

A NARRATIVE OF LOVE, POLITICS, AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN CLAES
JANSZ. VISSCHER'S *THE SMALL LANDSCAPES*

A Thesis

Presented to

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of Art History

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In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Art History

By

David William Garrett Brown

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ABSTRACT

In 1612 Claes Jansz. Visscher published in Amsterdam a suite of 26 prints that has come to be known as *The Small Landscapes*. These etchings were based on a pair of suites depicting the Flemish countryside originally published by Hieronymus Cock in 1559 and 1561 in Antwerp. Visscher made significant alterations to the figural elements of the images. Visscher's figures act to guide the viewer through the suite. This would suggest a narrative structure to the suite that the contemporary viewer would have to be able to recognize and read. The 17th century Dutch consumer of prints would have been able to recognize *The Small Landscapes* as a narrative, told through images, that was a rich source for contemplation. Identifiable symbols of love and marriage found throughout the suite suggests that *The Small landscapes* is in effect a nostalgic and sad love story.

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Introduction

In a recent interview, Svetlana Alpers stated “Dutch art isn’t going to give you, as I myself have written, much narrative.”¹ While Alpers qualifies her statement with the word “much,” it is the word “narrative” that raises the more interesting issues when considered in the context of seventeenth-century Dutch art. The grander of these questions concerns what one considers to be a narrative. I do not answer this question. However, the endeavor to answer this question has led me to consider new approaches to looking at seventeenth-century works of art from the Netherlands: in particular, how the contemporary viewer approached works of art that existed not only in multiples- the same exact image in different instances- but also as serialized groups, with several instances of different images in what appear to be ordered progressions. Claes Jansz. Visscher’s suite of *The Small Landscapes* seems the perfect vehicle to explore the issues that arise from this strain of thought.

In 1612 Claes Jansz. Visscher (1587-1652) published a suite of 26 prints that has come to be known as *The Small Landscapes*. These etchings, published during the Twelve Years’ Truce between the Dutch and Spain (1609-1621), were based on a pair of suites depicting the Flemish countryside originally published in Antwerp by Hieronymus Cock in 1559 and 1561. Cock’s two suites consisted of a total of 44 individual images from which Visscher picked 24 images to reproduce. To these 24 images Visscher created a new title page for his edition of *The Small Landscapes* as well as a new concluding print. Visscher closely reproduced the topographical and architectural

¹ Stephen Melville, "Sites That Have Mattered: Svetlana Alpers in Conversation with Stephen Melville," *The Art Bulletin* xcv, no. 1 (2013): 39.

elements of Cock's prints, but made significant alterations to the figural elements of the images.

Little scholarship exists specifically dealing with Visscher's publication of *The Small Landscapes*. Alexandra Onuf, in her article "Envisioning Netherlandish Unity: Claes Visscher's 1612 Copies of the *Small Landscape* Prints," considers the suite as a nostalgic view of the Flemish countryside that appealed to Flemish immigrants fleeing the Spanish occupation. Onuf interprets Visscher's motivations in the publication of the prints as primarily a finical opportunity that had the secondary effect of influencing the printmaker and publisher to represent the Dutch countryside in his future, original prints with a similar simplicity and specificity as Cock.²

Walter Gibson follows a similar train of thought as Onuf in his text *Pleasant Places: The Rustic Landscape from Bruegel to Ruisdael*. Gibson goes into more detail in his consideration of Visscher's suite. He considers The Small Landscapes within the framework of the emerging Dutch national identity during the Eighty Years War. Gibson also compares the formal qualities of Visscher's suite with Cocks original publication and suggests that a vague narrative is present in both publications.³

Boudewijn Bakker's *Landscape and Religion: from van Eyck to Rembrandt* briefly considers Visscher's career. He specifically focuses on the printmaker's political and religious beliefs. Bakker considers Visscher's motivations to have been motivated by his pro-Orangist stance and asserts that Visscher's oeuvre indicates an anti-pacifist view

² Alexandra Onuf, "Envisioning Netherlandish Unity: Claes Visscher's 1612 Copies of the Small Landscape Prints," *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 3, no. 1 (2011). 1-2.

³ W.S. Gibson, *Pleasant Places: The Rustic Landscape from Bruegel to Ruisdael* (University of California Press, 2000), 27-49.

toward the Spanish.⁴ An alternative, and contradictory, view is presented in the pages that follow.

Catherine Levesque offers a broader view of serial landscape prints in the seventeenth-century Netherlands with her text *Journey Through Landscapes in Seventeenth-Century Holland*. Levesque most notably considers how the contemporary viewer of serialized prints approached and interacted with the images presented to them by serialized images. The author explores the serial landscape as a complex mode of disseminating information that requires the active participation of the viewer.⁵

These publications form the basis of what follows. Chapter one of my thesis considers Visscher's decision to re-etch and publish selected images from Hieronymus Cock's 1559 and 1561 suites of *The Small Landscapes* and how Visscher's suite intentionally differs from Cock's specifically in regard to Visscher's figural elements. This consideration requires an understanding of the popularity of Pieter Bruegel's imagery of the sixteenth century in seventeenth-century Dutch culture and the pastoral tradition. By considering Visscher's juxtaposition of figures from the upper class with peasants in the Flemish countryside a connection to popular manners books appears to be present in the suite. This leads to a look at how the Dutch viewed the Flemish immigrants who moved to the North during the Twelve Years' Truce and how the Dutch were viewed by the Flemish in return.

Chapter two pieces together the packaging and sale of prints, in particular serial prints, to the public. The manner in which the consumer approached these suites of prints,

⁴ B. Bakker and D.L. Webb, *Landscape and Religion: From Van Eyck to Rembrandt* (Ashgate, 2012), 235-43.

⁵ C. Levesque, *Journey through Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Holland: The Harlem Print Series and Dutch Identity* (Penn State University Press, 1994), 35-54.

how they were “read” by the viewer, and what responsibility laid with the viewer to understand the images presented to them and the clues that Visscher provides the viewer with to navigate through the images is then considered. And, the intentions of the artist, Visscher, behind the creation of the work as a narrative brings *The Small Landscapes*, at least Visscher’s version, back to its origin.

Chapter three concludes my thesis with a look at the narrative present in Visscher’s suite and how it is representative of seventeenth-century Dutch culture. A look at the types of images Visscher decided to reproduce provides insight into the mode of reading the narrative. This also provides the frame work to connecting the images together. Finally, leading to the concept that Visscher intended to be read in the suite.

Chapter 1

Idle Staffage or Ideal State: The Figural Elements of Visscher's *Small Landscapes*

In 1612 Claes Jansz. Visscher published in Amsterdam a suite of etchings based on a pair of suites first published in Antwerp by Hieronymus Cock, the first in 1559 and the second in 1561. Visscher issued his adaptation of twenty-three of Cock's original forty-four prints from his shop, the "Sign of the Fisher," on the Kalverstraat, an area known for its population of mapmakers and dealers.⁶ Cock's original prints were most likely based on drawings by Joos van Liere, but which are often credited to "The Master of the Small Landscapes."⁷ Visscher's re-etching and re-publishing of Cock's *Small Landscapes* provides fresh insight into the practices of a seventeenth-century Dutch print publisher and his audience.⁸ The political, commercial, and sentimental motives behind Visscher's version of Cock's prints during the Twelve Years' Truce with Spain (1609-1621), moreover, offers an interesting framing to the likely reception of the images by the displaced population of Flanders. The scholarship on Visscher's motivations in publishing these well-known Flemish landscapes has tended to focus on the commercial viability of the images to invoke nostalgia in those who were displaced from Flanders and relocated to the north at the beginning of the Truce, the shift in Dutch imagery to strict and exacting representations of nature, and the development of a new Dutch national

⁶ M. Simon explores the lineage of Visscher and the history of his shop in her monograph. Maria Simon, "Claes Jansz. Visscher" (Albert-Ludwig-Universität zu Freiburg, 1958).

⁷ F.W.H. Hollstein, C. Schuckman, and D. de Hoop Scheffer, *Hollstein's Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts Ca. 1450-1700: Claes Jansz Visscher to Claes Claesz Visscher Ii (Nicolaes Visscher Ii) : Text* (Van Poll, 1990), 144.

⁸ T.A. Riggs, *Hieronymus Cock, Printmaker and Publisher* (Garland Pub., 1977), 370. Page 370, offers only cursory comments on *The Small Landscapes*.

identity.⁹ What has been largely overlooked is the relationship of the figures *present in The Small Landscapes* to existing social conventions in the region, and the further significance these figures could hold for the interpretation of the seventeenth-century Dutch landscape through the eyes of the print audience. The depiction of the human figure in the print culture of the Netherlands as a whole is visually connected to established mores in the contemporary culture. The inclusion of the human figure in Dutch landscapes invited viewers to identify the individual figures in these landscapes with what had been established social hierarchies prior to the Twelve Years' Truce and the influx of Flemish expatriates. I will argue that Visscher's figures are significant changes to Cock's original prints that represent the views the Dutch and Flemish held of each other.

Visscher etched his own title page for his suite and added two additional prints that did not appear in Cock's original publications. The original images are of the Flemish countryside, faithfully rendered *naar het leven* (in a life-like manner), as stated on Cock's original title page, and include both architectural and figural elements.¹⁰ The compositions offered a financial opportunity for Visscher fifty-three years after Cock's original publication.¹¹ Visscher's suite appealed to the nostalgic interest the seventeenth-century Dutch had in their countryside. Ann Adams has suggested that Dutch landscape

⁹ See Onuf, "Envisioning Netherlandish Unity: Claes Visscher's 1612 Copies of the Small Landscape Prints". 2. 2. and Gibson, *Pleasant Places: The Rustic Landscape from Bruegel to Ruisdael*, 27-49. as examples.

¹⁰ Both Cock and Visscher specify the Brabant countryside in their title pages. During the period covered by this thesis Flanders and Brabant are geographically close to each other and the citizens of Antwerp seem to have identified as being Brabantine rather than Flemish. However, scholarship regarding *The Small Landscapes* persists in referring to the images as depictions of the Flemish countryside. For the sake of clarity I will follow this trend except where it is necessary to distinguish between the two regions, as in chapter 3.

¹¹ Onuf, "Envisioning Netherlandish Unity: Claes Visscher's 1612 Copies of the Small Landscape Prints". 1.

painting of the period “historicizes and recollects an earlier era.”¹² This also seems appropriate to the discussion of *The Small Landscapes* since the countryside of Flanders, as presented by Visscher, had actually been ravaged by war with Spain and no longer appeared as presented in Visscher’s suite but had already been decimated when Cock published his images.¹³ The woods in the countryside had been destroyed and villages either burnt to the ground or emptied of residents fleeing the conflict with the Spanish. Cock’s publication was much closer to the Spanish destruction of the Flemish countryside than Visscher’s. Visscher’s publication presented a new context for *The Small Landscapes*. The Truce had been struck and a tentative peace established. Even further removed from the conflict between Spain and the Netherlands in time than Cock’s, Visscher’s prints provided a more detached view of the Flemish countryside. Whereas Cock’s suite presents the idyllic Flemish countryside to the residents of Flanders amidst the conflict with Spain, Visscher’s suite presents the countryside of Flanders to the Dutch *and* the dispossessed Flemish in the context of new political and social problems, involving the assimilation of the displaced Flemish with the Dutch, or debates about the possible re-unification of the southern and the northern Netherlands.

Visscher’s 1612 edition of *The Small Landscapes* consists of twenty-six plates. Each image in the suite is individually numbered from 1 to 26 in the lower right corner within the image itself. These numbers are etched directly into the matrix of the image. The first plate of the suite functions as a title page. The composition of this image marks not only the greatest departure from Cock’s original images, but also stands apart from

¹² Adams, *Competing Communities in the “Great Bog of Europe,”* 55.

¹³ Onuf, “Envisioning Netherlandish Unity: Claes Visscher’s 1612 Copies of the Small Landscape Prints”. 6.

the visual language of Visscher's versions of the other *images in the suite*. The image is dominated by architecture and the figure of a peasant bagpipe-player (fig. 1). As with all of the images in the suite, Plate 1 is longer along its horizontal axis; in what has become known as the landscape format, the figure of the musician fills the right side of the print from top to bottom, easily the largest and most detailed figural element in the entire suite. The musician rests his weight on his left leg and a long staff held in his right hand. He cradles a set of bagpipes under his left arm and is slouching forward. A small cottage, most likely a middle-class home, fills most of the rest of the image. A five pointed star is carved into the side of the cottage just above the bagpiper's left shoulder, possible a vagabond glyph that marks the house as being occupied by particularly charitable people.¹⁴ Nailed to the side of the building is what appears to be a sheet that displays the Latin text "REGIUNCULÆ, ET VILLÆ \ ALIQUOT DUCATUS BRA: \ BANTIÆ, À P. BRUEUGELIO \ DELINEATÆ, ET IN PICTO: \ RUM GRATIAM, À NICO: \ LAO IOANNIS PISCATORE \ EXCUSÆ, & IN LUCEM EDI \ TÆ. AMSTELODAMI." ("Some small residences and estates from the duchy of Brabant, delineated by P. Bruegelio, and for the sake of painters, engraved and brought into light [published] Claes Jansz Visscher at Amsterdam.") from which the suite takes its title.¹⁵ A dirt road runs in front of the musician and building, a short fence with a wagon wheel strapped to its cross beams extends from the side of the cottage and borders the right side of the road which then recedes into the background where a larger building is lightly rendered in atmospheric perspective. The year of the suite's publication, 1612, appears below the

¹⁴ L.A. Stone-Ferrier and Helen Foresman Spencer Museum of Art, *Dutch Prints of Daily Life: Mirrors of Life or Masks of Morals? : Essays and Catalogue* (Lawrence: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, 1983), 120.

¹⁵ Gibson, *Pleasant Places: The Rustic Landscape from Bruegel to Ruisdael*, 42.

banner nailed to the building as if the numbers were carved in bas relief from the road's embankment. Visscher's monogram appears in the right corner of the image and the number one at the bottom right.

Visscher's rendering of a bagpiper so prominently on his title page contrasts with his treatment of the figures throughout the rest of the suite. The figures throughout Visscher's publication are much smaller and rendered in less detail than the bagpiper in the title page. Walter S. Gibson has plausibly suggested that Visscher was attempting to connect his prints directly to the fame and following of Pieter Bruegel that had developed across the Netherlands in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.¹⁶ The image of the peasant bagpiper recurs in Bruegel's *oeuvre* and Visscher recreates this iconic image in a manner that is strongly suggestive of Bruegel's hand.¹⁷ Whereas Cock did not attribute his suite to any particular artist, Visscher marketed his prints as being after the designs of Bruegel as is indicated in the text of the title page of Visscher's suite. This serves to place the images as originating in the mid-sixteenth century prior to *The Truce*. The reality of the images is that they were not originally designed by Bruegel. The unnamed designer of Cock's original prints, sometimes called "The Master of the Small Landscapes," was, as Gibson has argued, most likely Joos van Liere, an artist who later became a Calvinist preacher.¹⁸ Initiating the suite with such a prominent figural image, both in scale and popularity, gives an importance to the figures also found throughout the rest of the suite. It would seem that Visscher is connecting his images of peasants to Bruegel's festive renderings of sixteenth-century peasant life. Svetlana Alpers views

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Nadine Orenstein et al., "Print Publishers in the Netherlands: 1580-1620," in *Dawn of the Golden Age: Northern Netherlandish Art, 1580-1620*, ed. G. Luitjen, et al. (Yale University Press, 1994), 192.

