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Sex and Drugs before Rock 'n' Roll

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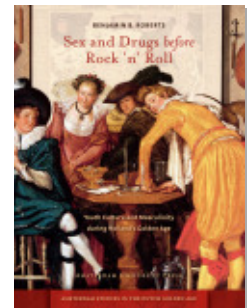
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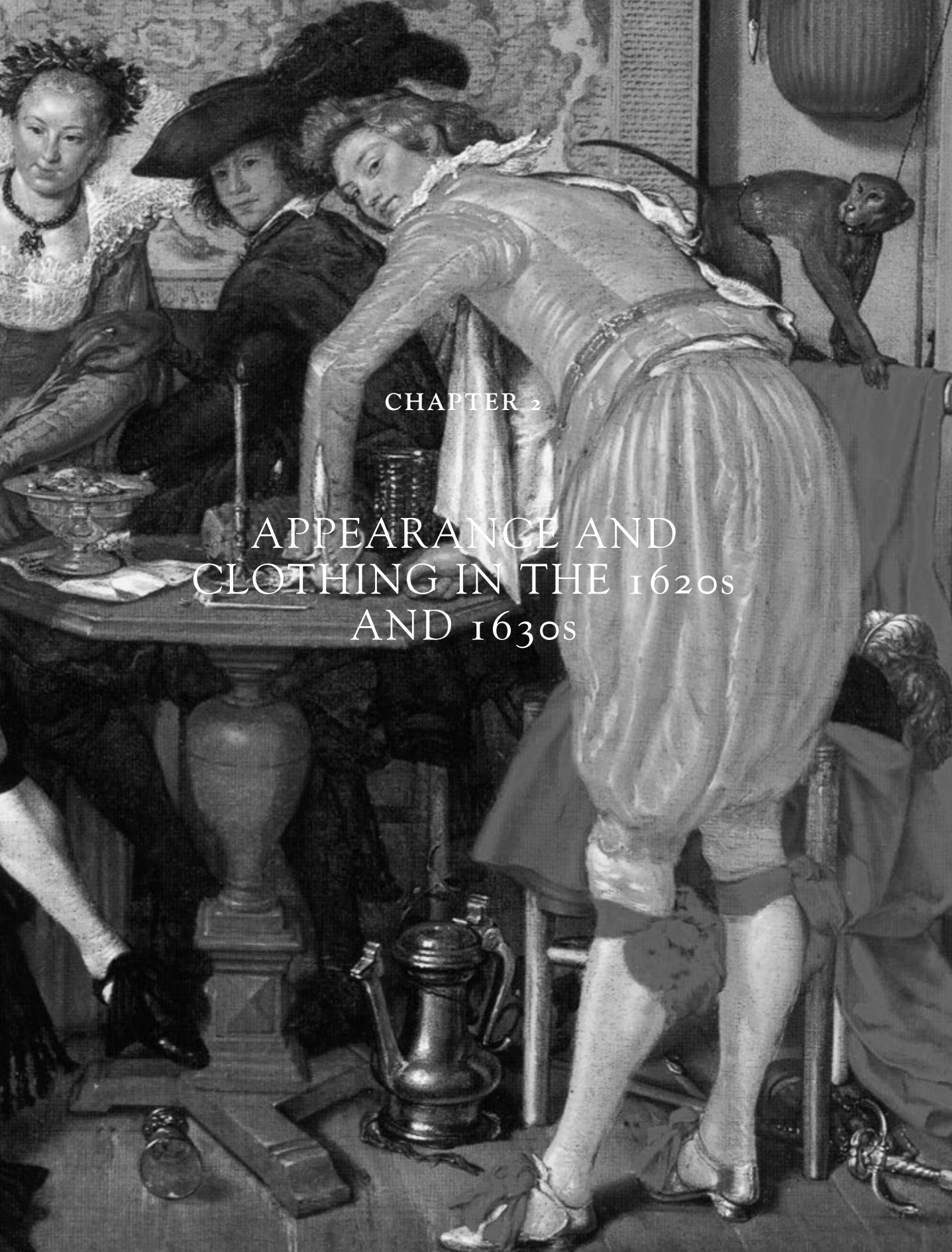
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CHAPTER 2

APPEARANCE AND
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Appearance and Clothing in the 1620s and 1630s

One of the most notorious members of the generation of young men from the 1620s and 1630s was the son of a miller from Leiden, Rembrandt van Rijn. In an early self-portrait from 1629, the young 23-year-old painter illustrated himself with long bushy hair, draped with a lock of hair slightly longer on the left side. His face is bare without any signs of a beard. He is wearing a gorget – a metal coat, hinged at the neck, that covered the upper torso, similar to the ones worn by cuirassiers. In many aspects his portrait is telling about what young men looked like in the early seventeenth century and radiates various messages about masculinity.¹ In this chapter we shall address how young men in the 1620s and 1630s looked physically from head to toe. Did young men have beards, mustaches, short or long hair; what kind of clothes did they wear, which colors were popular, and which styles were imitated? In essence, what was the appearance of a young man of the elite or middle class in the early seventeenth century? In *Centuries of Childhood* (1962) the French social historian Philippe Ariès argued that children in the Middle Ages and early modern period were often imitations of their parents: ‘as soon as a child abandoned his swaddling-band – the band of cloth that was tightly wrapped around his body in babyhood – he was dressed just like other men and women of his class’. He further remarks that a change came in the seventeenth century when children of the nobility and middle class started to dress differently than adults did.² However, the situation in Holland and the Dutch Republic was different from most European countries in regards to fashion. First of all, there was no real nobility to speak of. With its elected stadtholder, Holland did not have a court culture equivalent to the grandeur of Paris and London. Not until Frederik Hendrik ascended to the post of stadtholder in 1625 did the stadtholder’s court in The Hague become more court-like. Frederik Hendrik and especially his wife Amalia van Solms, who had been a lady-in-waiting for the court of Queen Elisabeth, the wife of the Winter King, became a driving force in elevating the court culture in The Hague. Frederik Hendrik and Amalia were responsible for commissioning the construction of Huis ten Bosch palace and various artworks. Until the mid-1620s the middle class were the real leaders and rulers of fashion in the Republic, and not the nobility and elite as in neighboring countries.³

More recent studies have shown that children in the Dutch Republic wore other clothing than their parents did, and there was a distinctive 'children's fashion' which proved Ariès to be incorrect in his postulation that smaller children were dressed as miniature adults.⁴ However, little or no research has examined the distinctive dress of children beyond the age of seven. In this chapter we will address whether young men resembled their parents or chose to distinguish themselves by dressing differently. If so, how did they differ in facial hair, hairstyle, and clothing from adult males?

To answer the first of these questions, let us return to the self-portrait by Rembrandt from 1629. Rembrandt's face is soft and shiny, and he has a downy beard. Constantijn Huygens (1596-1687), secretary to the stadtholders, poet, and composer, who met Rembrandt in the same year the portrait was made, reported that the young painter was *still* beardless.⁵ When Huygens was 26 years old in 1623, he portrayed himself with a mustache. Thus he must have thought it was odd that the 23-year old painter was still beardless. Huygens used the word 'still' because he had met Rembrandt two years earlier, together with the painter Jan Lievens (1607-1674). At that time, Lievens, aged 20, and Rembrandt, aged 21, shared a studio, and according to Huygens's description, 'both were beardless, and in their physical and facial appearance resembled boys rather than men'.⁶ Later in 1629 Rembrandt painted another self-portrait. This time he portrayed himself with downy hair under his nose that resembled a mustache and a bit of hair on his chin. But he still did not have an adult beard. It is not unlikely that Rembrandt wanted to present himself on canvas as a more mature grown-up and more sophisticated, albeit with a feather in his hat and a gold chain around his neck. In an engraving from 1631 entitled *Self-Portrait in a Soft Hat*, the painter sported a mature mustache.⁷

These assumptions are very speculative, yet they could be very telling.⁸ In the realm of manhood and masculinity, facial hair is one of the most important physical signifiers between men and boys. Having a mustache or beard denoted maturity and commanded respect from other men. In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, hair on the face of men is what – initially – distinguished a man from a boy. Facial hair – a mustache or beard – was a common feature of adult men. The growth of facial hair in the Renaissance and early modern period had a sociological and physiological significance as well. Facial hair on men was often associated with the production of semen, which meant that they were no longer boys, and the beard was a sign of 'procreative potential'.⁹ In *Materializing Gender in Early Modern Literature and Culture*, Will Fisher argues that facial hair was just as important as genitals as a key biological marker of manhood. Beards materialized the sexual difference between men and women. If a young man lacked a beard, he was still considered to be a boy whatever his age might have been, and an incipient beard, if not worth shaving, was still not yet considered a sign of maturity. 'Indeed, beard growth was consistently associated with the "masculine" social roles of soldier and father'. The beard was understood 'to announce a man's "Manhood" or social position (his "majesty") in the same way as an "ensign" announces the military identity of a group of soldiers'.¹⁰



Illustration 3 'A bushy-haired Rembrandt with no facial hair' in: Rembrandt van Rijn,
Self-Portrait as a Young Man (c. 1628-1629)

Most likely, Huygens did not accept the beardless Rembrandt as a fully fledged man. However, according to early modern standards, we can surmise that Rembrandt was normal regarding physical maturity. Today, the average age that downy hairs start growing on the upper lip of an adolescent is around 14 years and 9 months. Young men have a full beard at the average age of 17 years old. That was not the case for young men in the early modern period. The average age when male youths in the early seventeenth century could grow a beard was usually around 23 or 24 years old. According to Herbert Moller, who has studied beard growth throughout history, the late physical maturity in the early modern period was often caused by poor general health and nutrition, and as well as other factors. By the late eighteenth century, after improvements in diet, housing conditions, and hygiene for the upper and middle classes in European society, young men started to mature physically at a younger age, usually around 18 or 19 years old. In this light, it is very possible that the 23-year-old Rembrandt with his downy mustache could be considered a 'late bloomer' in comparison with male adolescents today.

