioned this already), which, like Ruisdael himself, radiates towards Amsterdam [57], where this type of landscape would have been considered a Haarlem specialty. This phenomenon remained restricted to those two cities, however. (In Haarlem also other specialties, like merry companies, peasant scenes, and large-scale academic history paintings clustered around successful artists).

As was to be expected, the popular Poelenburch-type of landscape remained an Utrecht specialty, radiating towards The Hague [58].

And we can see that a truly important clustering of history painters, producing mostly biblical scenes and among them a majority of Old Testament subjects, appears in Amsterdam, first centred around Lastman [59] and subsequently taken over by a group of painters around Rembrandt [60, 61]. We also notice that the Rembrandt circle includes a remarkable number of Dordrecht painters, initially caused by a network that must have started quite incidentally but which then became a sort of established phenomenon. And the number of foreigners, especially Germans, most of them returning or going elsewhere, is really remarkable in this group, while, for instance, only one minor Rembrandt follower is working in Utrecht.

This is just a quick, preliminary test that still has to be refined and applied to several other 'schools' focused on a certain painter.

It is also clear that certain types are completely lacking in some cities. In Leiden, there are virtually no history painters after Rembrandt left and also no painters of church interiors, for instance. In Delft we encounter almost no peasant scenes, in Utrecht no high-life genre nor peasant scenes, and no Lastman or Rembrandt following. And in The Hague high-life genre is completely lacking – only later did Caspar Netscher settle there (mainly to make portraits); and no history painters either. (Those who worked for the court lived in other cities, particularly Haarlem, Utrecht and Antwerp.)

All these local specialties centred around a successful master and were often surprisingly short-lived. They often seem to have been fashions connected with a single artist, and it is possible that one also came to consider them as specialties of a particular city. There are indications that a painter coming from a certain city could be expected to paint a particular type that was identified with his city of origin; a striking case in point is Gabriël Metsu. As Adriaan Waiboer has shown, Metsu began to paint fairly detailed Leiden-type window scenes *after* he had left the city and settled in Amsterdam [62]. Others adapted to a certain type, introducing innovations by combining these with their own background. To name just one example, Bartholomeus Breenbergh brings from Rome a new type of Italianate landscape, but after his return to Amsterdam, he inserts biblical, many of them Old Testament, Lastman-like subjects [63]. His choice of subject is totally unlike that of his Utrecht colleague Cornelis van Poelenburch.

Thus, we should analyze the development of certain successful specializations in types and manners, and closely examine the artistic and socio-economic context in which they came into being. A talented and ambitious artist, after leaving his master's workshop knowing how to paint in a certain manner and execute certain type of paintings, would have tried to make a name for himself with his own recognizable product, to acquire his

own niche in the art market. And he certainly would have done so with a certain audience in mind, building networks of clientele and catering for certain social groups. If he became successful, the less ambitious and talented – the second tier – would follow, producing similar works for a lower price. For example, if one wanted a meticulously painted scene of a hermit or of a window with figures, many people would have known that one needed a Leiden painter [64], and dealers could cater to such knowledge. Probably, the bulk of such local specializations were rather made for *export* than for the local population. They remind us of ‘brands’, and art dealers, who often bought their stock interlocally, probably played an important role in disseminating such fashions and trends. As Montias observed, the number of art dealers grew considerably as of the 1630s, probably because of the increasing degree of artists’ specialization and the variation of consumers’ tastes. Many successful masters and their followers would have been associated with a city, even if the works they made were not produced in that city, just as Gouda cheese is still associated with Gouda but is no longer made there.

An argument that has often been adduced for the existence of distinctive local schools is the observation – stemming from research in household inventories – that in inventories in cities like Delft, Leiden and Amsterdam, for instance, 50 to 60 percent of the paintings were from artists working in that city. For Maarten Prak this was a crucial point of departure when arguing for the importance of the guilds and their restrictive regulations, while for De Bièvre this was even proof of the artistic isolation of painters! But, apart from the fact that the local clerks who drew up the inventories would have recognized resident artists better, I would like to turn this argument around. Isn’t it self-evident that, if you need a painting to decorate your house, you buy it in your own city? After all, if I need household goods, I still buy it in my own city rather than going elsewhere. This also accounts for the fact that one often finds almost every specialization in some way represented in a city. So this should not surprise us. In my view, it is much more surprising that 40 to 50 percent of the named works in those inventories were by artists from *other* cities, which testifies to the openness of the market, and confirms that guild restrictions never worked. It testifies to the willingness to buy specialized goods elsewhere, and that dealers and other intermediaries, mostly painters themselves, acquired and sold paintings produced in other cities. From the known stock belonging to a few large dealers – such as Van der Cooge in Delft, Volmarijn in Rotterdam, De Renialme in Amsterdam, and Coelenbier in Haarlem – it appears that they dealt largely in paintings bought in diverse cities.