¹⁸ Gibson, *Pleasant Places: The Rustic Landscape from Bruegel to Ruisdael*, 10.

Bruegel's comic peasant paintings as related to the sympathetic bond of human nature in the context of laughter.¹⁹ In 1604 Carl van Mander wrote that Bruegel was known to cavort with peasants. Van Mander writes that Bruegel even went so far as to dress as a peasant and, with gifts in hand, crash peasant weddings in order to observe their mannerisms.²⁰ While van Mander's topos of Bruegel's party-crashing specifically suggests the observation of but not direct interaction with peasants, the cultural distance between Bruegel and his subjects seems less distant than many other images of peasants by northern artists, such as Adriaen Brouwer. Jan and Lucas van Duetecum's print after Bruegel's *Fair Day of Saint George*, published by Cock c. 1559, presents a kermis with its peasant attendees in Bruegel's typical comedic manner (fig. 2). The peasants drink, fight, and engage in overall raucous behavior. A banner in the lower left of the image identifies the kermis in honor of the feast day of Saint George and, inscribed on the ribbon above Saint George is the phrase *Laet die boeren haer keermis houden*, "let the peasants hold their kermis." The Holy Roman Emperor Charles V had issued an edict that limited the kermis to a single day.²¹ The phrase on the ribbon in Bruegel's image suggests that Bruegel approached the depiction of peasants from a humanistic view point. The manner in which Bruegel presented peasants in his work led Abraham Ortelius to compare him to the artist Eupompus who considered crowds of people to be part of nature itself.²² Seen in the context of Bruegel's relationship to peasant imagery,

¹⁹ Svetlana Alpers, "Realism as a Comic Mode: Low-Life Painting Seen through Bredero's Eyes," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 8, no. 3 (1975): 136.

²⁰ C. van Mander and C. Van de Wall, *Dutch and Flemish Painters* (McFarlane, 1936), 154.

²¹ N.S., "Mfah | Collections | Arts of Europe | the Fair of Saint George's Day," <http://www.mfah.org/art/detail/fair-st-georges-day/>. Museum of Fine Art, Houston museum file for *Fair Day of Saint George*.

²² T.M. Richardson and P. Bruegel, *Pieter Bruegel the Elder: Art Discourse in the Sixteenth-Century Netherlands* (Ashgate, 2011), 39.

Visscher's images, particularly his original renderings of the figural elements, provide the viewer with a positive characterization of the population of the Flemish countryside with the peasantry representing human nature. This is not surprising when considering that Visscher was trained in the milieu of David Vinckboons and other Flemish artists.²³ The bagpiper also suggests the pastoral tradition in the arts and literature, in which shepherds had a tendency to engage in musical contests out in the countryside. The pastoral shepherd also tended to be a thinly disguised surrogate for the author of the text, thus "shepherds" are not always what they appear.²⁴ The Classical pastoral tradition had been assimilated into the Northern artistic and literary tradition by this period. The Dutch had taken topos and visual motifs from the Classical pastoral tradition and presented them with a Northern flavor. Visscher's bagpiper sets the context for *The Small Landscapes* he published by connecting the imagery that follows the title page to the pastoral tradition and by making it stand apart in some ways from Cock's original suite.

Plates 2-24, on the other hand, are close reproductions of Cock's original imagery. Casual inspection of the images reveals little difference in the presentation of landscape and architecture from Cock's suite, and it is only with close comparison that the differences become apparent. However, even casual comparison reveals major differences in the figural elements of the two publications.²⁵ Visscher took great liberties with the representation of Cock's original figures. His resizing of figures, new poses, alteration of the composition of the figures within the landscape, and complete redactions of figures as well as the creation of completely new figures in Visscher's version of the

²³ Bakker and Webb, *Landscape and Religion: From Van Eyck to Rembrandt*, 235.

²⁴ A.M. Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology: Virgil to Valéry* (University of California, 1987), 139.

²⁵ Onuf, "Envisioning Netherlandish Unity: Claes Visscher's 1612 Copies of the Small Landscape Prints". 4.

images seems at odds with the relatively exact manner in which Visscher reproduced the architectural and topographical elements of Cock's publication. To be clear, Visscher did not reproduce Cock's *Small Landscapes* in exacting detail as in the manner of a forgery, but reproduced the images with his own graphic vocabulary. A looser use of line and relatively minor changes in composition such as cropping the image and altering the cloud formations in the background to frame the image more forcefully, is apparent in Visscher's prints when viewed side-by-side with Cock's.²⁶ While there is at times the addition of a shrub, and a minor change in the growth of some of the foliage in Visscher's prints, the overall image remains true to Cock's edition. In addition, it should be noted that Visscher darkened the extreme foreground of his images in what would become one of the most notable features of Dutch landscape imagery. However, just as significant, is Visscher's depiction of the population of the images with figures.

Visscher's Plate 8 (fig. 3) has one lone figure in the image. The figure, a man who is drawing water from a well, is in contrast to Cock's original image (fig. 4). Visscher alters the image, the clouds have been re-drawn and the foreground darkened, in the same standard manner that is present throughout the suite. But, where there is a goat herder prominently placed in the foreground of Cock's image, Visscher has placed the figure in his image further down the road that extends from the left foreground to the right edge of the image, further into the image. This comparison highlights the general differences between the prints in the two suites, and illustrates the significant changes Visscher made to the figural elements of the prints.²²

²⁶ Ibid.

Visscher's Plate 22 places members of the upper level of society in the same scene as peasants (fig. 5). Visscher has made alterations to the image in his standard manner and slightly altered the figural elements. Cock's original image (fig. 6) places a man and a woman walking together in front of the castle in the center of the image. A child runs ahead of the couple. Two men appear on the far right side of the image. One man is in the act of either sitting down on or rising up from the raised base of a tree. The other man is walking towards the first. Both men carry hiking staves and have large baskets strapped to their backs. Visscher omits the child completely, as well as a dog that follows the man and woman, and alters the appearance and stature of the other figures. The central figures, the man and woman, can be identified as members of the upper class in both versions of the suites. Cock's couple appears to be in motion, the man slightly in front of the woman in mid-stride as he looks back to her, apparently in conversation. Visscher's version of the couple appears not so much in motion as posing. Both stand up remarkably straight, the man with his left arm extended in front of him holding a walking staff. His legs are spread wide and he presents the elegance in his posture, as does the woman, according to the norms of the manners books popular at the time that defined rules of comportment for the upper-class. In contrast, the two men at the right edge of the image both appear stooped over, one fully seated and obviously at rest on the raised base of the tree. The other man, not in motion as in Cock's print, stands close to the seated man, stooped over, leaning heavily on his staff. Both men bend their heads down. This juxtaposition between the postures of the upper class and peasants recurs throughout Visscher's suite.

The poses in which Visscher renders both peasants and the upper-class figures follows closely the rules for the proper comportment of members of these two social classes as outlined in the manners books popular during the period such as Antoine de Courtin's manners book *The Rules of Civility, or the Maxims of Genteel Behavior*, published in France in 1671, Erasmus's *De Civilitate Morum Puerilium* of 1530, and Baldassare Castiglione's *Cortegiano* of 1528 were also very popular manners books in the Netherlands during the seventeenth century.²⁷ The rules for proper comportment from these manners books would show up much later in Gerard de Lairese's 1707 *Groot Schilderboek*.²⁸ Of interest to the imagery of Plate 22 is de Lairese's description of how a "rude peasant" should be depicted as being stooped over and "rest[ing] and stand[ing] simultaneously on both legs" as with the man on the far right of the image.²⁹ The way in which the member of the upper class should carry himself or herself is expressed in the manners books in contrast to the poor posture of peasants, most notably stooping and bending the head to the side. Essentially, the well-bred are instructed to not carry themselves as peasants. Visscher clearly renders these two social strata in separate postures, whereas Cock's rendering of the two groups of figures places them in motion. The action of Cock's figures skews a clear reading of the figure's postures where Visscher's rendering clearly poses the figures. This certainly shows that Visscher not only gave close consideration to the figural elements of his suite, but that he intended, or at least expected that, the figures would be read in a specific manner.

²⁷ Herman Roodenburg, "On "Swelling" the Hips and Crossing the Legs: Distinguishing Public and Private in Paintings and Prints from the Dutch Golden Age," in *The Public and Private in Dutch Culture of the Golden Age*, ed. Jr. and Adele Seeff Arthur K. Wheelock (Newark and London: University of Delaware Press, 2000), 65 and 68.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 69.

Visscher regularly obtained etched plates from other publishers and printmakers, including plates from living draftsmen and previously reissued plates. He regularly acquired plates that had been previously published by Cock.³⁰ This was standard practice for seventeenth century printmakers as a way of supplementing their income.³¹ Visscher's known history of republishing prints originally issued by Cock using the original plates suggests that Visscher was unable to obtain Cock's original plates of *The Small Landscapes*, which were owned by Philipp Galle at the time.³² Visscher's revisions, as necessitated by his inability to acquire the original plates from Cock's edition, provide insight into the changing visual and cognitive aesthetics of Dutch landscapes. It is a simple matter to compare how Visscher approached the reproduction of Cock's images to their originals. It was common practice for print publishers to shear off the edges of plates in order to change the composition of the original image. Visscher did as much with his rendition of the landscapes by shrinking the dimensions of the images.

It was also common practice to re-work the images of old, previously published plates. This too would have been a simple and quick act for Visscher to have performed especially for the most identifiable elements of Dutch landscapes that Visscher's edition of *The Small Landscapes* helped to establish: the creation of depth in landscape images through the darkening of the foreground of the image. This would have been an additive measure for Visscher that, thanks to the relative time-saving nature of etching as opposed to engraving, would have been very cost effective. This can also be said of Visscher's

³⁰ Gibson, *Pleasant Places: The Rustic Landscape from Bruegel to Ruisdael*, 33.

³¹ Nadine Orenstein, *Hendrick Hondius and the Business of Prints in Seventeenth-Century Holland* (Rotterdam: Sound & Vision, 1996), 95.

³² Onuf, "Envisioning Netherlandish Unity: Claes Visscher's 1612 Copies of the Small Landscape Prints".
1. Galle published Cock's two original suites as one in 1601.

treatment of the foliage that he redrew more fully in his edition than in Cock's original. In contrast, the alteration of the figures would have been time-consuming, suggesting that Visscher's figures held some significance in his publication.

Had Visscher gained access to Cock's original plates, the difference between the two editions would therefore likely not have been as dramatic in the depiction of the figural elements. The degree to which Visscher altered the figures in the images, free from the constraints of the pre-existing etched line in the matrix, provides insight into the changing conventions for the depiction of the human figure in seventeenth-century Dutch art. It also shows that Visscher placed some degree of importance on the figures.

Cock's figures have generally been described as indiscriminately placed within his compositions.³³ This notion corresponds to most analysis of Dutch landscapes, both prints and paintings. The tendency to refer to the figural elements of all landscapes as *staffage*, a word inspired by the German word *staffieren*, indicates the low level of importance that these elements have been assigned by art historians. Gerard de Lairese, in his *Groote Schilderboek*, used the term *stoffagie* in 1707 which was translated as "ornament."³⁴ This insinuates that the figures in a landscape are secondary to the larger design of the image, or simply disposable. However, this does not seem to be the case with Visscher's treatment of the *staffage* of *The Small Landscapes*.

Visscher's physical rendering of the figures in his suite differs dramatically from Cock's. While it is not accurate to state that Visscher's *staffage* is more detailed or carefully etched than Cock's, Visscher does apply conventions to the human figure that originate in mid-sixteenth century manners books that are not present in Cock's

³³ Ibid., 9.

³⁴ Ibid., 117.

depictions. These texts cover a great many rules for how the well-bred should carry themselves in comparison to how peasants were thought to present themselves to the world around them.³⁵ These conventions were then adopted in *schilderboeken*, (painters' books"), essentially painter's manuals, and expanded upon to indicate how figures of specific social standing should be portrayed in works of art.³⁶

Rather than describing the manner in which each of Visscher's prints diverges from Cock's, a couple of examples can illustrate the change in the presentation of the human figure and the social and cultural significance of that change from the older suite to the newer. The most striking example can be found in Cock's Plate 11 (fig. 7), and the corresponding Plate 21 (fig. 8) of Visscher's suite. The image is of a road leading from the foreground, roughly where the viewer would naturally place himself in the image, receding to the background and curving around behind a small building that extends to the viewer's left. Further in the background another building, this one quite larger and appearing to be at least two stories, stretches from the middle of the image nearly to its left edge. In the extreme background the tops of other structures have been rendered lightly in accordance with aerial perspective. This general description fits both Visscher's Plate 21 and the corresponding image from Cock's suite. Visscher's image has been very slightly cropped (in this case along the right side of the plate), the cloud formations have been altered in a manner that frames the top of the image in a rough arch, some foliage has "grown" fuller (as with the tree behind the foremost building in the near center of the image), and the foreground has been darkened to create a more significant contrast with

³⁵ Roodenburg, "On "Swelling" the Hips and Crossing the Legs: Distinguishing Public and Private in Paintings and Prints from the Dutch Golden Age," 65.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 68.

the lightly etched buildings in the extreme background. These changes are consistent, to the point of being standardized, throughout Visscher's suite.

Visscher's Plate 21, however, also diverges from Cock's print in other ways. No figures are present in Cock's print, but Visscher includes three. Two men are grouped together next to the foremost building where the road curves into the background, and a woman is in the left foreground. The female figure, her basket and staff resting on the ground in front of her, is squatting halfway down, her dress pulled almost above her bent knees, and two short strokes of the etching needle indicate that she is urinating on the side of the road, very much in the open (fig. 9). She is also well within sight of the two men, who are just down the road. One of the men sits just over a rise in the road, his hiking staff resting against his right shoulder. He is blocked from the waist down by the rise in the road and his back is to both the viewer of the image and the other man. The last figure stands facing the nearest building's corner. He is in the darkest shadow present in the image and a curving line extends from his waistline down and past the corner of the building. This could of course be his staff, a recurring attribute associated with the peasants in Visscher's prints, but in the context of the image of the woman prominently displayed in the foreground it seems likely that this figure, too, is relieving himself. The rendering of the figures in this plate performing natural bodily functions is suggestive of Ortelius' comparison of Bruegel to Eupompus. Similar concepts concerning bodily functions can be found in Nicolaes Berchem the Elder's image of a sheep urinating in his etching *Two Sheep: One Urinating* of the mid to late seventeenth century (fig. 10), and Joseph de Bray's *Still Life in Praise of the Pickled Herring* of 1656 (fig. 11). De Bray's painting includes the poem "In Praise of the Pickled Herring" by Jacob Westerbaen,

painted in the background, that extols the virtues of eating pickled herring including that it "...will make you inclined to piss/ And you will not fail to shit (pardon me)/ And fart without ceasing..." Both Berchem's print and Westerbaen's poem deal bluntly with natural activities.