On the other hand, in the 1620s keeping a clean-shaven face had become the fashion among young elites across Europe. One reason for this new trend can be ascribed to the French king, Louis XIII (1601-1643). According to his physician, Jean Héroard, the young monarch was shaved for the first time on August 1, 1624. Héroard, who observed him as a child and young adult, remarked that the 23-year-old monarch did not have much facial hair at all, and it was believed that he suffered from some kind of disease which left him almost beardless.¹¹ One day in 1628, the French sovereign ordered all his courtiers to shave off their beards. They were only allowed to have a mustache and 'pointed tuft on the chin'. Perhaps the young king felt less manly as he did not have a mature beard like the men around him. Nevertheless, clean-shaven faces with mustaches and goatees became the fashion at his court, and consequently Louis XIII set a new trend for young elite men throughout Europe.¹² Beards were trimmed in points or in the form of a fan, and were roughly about three fingers long.¹³

In order to keep clean-shaven cheeks and maintain goatees, the style required men to visit a barber-surgeon on a regular basis. This suggests the 'clean-shaven look' could only be maintained by young men of financial means, such as those from the middle class or elite. Moreover, clean water for shaving was not always readily available in urban areas, and that made a visit to a barber-surgeon more expensive. The shop of the barber-surgeon could easily be recognized by a sign with a scissors and lancet, a shaving dish painted on it, or a staff with a helix of colored stripes (red and white), which is still in use today.¹⁴ According to one theory, the staff symbolized the piece of wood that a patient was asked to squeeze to expose his veins while a venesection was being performed and blood (symbolized by the color red) trickled down his arm and hand.¹⁵ In the Dutch Republic, barber-surgeons had to be members of the St. Cosmas and St. Damianus guild, which was also the guild of surgeons. It wasn't until the eighteenth century that barbers split from the surgeons; in the seventeenth century, barbers were also trained in the art of bloodletting. Before becoming a member of the guild, apprentices were required to take an exam in the skills of shaving and bloodletting in which they had to show their dexterity in using a lancet. This instrument was used for bloodletting and was probably the original device used for shaving

before the razor was invented.¹⁶ The trimming and styling of the beard would have been done by the barber-surgeon, but the owner would have to groom his beard regularly with a special brush, and keep it in place with perfumed wax.¹⁷ The beard was shaped into style and kept in place by wax. Before going to bed, moustaches and beards were dressed overnight and protected by a small bag called 'bigotelle'. However, we have found no references to the use of the bigotelle in the Dutch Republic.¹⁸ Thus, a young man's visit to the barbershop for his first shave must have been one of the rites of passage to manhood. Unfortunately, there are no diaries or journals that make note of this biological transition to adulthood.

Long hair

That young people (and people in general) were concerned with their appearance becomes even more obvious in the Alessio Piemontese translation, *De Secreteten* [The Secrets of Alexis of Piemont] (1636), originally published in Italian. This household manual was published many times throughout the sixteenth century and appeared in Dutch in 1602 and 1635. It contained beauty tips for men and women covering everything from hair removal under the arms to remedies for whitening teeth. One recurring entry is the dyeing of hair.¹⁹



Illustration 4 'Short hair for young men was common around the turn of the century, c. 1600' in:
Jan van Ravesteyn, *Portrait of Hugo Grotius Aged 16* (1599)

The greatest changes that the generation of young people in the 1620s and 1630s contributed to hairstyle was the fashion of letting their hair grow long. In the same self-portrait from 1629, Rembrandt depicted himself with shoulder-length hair. In the exhibition 'Dawn of the Golden Age. Northern Netherlandish Art, 1580-1620' the contrast with the short hair of youths a generation earlier were significant. Jan van Ravensteyn's early portrait of Hugo Grotius depicted Holland's 16-year-old prodigal son in a diametrical panel with a short-cropped head of red hair.²⁰ By the 1620s and 1630s long hair had become the new fashion among youths, and it was often despised by more traditionally groomed and clothed religious groups such as the Mennonites. In the story entitled *Menniste Vryagie* [Mennonite Romance] that was included in Jan Jansz. Starter's popular songbook, *Friesche Lust-Hof* [Frisian Paradise] (1621), the well-known poet and songwriter mocked the conservative dress of a Mennonite girl who turned down the advances of a fashionably dressed young man. As the story progressed, the young man became completely frustrated and asked himself: 'what did I do wrong, I swore I loved her deep in my heart, but nothing moved her' ... 'She had Moses in her head, and had lived by David'. 'Everything was wrong, my hair was too long, and my collar too wide, sleeves too broad, the starch too blue, then my pants were too large, the jerkin too tight, each pant-leg too long, I had roses on my shoes. In short, she didn't want to kiss such a man of the world'. The Mennonite girl was only interested in him after 'his hair was cut short, and he was dressed in a black coat, and had a flattened white collar'.²¹ Starter's *Friesche Lust-Hof* was a widely read songbook published primarily for the Republic's well-to-do young people who resided in cities. They were probably the *fashionistas* of their generation and could appreciate Starter's mocking of the sober attire worn by Mennonites. The latter frowned on the excessive and colorful clothing worn by the mundane youth of the 1620s. Starter followed the latest fashion himself. On the title page of *Friesche Lust-Hof* (illustration 2), the 27-year-old author was portrayed as sporting longish hair, a mustache, and a goatee.

In order to understand the trend that started in the 1620s and 1630s, we have to fast-forward to the 1640s when long hair had become widespread among young men. Not only young men wore their hair long, but also men such as schoolmasters, ministers, and university professors who were traditionally seen as role models in the community. The trend started with young men and spread to adult men, which was reason enough for the pious reformed Protestant minister, Godfridus Udemans (1582-1649), to write a 406-page discourse entitled *Absaloms-hayr off Discours* [Absalom's Hair or Discourse] (1643) on the immorality of long hair. The discourse was based on the Biblical story of Absalom, the third son of David, who was known to be handsome and to have an abundance of hair. As an adult, Absalom led a revolt against his father at the Battle of Ephraim Wood and was caught on an oak tree by his mane of hair, which led to his death by his father's soldiers. By the time Udemans published *Absaloms-hayr*, long hair had become the subject of a moral war in the Dutch Republic. Consequently, the author, who had written many moralistic treatises, chose to publish the discourse under a pseudonym: Irenæus Poimenander. In seeking the right answer in the battle of hair length, Udemans based his arguments on the Old Testament where short hair sometimes signified sorrow, and long hair did not necessarily imply triumph and pleasure.



Illustration 5 'Adversary to long hair, minister Godefridus Udemans was short-cropped and slightly balding' in:
 J. Sarragon, *Godefridus Udemans* (1635)

Udemans also questioned why young men had a beard. He compared those with long hair to pagans like the American Indians, which was supposed to be reason enough for young men to refrain from long locks. After all, as he argued, 'heathens were uncouth, displayed triumph, and were promiscuous'.²² Another argument against having long hair is that one would jump social ranks and upset the social order. The male French nobility (kings and princes) as well as other European nobles were well-known for sporting long locks. Udemans believed this to be their reserved right, and if young men from other social groups followed in their footsteps, it would be considered pretentious.²³ He himself had nothing to worry about, he wore his hair short and was slightly balding.

