Dutch influences on English literary culture in the early Renaissance, 1470-1650

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In his famous *Survey of London* (1598), John Stow pays a curious tribute to the Low Countries which typifies early modern English attitudes.¹ Describing the course of the Thames, Stow notes that it ‘openeth indifferently’ on ‘*Flaunders*, our mightiest neighbors, to whose doings we ought to haue a bent eye, and speciall regarde’.² In these remarks a clear mix of kinship and suspicion is apparent. On the one hand there is definite respect, even a sense that England and the Netherlands are elements in a single system. On the other hand there is profound mistrust. It is true that many English writers tend to echo Stow’s fears more than his admiration. In several later texts the main image of the Dutch is one of inhuman cruelty: Behn’s *Oronooko* (1688) presents them as an apocalyptic force, indiscriminately butchering the inhabitants of Surinam; in Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726) they are godless opportunists, profaning the crucifix for the sake of a sale. The root of such depictions is easy enough to locate. England and the United Provinces been brought into conflict no less than three times between 1652 and 1674, and were fierce commercial and maritime rivals. Nonetheless these later attitudes mask the other side of Stow’s comments, obscuring key links between English and Dutch culture during the Renaissance. As Leonard Forster and Tiemen de Vries have found, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there was much traffic between the two cultures.³ Books, people and ideas circulated between the two regions: in these transactions England was more often the benefactor than the contributor. It is the purpose of the present article to survey some of these links, and lay bare their impact on English literary culture, with reference to recent scholarship on the subject.

The late Middle Ages had seen powerful ties forged between England the Low Countries. From the early twelfth century onwards the wool-trade between England

¹ In the present article, the terms ‘Low Countries’ and ‘the Netherlands’ denote the fifteenth-century personal union of *Zeventien Provinciën*, later the *Burgundischer Reichskreis*, formed under the dukes of Burgundy. This incorporates the duchies of Brabant, Limburg, Luxemburg and Guelders, the countships of Artois, Flanders, Mechelen, Namur, Hainaut, Zeeland and Holland, the lordships of West Frisia, Drenthe, Overijssel and Groningen, the prince-bishoprics of Liege and Utrecht, and the Frisian Ommelanden. Unless otherwise stated, the article will focus on the Dutch-speaking *Provinciën*.

² John Stow, *A Survey of London: Reprinted from the Text Of 1603* (London: Dent, 1912), p.200.

³ Leonard Forster, ‘Literary relations between the Low Countries, England and Germany’, *Dutch Crossing* 24 (1984), pp.16-31; Tiemen de Vries, *Holland’s Influence on English Language and Literature* (Grentzebach: Chicago, 1916), pp.149-302.

and the cities of the Netherlands had been vital for the economies of both regions.⁴ Communities of Flemish merchants had settled across the British Isles, not only in important centres such as London, Bristol and Norwich, but also as far afield as Pembroke.⁵ The nobility of the two regions also developed important connections. A succession of English kings recognised the strategic importance of the Low Countries, and sought to impress their influence on the area. Edward I in particular aimed to control the provinces by both pacific and aggressive means: in 1290 he married his daughter Margaret to the son of Duke John I of Brabant, while in 1294 he masterminded a plot to imprison Count Floris V of Holland, holding his young heir captive in London.⁶ This policy was continued by several of Edward's successors. Edward III and Richard II courted the dukes of Guelders as allies against France, Edward by marrying his sister to Reinald II, Richard by lavishly entertaining William II.⁷

Despite these tangible and manifold links, contemporary analysts have been unable to find much in the way of literary influence between the two cultures. Erik Kooper summarises the situation well: 'curious as it may seem, neither the blood relations between the ruling families of Brabant and Holland on the one hand and the English dynasty on the other, nor the close political, financial and mercantile links between the Low Countries and England, nor the presence in England of large groups of predominantly Flemish merchants and of Englishmen in Flanders resulted in any substantial kind of cultural exchange during the period... least of all in the area of literature'.⁸ Such links that do exist tend to be mediated through French, such as the traces of an Antwerp folktale found in Chaucer's *Summoner's Tale*, which owe more

⁴ Adriaan E. Verhulst, *The Rise of Cities in North-west Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.137.

⁵ A useful survey of immigration patterns is given in Wendy Hefford, 'Flemish Tapestry Weavers in England', in *Flemish Tapestry Weavers Abroad: Emigration and the Founding of Manufactures in Europe* (Louvain: Louvain University Press, 2002), pp.43-61.

⁶ W.P. Blockmans, 'The Formation of Political Union, 1300-1588', in *History of the Low Countries*, ed. by J.C.H. Blom and Emiel Lamberts, trans. by James C. Kennedy, rev. ed. (New York: Berghahn, 2006), pp.57-81.