Visscher's Plate 21 illustrates not only the tendency for Dutch artists to address these natural functions, but also the way the figures in his suite can be seen to relate to the manners books that were prevalent in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century. Popular in the Netherlands, de Courtin's manners book addresses the essential activities of life. These activities, of course, include urinating and defecating.³⁷ This suggests, as these bodily functions are shared by both the peasantry and upper-class, a connection between the upper and lower strata of Dutch culture that cannot be separated except through rules of comportment. Visscher's Plate 21 is not merely a case of lowbrow humor, but must be understood in the context of the rest of the suite and the changing culture of the Northern Netherlands. The manners books of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries taught their lessons through the comparison of proper manners to social blunders and *faux pas*, as well as with comparisons of how the well-mannered, upper class of society held themselves and moved about in contrast to the peasants.³⁸ By bring to light these differences Visscher is not presenting the rudeness of peasants compared to the upper-class, rather he has illustrated that both exist together. In the context of the rest of Visscher's suite, the figures in Plate 21 can be identified as peasants and the suite as a whole can be seen as a comparison between the activities of the upper and lower strata of the social hierarchy of the Netherlands.

³⁷ As cited in *ibid.*, 65.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Herman Roodenburg points out that many of the manners books previously discussed were not translated into Dutch until the middle of the seventeenth century. The upper classes, however, were well trained in languages other than Dutch and could “disseminate the new rules among their family and acquaintances.”³⁹ The desire to comport one’s self in a proper social manner would be of more interest to the upper strata of Dutch society than to the peasantry.⁴⁰ Rather by intentionally drawing a difference between how the peasants act and hold themselves in comparison to the upper-class figures in his prints, Visscher has offered contrasting images of the people who make up a particular culture.

Considering that Visscher was based in Amsterdam, in the northern seven provinces, and made significant alterations to the figural images of Cock’s print series of Flemish landscapes, the “particular culture” that Visscher is presenting with his figural images is not so clear. To consider this question, it is helpful to look at Gerbrant Bredero’s 1617 play “The Spanish Brabanter” which presents a Brabantine immigrant named Jerolimo as a pretentious and flashy contrast to the modest Amsterdammers. Having arrived in Amsterdam from Brabant⁴¹ Jerolimo says:

In Brabant we’re all quite exquisite
 In dress and bearing- in the Spanish mode-
 Like lesser kings, gods visible on earth
 O imperial Antwerp, great and rich!
 In all the sun’s wide range there’s nowhere else
 Such abundance of slime, and comely fields
 Triumphant churches, cloisters most devout
 And stately buildings, lofty ramparts
 And overreaching trees along piers

³⁹ Ibid., 65-66.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 65.

⁴¹ For this specific argument let us consider that “Brabant” and “Flanders” in the seventeenth century were perceived similarly by the Northern Netherlands.

And quays where flows the mighty Scheldt.⁴²

Jerolimo does not lack pride in his home, but, as he has found himself forced to flee his creditors in Antwerp for Amsterdam, the implication is that the Dutch, are *botmuilen*, “blockheads.”⁴³ The Amsterdammers, in Jerolimo’s eyes, know nothing of honor or elegance and have no respect for title and rank.⁴⁴ Erasmus made a similar comment on the Dutch, in a less derogatory manner, in his 1509 *Praise of Folly* in which he refers to Dutch manners as “plain.”⁴⁵

It seems that the ten southern provinces viewed the seven northern provinces as uncouth. In return, the seven northern provinces considered the south to be pompous.⁴⁶ The upper class of the north, those with money and education, tended to dress modestly, as opposed to Bredero’s Jerolimo’s manner of dressing in the “Spanish mode.”⁴⁷ It was also felt by the Dutch that the immigrants from the south were corrupting the simple traditions of the north with a level of education and sophistication that was not welcomed.⁴⁸ In this respect, Jerolimo represents a threat to the Dutch from the

⁴² G.A. Bredero and H.D. Brumble, *The Spanish Brabanter: A Seventeenth-Century Dutch Social Satire in Five Acts* (Center for Medieval & Early Renaissance Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1982), 47.

⁴³ *Botmuilen*, literally “blunt mouths,” Roodenburg, “On “Swelling” the Hips and Crossing the Legs: Distinguishing Public and Private in Paintings and Prints from the Dutch Golden Age,” 65.

⁴⁴ J. Pollmann, “‘Brabanters Do Fairly Resemble Spaniards after All:’ Memory, Propaganda and Identity in the Twelve Years’ Truce,” in *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands: Essays in Honour of Alastair Duke*, ed. A.C. Duke and J. Pollmann (Brill Academic Pub, 2007), 212.

⁴⁵ As cited in Roodenburg, “On “Swelling” the Hips and Crossing the Legs: Distinguishing Public and Private in Paintings and Prints from the Dutch Golden Age,” 65.

⁴⁶ This is of course subjective to one’s particular point of view. Iija Veldman provides a view of how residents of the Low Countries perceived themselves as hard working and diligent through the writings of Hadrianus Junius. I.M. Veldman, *Images for the Eye and Soul: Function and Meaning in Netherlandish Prints (1450-1650)* (Primavera Pers, 2006), 171.

⁴⁷ Pollmann, “‘Brabanters Do Fairly Resemble Spaniards after All:’ Memory, Propaganda and Identity in the Twelve Years’ Truce,” 212.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 213. It is also interesting to note that the Dutch youth culture was satirized for their pompous manner of dress in contemporary paintings such as *The Merry Company* by William Buytewech of c. 1620. And, Levesque notes that the sixteenth century theories of Jean Bodin, who considered a nation’s destiny was determined by the nature of its people, were still popular in the seventeenth century. Levesque,

contemporary Spanish.⁴⁹ While Bredero's play is set prior to the Twelve Years' Truce, it connects with contemporary political rhetoric that kept the memory of the Dutch Revolt of the 1570s, roughly around the same time that Cock's suites were originally published, and the Reformation alive.⁵⁰ Needing to sway the Catholic population as well as the Protestant, this rhetoric placed emphasis on a common threat to the northern provinces, including the immigrants from the south, the Spanish influence on the Brabanters. The creation of a common threat to the Netherlandish culture served to integrate the Flemish and Brabant exiles into their new region.⁵¹

Visscher presents the clash of cultures evident in Bredero's play in a more subtle fashion that invites the blending of Flemish pomp with Dutch modesty. Visscher presents images of the Flemish countryside, through his choices of which images from Cock's suite he chose to reproduce, that include stately manors and castles present in the Dutch countryside during the seventeenth century, but do not present themselves in any of Visscher's other serial prints, such as *Pleasant Places* that is a series of landscapes set in and around Haarlem. Onuf compares the similarities of *The Small Landscapes* and *Pleasant Places*, but considers the activities of the figures of both suites to be mundane.⁵² Onuf seems to be missing the fact that the peasants present in *Pleasant Places* are laboring where the peasants in *The Small Landscapes* mostly engage in leisurely activities. This leads Onuf to consider the two series as Visscher's attempt to equate the

Journey through Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Holland: The Harlem Print Series and Dutch Identity, 14.

⁴⁹ Pollmann, "'Brabanters Do Fairly Resemble Spaniards after All: Memory, Propaganda and Identity in the Twelve Years' Truce,'" 224.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 222.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 219-21.

⁵² Onuf specifically considers the format of the two suites and the serial nature of the images. Onuf, "Envisioning Netherlandish Unity: Claes Visscher's 1612 Copies of the Small Landscape Prints". 8.

two regions to each other. This seems probable, but it ignores the differences Visscher presents in the two regions illustrated by the figures of *The Small Landscapes*. The manner in which Visscher presents his figures suggests that Visscher was aware of the social friction caused by the influx of Flemish immigrants and that he chose to equate the stately manors and castles of *The Small Landscapes* with identifiable members of the upper class in Flanders. As in Visscher's Plate 22 where the obvious differences between the pair of upper-class figures and the pair of peasant figures are presented to the viewer in connection with a stately castle, and as in Plate 21 where peasants are rendered with stark naturalism, the differences in the two strata of society can be considered in terms of both the North's view of the South and the South's view of the North.

The identification of the social standing of the figures in the Visscher suite does pose an interesting contrast with other images produced in the printed medium in the seventeenth century Netherlands. In particular, images depicting and praising the virtues of labor and diligence were popular at the time Visscher published his suite of *The Small Landscapes*, but most commonly only in prints.⁵³ Visscher, being in the print trade, would certainly have been familiar with Frans Huys' engraving *Idleness Leads to Poverty* (ca. 1550-60) after Cornelis Massijs, the series *The Use and Abuse of Time* (ca. 1570) attributed to Gerard de Jode, and the many other printed images that extol the virtues of hard work. These images developed from a particularly humanist ideal of labor.⁵⁴ The figures in Visscher's suite, peasant and upper class alike, do not appear to be performing

⁵³ Veldman, *Images for the Eye and Soul: Function and Meaning in Netherlandish Prints (1450-1650)*, 192.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 183.

any labor.⁵⁵ The peasants lounge upon the ground or sit idle, the upper class stroll and talk, but the virtues of labor are not addressed. A frequent interpretation is that Visscher is presenting to the viewer a leisurely stroll through the countryside.⁵⁶ This would seem to connect with the audience to which Cock originally marketed his suite. Targeting the educated, Cock's prints would have appealed to scholars and rhetoricians, an elite class interested in literature and drama. Cock separated the rustic landscape from its previous pairing with urban scenes in the town-and-country tradition.⁵⁷ Wealthy city dwellers often spent weekend getaways in *hofjes van plaisance*, summerhouses, where they would *wandelen*, stroll, through the countryside.⁵⁸ With his edition of *The Small Landscapes* Visscher targeted this same elite class after the fall of Antwerp forced many Protestants, particularly those from Flanders, to the Northern Netherlands.⁵⁹

By recalling the pastoral imagery that had been assimilated into Dutch visual and literary culture Visscher's figures appealed to the elite of the Northern Netherlands . Scenes like the one found in Plate 7 of Visscher's suite that depicts two men and a woman lying on an embankment conversing, most likely flirting, or in Plate 16 in which a man, lying on the ground next to a woman, appears to be caught in some salacious act by a second woman who bends over the two reclining figures, illustrate this connection between *The Small Landscapes* and the pastoral tradition.

⁵⁵ The idea of "labor" is subjective in terms of seventeenth-century Dutch printmaking. While the particulars of laboring in Visscher's prints relates to some type of manual labor and has been typified as middle-class, the idea of "labor and diligence" can be equated to many forms of productivity it has typically. *Ibid.*, 173.

⁵⁶ Gibson, *Pleasant Places: The Rustic Landscape from Bruegel to Ruisdael*, 41.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁵⁹ Onuf, "Envisioning Netherlandish Unity: Claes Visscher's 1612 Copies of the Small Landscape Prints". 2.

The popularity of these images of pleasant country life, both when originally published by Cock and then re-published by Visscher, at a time when new industry and new perceptions of labor were growing in popularity in the Netherlands, provide insight into the changing face of the emerging Dutch national identity. The map of the Netherlands was continually being re-drawn in the most literal of senses as well as symbolically representing a change in philosophies and ideals. *The Small Landscapes* not only represented to the Dutch an ideal and peaceful life, but reminded them of what an ideal state the new Netherlands could become. The figures in Visscher's suite may not engage in labor, but they do express more than idleness. The figures constitute a cross-section of the growing culture of the Dutch Republic that was defined by the blending of the immigrants from the south with their new home in the north. More than "idle staffage," Visscher's publication of *The Small Landscapes* presents, as will be explored in the next two chapters, the "ideal state" of the emerging nation of the Dutch Republic.

Chapter 2

Selling the Story: The In, Out, and In-Between of the Serial Print Trade

The Dutch print market in the seventeenth century was an affair of complexity and intense activity. The urbanization of the region and the “surprisingly” high literacy rate of its population created a market for printed material.⁶⁰ A variety of printed material was created and exported from Amsterdam and other Dutch cities to the rest of the world.⁶¹ Claes Jansz. Visscher alone is known to have designed, printed, and published maps, reproductive prints, re-issued prints from other publishers, journalistic prints, and serial prints like *The Small Landscapes*.⁶² The serial print format of *The Small Landscapes* (1612) offers an interesting look at how prints were viewed in the seventeenth century. It provides insight into a larger context that swells outside of the format itself, and thus outside of the specific images in the suite, and encompasses the history and knowledge of the culture that it presents to the viewer.⁶³

The serial format presented to the viewer a suite of prints in which the individual images appear to be ordered in some manner, thus suggesting that any individual image in the suite is dependent upon the others. This dependency between the images must be acknowledged to fully appreciate the suite. The manner in which the consumer viewed the images, how the suite was packaged and sold, and how the artist (and, in the case of Visscher, the publisher of the suite) intended the suite to be viewed, however, suggests that the Dutch approached the serial print format as a much richer source for

⁶⁰ This seems to be in comparison with other European countries as per S. Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (University of Calif. Press, 1988), 4.

⁶¹ The Dutch East India Company was based out of Amsterdam at this time and traded from the Americas to the Orient.

⁶² Bakker and Webb, *Landscape and Religion: From Van Eyck to Rembrandt*, 237.

⁶³ Levesque, *Journey through Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Holland: The Harlem Print Series and Dutch Identity*, xx.

contemplation than simply as a loosely connected series of images. The visual culture of the Netherlands was well-developed and informed the way the Dutch integrated inherited traditions into their contemporary culture.⁶⁴

Visscher's background, both professional and personal, suggests he intended a more complicated connection between the individual images of *The Small Landscapes*, and between the suite as a whole and the viewer. Thus, *The Small Landscapes* should be viewed as a whole. The intention of the artist in creating a work of art that is dependent on the ordered collection and viewing of several individual images suggests that the breaking up of the suite would result in the destruction of the work of art itself. However, the practice of selling off the individual images of a collection of prints piecemeal is persistent and creates a new context in which the individual prints of the group stand as independent works of art. This conflicts with the clues left by Visscher within the images of *The Small Landscapes* and suggests that the suite is intended to be viewed as a narrative construction dependent on the progression from one image to the next in the series. Unfortunately, current scholarship tends to view and discuss serial prints independently from one another.⁶⁵

To begin the discussion of how serial prints were approached by the seventeenth-century Dutch, it is best to start with the end goal of a suite's production, which is with the group of images in the hands of the consumer. *The Small Landscapes* is not, properly considered, a series of reproductive prints, at least not in the same manner that a print produced to act as a surrogate for a painting is considered a reproductive print. The

⁶⁴ Ibid., xix.

⁶⁵ Veldman singles out Clifford Ackley, Irene de Groot, and David Freedberg. Veldman, *Images for the Eye and Soul: Function and Meaning in Netherlandish Prints (1450-1650)*, xx.

convention of framing prints and hanging the images on the wall as with paintings does not seem to have been as prevalent in the seventeenth century as today.⁶⁶ Rather, the nature of the serial print was to be pondered over or “read” by the viewer. Prints, in general during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, have been valued “in so far as they can be regarded as works of art” with much less emphasis on their ability to accurately reproduce pictorial statements multiple times in the same manner as movable type reproduces letters as symbols for language.⁶⁷ The complexity of serial images indicates an audience with a well-developed sense of visual literacy.⁶⁸ The convention of keeping suites of prints in either loose or bound portfolios suggest that the images were treated like bound texts.⁶⁹ Rather than being continually present to view as a painting hanging on a wall, the viewing of a suite of prints required active physical involvement with the object itself. The activity of flipping through the prints in the portfolio not only parallels the activity of reading a book, but for the appreciator of the prints a cognitive activity occurs that emulates the “reading” of the images in much the same way as reading text. The viewer’s interaction with serial prints like *The Small Landscapes* needs to be seen to follow the relationship of text to image that is present in Visscher’s other formats before the complex association of images and narrative in the suite can be considered. This relationship between text and imagery is noted by Catherine Levesque

⁶⁶ While there is some evidence in contemporary paintings that prints were adhered to walls using sealing wax in the seventeenth century the only images of framed prints in the seventeenth century appear to be associated with the selling of prints in markets and shops and not in the context of private spaces.