By the early 1640s the fashion of long hair had become unstoppable. Youths, students, university scholars, the urban elite, and even ministers, especially the younger ones, were all letting their hair grow. Perhaps Udemans fired such an arsenal of arguments for keeping one's hair short-cropped because he knew he was fighting an uphill battle. Every conceivable motive from vanity to conspicuous consumption was thrown in the ring, but the most effective reason that struck home among young men was the fact that long hair endangered their masculinity. Simply put, for Udemans long hair turned *he-men* into *she-men*. He considered young men with long hair to be feminine, and applied the simple logic that when young men sported long locks, they not only physically resembled women but also behaved like them. Consequently, men became

vain and would squander endless hours grooming in front of a mirror. Young men might have had the good fortune to grow their hair long but the endless grooming and maintaining of long hair was only a privilege bestowed on women. If young men had the time for such vanities, they were also considered to be the submissive sex.²⁴

Udemans's pseudonymous publication in 1643 was cleverly timed to appear before the annual synod of Dutch Reformed churches. In August 1641, the long hair issue had been put on the agenda of the synod of North Holland held in Amsterdam. It was not necessarily an attack against young men with long hair, but more of an innuendo towards young ministers who were role models in the community and congregation, and who were starting to let their hair grow longer. According to the delegates from Groningen, young ministers with long hair and dressed in trendy clothing had become a thorn in their eye. Their complaint also applied to the wives of young ministers. The delegates from Zutphen were furious that schoolmasters were letting their hair grow long, and the delegates from the town of Woerden added that students were also following suit. To make matters worse, theology students and young ministers took up the latest hair fashion, and consequently became poor role models. In the pamphlet *Predicatie van 't langh hair* [Designation of Long Hair] (1645), Udemans was supported in his battle against men having long hair by Jacobus Borstius (1612-1680). Borstius, 33 years old at the time, protested the new fashion of long hair by publishing a sermon based on the Bible, 1 Corinthians 11.14: 'Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him.' Borstius made it clear: hairstyle on young men was a matter of honor. In Corinthians 11.15, Borstius emphasized that long hair violated the boundaries of the male gender: 'but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering'. Moreover, it turned men into submissive beings just like women, and essentially made men into whores.²⁵ According to the Dutch historian John Exalto, many of the orthodox ministers in the early seventeenth century believed that the clergy fulfilled an important position as role models in society, and specifically young ministers. Their short-cropped hair and full beards had become intertwined with the creditability of their profession. Anything different was considered a violation of their professional code.²⁶ Willem Frijhoff argues that short hair and facial hair were important attributes of the clergyman's profession. Eighteen-year-old Evert Willemsz. Bogaert, who was a clergyman in training in 1625 and later became a minister in Manhattan, probably had a mustache, goatee or beard, and most likely had short hair.²⁷

Numerous ministers protested the new fashion of long hair on young ministers, often referring to Corinthians 14.²⁸ This continued even late in the 1670s after long hair on men had become the mainstream fashion; Reverend Jacobus Hondius (1629-1690) from Hoorn still listed long hair on men as a sin in his *Black Register of a Thousand Sins* (1679).²⁹

By 1645 the issue had become a heated debate at the annual synod. In that year, adversaries and advocates were in a head-on battle ignited by Udemans's treatise and a new publication by Claudius Salmasius (1588-1653), professor of Philology at Leiden, who opposed him. Salmasius wrote a 484-page tome entitled *Brief van Claudius Salmasius aen Andr. Colvium, belangende het*

langh hair der mannen en de lokken der vrouwen [Letter from Claudius Salmasius to Andreas Colvium about Long Hair for Men and Locks for Women]. It was originally written in Latin and translated later that year into Dutch. Salmasius drew his arguments from history but with another perspective. He pleaded that throughout history man had alternated between wearing long hair and short hair – even as far as shaving the scalp. As each nation of people (Jews, Arabs, and Phoenicians) had their own tradition of whether men should have long or short hair, what difference does it make in essence?³⁰ Salmasius repudiated the use of the Apostle Paul’s argument that men will become women if they have long hair. In his view men were allowed to have hair the same length as women as long as they did not wear their hair like women, such as tying it in a bun or using a net. Hair on women was meant to be long. Men’s hair would never have the same length as women’s because it would be regularly trimmed. Salmasius, who was 57 years old at the time and with a full head of hair, was not arguing on his own behalf. He explained to readers, ‘the command of the Apostle Paul does not apply to our era’.³¹ In the debate on long hair, time was on Salmasius’s side. After 1645, the issue was no longer discussed at the synod, as more and more men wore shoulder-length hair, even older ministers.³² Another reason for the end of the debate was that by 1643, the French king Louis XIV, who was 16 years old at the time, had ascended to the throne with a full head of long and curly hair. The French court had set the stage, and long hair on men had officially become the new fashion among monarchs, elites, scholars, and students, and the trend spread down the social ladder. Those who could not keep up with the fashion of long hair had to resort to using hairpieces and wigs. When Louis XIV was 35, the appearance of his thinning and receding hairline forced him to shave his head and wear a wig in order to maintain the long hair fashion that he started. From that period on, wigs became a fashionable hairstyle. In hindsight, the fashion of young men in the 1620s and 1630s set a precedence of long hair in fashion that remained until the late eighteenth century and was replaced by shorter-cropped hairstyles only in the French Revolution era. During that period, shorter hair and less flamboyant dress became the new expression of masculinity.³³

Cavaliers

Whereas the face of young men in the 1620s and 1630s was probably adorned with a mustache, goatee, or pointed beard, the rest of their body was hairless or had very little body hair. The ideals of beauty in the early seventeenth century suggest that male bodies were hairless. In *De Secreeten*, Alessio Piemontese recommended that men remove hair under the arms, chest, and pubic area for good hygiene. Hair on the body could be a place where sweat lingered and would ultimately produce smelly odors. Piemontese even proposed that children should remove ‘any hair under the armpits or elsewhere as they wish’. He also included a remedy for permanent (!) hair removal for young adolescents who had just sprouted a beard.³⁴ The art historian Bianca du Mortier argues that the ideal of the male body not only involved being hairless, it should also be ‘muscular with full calves and clean feet’.³⁵

From a contemporary point of view, the fashion of affluent young males of the 1620s and

1630s make *metrosexual* males of the early twenty-first century with their facial crèmes and perfumed hair gels look like machos. However anachronistic that might be, it was probably close to the truth. After the death of his father in 1625, Carel of Nassau (1612-1637), the 16-year-old illegitimate son of Prince Maurits, squandered his annual codicil of 4,000 guilders on idle frivolities like expensive plumes and gloves. A few years later his spending spree had become so exorbitant that his uncle, Frederik Hendrik, commissioned an inquiry from the Court of Holland into his nephew's extravagant expenditures. Despite what might seem to be the onset of a lighthearted and cultivated lifestyle, Carel of Nassau had a yearning for adventure and chose a career in the military, like most of the stadtholder's family. In 1635 he left for Brazil with his cousin, Maurits of Nassau. Two years later he died in battle at the age of 25.³⁶

The new fashion in men's clothing of the 1620s became more comfortable. For example, the jerkin was a popular waistcoat for young men in the late sixteenth century that was padded on the inside and buttoned at the neck, but it lost most of its stiff padding in the early seventeenth century. A flaring collar replaced the ruff, which became a broad turned-down collar bordered with pointed lace. Sleeves came to the wrist and were turned back with a cuff. In the 1620s, baggy and puffy padded breeches, known as 'bombast', became less stuffed and more fitted to the knee, where they were fastened with a garter, ribbon, or buttons. The garment was fastened at the waist with a button or drawstring.³⁷ Besides breeches, trunkhose were also fashionable. Trunkhose were very baggy, and many times things could be carried inside them: hence the name 'trunk'.³⁸ Over the jerkin and breeches or trunkhose, young men often wore short capes that hung from the back of the shoulder. They also decorated their faces with make-up or patches in the shape of a black dot, a fake beauty mark. These patches were often used to hide facial scars and marks from childhood smallpox.³⁹

For footwear, young men in the early seventeenth century wore shoes that were fastened with either ribbons or buckles. Fashionable shoes in the 1620s were square-toed instead of the round shape that had been in style in the late sixteenth century. Alternatively, boots were also very popular, which cavaliers also wore. Young men in general imitated the clothing of cavaliers. The military horsemen were known for wearing large plumed and feathered hats, fancy jackets, and breeches or pants, and high-heel leather boots with floppy tops. The boots were often shaped like a funnel and could reach 20 inches (45 cm) in diameter at the top, being pulled down to the knee or to mid-calf to show off the many ruffles of lace-edged hose. Boots were often dark leather, but lighter colored ones were sometimes worn for formal events. Both shoes and boots usually had heels that were at least one inch (2.5 cm) high made from stacked layers of leather or pieces of wood. Shoes were decorated with ribbons that were twisted into a rosette or bunched together into a large ruffled puff. These ribbons were made from gold or silver lace-edged ribbons.⁴⁰ On the top of their heads, young men wore large floppy hats with high crowns and wide brims that were decorated with plumes or feathers, just like the cavaliers.⁴¹