In my opinion, we should research the processes of artistic and economic competition among artists and workshops, vis à vis certain networks of customers, and in connection with the economic processes of clustering, about which we heard this afternoon from Claartje Rasterhoff. When doing this, we should forget about thinking in terms of influences. On the contrary: we should think in terms of choices made by artists in specific circumstances. For instance, when does an artist choose to follow a fashion, or to imitate or vary upon a certain master’s work, and when does he choose to strike out new paths in subject matter, manner, techniques or workshop organization? We should also learn more about networks of customers when considering such choices. What role do

certain groups play that are bound by common religious, social, or economic concerns in connection with subject matter, types and manners that certain artists develop?

For the specializations in types, it is foremost the successful workshops, rather than the guilds, that we should examine. It is the, often quite temporary, authority of the '*handeling*' and thematic choices of a certain successful artist that define a fashion with identifiable characteristics in a certain place. Therefore we should learn more about the successful workshops and successful masters, such as Bloemaert, Honthorst, Rembrandt, Frans Hals, Frans de Grebber, Dou, Van Goyen, Saftleven, Poelenburch, and so on, as places of exchange and transmission of knowledge and specialized information. We should examine more closely their networks and the behavior of their pupils when they leave the workshop. In my opinion, these studios were the dynamic forces, not the guilds. We should also think more about informal exchanges between artists, the face to face relations, and the sharing of common work experience. As it appears, painters almost always lived closely together. They would often have met by visiting each other's shops, but they encountered each other also in taverns and on the streets, hearing from each other what innovations in subject matter or manner so-and-so had devised, or who the clients were of the other artist, or what problems his neighbor had with a patron, or what so-and-so was so excited about upon returning from Rome or Antwerp, and so on and so forth. To think about such things is truly fascinating.

We do need methodological underpinnings when doing this, and here recent socio-economic theories of competition, clustering and network analysis will be of use. There are quite a few recent studies about how, in our present society, clustering of industries – including the cultural industry – takes place in certain urban centres. Many questions asked in this type of research are highly relevant for us, questions about the relation of clustering to competition and innovation, about the role of informal exchange of knowledge, and about the importance of subsidiary trades, specialized supplies and associated institutions. As Claartje Rasterhoff has started to do in her PhD research, we should see how we can adapt such methods to the specific historical circumstances of Dutch cities and to the production of paintings there. We want to know how process innovation (such as painting techniques, production process and related studio organization) and product innovation (new types and themes, with new forms and content) develop in such places, and which information networks stimulated the sharing of knowledge and experience. What infrastructure was necessary for the development of successful groups and successful types, and what was the role of workshops, individual market leaders, guilds and drawing academies? How important was the presence of associated crafts like printmaking, tapestry, faience, gold- and silversmith work, embroidery, glass engraving, woodcarving – for all of which one needed the ability to draw – and the presence of which seems to have reduced the risks for the lesser talented. We should study the migration of artists more closely: in what stage of their career do artists often move to another city? Do they often move when they are successful, or is it the other way round?

Although I think that we will never find the neat concepts for which we are always looking, I am sure that through the collaborative efforts of art historians and economic historians, we can develop new insights in how manner, themes and types developed, competed, clustered, and were transmitted in cities like Amsterdam, Haarlem,

Delft, Leiden or The Hague, and let us not forget, Antwerp. This symposium seems to be a wonderful incentive to do this.

Contemporaries were surely aware of fashions and specializations among certain groups of artists in certain places. Jan de Bisschop maintained that 'every age ... has its fashions, which are introduced by one or more masters held in high esteem at the time and therefore capable of making an impact.' Houbraken wrote several times, for instance in the lives of Govert Flinck and Aert de Gelder, how, at a certain time, every painter, if one wanted to have success with customers, had to work in the manner of Rembrandt [65]. And Samuel van Hoogstraten writes that 'a good painter pursues the kind of art that is held in esteem in the place where he works, and is often stimulated by competition in the art.' We should examine in all its ramifications the consequences of such utterances, in which artistic competition to attain a prominent position in the market of a place, as well as catering to certain fashions in that place, are implied.