⁶⁷ W.M. Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communication* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969), 1-2.

⁶⁸ Levesque, *Journey through Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Holland: The Harlem Print Series and Dutch Identity*, xx.

⁶⁹ C.S. Ackley, "This Passion for Prints: Collecting and Connoisseurship in Northern Europe During the Seventeenth Century," in *Printmaking in the Age of Rembrandt* (Museum of Fine Arts, 1981), xlvi. Ackley notes several private inventories that range from the mid-seventeenth century to the twentieth century that include framed prints, and notes one British printseller from 1688 offering loose and framed prints in footnote 24.

in her book *Journey Through Landscape in Seventeenth Century Holland: The Haarlem Print Series and Dutch Identity* specifically with regard to Visscher's visually complicated arrangement of imagery and text in his maps and journalistic prints.⁷⁰ How Visscher ordered the prints in his suite of *The Small Landscapes* corresponds with contemporary concerns for the spatial organization of serialized objects.

The thematic content and the visual organization of each individual print and the suite as a whole share the concerns of contemporary writers and cartographers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with *ordinance*, *ordinantia* in the seventeenth-century Dutch.⁷¹ Taken from William Heckscher's essay on Joachim Camerarius's 1541 "The Rhetoric of Description," *Ordinancy*, more than the term composition, concerns the three-dimensional grouping of objects in both three-dimensional and two-dimensional space, and was applied to a variety of contexts, including pictorial composition, as well as the ordering of chapters in a book.⁷² This suggests that the viewer of *The Small Landscapes* would relate to the suite, the ordered series of prints, in the same manner as they would relate to a book. That is, there is an implied significance of the image's relationship to one another that transcends the prints' formal qualities. The images are grouped together for reasons other than the fact they are landscapes set around the same locale.

The connection between the individual prints of a serial suite to each other and to the concept behind the suite as a whole requires an ability to understand complex spatial

⁷⁰ Levesque, *Journey through Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Holland: The Harlem Print Series and Dutch Identity*, 6.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 6-7. *Ordinatio* in Latin.

⁷² William Heckscher, "Camerarius on Durer's Melencolia," in *Joachim Camerarius*, ed. F. Baron (Munich: Fink, 1978), 92.note 45.

organization and to imagine the space between the images. Visscher's prints do not directly lead from one to the next. To consider *The Small Landscapes* suite, and indeed any of Visscher's serial prints, in terms of a narrative requires the viewer to engage in a game of "fill-in-the-blank," the "blank" being the undefined space between images. Visscher provides the viewer with clues to where these imagined areas of the landscape exist. A road running throughout *The Small Landscapes* provides the most obvious course for the viewer to follow.⁷³ At times the road diverges or seems to melt away into the scenery as seen in Plates 13 (fig. 12) and 17 (fig. 13) respectively. To direct the viewer through the image in these cases, Visscher provides a subtle guidance. In Plate 13 two monks, possibly nuns, are present in the lower right foreground of the image.⁷⁴ The figures walk away from the viewer toward the middle of the image where a building is partially obscured by trees. Just behind the building the spire of a monastery rises. The road that they travel on splits at that point. One path leads to an open field on the left where a long fence can be seen far in the distance. The other path leads to the right of the central building, a monastery, directly into town.⁷⁵ The trajectory of the monks seems to head directly to the monastery, but the direct path to the church is blocked by the large central building and a row of shrubbery and trees. At some point the couple will need to choose a path to follow, and by extension so will the viewer. Both paths lead deeper into the image toward the edge of the print where they fall from view but suggest continuation outside the picture plane. The following image, Plate 14 (fig. 14), presents the viewer

⁷³ Levesque considers the "journey theme," the serial format, as the viewer's guide through the landscape. Levesque, *Journey through Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Holland: The Harlem Print Series and Dutch Identity*, 13.

⁷⁴ Hollstein identifies these two figures as monks, Hollstein, Schuckman, and de Hoop Scheffer, *Hollstein's Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts Ca.1450-1700: Claes Jansz Visscher to Claes Claesz Visscher Ii (Nicolaes Visscher Ii) : Text*, 146., however they do appear to be nuns.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

with the road directly in front of him, taking up two thirds of the bottom of the picture plane and extending nearly straight forward into the image where it turns slightly to the right and meets a fence that curves along the road sharply to the right. Several small houses line the left side of the road and one on the right. A figure with a hiking staff directs a pair of cows and what appear to be seven calves in the lower right foreground away from the viewer. The cowherd and his charges move down the road directly toward a second figure, also carrying a hiking staff, situated farther down the road. The second figure continues toward the bend in the road and leads the viewer out of the image. The viewer is led between the images of Plates 13 and 14. The road that is present in both images, and all of the images of the suite, begins to be identified by the viewer as the same road running throughout. But the image of Plate 13 provides no direct visual connection to the image of Plate 14. Thus, no uniquely identifiable landmarks can be seen in the distance of Plate 13 that connect to Plate 14. To connect the image of Plate 13 to the image of Plate 14 the viewer must create a significant amount of space to traverse. Visscher provides the viewer with the suggestion of an open field down the left fork of the road in Plate 13, or a stroll through town down the right fork.

The pastoral tradition was a semi-private language during the Renaissance and stood as a “metaphor for the condition of the writer-intellectual.”⁷⁶ The viewer is helped along in the reading of not only the images of the suite but also the visualization of the “in-betweens” by the various figures who populate the countryside. In this sense the figures of the suite supplement the “shepherd” role of the Bruegelian bagpiper presented by Visscher on the suite’s title page and connect to conventions found in contemporary

⁷⁶ Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology: Virgil to Valéry*, 133.

love poetry. The combination of visual clues provided by the figures and the road running throughout the suite has the effect of providing the viewer with an entrance and an exit to each image and clues to what exists in-between.

The ability of the viewer to image these “in-betweens” is tested in Plates 17 (fig. 13) and 18 (fig. 15). The road in Plate 17 commences in the center of the image’s bottom edge. Long timbers are piled up on either side of the mouth of the road and run parallel to the image’s bottom edge. This not only gives the effect of framing the bottom of the image but also emphasizes the road itself. The road travels straight ahead between two buildings and to the right of a small pond, or very large puddle, where it seems to disappear in the shadows of a clump of trees. The connecting elements in a kind of narrative movement/progression that runs through the series would seem to be lost were it not for the couple, a man and a woman, who appear in the deep shadows of the trees (fig. 16). They face one another, a posture that appears between figures in the suite only in moments where the figures populating the suite are resting from their journey. The viewer is expected to fill in the rest of the moment. Such a viewer would have been aware of the well-established pastoral tradition of young lovers cavorting in the countryside in the arts of the period. Images such as Rembrandt’s etching *The Omval* (1645) (fig. 17) displays the clandestine meeting of lovers in the outdoors.⁷⁷ These images seem to invite the viewer into an intimate moment between lovers. So, too, it could be said that the couple obscured in the shadow of Visscher’s Plate 17 invite the viewer to slip behind one of the buildings and out of the vignette before him, thus moving forward in the narrative to the next image. The viewer enters Plate 18 (fig. 15) via the road in the lower right

⁷⁷ H.R. Nevitt, *Art and the Culture of Love in Seventeenth-Century Holland* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 184-88.

corner of the image. The road proceeds into the picture plane and turns sharply to the left cutting horizontally across the image to its left edge where the road again curves sharply and disappears into the woods. A large building with a spire rising from its roof is centered in the image, the road runs in front of the building's main door. But, before traveling through the image the viewer is invited to rest for a moment by way of a pair of figures, facing one another, just off to the left of the mouth of the road. They stand next to a pond which occupies the attention of a cow, three ducks, and a pair of swans and their six offspring.⁷⁸ This suggests that the viewer should take a moment and ponder what is presented before him before continuing down the road. The prominence of the building with the spire as a central focal point to the image situated directly above the family of swans suggests the results of the young couple's activities from the previous plate, marriage and children. This requires of the viewer not just the ability to connect the two images, but also to have some understanding of pastoral imagery to fully realize the connection between the individual narratives of the two images to the larger narrative that runs through the suite.

Before the viewer can engage in the mental exercise of connecting the individual images of Visscher's suite of *The Small Landscapes* together to form a narrative, however the whole suite must make it into the hands of the viewer. It is worth noting that current collections of Dutch serial prints from the seventeenth century often appear to have been pieced together from several different printings of the suites.⁷⁹ This suggests that the suites had at some point been broken apart and the individual images sold

⁷⁸ It seems that young swans are properly referred to as "cygnets."

⁷⁹ For example the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection of Cock's *The Small Landscapes*, and the Blanton Museum's pair of prints from Visscher's *Pleasant Places*.

separately. However, it may be that suites of serial prints were originally also available as individual prints to potential buyers.

I have found little in my reading on Dutch prints of the seventeenth century addressing the street-side, open market, or retail sale of prints in the seventeenth century. Visual reference from seventeenth century France such as Jacques Callot's title page etching from his 1617-1620 suite *Varie Figure* depicts a print vendor selling his stock and provides some visual reference to one manner in which prints were peddled (fig.18). The print vendor has arranged the individual prints on a table for the gathering crowd to view. The sign above the vendor serves not only as the title to the suite of prints to which this image belongs, but also suggests that the prints the vendor is selling are from this very suite. It seems that the print vendor is presenting the individual prints to the public as separate elements of a whole, and that the images were offered for sale individually. Callot's print is also suggestive of an outdoor or at least temporary market. The man with the hiking staff and basket strapped to his back on the right side of the image gives the impression that he has stopped in the middle of his travels to view the vendor's products. He could be a vendor himself, thus suggesting the incestuous nature, the tendency for dealers to buy from other dealers to expand their own stock and to support their fellow dealers, of the print trade. He peruses what appears to be a bound volume as does the man on the other side of image behind the table. While Callot's image provides a good example of the street-side vendor, its primary function is as an introduction to the suite itself. Thus, it is not surprising that the prints appear to be from *Varie Figure*.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Add to this that Callot's suite is not serialized in the same manner as Visscher's *Small Landscapes*.

A more historically accurate description of how prints were sold to the public in the seventeenth century comes from Nadine Orenstein. Orenstein briefly considers the selling of prints in The Hague in the early seventeenth century in her book *Hendrick Hondius and the Business of Prints*. Orenstein mentions the indoor and outdoor stalls of the Groote Zaal in the Binnenhof, the inner court of the Prince of Orange, where markets were regularly held. By 1607 booksellers dominated the stalls in the hall, but painting and print dealers were also present.⁸¹ The bookseller's stall would have looked very much like Abraham Bosse's etching *La Galerie du Palais* of 1630 (fig.19), where the bookseller presents her stock on shelves behind a counter that allows the potential customer to inspect the volumes. In this case the bookseller seems to be directing the customer through the pages of one of the books. The interaction between the bookseller and her customer is very different from the fan merchant in the stall directly next to the bookseller, in the center of the image, and her clientele. The fan merchant stands behind her counter and simply observes the group of four customers, three female and one male, as they consider some of the merchant's fans. Their backs are to the fan merchant and they are seemingly oblivious to her presence. Possibly fans sold themselves in the seventeenth century market while books required their value to be presented to the potential customer. This provides a look at how prints in the open market were presented to the consumer.

A similar mode of the presentation of the bookseller in Bosse's print appears in the context of printsellers. The print dealer stalls of the Groote Zaal would most likely look very much like the one found in the Flemish artist Aegidius Sadeler's engraving *The*

⁸¹ Orenstein, *Hendrick Hondius and the Business of Prints in Seventeenth-Century Holland*, 135-37.

Great Hall in the Castle at Prague from 1607, an image of an annual fair held in Prague and in the very same year that Orenstein notes the domination of booksellers in the Groote Zaal (fig.20). In the lower left corner of Sadeler's engraving of a market held in a Prague castle, settled back into a niche, is a printseller (fig.21).⁸² The printsellers in Sadeler's engraving combine the approaches presented by the bookseller and fan dealer in Bosse's print. Set back in the niche, behind a counter, two print sellers present their products to two customers. One printseller presents a large print that has been mounted on card, the other holds what appears to be either a portfolio of prints or a bound copy of a suite. Behind the two printsellers, where the rows of books are in the bookseller's stall, large prints mounted on card are displayed. On the counter are stacks of prints, each stack possibly of the same image, and hanging above the counter on a line larger, unmounted, prints are displayed. The printsellers seem to be taking on the same active role as the bookseller in Bosse's print, but just to the left of the brightly light niche, two customers appear, separately, to be pondering more prints. Apart from the active participation of the printsellers these two customers are left alone with the images they hold or stoop over on the counter. Above their heads, hung on a line, are long columns of prints. These prints are obviously separate images attached to one another, top to bottom, and are most likely serial prints. However, in this case the term serial print may indicate a broader definition. *The Small Landscapes* are obviously a group of images that are dependent on one another, thus they are considered to be serialized. A broader and equally important aspect to the concept of "serial images" includes groups of images that are intended to be

⁸² Anthony Griffiths credits this print with being one of the earliest depictions of a printseller's stall. A. Griffiths, *Prints and Printmaking: An Introduction to the History and Techniques* (University of CALIFORNIA Press, 1996), 156.

regarded together, but do not necessarily depend on one another in the same fashion as *The Small Landscapes*. Images such as scientific illustrations, suites that exist as a thematic group of images, or simply suites that collect the work of a specific artist or genre can be included in the broader definition of “serial prints.” The manner of displaying serialized images present in Sadeler’s engraving, displaying the individual images connected together for the potential buyer, is prevalent in later images of print shops such as J. Elwood’s drawing of 1790, *A Crowd Outside of a Print Shop* (fig. 22) and Theodore Lane’s hand-colored etching (published by George Humphrey) *Honi Soit qui mal y Pense*, “Shamed be he who thinks evil of it,” (fig. 23) of 1821.⁸³ This manner of displaying serial prints would have a long life.