Besides his lack of a beard, another revealing feature of Rembrandt's early 1629 self-portrait is a gorget – a harness-like vest made from metal. Rembrandt is not wearing the millstone

collar that was fashionable among the older generation around 1600. This collar, which required as much as 15 meters of cloth to create, was no longer visible in portraits of young people in the 1620s and 1630s. One of the possible reasons why long hair was not fashionable before the 1620s is because it was impractical with a millstone collar: long hair easily got caught in the numerous ruffs. In 1630 when the millstone collar was on the decline and being replaced by flat-laced collars, young people could easily let their hair grow longer.⁴²

The gorget was a garment originally worn by military men, including the cuirassiers, a cavalry troop that originated in the fifteenth century. They were known for wearing breast-plated armor, the 'cuirass'.⁴³ It is curious that Rembrandt had on this shiny and uncomfortable metal apparel, which was traditionally worn by military men. As far as we know, Rembrandt did not serve in Leiden's municipal guard because he was enrolled at the University of Leiden, which exempted him from guard duty.⁴⁴ In all likelihood, there was no practical necessity for Rembrandt to wear a gorget.⁴⁵

A more probable answer suggests that the young painter wore the gleaming piece of iron because it was fashionable, and made him look more masculine. Just like other young men of the 1620s and 1630s, Rembrandt followed the latest fashion trend that was influenced by the military and worn by young men who were not in the armed forces. Martial gear worn by civilians was by no means a new phenomenon in Europe. Since the late fifteenth century, various clothing pieces that were traditionally worn by the military, such as the jerkin, were stylish among civilian youths. The jerkin, which resembled the knight's harness, was made from either leather or cloth instead of iron. The fact that civilian young men were sporting military garb and were *not* members of the nobility symbolized a shift in power. In the Middle Ages the privilege to bear arms and fight in battle had been strictly reserved for the nobility. By the early modern period, a fundamental social change occurred in the military: fighting and bearing weapons became a task for mercenary soldiers from the lower echelons of society. In addition, the increasing economic power of the Republic's merchant class and upper middle class in the seventeenth century meant their offspring also gained access to the universities. These students were granted the privilege to bear arms just like the sons of the nobility. The popularization of weaponry carried by young men and their taste for military outfits represented the waning monopoly of the nobility to bear arms.⁴⁶

This trend is comparable to today's fashion of wearing khaki-colored army pants and other camouflage apparel which are traditionally worn by military personnel. In the early seventeenth century, the military look went hand-in-hand with the bearing of weapons, a growing trend among university students who were granted the privilege to bear arms. By the 1630s it had become rampant among youths of the elite and upper middle classes. According to the historian Antje Stannek, the martial outfit of young men in the 1630s was characterized as 'less stiff collars, wider pants, earrings, and long curly hair', and a fashionable young nobleman had to dress like Claude Beruet, the court painter to the Duke of Lorraine '... [who] dressed in the fashion of cuirassiers: they wore gambesons, gauntlets, cuffs, top-boots, and the slashed sleeves which the Swiss guards made popular all over Europe. They preferred the wide trousers named *rhingraves*

(petticoat-breeches), introduced by the Wild-and Rheingraf, a Palatinate diplomat at the court of Louis XIV. Despite its extravagance, the outfit of the Beruets was a sharp contrast to the formal and stiff costumes worn at the Habsburg court'.⁴⁷

There was also another reason why young men in the 1620s and 1630s were particularly attracted to military apparel. Most of them had grown up during the turbulent period of the Twelve-Year Truce (1609-1621), when a civil war almost broke out in the Republic. After the truce ended in 1621, the war resumed, war propaganda continued, numerous books about the history of the war were published, and taxes were raised to support the effort. These centrifugal forces caused Dutch society to become completely engrossed with the renewed war against its old enemy, and consequently changed the public's image of the military as well. Under the helm of Stadtholder Maurits, the military had changed from what was often perceived as a motley crew of unorganized, undisciplined, poorly outfitted men, who were sporadically paid and were inclined to pillage and plunder for their wages, into a professional army. They were disciplined, trained with the latest fighting techniques, and most importantly paid on a regular basis. All ranks of the military were outfitted with proper weapons and assigned military uniforms that were very colorful. Manuals such as *Military Instructions for the Cavallrie* (1632) stipulated how soldiers were to be dressed, paid, quartered, encamped, supplied, armed, drilled, to be commanded, and how to go into battle. The standardized instructions streamlined and professionalized the military, and were copied by armies across Europe.⁴⁸ In the public view the military gained prestige and esteem, and burghers and young men in particular could have easily looked up to them as masculine role models.⁴⁹

The positive image of the military was also propagated at the court of King Louis XIII of France. At the age of nine, Louis XIII inherited large shoes to fill. His highly intelligent father, Henry IV, who had converted from Calvinism to Catholicism and enacted the Edict of Nantes in 1598 that gave rights to Protestants in France, had ended a civil war. In 1610, the monarch was brutally murdered in his carriage while caught in traffic incurred by the coronation ceremony of the queen. Contrary to his father who was interested in the arts, literature, and clothing, young Louis XIII was primarily focused on masculine sports, including hunting and warfare, and was known to lead his men into battle. However, Louis's preference for the military and macho-like behavior might stem from another source. He was also known to be a notorious bisexual and liked handsome, swashbuckling young men. This could have been the reason his court adopted the more masculine style of the cavaliers' loose-fitting and vibrant-colored attire.⁵⁰

Republic *sans* court culture

Bianca du Mortier, the Dutch art historian of seventeenth-century costume, argues that French fashion was worn by young people in Holland already in the late sixteenth century and was introduced by the flood of immigrants from the Southern Netherlands. However, it took another 25 years before French fashion had become mainstream, when stadtholder Frederik Hendrik accended to the position in 1625 and established his court at The Hague. Unlike his older half-

brother Maurits, Frederik Hendrik had spent much time at the French court in Paris, where he was undoubtedly influenced by French taste and fashion. His mother was Louise de Coligny, a Frenchwoman. Until that time (the mid-1620s), the Dutch elite and middle classes did not have a court culture that they could reflect on, as the elite in other countries did.⁵¹ The scarcity of translated courtesy books, including Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Libro del Cortigiano*, points to the same conclusion. One example was translated into Dutch, Stefano Guazzo's courtesy book, *Van den Heuschen Burgerlycken Ommegangh* (1603), which advised everyone to have 'courteous, polite, suitable, decent and pleasant conduct'. Guazzo quotes the sixth century wrestler and disciple of Pythagoras, Milo of Croton, who distinguished between 'those who dress well and eat poorly, and those who eat well and dress poorly'. Milo emphasized the importance of not dressing above one's rank.⁵² In 1623, Godefroy Boot wrote *Burgerlycken Onderrechtinghe* [Civic Education], one of the first courtesy books in Dutch, which was published by Jan Cloppenburgh, Catharina Cloppenburgh's father in Amsterdam. Boot clearly stated on the title page that his advice was intended for 'all ranks of people' but specified 'especially for kings, dukes, royals and princes, as well as members of the republic, magistrates, governors, and other public administrators of the country'. This group applied to the ruling echelon of Dutch society. Boot does not mention fashion in his advice for Holland's ruling group, however.⁵³ In the Northern Netherlands, the most prominent codes for etiquette and courtesy were based on the ideas of Erasmus, *De civilitate morum puerim libellus* (1530), which called for *civilitas*, a kind of civility and modesty in behavior that included taking good behavior and respect for others into account. One should try not to offend someone else. *Civilitas* was not only for the higher ranks but was a virtue for all social echelons in society. This etiquette not only applied to behavior in eating, drinking, and general conduct, it also covered clothing and how one presented oneself in public.⁵⁴

Erasmus's notion of appearance and clothing 'not causing offence' is a quite neutral concept and can be interpreted in a variety of ways. We find more contemporary ideas of men's fashion in the 1620s in Johan van Heemskerck's *Minne Baet, Minne Kunst* (1626), an entertainment book primarily for young ladies, providing practical and beauty advice for single young men and women. Men were advised to keep their beards in good condition and use a clean and 'experienced scissors', to wear shoes that were not too roomy otherwise they would cause problems, and to keep their nails trimmed short, and their breath smelling 'clean and fresh'.⁵⁵

Du Mortier emphasizes that the sober Spanish fashion of the first two decades of the seventeenth century slowly shifted towards the French fashion by the 1620s, and a new men's fashion of the early 1620s was depicted probably the best in Frans Hals's *Portrait of an Unknown Man* (1622). There Hals illustrated the young man with embroidered sleeves, decorated in a fancy pattern of symmetrically composed golden threads. He is wearing a short, tailored-shaped jerkin, with a shaped lap that reaches down to the thigh. The jerkin, which was fastened down the middle, has puffy arms, lined with golden buttons. The sleeves are fastened underneath the small shoulder flaps at the opening of the arms. On top of this a cloak was worn, which was characteristic of this period, with the flaunting sleeves from the jerkin sticking out of it. The jerkin and cloak were usually made from various fabrics such as velvet, silk, satin, cloth, and yarn,

and decorated with embroidery, ribbons, and other passements. With this type of cloak, it was fashionable to wear a collar with folds, usually called a *fraise à confusion* and a broad-rimmed hat tilted slightly over the forehead that was decorated with colorful silk, gold or silver embroidery, gems, black marbles, feathers or rosettes. That is our image of adult men's fashion through the eyes of Frans Hals in the early 1620s.⁵⁶