But, while the crowds in Elwood’s and Lane’s two prints stand outside their respective shops and view the serial prints displayed in the store windows, one of the customers of the printseller in Sadeler’s print, a man who has turned his back to the display of serial prints hanging above him and is leaning against the counter that supports more stacks of prints, holds in his hands two sheets of paper. The sheets, probably two prints from the series presented over his head, overlap as the man glances from one image

⁸³ Elwood’s drawing depicts the store front of a late eighteenth century print shop with its windows filled with the progression of several serial prints on view for the passersby. Included in the display is a print identified as *The Monster*, (N.S., "British Museum - Search Object Details," http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectId=746541&partid=1&output=Terms%2F!!%2FOR%2F!!%2F16364%2F!%2F%2F!%2Fprintshop%2F!%2F%2F!!%2F%2F!!%2F&orig=%2Fresearch%2Fsearch_the_collection_database%2Fadvanced_search.aspx¤tPage=1&numpages=10.), a print that was originally produced as a dual image. The first image of “The Monster,” a man who was stabbing women on the streets of London, the second image of a man affixing copper buttons to a woman’s dress to protect against being cut. Lane’s print depicts the presentation of one long serial suite that attacks Queen Caroline ("Orbis Holdings Information," [http://orbexpress.library.yale.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=9441593.](http://orbexpress.library.yale.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=9441593)) on view in the window of George Humphrey’s print and publishing shop thirty-one years after Lane’s drawing and two hundred fourteen years after Sadeler’s print. While the setting may be different between *The Great Hall in the Castle at Prague* and *Honi Soit qui mal y Pense*, the similarity between the two displays of serial prints in these images separated by more than two centuries is remarkable.

to the other. More than just providing an image of how prints were presented and sold to the consumer, Sadeler shows how the viewer of serial prints considered the individual images in relationship to one another, and draws attention to the direct physical connection to the prints by the viewer. The detail of the customer considering the two prints also suggests that the individual images of the serial prints were available to the customer separately. That is, while the serial format of the prints is presented to the viewer through the print stall's display, it appears that the consumer was allowed to consider and most likely purchase individual images from the suite. The inclusion of the man considering the two prints in relation to each other suggests that how the serial print was received by the viewer was as important as how the prints were sold, and makes clearer that artists were aware of how viewers considered serial prints.

While it is conceivable that Visscher did participate in such markets, he primarily based his print sales out of his map shop on the Kalverstraat.⁸⁴ In this setting Visscher not only would have the opportunity to observe his customers interact with his prints, but would be able to direct the viewer through the images, if needed, in much the same way as the bookseller in Bosse's print.⁸⁵ The manner in which the customer approached serial formats such as books and suites of prints coupled with the display of such formats by merchants indicates that printmakers/publishers such as Visscher did not approach the making of these serialized prints as loosely related groupings of individual works of art. Rather, each individual print within the suite served to create a larger unified whole.

⁸⁴ Orenstein, *Hendrick Hondius and the Business of Prints in Seventeenth-Century Holland*, 136. Orenstein asserts that a loose connection between print dealers must have existed in Holland to sell prints published from one another.

⁸⁵ Simon Schama characterizes the Kalverstraat, both in the seventeenth century and now, as the destination for tourists, in Amsterdam, who preferred its "sweaty shove and jostle" over the Rokin. Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*, 15.

The primary function of Visscher's shop on the Kalverstraat was the printing and sale of maps. The didactic function, the intention to convey instruction or information, of Visscher's primary source of income informed his approach to other genres of printing. This notion is reinforced by the title page of *The Small Landscapes* and the table of contents page to his *Pleasant Places* of 1611 (fig.24). The title page of *The Small Landscapes* declares outright that Visscher is offering the images in the suite "for the sake of painters." In the table-of-contents of the *Pleasant Places*, Visscher makes this connection with artistic practice by presenting the tools of his trade, printmaking, and painting, on the ledge of a window that frames an expansive landscape of the countryside around Haarlem.⁸⁶ Boudewijn Bakker considers the explicit reference to the use of *The Small Landscapes* by artists in the suite's title page and the lack of a direct reference to artists in the title and contents pages of *Pleasant Places* as an indication that Visscher intended the suite *Pleasant Places* to be considered solely by the viewer for the "simple joy of viewing."⁸⁷ Thus, Visscher's *Pleasant Places* is for Bakker no longer an instructive tool for artists, but a broadly appealing view of the Haarlem countryside. This notion ignores the ability of the seventeenth century viewer to connect image to concept, which is to reflect on the significance of the material presented. To do this the viewer must deal with the spatial structure of knowledge presented to them. Bakker only considers the superficial use of *Pleasant Places* as enjoyable scenes and not as a connection to a specific place. Along with the connection to place comes a connection to the politics and culture associated with that place. As Levesque argues, this

⁸⁶ Levesque, *Journey through Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Holland: The Harlem Print Series and Dutch Identity*, 37.

⁸⁷ Bakker and Webb, *Landscape and Religion: From Van Eyck to Rembrandt*, 239-41.

understanding of spatial ordering by the viewer allows the viewer not only to locate an image geographically, in an imagined three-dimensional space if not a specific locale, but also to extract deeper meaning from the suites by providing the viewer with an active role as contemplator of the image. The print could thus stand in for an object or view that was not actually before the viewer, and facilitate the active consideration of the object that is presented in the image.⁸⁸ This ability by the viewer to connect image to place can be seen in the connection between Visscher's maps and his serial landscape prints. Consider Visscher's map *Leo Belgicus* of 1609 (fig. 25). Visscher has presented a map of the seventeen traditional provinces of the Netherlands within the shape of a seated lion, an image that would become symbolic of the free Netherlands later in the century. Behind the lion is the image of a vast landscape of the countryside of the Netherlands. Bordering the left and right sides of the map are smaller landscapes of specific cities, northern cities on the left and southern cities on the right. Visscher offers two distinct views of the Netherlands in *Leo Belgicus*, the cartographic in the scientific rendering of the seventeen provinces, and the topographical in the landscape views of the specific cities. Visscher understood that his customers were capable of transitioning from the cartographic map to the topographical images.⁸⁹ It is plausible that Visscher considered the viewer of his serial landscapes to have this same capability.

What then was Visscher's intention behind publishing *The Small Landscapes*? Being familiar with the print and book trade as well as being a trained printmaker, Visscher would have undoubtedly been aware of the concept of "ordinancy." Thus, he

⁸⁸ Levesque, *Journey through Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Holland: The Harlem Print Series and Dutch Identity*, 6-10.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 6. The transition from the cartographic image to the topographical landscape is not unlike switching from aerial view to street view in Google Maps.

would approach the collection of images in *The Small Landscapes* in terms of how they related to one another in three-dimensional and imagined space. So, too, would he have understood that his customers would approach the serialized images in this manner, connecting one image to another as a fantasized stroll through the countryside. In this sense, the suite creates its own context for the viewer to decipher with little need for any accompanying text except to set the placement of the scenes in a general locale. While it is conceivable that the individual prints from the suite were made available for purchase, it would be hard to imagine any retail salesman turning down an offer to buy his product, the numbering of each plate would have signified the image's part in a larger whole. This could have served to create repeat customers. Those who could not afford the entire suite could gradually collect individual prints like modern day serial romance novels or a comic book miniseries. It seems very possible that Visscher intended the *Small Landscapes* to function much like a narrative that requires the active participation of the viewer. In the following chapter we will consider more specifically the content/character of that narrative.

Chapter 3

A Road for Narratives

As I have demonstrated in the previous chapter, Visscher's suite of *The Small Landscapes* is best understood as a whole, and constitutes a narrative of a kind. Returning now to the figural elements after considering the nature of serialized images reveals the role the figures play in the reading of the narrative present in *The Small Landscapes*. The combination of figural and pastoral elements and their placement in a numbered series of images leads the viewer to create a loose narrative that suggests the suite of prints itself acts as its own agent by creating its own context.

Again, this is best elucidated by considering Visscher's suite of *The Small Landscapes* in relation to Cock's original version. Cock assures the viewer in his second title page that the images presented are faithfully rendered *ad vivum*, or *naar het leven*, usually translated as "in a lifelike manner."⁹⁰ This suggests that we might understand Cock's images as documentary in intent. Svetlana Alpers has built a strong argument that the Dutch art of this period should be approached as if the artists created their works, both in print and paint, to describe the world around them rather than to create a narrative as had the Italians.⁹¹ For the most part Cock's images depict what on the surface seem to be ordinary events. The structural elements of the images, the architecture and landscape, are specific to the region, but not of special significance as historic monuments or sites of historic importance in the region. In keeping with the general tone of the images, Cock's figural elements seem inconsequential. The figures are not to the same scale as the

⁹⁰ Gibson, *Pleasant Places: The Rustic Landscape from Bruegel to Ruisdael*, 2.

⁹¹ Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), xx.

surrounding buildings and landscape. This can be related to the tradition in which the staffage of a print or painting tended to be rendered by the hand of another artist or artisan.⁹² Visscher's publication of *The Small Landscapes*, in contrast, treats the figural elements as important elements to the compositions that interact with the ordering of the individual prints within the suite.

Cock's original publications are not ordered. There is no suggested or implicit manner in which the images are to be read, if a sequential reading of the images was intended at all. While the prints of each of the two suites were published together, one set in 1559 and the other in 1561, this does not mean that each individual impression was sold as a part of the corresponding suite. The prints in each suite certainly relate in some manner to each other, most obviously in that they are all presented as being representations of a specific region of the Netherlands; the countryside around Antwerp in Flanders. More than that, grouping the prints together in a suite makes the strongest case for an intentional narrative to be derived from the prints. But how does one read a series of images that have no discernible order? After the initial success of the original *Small Landscapes*, Cock republished the series in a combined suite in 1561, possibly with the addition of ten new images, this time numbering each image.⁹³ Philips Galle republished Cock's original two suites in 1601 in Antwerp, keeping Cock's numbering of the images.⁹⁴ It is possible that Visscher appropriated this convention from Galle when he decided to republish Cock's suites.

⁹² Gibson, *Pleasant Places: The Rustic Landscape from Bruegel to Ruisdael*, 117.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

As mentioned earlier, Visscher was unable to acquire Cock's original plates for *The Small Landscapes* from Galle's press. This did not stop Visscher, who was eager to tap the newly booming market of Flemish emigrants in the Northern Netherlands who were fleeing the Spanish-controlled South, from republishing Cock's images. Without the original plates, Visscher took on the task of etching new plates for *The Small Landscapes*. Instead of creating new plates for each of the forty-one images in Cock's original suites Visscher selected specific images to reproduce. He then reproduced the images with some minor alterations save for his treatment of the staffage of the landscapes. He then ordered the images by numbering each one, much as Cock had done in 1561 and Galle had done in his 1601 publication. The last major addition made by Visscher to Cock's original suites is that of three completely original images to the collection.

First, it is necessary to look at Visscher's selection of images. There is no extensive scholarship concerning Visscher's choice of which images he reproduced. Consideration of Visscher's selection of Cock's original images reveals some interesting insights into why Visscher chose the twenty-three images to include in his suite. Cock's images consist of two basic compositions. The first compositional type arranges the architecture and landscaping of the image roughly parallel to the print's picture plane. The second compositional schema consists of a foreshortened perspective that extends into the background of the image. These two schemas are generally clearly distinguished in Cock's series though a few prints seem to exemplify both.⁹⁵ Visscher chose images of the second schema almost exclusively. Only Plates 10 (fig. 26), 22 (fig. 5), and 23 (fig.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 10.

27) fit into the first schema, but they do hint at a foreshortened perspective. I will argue that Visscher's choice in images was not merely a matter of formal preference.

Only three of Visscher's plates are void of figures, Plates 5 (fig. 28), 10 (fig. 26), and 11 (fig. 29). Of the remaining twenty plates that are reproduced from Cock's original prints, only three of Visscher's prints closely reproduce the figural elements of the original images, Plates 2 (fig. 30), 20 (fig. 31), and 22 (fig. 5). Even in these three plates the figural elements closely resemble their original designs only in terms of the figures being rendered in roughly the same position within the image and performing roughly the same actions. Most of the figural elements of Visscher's prints are interactions between figures in some manner. For example, Plate 16 (fig. 32) presents the viewer with three figures, a man and woman lounging on the side of the road next to a plowed field. The third figure, another woman, stands in front of the couple, bent at the waist with her arms akimbo and chin jutting toward the couple. The woman lounging on the ground with the man has sat up and turned to face the man directly. The viewer of this image is likely to think that something has occurred prior to this moment, an event not present in Plate 15 (fig. 33), and that something, possibly comic or violent, will occur after this moment that is not presented in Plate 17 (fig. 13). This further illustrates the ability of the viewer to interact with the "in-between" of the prints. To some degree all of the figural elements in Visscher's prints present the viewer with this open beginning and open-ended interaction between figures. Richard Wollheim has proposed an interesting exercise that seems appropriate here. Wollheim imagines a conversation consisting of questions posed to the viewer about an image that increase in degree of specificity as to what the viewer can imagine could have transpired in the presented image. Wollheim uses a painting of a

Classical landscape complete with ruins in his example. He then creates a hypothetical dialog with the viewer of the image that progresses as follows:

Can you see the columns?

Yes.

Can you see the columns as coming from a temple?

Yes.

Can you see the columns that come from the temple as having been thrown down?

Yes.

Can you see them as having been thrown down some hundreds of years ago by barbarians?

Yes.

Can you see them as having been thrown down some hundreds of years ago by barbarians wearing the skins of wild asses?

(Pause.) No.⁹⁶

When a degree of specificity has been reached where the viewer can no longer reasonably imagine the detail based on what has been presented to him then “the limits of visibility in this (image’s) surface have been reached.”⁹⁷

Wollheim’s viewer for this exercise represents an uninitiated spectator in regard to the specific image presented. That is a person whom he refers to as not being a *suitable spectator*. In this case the “no” response indicates that the prompt posed in the form of the question “Can you see them as having been thrown down some hundreds of years ago by barbarians wearing the skins of wild asses?” did not make a difference in how the viewer perceived the image.⁹⁸ A *suitable spectator*, one who is “suitably sensitive, suitably informed, and, if necessary, suitably prompted,” who answers “no” to a prompting question is refusing to be forced to see something in the image that it does not

⁹⁶ Richard Wollheim, "On Pictorial Representation," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 56, no. 3 (1998): 224.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

represent.⁹⁹ This certainly suggests that the viewer is responsible to some degree for the interpretation of singular images. Consider Wollheim's exercise with Visscher's Plate 16 as the image in question instead of the Classical landscape. Viewed alone, the viewer of Visscher's Plate 16 would have the same reaction as the viewer of the Classical landscape. Considering Plate 16 in the context of Plate 15 preceding and Plate 17 following the image the viewer is presented with the possibility of more prompting questions. Had *The Small Landscapes* been presented individually and not as a suite, Wollheim's exercise in Seeing-In would stand as the preferable manner in which to address the nature of each individual print from the suite. But the manner in which the images are packaged as a suite demands that they be approached in connection to each other. That is to ask how these small narratives relate to their larger context.

Important in this context is the sequential numbering of Visscher's series. As previously stated, Cock's original publication of *The Small Landscapes* was not numbered. With the addition of sequential numbering of the prints comes the natural tendency for the viewer to approach the images in a defined order. That is, Plate 3 follows Plate 2. Yet the image of Plate 3 does not connect to the image of Plate 2 in a manner that readily calls to mind a cohesive chain of events. The same is true throughout Visscher's suite. Simply numbering the images in a series is not sufficient to establish a narrative. The intentions of the printmaker/publisher could simply be to provide the purchaser with a simple way to refer to the individual prints, much in the manner in which the prints have been referred to throughout this essay. The numbering of the prints could be nothing more than a marketing strategy: a way to let the purchaser of a broken

⁹⁹ Ibid., 217.

suite know that there are more prints associated with the one they own. Christy Mag Uidhir proposes a definition for *Serial Art* in his article “How to Frame Serial Art” that is useful here.¹⁰⁰ Mag Uidhir defines *Serial Art* as a work of art that is wholly composed of some sequence of things (images, objects, scenes, etc.) that requires, in order to properly attend to the work of art as a whole, each part of the work of art to be properly attended.¹⁰¹ Properly attending to the parts that make-up the work as a whole requires that they be approached in the manner or order prescribed by the larger whole. The suite defines how the individual images that it is composed of are to be considered. It is not necessarily that the images of *The Small Landscapes* are numbered that is important, but that the suite as a whole dictates that the images within are approached in a sequential manner. The possible intentions behind sequentially numbering the prints of *The Small Landscapes* are nearly endless. That is, except for Plate 1 and Plate 26 of Visscher’s suite. These two plates are completely original designs by Visscher, and seem to have been intended to bookend the series of prints.