According to the French historian of clothing, Daniel Roche, fashion operates in three manners: one, by imitation (distinguishing between the court, the town, and the people); two, by conventions of vogue, fashion unveils human nature to be capricious and finesse, love and its trickeries; and three, sought-after fashions challenged the styles that were represented in manuals on good manners which were important tools in educating respectable people who were strongly influenced by custom, good sense, and social control. Roche believes that the French king set the fashion 'that caused beards to be shaved, or hair to be grown longer or shorter; he provided the lead. The court followed suit, as did the rest of France, as Montaigne observed: 'Fashion doubtless lies in the encounter between the tastes of the French and the authority of those whom the French admire'.⁵⁷ Imitation of the French court went beyond the realm of other royals and aristocrats. The trend trickled down to young elites throughout Europe, who usually went on the grand tour – of which Paris was the most important stop where young elite men shopped for the latest fashions. Young travelers from the Republic were the most likely to imitate court fashion, in some cases 16% of their entire travel budget was spent on clothing.⁵⁸

The cavalier look that became popular among young men in the Dutch Republic and at the courts throughout Europe made a shrill contrast to the style of clothing worn by the previous generation growing up at the turn of the century. The fashion did not resemble any of the lower body garments worn by young men at the court of Elisabeth I of England, or the tights that young men had on in Renaissance Florence during the fifteenth century that enabled them to play sports and drew attention to their physical constitution and groin. The small garment known as the codpiece, that was fashionable among Italian young men, remained popular among young men and soldiers until the late sixteenth century, but was not to be seen on Dutch young men in the early seventeenth century. They displayed their virility in another manner that will be addressed shortly.⁵⁹

Silk ribbons and metallic accessories

Besides modeling the cavalier style, young men of the 1620s and 1630s accessorized their clothing with expensive metals and fabrics. In Hendrick Avercamp's *Winter Landscape with Skaters* (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam), 'frivolous' young men wear gold-colored ribbons and buttons.⁶⁰ This style resembled the same flare for flashy clothing exhibited by the generation of youths in the late fifteenth-century Renaissance Florence. The expensive style was not always appreciated by the older generation. One sumptuary law of the late 1490s prohibited young males under the age of fourteen from wearing gold, silver, silk, or embroidery and using colors such as rose or purple in their outermost clothes. Once youths in the Renaissance took on an official position and mar-

ried, they ascended to a new threshold in life and were expected to wear black and darker tones. Dark-colored clothing was considered official.⁶¹ The codpiece, which had symbolized masculinity throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, was no longer the centerpiece of young men's dress in the Dutch Republic, and consequently the main focalpoint of the outfit was no longer the crotch for young men in the 1620s and 1630s. Instead of every curve and bulge of the lower torso being visible to the viewer, the new fashion of the 1620s and 1630s was to carefully conceal it in a barrage of ruffled fabric. Young men's lower bodies were draped in fabric as if they were ashamed of the shape of their buttocks, upper legs, and groin. Instead, loose-fitting clothing extended to the knee and tapered off above high stockings.⁶²

The bright cloth and stockings were often made of silk, and most clothing was produced at home. Wealthier young men usually purchased fabric from a textile producer or silk importer who often had a wide variety of qualities, colors, and fabrics ranging from velvet to silk and half-wool and half-silk threaded weaves. For both men and women, silk was the most popular fabric to make clothing in the early seventeenth century. Since the late sixteenth century silk had been in great demand for clothing, especially amongst the affluent that could afford it. Silk was the status symbol *par excellence*. In 1596 during the revolt, the States of Holland passed a luxury tax on silk to generate revenue to finance the war because the demand for the fabric increased rapidly and was worn extensively. However, collecting the tax proved to be more of a challenge than the authorities had anticipated. Half a year later it was abolished.⁶³

One reason that silk was a popular fabric was because of its abundance in the Republic. After the fall of Antwerp in 1585, Amsterdam had emerged as the center of the silk trade in Northern Europe. Silks from Persia, the Levant, Turkey, Italy, and ultimately China (after the founding of the Dutch East India Company) were traded in Amsterdam. In addition, the domestic demand for the precious fabric had required more imports.⁶⁴

Articles of clothing in the early modern period had to be tailored by several craftsmen, and having an outfit put together entailed a process that started by purchasing fabric from a shop. Clementia van den Vondel, the elder sister of the poet Joost van den Vondel, owned a fabric shop in Amsterdam's main shopping street, the Warmoesstraat. She sold silk fabrics, threads, collars, buttons, and other accessories necessary for decorating clothing. According to the shop's inventory between 1634 and 1637, Van den Vondel supplied a wide assortment of black and colored silks.⁶⁵ Another source also suggests that silk was a favored fabric. In Utrecht, the young patrician lawyer, Carel Martens, was fond of buying expensive outfits in silk and satin. According to his account book, he paid 36 guilders for two pairs of silk stockings, four guilders and ten stuivers for black silk and stockings. Many times he purchased double 'taff', black silk lace, green silk lace, silk buttons, and strings of embroidered silk. On another occasion Martens bought a flowered velvet fabric for 66 guilders and six stuivers while in Amsterdam and paid a tailor 25 guilders for cutting the fabric and sewing it together.⁶⁶ This was the usual procedure for having an outfit made. If the apparel required being stuffed with fur, then it would be brought to a pelts craftsman who prepared it. For other decorations such as embroidery, the garment was brought to an embroiderer. The entire process of making an item of clothing was time-consuming.⁶⁷

In Holland, silk was in great abundance. According to the Dutch art historian Sjoukje Colenbrander, Amsterdam and Haarlem had flourishing silk-production industries. In 1643 when the Dutch East India Company proposed importing silk from the Far East, a letter of protest suggested that some 20,000 artisans, women, and children in Holland would be out of work if cheaper silks were imported. The silk industry and producers of silk garments involved more than just weaving.⁶⁸ Not only were pieces of clothing made from silk but also accessories such as stockings. By the 1630s there was a thriving business in the import and export of silk stockings in the Republic. In 1634, gold and silver craftsmen requested a reduction in tariffs from the States of Holland and West Friesland on the import and export of precious metals so they could keep up with the demand for gold and silver thread and silk stockings.⁶⁹ The craving for sparkling and glittery clothing made of expensive fabrics such as woven gold, silver, and furs resembled the *bling-bling* fashion worn by wealthy male youths in Venice of the fifteenth century. In 1456 the senate of that city complained that young people wore too many expensive fabrics and consequently passed a law that forced burghers to make a loan to the city government of 1,000 lire. Besides trying to instill moderation in its citizens, the municipality probably also needed revenue.⁷⁰

In the Dutch Republic of the early seventeenth century, the craving for glittery clothing made of silk started to take its toll on the environment. According to Constantijn Huygens, the preference for silk in young people's clothing was becoming an environmental disaster. In his sat-



Illustration 6 'Father Bicker, dressed in black and a mill color, wore the fashion of his generation and official attire of his political position' in: Bartholomeus van der Helst, *Andries Bicker* (1642)

ire on the extravagance of contemporary fashion, 't *Kostelick Mal* (1622), Huygens remarked how the farmers of northern Italy had sacrificed the leaves of their mulberry trees, which had provided shade for wheat fields and vineyards, to be used as feed for the silkworm larvae which produced some of the finest Italian silk. Huygens, a young man of 26 at the time, was also a victim of fashion. He preferred to wear silk and could do little more than comment on the ecological tragedy of the fashion craze.⁷¹

Bright colors

During his visit to Leiden in 1634, the Englishman William Brereton (1604-1661) reported that the students are 'apparelled some as gallants, some like soldiers, some like citizens, some like serving-men; all in colours for the most part'.⁷² Besides using expensive fabric like silk, the fashion trend of young men in the Dutch Republic during the 1620s-1640s also apparently included bright-colored clothing. The most telling discrepancy between this generation and that of their parents was captured by Bartholomeus van der Helst's portraits of father and son: Andries Bicker (1586-1652) and his son Gerard Andriesz Bicker (1622-1666). Van der Helst, who had slowly gained a reputation as the painter of Amsterdam's 'rich and famous', immortalized father and son Bicker circa 1642. The father, a wealthy merchant who traded in Russia and Scandinavia and



Illustration 7 "The 20-year old son of Andries Bicker, wore bright-colored clothing, a flat collar, and long hair" in: Bartholomeus van der Helst, *Gerard Andriesz Bicker* (1642)

was burgomaster of Amsterdam, is dressed in black with a millstone collar, while his corpulent son, in his early 20s, is dressed in a bright red velvet coat with a flat-lace collar. Recent infrared examination of the portrait of Gerard reveals that Van der Helst had trouble painting the drapery of cloth around the young man, who probably suffered from a disease that caused his obesity.⁷³