The final print of the suite, Plate 26 (fig. 34), is an original composition by Visscher as is the first print (fig. 1). Bookending the suite in this manner further suggests Visscher intended that the images be considered in in some ordered manner. The first print, the title page of the suite, is implicitly the first image to be read. The image of the final print suggests its place at the end of the series. Plate 26 depicts a castle centered in

¹⁰⁰ Christy Mag Uidhir, "How to Frame Serial Art," *ibid.* forthcoming, no. Summer (2013). Forthcoming, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Summer 2013.

¹⁰¹ W is a serial artwork iff:

-W is itself an artwork.

-W is wholly (non-trivially) composed of some (non-trivial) sequence

-Properly attending to (engaging with) W qua artwork—i.e., access to any and all of the constitutive art-relevant features for that W—requires properly attending to each element in that sequence (in the order/arrangement prescribed by that W).

the background reaching from the top of the image nearly to the bottom. In front of the castle runs a moat where a ferry is docked facing the viewer, and a male figure stands at the bow of the boat apparently releasing the mooring line. The boat is nearly filled with other figures. The figures of Plate 26, in particular the man at the bow of the ferry, are presented more prominently than the rest of the prints in Visscher's suite, with the exception of Plate 1. Moreover, the road that seems to have run through the images of the suite, from the title page to Plate 25, has disappeared. This print seems to parallel and thus balance the castle presented in Plate 2 (fig. 30).¹⁰² More than just a formal balance between images, these two plates present the only easily recognizable landmark present in Visscher's suite, the Roode Poort of Antwerp in Plate 2, juxtaposed with what may be a fictional castle in Plate 26.¹⁰³ The visual description of a place, be it real or fictionalized, has a political and social dimension.¹⁰⁴

It should be evident at this point that Alpers' argument that the primary function of Dutch art in the seventeenth century was to increase visual knowledge cannot be applied to Visscher's suite of *The Small Landscapes*, at least not so far as the figural elements are considered.¹⁰⁵ Visscher certainly did not travel to Antwerp during the period in which he places the landscapes to render his them from nature, he had yet to be born. And by 1612, the countryside depicted in *The Small Landscapes* was a war-ravaged wasteland that no longer resembled the images etched and printed by Visscher.¹⁰⁶ Alpers'

¹⁰² Gibson, *Pleasant Places: The Rustic Landscape from Bruegel to Ruisdael*, 41.

¹⁰³ Onuf, "Envisioning Netherlandish Unity: Claes Visscher's 1612 Copies of the Small Landscape Prints". 5.

¹⁰⁴ Levesque, *Journey through Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Holland: The Harlem Print Series and Dutch Identity*, 2.

¹⁰⁵ Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*, 26-71.

¹⁰⁶ Onuf, "Envisioning Netherlandish Unity: Claes Visscher's 1612 Copies of the Small Landscape Prints". 6.

definition of “picture” is derived from Kepler’s description of the eye and she prefers the use of the word *picturing* over *picture* because

...it calls attention to the making of images rather than to the finished product; it emphasizes the inseparability of maker, picture, and what is pictured; and it allows us to broaden the scope of what we study since mirrors, maps, and ... eyes also can take their place alongside of art as forms of picturing so understood.¹⁰⁷

Thus, Alpers suggests that the artist is directly connected not only to the making of the image but to the object depicted in the image. The number of people involved in the production of *The Small Landscapes* -- the artist who drew the original images for Cock, Cock’s production team of etchers, inkers, and printers, and then Visscher’s production crew -- to when the prints are purchased presents a very real disconnection between the original drawing of the image and the finished suite.

Accepting that Alpers’ argument does not directly apply to Visscher’s suite of *The Small Landscapes* what intentions can be assumed in the suite’s creation? Walter Gibson reads both Cock’s and Visscher’s suites as intentional narratives. Of Cock’s suites Gibson writes

This is not the workaday world of agricultural drudgery. Instead, it is the Sunday and holiday world of bucolic tranquility, where nothing much ever happens, and people have the leisure to stroll about, to enjoy the fresh air and other natural amenities,... or even to make love hidden in a grainfield”¹⁰⁸

This interpretation of Cock’s suite suggests the presence of some type of narrative, however uneventful that narrative may be. Gibson further reinforces the reading of Cock’s suites by noting that the second suite terminates with what will become Visscher’s Plate 6 (fig. 35), an image of figures rushing toward an inn known as *The Sign*

¹⁰⁷ Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*, 26.

¹⁰⁸ Gibson, *Pleasant Places: The Rustic Landscape from Bruegel to Ruisdael*, 9.

of the *Swan* “with its promise of refreshment after such rural pastimes.”¹⁰⁹ Gibson obviously sees this particular print’s placement at the end of Cock’s suite, after the images had been numbered by Cock, as affording a degree of closure for a series of images that present a story about how the inhabitants of the rustic countryside spend their free time.

Of Visscher’s suite, Gibson writes that “Visscher in effect conducts his viewers on an excursion, leaving the city gate and passing through various peaceful scenes in the countryside before arriving at the last scene, where a boat waits to ferry them to their final destination.”¹¹⁰ The most important element in Gibson’s viewing, or more appropriately reading, of the two series of prints is the interaction of the viewer with the prints. Gibson in essence places the viewer in the images, traveling from one print to another. This is a retrospective view of the imagery that takes advantage of being able to consider Visscher’s full oeuvre and the effect that *The Small Landscapes* had on seventeenth-century Dutch art as a whole. But what kind of narrative is constituted in the vaguely connected images of Visscher’s series?

Gregory Currie does not provide a definition of narrative as such in his book *Narratives and Narrators*, but he does offer necessary conditions that need to be met for a work to be considered a narrative. Currie states that narratives must be artifactual corpora that require the work to be a unified body of representations that are rich with consequential relationships, a corpus, and an artifact.¹¹¹ He defines a corpus as being “a body of representations, emanating from a more or less unified source... and in which we

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 41. 41.

¹¹¹ G. Currie, *Narratives and Narrators: A Philosophy of Stories* (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2012), 5-8.

may have a more or less systematic interest.”¹¹² An artifact, in Currie’s terms, is a man-made object that can be intended to be representational or non-representational.¹¹³ In Currie’s view a book is an intentionally communicative object, but a stone axe is not.¹¹⁴

Visscher’s suite certainly seems to fit the definition of a corpus. It is in the manner that the suite does so that is interesting and debatable. The simplest way to approach *The Small Landscapes* is to consider it in terms of a sequentially numbered series of images that were intended to be bought and viewed together in a specific order. Visscher did not keep the images he pulled from Cock’s original suite in the same order same order as their original publication. This calls into question the validity of considering *The Small Landscapes* a narrative simply due to the numbering of the images. If the images can be reordered and still approached as a corpus then the sequential numbering of the images is not the source of one’s systematic interest in the suite. That is, the numbering of the prints in and of itself does not turn the suite into a narrative. It is better to consider the content of the prints that are included in Visscher’s suite to find a unified body of representation.

The setting of Visscher’s prints, the Flemish countryside, connects the prints to each other. The one constant that runs through the prints of Visscher’s suite is the road that begins in the title page, Plate 1, and literally runs through the prints of the suite and terminates at the ferry in Plate 26. It is on this road, or very near it, that any and all action in the suite takes place. In a peculiar way this suggests that the road acts as an internal narrator. It, the road, leads the viewer to and through the action of the countryside.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Ibid., 8.

¹¹³ Ibid., 4-5.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 5-8.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 66-69.

Visscher appears to have picked the images he reproduces in his suite with care. The road figures prominently in the images and is used to create a sense of depth by connecting the foreground to the background, thus pulling the viewer into the image and forward to where the road continues on to the next image, and so forth. In this case the author, Visscher, is not responsible for the creation of the narrative as it exists in the images, but in how the narrative exists as a connected series of images gathered together. The specific stories that unfold in the images and their relationship to one another creates a larger narrative that requires the active participation of the viewer of the suite to understand it as an intentionally communicative artifact.¹¹⁶ This places a degree of responsibility for the interpretation of the narrative on the viewer of the images.

Bence Nanay has addressed the role of the viewer in the engagement of visual narratives. Nanay states that the suitably informed viewer of an image will understand that a single image is part of a larger narrative.¹¹⁷ That is, the viewer will understand that something has happened before the moment of the image and that something will happen after the event depicted. As with the image of Plate 16, (possibly, a young man's affair with another woman), a suitably informed viewer need only read body language to piece together an ending to this vignette. Certainly this image is not intended to depict any specific event in history or literature. How then is the viewer aware of what comes next? Nanay replies that the viewer imagines the next event.¹¹⁸ It follows that the viewer can also imagine the events prior to the image presented to him. This approach to visual narratives has interesting implications for Visscher's suite. Each image presented to the

¹¹⁶ Levesque, *Journey through Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Holland: The Harlem Print Series and Dutch Identity*, 11.

¹¹⁷ Bence Nanay, "Narrative Pictures," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 67, no. 1 (2009): 121.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 122.

viewer in *The Small Landscapes* can now be seen as a narrative. The suite as a whole then becomes a narrative composed of smaller narratives. Each individual print represents a moment in a story to which the road leads the viewer until, as Gibson's interpretation proposes, the story terminates at the ferry with the hope of further travels.

However, Visscher has provided one more clue to the content of the narrative that seems to unfold in his suite. Throughout the images of *The Small Landscapes*, Visscher has added elements that would be meaningful to anyone familiar with the pastoral tradition, whether in visual or written form, and would shape the series into a narrative that concerns marriage and love. In particular, the images of fishermen and swans are present throughout the suite. While Onuf and Gibson both consider the addition of fishermen to be a punning reference to Visscher and his shop, *The Sign of the Fisher*, H. Rodney Nevitt has connected imagery of fishermen to marriage that suggests a different reading of this motif.¹¹⁹ In connection with Rembrandt's *The Three Trees* (fig. 36), Nevitt considers the fisherman in the lower left corner as an indication of marriage due to the frequent appearance of images of fishermen on objects like *trouwkistjes* (marriage caskets).¹²⁰ The act of fishing had been associated with courtly love and amorous activity in Dutch imagery as is evident with the image of cupid fishing (fig. 37) from Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft's *Emblemata Amatoria* of 1611.¹²¹ The presence of a man and woman hidden in shadows under the trees on the right side of Rembrandt's print, much as in Plate 17 of *The Small Landscapes*, reinforces the imagery of courtly love. The image of

¹¹⁹ Onuf, "Envisioning Netherlandish Unity: Claes Visscher's 1612 Copies of the Small Landscape Prints".
4. And, Gibson, *Pleasant Places: The Rustic Landscape from Bruegel to Ruisdael*, 33.

¹²⁰ Nevitt, *Art and the Culture of Love in Seventeenth-Century Holland*, 190.

¹²¹ "Rembrandt's Hidden Lovers," in *Natuur En Landschap in De Nederlandse Kunst, 1500-1850*, ed. R.L. Falkenburg (Zwolle, The Netherlands: Waanders, 1998), 167.

the fishermen is also prominent in Plate 15 of Visscher's suite. Here Visscher has placed two fisherman in a small boat at the lower left edge of the image. Across the pond from the two men is a small village, and what appears to be the steeple of a church rises from the middle of the buildings. Under a couple of trees situated below the steeple, a group is sitting down at a long table; one woman stands and appears to be offering a toast to the group (fig. 33). This gathering, in the context of the church steeple and the two fishermen, suggests a wedding feast. Also present in the image are two ducks in the middle of the pond. The attention of the two fishermen, the direction in which they are casting their lines, draws the viewer's eyes across the pond, past the ducks, to the wedding party.

The swans are a recurring motif in *The Small Landscapes*. Of particular interest is the occurrence of two swans next to the ferry in the final print of the suite, one of Visscher's completely original designs. The ferry in Plate 26, where the road terminates, provides a sense of closure to the narrative. Noël Carroll defines narrative closure as the "phenomenological feeling of finality that is generated when all the questions saliently posed by the narrative are answered."¹²² Carroll also points out that not all narratives are prone to closure, such as histories and long running serials.¹²³ Gibson's reading of the final image from Visscher's suite seems to provide the viewer with a sense of closure. It is interesting to note that Gibson's reading of the final print from Cock's suite, after the prints had been numbered in 1561, offers closure in the form of respite at the inn at the Sign of the Swan and the image of swans also appears in Visscher's final print. If there is a sense of closure to the suite, what are the "salient questions" posed by the series of

¹²² Noël Carroll, "Narrative Closure," *Philosophical Studies* 135, no. 1 (2007): 1.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 2.

prints? It seems evident from the few examples presented that many questions are raised along the road that runs through the prints, but the viewer is tasked with interpreting these images and answering the questions that each poses. Such questions, however, are present only in the images that they are presented in and do not continue or hold the attention of the viewer beyond the time that he spends considering the image. Simply stated, the questions presented by each of the small narratives in the series do not move the story forward. It is necessary for Carroll's account of closure that the salient questions posed by the narrative do hold the viewer's attention and progress the story.¹²⁴ How then can the viewer feel a sense of closure in the image of the ferry? Visscher's background and the swans in this final image and throughout the suite, hold some clues that could provide a sense of closure to the narrative. A common poetic trope concerning swans can be found in the madrigal *Il Bianco e dolce cigaqno*, "The White and Sweet Swan," published in Arcadelt's first book of madrigals in 1539 and commonly attributed to Alfonso d'Avolos.¹²⁵ This madrigal uses the death of a swan as an allegory for amorous love. As Laura Macy writes of the madrigal:

The informed reader of cinquecento literature recognizes immediately that this poem is not about swans but about sex. The brief poem's central conceit compares the swan's "real" death with the lover's sexual one. The madrigal's conceit thus draws its meaning from contemporary belief systems about sex. The way in which

¹²⁴ Ibid., 4.

¹²⁵ Laura Macy, "Speaking of Sex: Metaphor and Performance in the Italian Madrigal," *The Journal of Musicology* 14, no. 1 (1996): 5 and fn. 13.

1 Il bianco e dolce cigno (The white and gentle swan)

2 cantando more, ed io (singing dies, And I)

3 piangendo giungo al fin del viver mio. (weeping arrive at the end of my life.)

4 Strana e diversa sorte, (Strange and unusual fate,)

5 ch'ei more sconsolato, (since he dies disconsolate,)

6 ed io moro beato. (and I die blessed.)