Bianca du Mortier argues that black played an important part in Dutch fashion for most of the seventeenth century. Especially during the first decades of the century, black was the most popular color. Black was also a difficult color to produce and required a labor-intensive process. Woollen cloth first had to be dyed blue with woad or indigo, and then colored black with gallnut and a mordant made from iron. It is safe to assume that black was an expensive color to produce, especially because indigo had to be imported from India.⁷⁴ Besides black, white was also a popular color. The Englishmen Fynes Moryson noticed that ‘men as women for their bodies and for all use of the Family, use very fine line, and I think that no clownes in the world weare such fine shirts, as they in Holland doe’. These linens were snow white, preferably starched, which was a status symbol. Haarlem and the surrounding area that bordered on to the dunes was well-known for its numerous bleacheries located close to the raw materials required for bleaching clothing and fabric. Clean water, buttermilk, and whey were used to enhance the bleaching process. Wheat was used for starching. Du Mortier argues that for centuries linen and cloth were the first layer of clothing in Holland, ‘absorbing bodily fluids as well as protecting it from dirt. With bathing still a health hazard – clean water was not available to everyone – people in the seventeenth century felt “clean” after having changed their linen. Immaculately clean linen was equated with “neatness”, the equivalent of our notions of hygiene and cleanliness’.⁷⁵

By the 1630s the colorful French fashion became more popular in the Republic and changed the entire fabric industry. Producers of cloth tried to imitate the same light-colored, shiny French fabrics. The inventory of the silk merchant Johannes van Heusden, for example, included a large quantity of silks, yarns, passements, and cords in light colors. Moreover, variations in silk products were becoming more popular. Damasks and gold brocades were being made in Amsterdam as well as prints on silk, velvet, and plush velvet fabrics, along with a wide variety of colored fabrics in red, violet, liver-colored, gray, and blue-green.⁷⁶ The fact that these colors were available to the shopping public can also be attested by the 1644 inventory of Adriaen van Bon’s silk shop in Amsterdam, which was stocked with large quantities of French, Italian, Turkish and Dutch silks, damasks, velvets, and brocades in all sorts and colors.⁷⁷

As show by the popularity of the merry company genre of painting, the mainstream fashion of the 1640s had already been initiated by youths in the 1620s. Many painters of the genre, including Willem Buytewech, Frans and Dirck Hals, Hendrick Pot, and Jan Miense Molenaer, portrayed companies of young men dressed in the same bright clothes. In Buytewech’s *Merry Company* (c. 1620-1622) in Budapest, for example, three young men are depicted: one is wearing a matching gold-colored jerkin, and his pants are tapered off with bright, red ribbons. The stockings matched the rest of his outfit and the uppers of his white shoes are adorned with the same bright



Illustration 8 'Young men dressed in bright-colored yellow and green outfits, silk stockings tapered off with ribbons, and heeled-shoes' in: Willem Buytewech, *Merry Company* (c. 1620-1622)

red-colored ribbons that tie off just under his knees. The second young man is wearing the same style outfit but in aqua-green. Instead of having matching stockings, he wears white stockings with a ribbon of the same aqua-green color of his outfit that narrows around his knee. The uppers of his shoes are also adorned with a ribbon of the same color. The same man is also wearing a big black floppy-shaped hat with a white feather sticking out. A third young man is dressed in a brown outfit. Although it is not a bright color, his outfit is accessorized with many of the same kind of ribbons and stockings. In the scene there is also a young woman, and attributes including musical instruments, a monkey, and pipes which indicate that the youths had taken up the new habit of smoking.⁷⁸ Although the merry company genre was often intended as a comical farce and an exaggeration of the truth, the fashion depicted was not.⁷⁹ In 1620-1622 Constantijn Huygens described the clothing of affluent youths: 'pants that are tied off at the knee with ribbons, a hanging shoulder flap, a jerkin that is as stiff as a harness, shoes that are so deep that the vamp is barely attached to the heel, hats that looked like a dish turned upside down meant to house lice, flashy pleated collars that could house rats, tight-fitting stockings in which the legs look like a sausage about to squeeze out of its casing, too many rosettes on the shoes, high heels, and an impractical outer coat which is more like a flag than providing coverage, and is more ballast than protection'.⁸⁰ The bright, colorful clothing of the youths depicted in Buytewech's merry companies was fashionable at the royal courts of young monarchs like Louis XIII of France and Charles I of

England. According to the travel descriptions of the English traveler, Fynes Moryson, in 1619, the French gentlemen were wearing mixed and light colors and silk garments ‘... and negligently or carelessly’, which the Germans regarded as sloppy because they go ‘without wearing hat bands and garters, with their points untrust, and their doublets unbuttoned’.⁸¹ The French pasquil, *La nouvelle mode de la cour ou le courtesan a la negligence et l’ocasion* (1622) referred to this new mode as negligent court fashion which consisted of undone band-strings, new slashed doublets, draped cloaks, low necklines and pinned-up skirts for ladies, and long hair for young men.⁸² According to Marieke de Winkel, the manufactured negligent look in men’s fashion had manifested itself by the 1640s with hats being worn slightly angled on the head, long, messed-up ‘cloaks casually worn over one shoulder and doublets slashed at the sleeves or half-unbuttoned, revealing much of the shirt and with the collar-strings left undone’.⁸³ In England the nonchalant look was fashionable in the second quarter of the seventeenth century and became widely criticized for being ‘calculated slovenliness’.⁸⁴

Calculated slovenliness

For Dutch youths in the 1620s and 1630s, the preference for a ‘calculated slovenliness’ look shifted away from black as a traditional color of dress. There is evidence that indicated that colorful clothing was also an act of rebellion against Spanish fashion. In 1621 when the Twelve-Year Truce ended and the Dutch Republic resumed war, Spain’s political and cultural might in Europe was fading. By the 1620s and 1630s the pendulum of political and cultural power in Europe drastically shifted from the waning Spanish empire and its court in Madrid to the more dynamic and youthful court of the French king, Louis XIII. The French capital emerged as the center of culture and fashion for the rest of Europe. Before ascending to the English throne in 1625, Charles I (1600–1649), who later married Louis XIII’s sister, followed the fashion of Louis XIII’s court by sporting colorful clothing that was ‘greene, sea-greene or willow collour’ and often adorned with another hue of green or ‘scarlet, crimson or carnation’.⁸⁵ For style, Dutch elite youths looked to the courts of Europe’s young monarchs. The French court was especially important for young urban elites. Paris was usually the first stop on the grand tour, and young and impressionable travelers from the Republic were most likely to imitate court fashion once they arrived in Paris. One of the first rituals was to shed their provincial garments and buy new wardrobes more appropriate to what a gentleman or *honnête homme* would wear. When 25-year-old Johannes Thysius of Leiden visited the French capital, for example, he purchased fabric for a winter and summer outfit along with a plume, hat, stockings, and a silver sword that cost 100 guilders and silver spurs for 50 guilders. The wealthy Thysius, who was orphaned at an early age, did not need to account for his expenditures to a father, but for most young men who depended on financial support, they often clarified the additional costs incurred when buying fashionable clothing in Paris with rational arguments, the most convincing being that a young man needed to look like a suitable representative while visiting dignitaries, scholars, and business associations of the family.⁸⁶ When 23-year-old Pieter de la Court visited London in the autumn of 1641, he accurately recorded in his diary the colors,

fabrics, and accessories worn by the people he met. The fact that the young De la Court was the son of a linen manufacturer in Leiden was probably the reason for his fascination with the specifics of textile, color, and fashion in general.⁸⁷

According to Norbert Elias, fashion is an obvious signifier of the civilization process. The fashion of the French court trickled down from the urban elite of the Republic to the working echelons of Dutch society. At the helm of following the new trends of the court were primarily elite young men returning from the grand tour. However, the majority of youths in the Dutch Republic could not afford expensive silk and satin garments. Despite these economic differences in purchasing power, the fashion of the upper echelons did influence the dress of the lower groups of Dutch society.

In the distinctively stratified society of the early modern period, clothing and apparel were one means by which people could elevate themselves above their social and economic rank in life. However, in the honor-based society of the early modern period, dressing above (or below) one's social station in life was a tricky business. Orphans dressed in black suits with white linen collars set off with red and white borders were recognizable on Sundays in small towns like Woerden and Oudewater.⁸⁸ In the larger cities of the Republic burgher orphans residing in municipal orphanages were required to dress in the color of the city so that they could be easily recognized. This made their behavior more controllable, and they could be identified if they begged for



Illustration 9 'Young men and women enjoying the outdoors' in: Dirck Hals, *The Garden Party* (1627)

money or visited a tavern.⁸⁹ Identification through clothing also applied to other groups in society who were not a financial responsibility or burden on the community.

Clothing was also an effective means to suppress social groups. When domestic servants began to dress in expensive silk fabrics in 1642, the social distinction between employer and employee became blurred, and Amsterdam's municipal authorities proposed curbing the extensive use of silk with a city ordinance which would forbid female servants from dressing in silk, velvet, and plush velvet. In essence, the ordinance aimed to emphasize the social division between employers and their employees, as well as to prevent servants from stealing from their employers in order to keep up with fashion trends that were beyond their financial means. In 1654, the city council considered a proposal that entailed more comprehensive sumptuary laws. However, its outcome is not known.⁹⁰

Clothing in the early modern period was an expensive item. Clothes were considered an asset that could be pawned, used for collateral, and willed to the next generation as family heirlooms. When Dirck Alewijn, a wealthy cloth manufacturer of Amsterdam, died in 1637, he left his wardrobe of expensive clothes to his sons, Frederick and Abraham, as well as leaving some pieces to his wife.⁹¹ That was standard for the elite in Dutch society. The majority of the Dutch population had to obtain clothing through other means. Young men who could not afford the expensive fabrics worn by their wealthier age-cohorts were more resourceful in keeping up appearances and staying with fashion trends. Many young people bought their clothing from a *uitdraagster* (a woman who sold clothing that was usually acquired through bankruptcies and estates), which was sold from door to door. Another option was to purchase second-hand clothes that could either be made fashionable by re-stuffing, by adding embroidery and decorations, or by being dyed. In Amsterdam, for example, young people of lesser means could shop on Monday at markets held at the Nieuwmarkt, Noordermarkt, and Westermarkt. Second-hand clothing was only permitted at the Nieuwmarkt. According to a city ordinance from 1639, only already tailored clothing could be traded at the Nieuwmarkt. At the city's Noordermarkt (adjacent to the Noorderkerk), there was also a weekly market held on Monday where both second-hand and first-hand clothes were sold. Today this market is still held on Monday morning and specializes in second-hand clothing and fabric.

In the sixteenth century second-hand clothing markets were referred to as flea markets because the clothing could sometimes be flea-infested. Especially when there were outbreaks of the plague as in the town of Zierikzee in 1625, second-hand clothing was considered a means of spreading the disease, and *uitdraagsters* were forbidden to sell clothing from the homes of the sick or where a victim of the plague had died.⁹² However, the growing demand for second-hand clothing could not be fulfilled by the natural lifecycle of clothing, and market vendors often had to rely on racketeers in stolen clothing to supply the demand.⁹³ During the 1650s there was a well-known gang of juvenile delinquents active in Amsterdam near the second-hand markets who specialized in stealing bales of linen, satin, and clothing from shopkeepers. One of the most popular places to steal coats was from a barber-surgeon's shop. There a visitor's attention was usu-

ally distracted from his coat while a sharp-bladed knife was running across his face and neck, or while undergoing surgery without the use of anesthesia. These stolen goods were usually fenced and resold before authorities could apprehend the juvenile thieves.⁹⁴

Whether the working class of the Dutch Republic could afford linens and satins is disputable. Holland produced linen, which might have made it more affordable, and perhaps the availability of satin in the Republic because of the staple market made the fabric more accessible for the lower ranks. In England, for example, a majority of the population could not afford these fabrics, and dark woolen fabrics remained the main staple of apparel until the second half of the seventeenth century. In the Dutch Republic, youths from the lower echelons could not afford an entire outfit made from linen or satin. However, they could accessorize their apparel from haberdasheries that specialized in stockings, gloves, collars, ribbons, plumes, and other frivolities. In this aspect they could follow the dandyish style of affluent young men.⁹⁵

Sumptuary rite of passage

The wearing of colorful clothing has often been an area of contention among historians of clothing, especially for the Dutch Republic where black was often considered the symbol of soberness and religious piety. The Dutch historian Irene Groeneweg argues that throughout the late Middle Ages and the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there were periods when colorful clothing was fashionable which alternated with ones when black was considered more stylish. In the late sixteenth century the fashion in the Northern Netherlands was influenced by the sober style and black attire worn by the Spanish court in Madrid. By the 1620s and until the 1640s, bright colors returned to the fashion landscape. However, a distinction should be made between young men who wore colorful clothes and adults who were dressed in black. Bright, colorful clothing was often worn by young people and considered leisure wear whereas the black attire worn by adults was regarded as business apparel similar to a black suit for official engagements. In the early seventeenth century, once young men reached the age of majority and started to fulfill an official position in society, they were inclined and expected to wear black or dark-colored outfits. For young men the transition from bright-colored clothing to official black or dark attire was a rite of passage much like marriage and starting a profession.⁹⁶

This fashion for colorful clothing for young men met with great resistance from pious religious groups. In general, colorful dress was regarded as mundane and frivolous, which clashed with their ideas of soberness. In 1622 when Josua de Keldere, a young Dutch Reformed minister from Purmerend, visited the daughter of a wealthy merchant in Amsterdam, it was reported that she had removed her worldly garments to adapt herself to the clothing deemed more suitable of the wife of a clergyman. The bride-to-be shed her fashionable attire of the day and dressed down for her prospective husband.⁹⁷ When Frans Hals painted the Baptist couple Lucas de Clercq (c. 1593-1652) and his wife Feyntie van Steenkiste (c. 1603/04-1640) in 1635, they were dressed in sober black attire and lacked accessories. The couple most likely disapproved of the flashy colors

that were in vogue due to the religious convictions of their faith, which called for constraint and inconspicuous clothing.⁹⁸

The lion's share of opposition to flamboyant and colorful clothing came from the clergy, and during the 1610s the worldly style was often blamed on the *courtoisie* of wealthy Flemish families. Dutch historian Herman Roodenburg argues that by 1625, two ministers reported seeing the first mannequins in Amsterdam, and he feels that the new fashion was probably no longer the result of wealthy Flemish immigrants but rather 'the fashions followed at the courts in The Hague and Paris'.⁹⁹ According to the four sermons published in *Den Spiegel der Zedigheyt* [Mirror of Modesty] (1620), Willem Teellinck, a Dutch Reformed minister from Middelburg, preached that wearing fashionable and luxurious clothing was a vice. The young people of Teellinck's congregation defended their flare for fashion by pointing to the portraits painted of their parents, in which they were depicted in fancy and expensive dress.¹⁰⁰ However, Teellinck also believed that some fashion was only intended for the young and should not be imitated by adults. Teellinck's criticism was mainly directed towards young women in his congregation who were dressed in expensive fabrics and had accessorized with superfluous details, frivolities, and decorations. He argued for a more sober style of dress, and for women to adhere to the more conventional style of the times, instead of becoming slaves to fashion. Moreover, the 'modern' fashion with its frivolities was considered to be provocative for that era. The new style of bright blues, yellows, greens, and 'carnaet[s]' along with women's low cleavage that disclosed too much naked flesh excited the sexual desires of young men. In other words, the bright colors (and naked flesh) roused the sexual appetites of male youths. Teellinck explained that young men have difficulty enough managing their lust, but when a young woman appears in such a dress then she becomes nothing more than a lust object, and there would be little to hold him back.¹⁰¹ In Teellinck's eyes women were the instigators of sexual immorality and promiscuity for young men. After all, women were the sex which frittered their leisure time away reading aimless 'amorous books and songs'. The bottom line in Teellinck's argument is that if women did not dress so provocatively, then it would be easier for young men to keep their eyes off of them.¹⁰² However, the real note that Teellinck was trying to emphasize was that parents spoiled their children by purchasing expensive clothing for them. The parents of the 1620s, who were raised in modesty, now – since they had money – lavished their children with fancy dress 'three time[s] more expensive' than the clothes they had been dressed in as children. According to Teellinck, dressing children in expensive attire was a vicious circle. He argued that the spoiled youth of the 1620s would only indulge their children even more.¹⁰³

Despite Teellinck being influenced by the sober teachings of the English Puritans, he still pleaded for a moderation of dress for his congregation. In regard to the stoic soberness of Mennonite dress, the minister preferred men to follow mainstream fashion because he believed the Mennonites showed a moral arrogance and found it hypocritical. Teellinck stressed to his congregation that it was better to follow the conventional styles of dress that the regents of the country wore

– despite being affluent enough to afford expensive and elaborate attire. Teellinck considered their attire to be morally correct.¹⁰⁴

The moralist Zacharias Heyns (1566-c. 1638) used the trendy fashion of the youths of the 1620s to portray how wealth and prosperity in Dutch society had gone amok. He not only accused young people but society as a whole for their decadence. In *Emblemata Moralia* (1625), Heyns argued that wearing fancy clothing was a combination of being vain, ostentatious, and presumptuous. In the emblem book he placed an engraving on the opposite page that featured a ball with a cross on the top enclosed in a large heart. Heyns wanted readers to believe that young people were steering this mundane exhibition of wealth and luxury. The caption under the engraving states: ‘*Het dichten des menschelijcken herte is boos vander jeucht op*’ [the conception of the human heart is evil from youth onwards]. According to Heyns, excess was a vice whether displayed in clothing or in lofty poetry. It was a shortcoming that was acquired during one’s youth.¹⁰⁵