7 Morte che nel morire (Death that in the dying)

8 m'empie di gioia tutto e di desire; (I am filled with all joy and desire;)

9 se nel morir altro dolor non sento (if in dying I feel no other pain)

10 to di mille morti il di sarei contento. (10 I would be content to die a thousand deaths a day.)

that conceit is played out in poetic and musical form, however, is dictated by the performance context of the genre.¹²⁶

Note Macy's consideration that the "informed reader" understands the metaphor of the poem much in the same way that Wollheim's "suitable spectator" would refuse to see something in an image that is not represented. The informed reader and the suitable spectator of Visscher's suite would also identify the image of two swans with fidelity, as swans are known to mate for life.¹²⁷ The image of swans associated with love is also common in Dutch visual culture. Jacob Cats used the association of swans with love in his emblem *Mon Mal est Sans Fin* (fig. 38) of 1611, and a pair of swans are guided by cupid as they pull a boat carrying the image of J.J. Starter in the frontispiece (fig. 39) to his book of love songs *Friesche Lusthof* (1621). The ideology of courtly love became open to those outside of the aristocracy in the early seventeenth century.¹²⁸ When the prospect of peace with Spain just prior to the Twelve Years' Truce became a very real possibility marriages in the Netherlands increased for nine years.¹²⁹ This corresponds to the publication and growing popular interest in emblem books that focused on images of love and illustrated love songs from 1600-1625.¹³⁰ Visscher's own publications such as *Leo Belgicus* (fig. 25) suggests that the printmaker and publisher saw the Netherlands as thriving when in a state of peace. The allegorical images in the naturalistic background of the map suggests that Visscher saw the land, both the Spanish Netherlands and the Dutch republic, prospered during times of peace. The North and South remain separated from

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Douglas W. Mock et al., "Avian Monogamy," *Ornithological Monographs*, no. 37 (1985): 7 and 71.

¹²⁸ Joanna Woodall, "Love Is in the Air--Amor as Motivation and Message in Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Painting," *Art History* 19, no. 2 (1996): 226.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 230.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 226-27.

each other in the print while the suggestion of prosperity, safe travel, and abundance of agriculture appear while the allegorical figure of war sleeps.¹³¹ Rather than suggesting the Spanish Netherlands and the Dutch Republic reunify, as Bakker suggests, Visscher is advocating that the two regions are better served by maintaining the peace of the Twelve Years' Truce.¹³²

Visscher's pro-peace stance is further evident in two other prints he published during the Truce, *The Truce at Her Deathbed* of 1615 (fig. 40), and *Allegory of the End of the Truce* from 1621 (fig. 41). *The Truce at her Deathbed* was a reaction to military conflicts between the Spanish and Dutch in the duchies of Cleves, Jürlich, and Berg during the Truce.¹³³ *Allegory of the End of the Truce* depicts the end of the Twelve Years' Truce as a funeral procession. Both prints lament the end, or possible end as with *The Truce at her Deathbed*, of peace between the Spanish Netherlands and the Dutch Republic. It seems that the recurring images of fishermen, a connection to love, marriage and swans, and Visscher's stance on the continuation of peaceful relations between the Spanish and Dutch suggest that Visscher has created a narrative that serves as a kind of love song to the traditional seventeen provinces as well as suggesting that the immigrants from Flanders are welcomed in the north. Seen in the context of these symbols of love the images of the couple under the trees in Plate 17 (fig. 16) now appear to about to embrace. The reading of the group gathered under two trees around a table in Plate 15 (fig. 33) as a

¹³¹ Levesque, *Journey through Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Holland: The Harlem Print Series and Dutch Identity*, 61-62.

¹³² Bakker and Webb, *Landscape and Religion: From Van Eyck to Rembrandt*, 235.

¹³³ N.S., "British Museum - Search Object Details," The British Museum, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=1489366&partid=1&output=People%2F!!%2FOR%2F!!%2F104053%2F!%2F104053-2-60%2F!%2FPrint+made+by+Claes+Jansz.+Visscher%2F!%2F%2F!!%2F%2F!!%2F&orig=%2Fresearch%2Fsearch_the_collection_database%2Fadvanced_search.aspx¤tPage=3&numpages=10.

wedding party is plausible within the symbolic web that Visscher has created. And, the interaction between the figures of Plate 16 (fig. 32), the man and woman lounging on the road as a second woman appears to berate them suggests that the man has been caught philandering. Since Virgil the pastoral tradition has been associated with the relationship between peace and culture.¹³⁴ By presenting the countryside of Flanders in peaceful tranquility at a time when the peace with Spain, during the Twelve Years' Truce, was relatively new, Visscher seems to be indicating that love blooms when the land is in such a state.¹³⁵

It would seem that the salient question posed in *The Small Landscapes* is not presented in the individual images as such, but by the suite as a whole. This question seems to be along the lines of “What does one see when strolling along in the Flemish countryside?” The question itself is far more relaxing than enticing, but what the viewer sees along the road in the Flemish countryside ranges from the bucolic to the near violent. *The Small Landscapes*, both Cock's originals and Visscher's reproductions, present to the viewer a narrative that is primarily dependent upon the viewer's willingness to participate in the act of storytelling. The presentation of the Flemish countryside by way of a stroll down a dirt road presents the viewer with several smaller narratives, each encapsulated in its own print, for the viewer to interpret. All the way the road is actively telling a story by presenting these small vignettes to the viewer. It leads the viewer through the countryside

¹³⁴ Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology: Virgil to Valéry*, 134.

¹³⁵ Levesque considers Visscher's *Pleasant Places* as his “call to celebrate the cultivation of the land and arts rather than the destruction of war.” Levesque, *Journey through Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Holland: The Harlem Print Series and Dutch Identity*, xviii. I see Visscher's *Small Landscapes* in much the same way.

as a narrator would lead a reader through a story. In this respect the suite of prints itself acts as its own agent.

Conclusion

The validity of my argument may depend on any one person's definition of "narrative." But, I think it clear that Visscher intended some type of reading of his suite of *The Small Landscapes*. This is of no great revelation, and serial prints have been considered in terms of a narrative structure. It is the degree to which Visscher structured the narrative of this specific suite of prints and the insight and questions involved in the consideration of the work that are of interest.

To consider the staffage of the suite in terms of the figures providing insight into the emerging Dutch identity and not as mere ornamentation provides a richer discussion to the study of seventeenth-century Dutch art. So too does providing the context of how the suite was packaged, sold to, and interacted with by the viewer, and, the final issue of how the narrative presented in the suite could have been interpreted by the viewer as a love poem of sorts to the seventeen traditional provinces of the Netherlands that seems to lament the loss of the South, both in terms of the fall of Antwerp to the Spanish and the destruction of the countryside.

Visscher's selection of specific images from Cock's original publication suggests an intention on the part of the publisher to structure a specific reading of the images. This is reinforced with Visscher's treatment of the figural images in his publication. Visscher's prints present the upper-class and peasantry in the same setting. The juxtaposition of these two classes of society does more than invite comparison, it places them within the same locale. This connects the figures to the land and the politics associated with the land. Further, the altering of the figures of Cock's suite, ranging from

alterations of poses to complete redaction and rendering of new figures, suggests Visscher intended these elements to move the viewer through the suite.

The contemporary viewer of Visscher's prints would have understood the complex organization of the images and the role the figures play in directing the viewer through the landscapes. The organization of the images are closely related to the organization of texts which is reinforced by the manner in which the serial print format was presented by publishers and vendors to the public. Visscher understood that the consumers of his prints were capable of making complex connections between images, text, and geography. His other publications, most notably the maps he published that combine topographical and geographical views, are evidence of Visscher's understanding of his audience's ability to read complex visual imagery and extract deeper meaning from the imagery.

The deeper meaning in Visscher's *The Small Landscapes* becomes apparent to the viewer through visual clues inserted into the prints. Symbols associated with love and marriage, such as fishermen and swans, are present throughout the series. These symbols are present in contemporary images and would have been recognized by the viewer of Visscher's suite. The network of symbolism created by these elements suggests Visscher intended *The Small Landscapes* to be considered in terms of a narrative of love. The narrative present in the series ultimately suggests the integration of immigrants from the Spanish Netherlands into the Dutch Republic, despite previous cultural differences, is welcomed in order to keep the peace throughout the region and allow the emerging Dutch national identity to grow.

Images



Figure 1. Claes Jansz. Visscher, Plate 1, Title Page to *Regiunculæ et Villæ Aliquot Ducatus Brabantiae*, etching, 1612, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 2. Jan and Lucas van Duetecum after Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Fair Day of Saint George*, etching and engraving, c. 1559, 33.7x52.3 cm, Museum of Fine Art, Houston.



Figure 3. Claes Jansz. Visscher, Plate 8, *Farms in a Village* from *Regiunculæ et Villæ Aliquot Ducatus Brabantiae*, etching, 1612, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 4. Hieronymus Cock, *Landscape with a shepherd and his flock in foreground* from *The Small Landscapes*, etching, 1561.

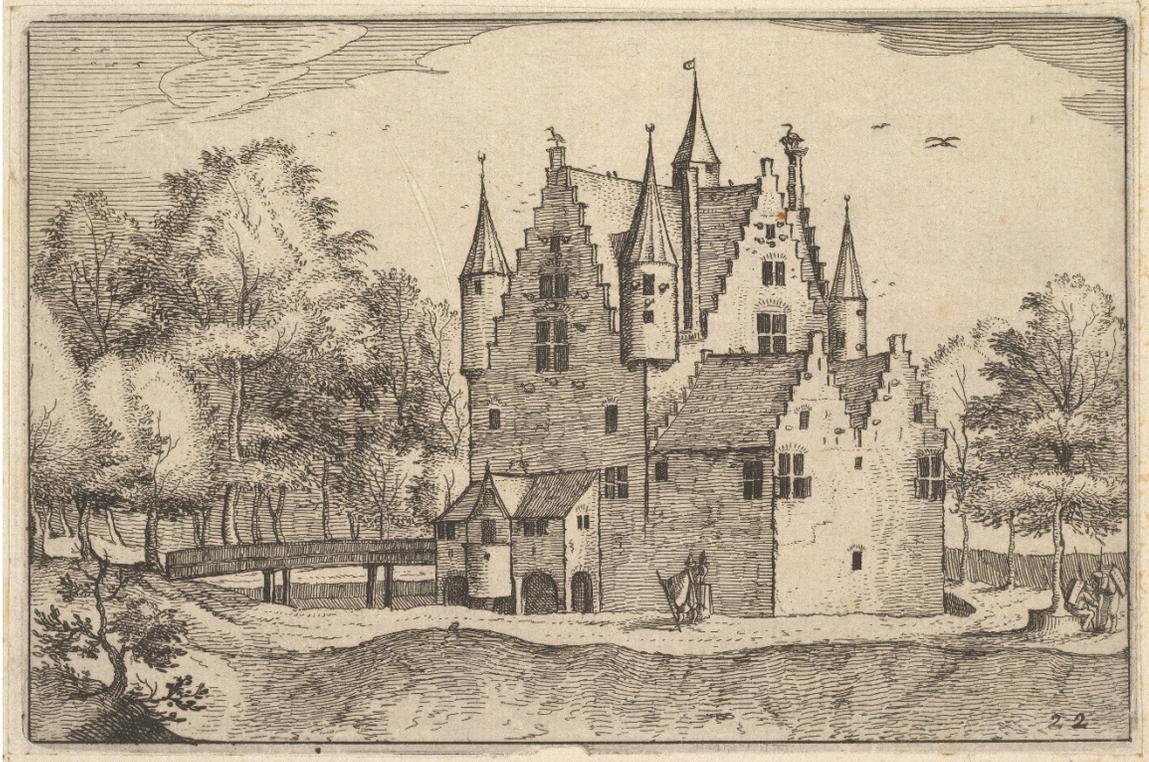


Figure 5. Claes Jansz. Visscher, Plate 22, *A Castle from Regiunculae et Villae Aliquot Ducatus Brabantiae*, etching, 1612, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 6. Hieronymus Cock, *Landscape with a castle at centre; a couple walking in foreground with a child and dog*, etching, 1561.



Figure 7. Hieronymus Cock, Plate 8, *Landscape with view of a village*, etching, 1561(?), British Museum of Art.



Figure 8. Claes Jansz. Visscher, Plate 21, *Large Sheds* from *Regiunculæ et Villæ Aliquot Ducatus Brabantiae*, etching, 1612, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 9. Detail of Visscher's Plate 21.



Figure 10. Nicolaes Berchem the Elder, *Two Sheep: One Urinating*, etching, mid to late seventeenth century, 10x11.1 cm, Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum.



Figure 11. Joseph de Bray, *Still Life in Praise of the Pickled Herring*, oil, 1656, Dresden.



Figure 12. Claes Jansz. Visscher, Plate 13, *A Convent from Regiunculae et Villae Aliquot Ducatus Brabantiae*, etching, 1612, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 13. Claes Jansz. Visscher, Plate 17, *Landscape with Hewed Trees* from *Regiunculæ et Villæ Aliquot Ducatus Brabantiae*, etching, 1612, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 14. Claes Jansz. Visscher, Plate 14, *A Village Road* from *Regiunculæ et Villæ Aliquot Ducatus Brabantiae*, etching, 1612, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 15. Claes Jansz. Visscher, *A Pond* from *Regiunculae et Villae Aliquot Ducatus Brabantiae*, etching, 1612, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 16. Detail Visscher's Plate 17.



Figure 17. Rembrandt, *The Omvale*, etching and drypoint, 1645.



Figure 18. Jacques Callot, title page to *Varie Figure*, etching, 1617-1620.



Figure 19. Abraham Bosse, *La Galerie du Palais*, etching, 1630.



Figure 20. Aegidius Sadeler, *The Great Hall in the Castle at Prague*, engraving, 1607.



Figure 21. Detail, *The Great Hall in the Castle at Prague*.

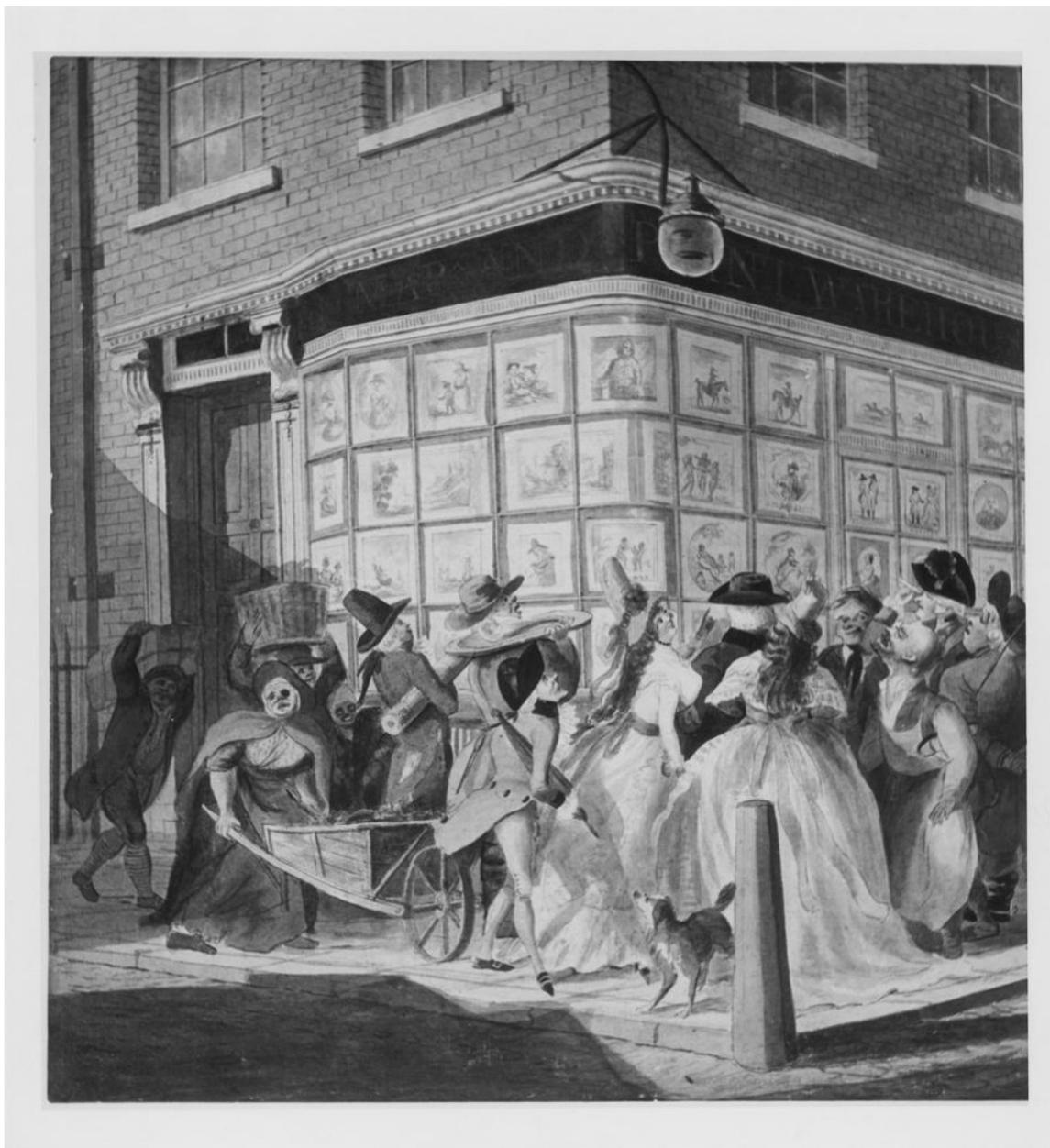


Figure 22. J. Elwood, *A Crowd Outside a Print Shop*, drawing, 1790.