In England, the new fashion from France was strongly opposed for slightly different reasons. Critics were quick to accuse foreigners of wanting to seduce English society with new and international trends. They never tired of blaming foreigners for introducing a clothing fad that they considered to be extravagant. In the sixteenth century a continuous clash manifested between Western morality and dress codes that were driven by increased international trade, travel, war, and the exchange of information through the press. According to the English historian of early modern clothing Aileen Ribeiro, contemptuous commentators sneered at foreigners for introducing English society to conspicuous dress but, more importantly, for launching a fashion in England that made men look effeminate.¹⁰⁶ English complaints were ranged more against the use of foreign fabrics such as silks which hurt the domestic wool industry and disrupted the domestic cloth trade. English moralists believed cloth from France, Spain, and Italy was affiliated with leisure, decadence, and even disease considered the pinnacle of the dissolution of the virtues ascribed to English textiles. Those who wore silks and satins from Spain and Italy were associated with the Papal order and wantonness, and fabrics from France were associated with syphilis, one of the most dreaded diseases of the early modern period.¹⁰⁷

By the 1610s and 1620s in the Dutch Republic, newcomers were no longer criticized for wearing flamboyant clothing. Twenty years earlier that had been a different story. In the late sixteenth century ministers blamed the Republic’s immigrants, especially those from the Southern Netherlands, for wearing fancy clothing and having cosmopolitan ways. Their style clashed with the soberness of ‘true’ Dutchmen. According to the Dutch cultural historian Herman Roodenburg, by the 1610s the fashion of the wealthy immigrants from the south and native Dutchmen had merged into a blur.¹⁰⁸

Extravagant clothing and the Prodigal Son

In the Dutch Republic, the moralistic debate against young people wearing fancy clothing was intertwined with the Biblical story of the Prodigal Son. Willem Teellinck criticized parents for

neglecting their role as educators and spoiling their children with flamboyant clothing. Throughout the early modern period, the poor parent/rich children complaint was a common theme used in art and based on the Biblical story of the Prodigal Son who squandered his father's wealth. Throughout the sixteenth century the Prodigal Son had been a popular theme in art and literature to portray youthful foolishness and excessiveness or, rather, the foolishness of extravagance, but over time it was shoved into the background. Especially in the 1620s and 1630s the Prodigal Son dressed in lavish clothing became a contemporary theme that was staged by playwrights including Willem Dirckz Hooft (1594-1658), who wrote various comedies for Amsterdam's city theater.¹⁰⁹ In *Heden-daege Verloren Soon* [The Contemporary Prodigal Son] (1630) Hooft captivated audiences with a modernized version of the theme. Hooft poked fun at the topic and portrayed a wealthy young man who had gone astray in his passion for pleasure seeking. Clothing was one of those indulgences the young man wasted his money on. When he went to a tailor or shoemaker, he did not contemplate the cost of the fabric or the accessories required to satisfy his desire. Money was no object; the more exotic, the better. Hooft's play was appropriately first performed on the evening before Lent (the last evening of the Catholic feast of Carnival) in 1630 and again in 1640, and told in the form of a dialogue between two young men who had a wild night on the town. It is essentially about a young man, Juliaan, who has not learned the golden mean of moderation, and his spending spree starts when he and his friend meet two hookers on the street who take them to a public house and later to a brothel where they get drunk. According to Hooft, not only has the young Juliaan failed to master the age-old trope of wine, women, and song, he is also modernized as he has not mastered his excessive behavior given all the luxuries that affluent Dutch consumers in the early seventeenth century had available. According to the story, the innkeepers treat Juliaan and his friend honorably, a status which he enjoys among the many shopkeepers because he is known as a paying customer among those who sell luxurious items such as pastry-bakers and wine-sellers. Shopkeepers know Juliaan has money because he has been seen in the theater, the tennis court, the dance school, the tailor and shoemaker shops, and the lawyer's and doctor's offices. Juliaan is a parasite living off his father's money and squandering it. Everybody profits from his extravagance, even the bailiff who often has to escort him home after an evening of carousing.¹¹⁰ Although Juliaan appears in the comedy clearly as the bad guy, in reality he is a victim of poor parenting.¹¹¹ During the economic boom of the early seventeenth century when fortunes were easily made, the Prodigal Son theme became popular again. The genre spilled over into other forms of art as well. In 1622 the engraver Gillis van Scheyndel depicted a merry company of the children of the *nouveaux-riches* after Karel van Mander (1548-1606). The inscription underneath the engraving spells it all out: 'long live love, our marriage has begun with joy. Our parents were simple folk, they amassed money by being miserly. Well-greased pot, living it up, it all has to be got down the gullet. We have money enough, how can we get through it all'. This engraving resembles a similar one by Cornelis van Kistesteyn that is a portrait within a portrait. The main one illustrates elaborately dressed youngsters who are shown enjoying the pleasures of life, while the second one is an image of their parents pictured in the back of the room dressed in humble attire. For seventeenth-century viewers, the pedagogical

message must have struck a nerve. Elite and middle-class Dutch youths and their parents were in a position to spend money on luxury goods such as expensive clothing made from costly fabrics and accessorized with ribbons, silk stockings, and fancy ostrich feathers that were traded in London, Leghorn, and Marseille. It was excessive compared to their parents' dress, and the question remained of how much more extravagantly would the next generation of children be dressed?¹¹² In the early seventeenth century, the Prodigal Son theme was intended as an exaggeration of the world gone astray. According to the art historian Korine Hazelzet, the negative behavior portrayed in depictions of carousing sons of the wealthy, as well as peasants dancing, drinking, and fighting, brothels and pubs, hen-pecked husbands and bossy wives, ill-matched lovers, lustful elders, beggars, drunks, and gamblers, was 'a method of teaching morality but ironically praising the opposite'. For seventeenth-century audiences, learning morality through negative didactics including satire and humor elaborated on the Biblical command 'Thou Shalt Not'. The upside-down didactics aimed to make people laugh initially and mock the negative behavior while at the same time they got the subliminal, morally correct gist. In this case, knowing what *not to do* was initially easier to remember than what *to do*.¹¹³

For many of the elite and middle class that had gained financial wealth and affluence in the early seventeenth century, the part in the Prodigal Son about squandering money and economic downfall must have represented a real angst. In the pamphlet entitled *Den rechten weg nae 't Gast-huys* [*The Hye Way to the Spyttell House*] (1536), that fear must have struck a cord for the wealthy merchant families who prospered during the economic conjecture of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, an era when fortunes were easily made.¹¹⁴ Between 1603 and 1647 several Dutch translations of the French version (which was originally written in 1503 by Robert de Balsac) painted a path to economic downfall of the affluent merchants who feasted on decadent banquets and spoiled their children with spending money and allowed them to live a licentious lifestyle with excessive drinking, bad company, and visits to the brothel. No good was to come from educating youths in this manner, and the path ultimately ended in the poorhouse. The word *rechten* was even ambiguous. On the one side it could be translated as 'straight' or 'immediate' path but just the same it could also have implied the 'rightful' course of moral justice. The English translation, *The Hye Way to the Spyttell House*, translated by Robert Copland in 1536, eludes even more to the social disgrace (*spyttell* = spit) of falling down the economic ladder.¹¹⁵ The ostentatious fashion of wealthy youths during the 1620s and 1630s posed a threat to the moral fiber of the rich Dutch Republic. In reality, it was more a reflection of the material affluence of its adults.

Conclusion

By choosing to present themselves with clean-shaven cheeks, mustaches, goatees, and shoulder-length hair, the worldly youths of the 1620s and 1630s clearly distinguished themselves from the previous generation who wore full beards, short-cropped haircuts, tight fitting garments, and dark-colored clothing. The generation of young men from the 1620s chose to have long hair

which was a style that would remain in fashion for almost two hundred years, and expressed their masculinity by wearing military garments, such as the gorget and jerken, that were traditionally worn by cavaliers. Despite the fact that the style was known to be negligent and had a disheveled appearance, nothing was further from the truth. Young men spent much time and attention in manicuring this 'sloppy look'. The military style was introduced at the court of the young monarch, Louis XIII of France. Europe's young monarchs, Louis XIII of France and Charles I of England, were especially important fashion role models for the affluent young men of the Dutch Republic as well as the rest of Europe. By sporting 'masculine' garments, young men hoped to radiate manliness in their identity and appearance. When it came to fashion and appearance, there was very little *embarrassment of riches* for the generation of young men from the 1620s and 1630s. In this realm Simon Schama's theory applied more to the parents than to their children, who preferred to dress their children in flamboyant clothing.