Figure 23. Theodore Lane, *Honi Soit qui mal y Pense*, hand-colored etching, 1821.

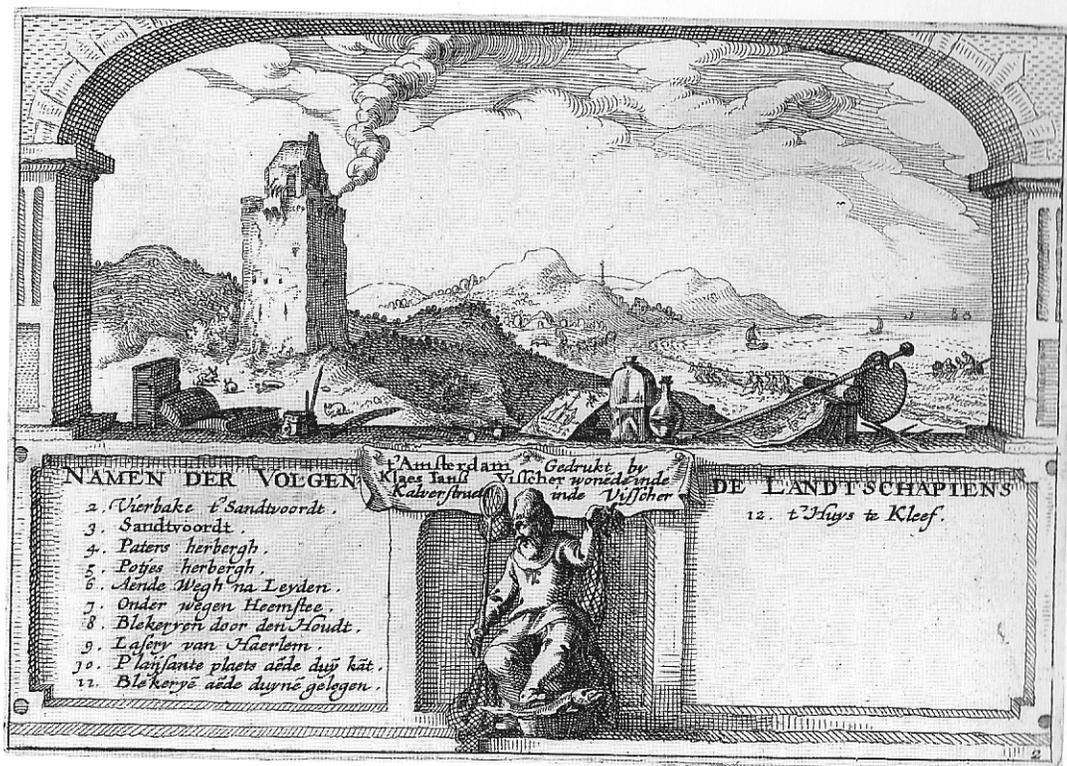


Figure 24. Claes Jansz. Visscher, contents page from *Pleasant Places*, etching, 1611.



Figure 26. Claes Jansz. Visscher, Plate 10, *Large Farm* from *Regiunculæ et Villæ Aliquot Ducatus Brabantiae*, etching, 1612, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 27. Claes Jansz. Visscher, Plate 23, *Large Walled Farm* from *Regiunculae et Villae Aliquot Ducatus Brabantiae*, etching, 1612, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 28. Claes Jansz. Visscher, Plate 5, *Farmyard* from *Regiunculæ et Villæ Aliquot Ducatus Brabantiae*, etching, 1612, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 29. Claes Jansz. Visscher, Plate 11, *Walled Farm* from *Regiunculae et Villae Aliquot Ducatus Brabantiae*, etching, 1612, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

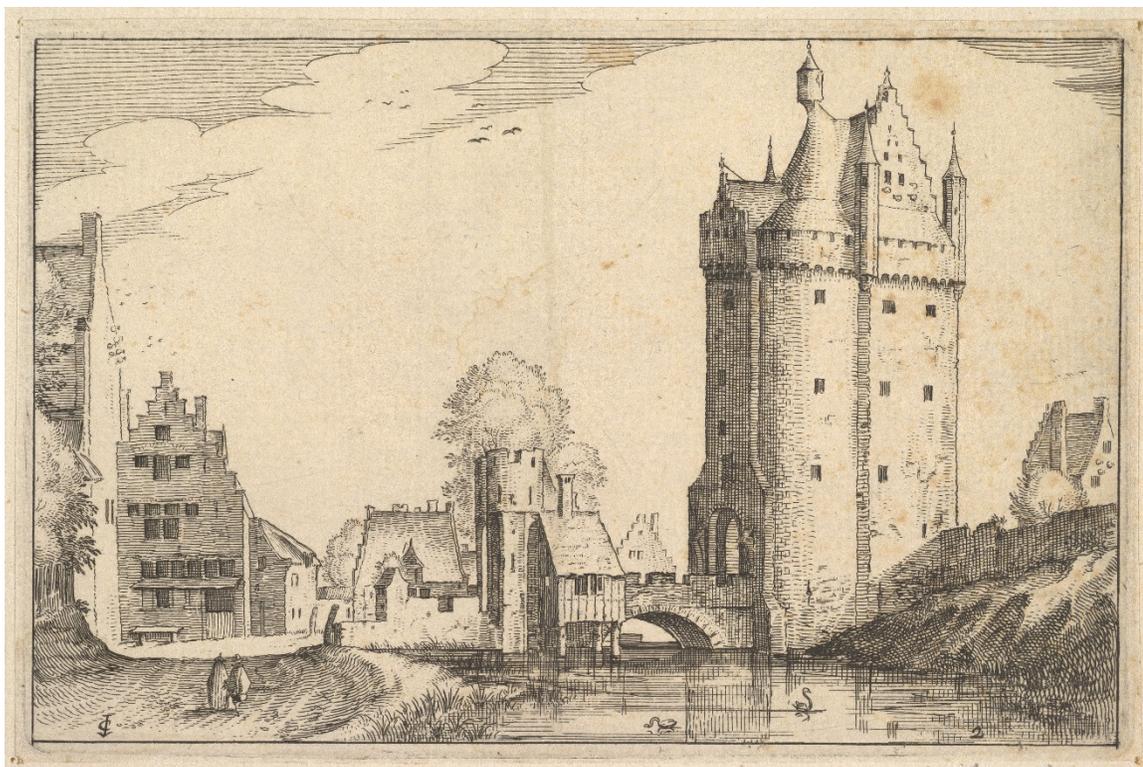


Figure 30. Claes Jansz. Visscher, Plate 2, *Town Gate* from *Regiunculæ et Villæ Aliquot Ducatus Brabantiae*, etching, 1612, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 31. Claes Jansz. Visscher, Plate 20, *Village Road from Regiunculae et Villae Aliquot Ducatus Brabantiae*, etching, 1612, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 32. Claes Jansz. Visscher, Plate 16, *Road along a Field* from *Regiunculæ et Villæ Aliquot Ducatus Brabantiae*, etching, 1612, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

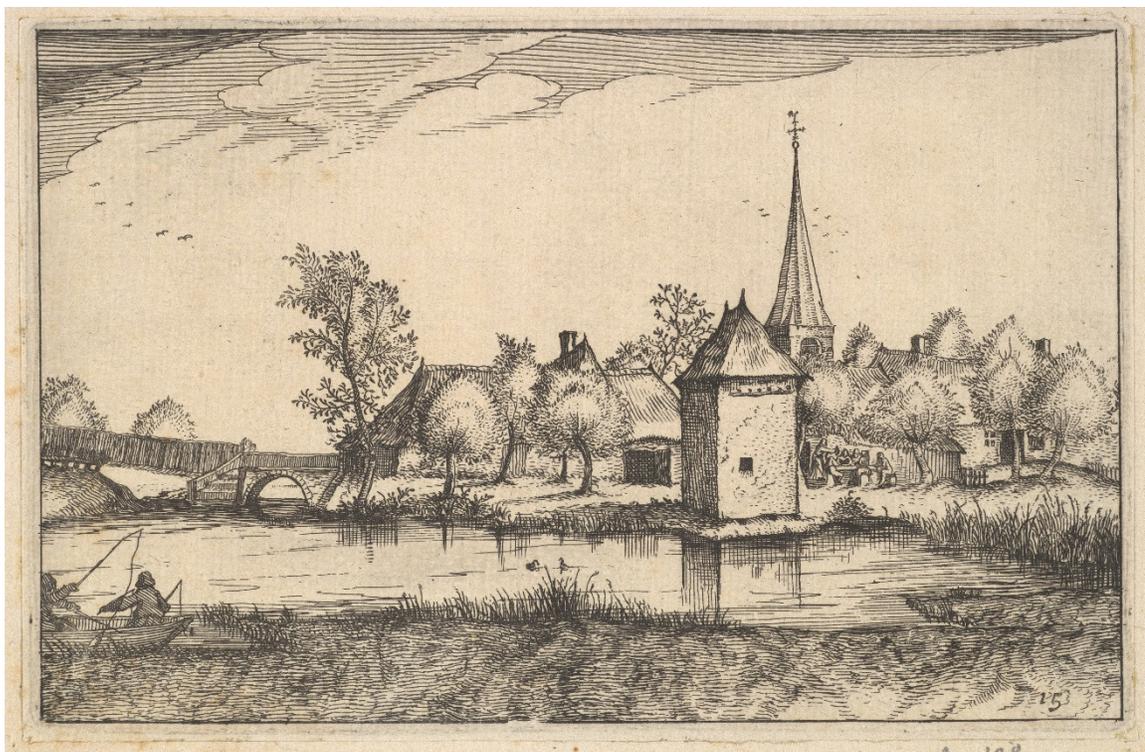


Figure 33. Claes Jansz. Visscher, Plate 15, *Pond and a Village from Regiunculae et Villae Aliquot Ducatus Brabantiae*, etching, 1612, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

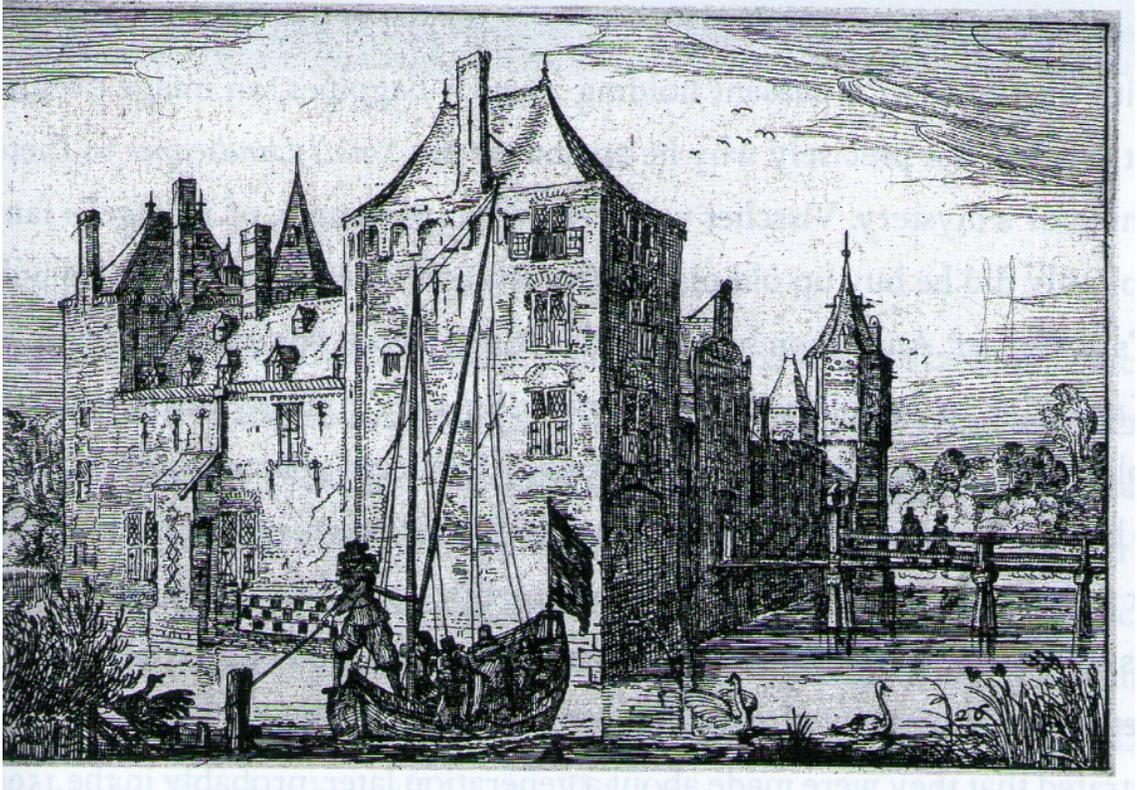


Figure 34. Claes Jansz. Visscher, Plate 26, etching, 1612.



Figure 35. Claes Jansz. Visscher, Plate 6, *The Swan's Inn* from *Regiunculae et Villae Aliquot Ducatus Brabantiae*, etching, 1612, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 36. Rembrandt, *The Three Trees*, etching and drypoint, 1643.



Figure 37. Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft, *Cupid Fishing* from *Emblemata Amatoria*, engraving, 1611.



Figure 38. Jacob Cats, *Mon Mal est Sans Fin*, engraving, 1611.



Figure 39. J.J. Starter, frontispiece to *Frische Lusthof*, engraving, 1621.



Figure 41. Claes Jansz. Visscher, *Allegory of the End of the Truce*, etching, 1621.

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