⁷ Gerard Nijsten, *In the Shadow of Burgundy: The Court of Guelders in the Late Middle Ages*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought 58 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp.44-88.

⁸ Erik Kooper, 'Introduction', in *Medieval Dutch Literature in its European Context*, ed. by Erik Kooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.3.

to Jacques de Baisieux's *fabliau* than any Dutch version.⁹ The popular religious movements which stimulated vernacular composition in the Netherlands also had a negligible impact in England.¹⁰ As Walter Simons writes, while such groups as the beguines enjoyed a reputation for devotion in England, attempts to establish similar communities there only met with failure.¹¹ The paucity of the Dutch influence on Middle English literature is underscored by a recent collection of essays on the Netherlands and medieval England. While this finds startling evidence of the scale of Dutch influence – for example, Vanessa Harding estimates that by 1400 up to seventy-five percent of the ships arriving into London came from the Low Countries, either directly or indirectly – little of it is literary. Music, tapestry-work and painting are amply represented, but the one literary link is largely conjectural: Alexandra Johnston proposes a faint connection between the York Corpus Christi plays and the civic drama of Holland, Flanders and Brabant.¹² Kooper's point is clearly valid. For all its breadth of contact with England during the medieval period, the Low Countries had little impact on English literature.

However, from the late fifteenth century this state of affairs begins to change. The year 1470 marks an event which continues England's medieval engagement with the Netherlands, as well as foreshadowing something of its next phase. It is the year of the Readeption, the brief period in which supporters of Henry VI managed to seize power from Edward IV. During his exile Edward sought refuge in Bruges, under the protection of Charles the Bold of Burgundy.¹³ This was made possible by the long-standing practice of creating marriage ties with the major powers in the Low Countries, as Charles was husband to Edward's sister Margaret. Although Edward's

⁹ Larry D. Benson and Theodore M. Andersson, *The Literary Context of Chaucer's Fabliaux* (Indianapolis: Bobs Merrill, 1971), p.359.

¹⁰ See Paul Mommaers and Elisabeth M. Dutton, *Hadewijch: Writer – Beguine – Love Mystic* (Louvain: Peeters, 2004), pp.39-71; Wybren Scheepma, *Medieval Religious Women in the Low Countries: The Modern Devotion, the canonesses of Windesheim, and their writings* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), pp.83-129.

¹¹ Walter Simons, *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200-1565* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp.18, 35.

¹² Alexandra F. Johnston, 'Traders and Playmakers: English Guildsmen and the Low Countries', *England and the Low Countries in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. by Caroline M. Barron and Nigel Saul (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), pp.99-114.

¹³ An excellent and highly suggestive account of Burgundy's influence on the Netherlands is given in Peter Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1996). Graeme Small, *George Chastelain and the Shaping of Valois Burgundy: Historical Cululture at Court in the Fifteenth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1997) is a useful examination of Burgundy's own attempts to ratify its dominance.

exile lasted barely eight months, and had little effect on his policies once he returned to England, it does seem to have left one important impression on the king.¹⁴ It stimulated his interest in manuscripts from the Low Countries. Edward's host during a large part of his exile was Lodewijk de Gruuthuse, Charles' *counseiller-chambellan* and a prominent citizen of Bruges. As Charles was reluctant to receive Edward personally, since this would give Louis XI of France a pretext for invading his territories, Lodewijk hosted Edward in his own home.¹⁵ Gruuthuse was an exceptionally avid bibliophile: his vast collection included over 200 texts contained in some 160 manuscripts, a library second only to that of Philip the Good.¹⁶ As the work of Scot McKendrick, Malcolm Vale and Arjo Vanderjagt has made clear, Edward must have been impressed by his host's library, as he sought to imitate it after returning to England.¹⁷ In the decades following the Radeption, Edward commissioned around twenty manuscripts from the workshops of Bruges and Ghent, many lavishly illustrated.¹⁸ Janet Brackhouse points out that this move makes Edward the first English monarch to develop a deliberate 'acquisitions policy' for books: in effect his efforts laid the foundation for the 'Royal Library which was eventually to be presented to the nation by George II in 1757'.¹⁹ In several cases Edward's choice of books exactly duplicates the contents of Gruuthuse's library. Both collectors owned copies of William of Tyre and Froissart, for instance, while Edward even acquired a

¹⁴ On continuities between Edward's pre- and post-Radeption policies, see Rosemary Horrox, 'Edward IV (1442–1483)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8520>> [accessed 8 June 2007]

¹⁵ Hans Cools, *Mannen met macht – Edellieden en de Moderne Staat in de Bourgondisch-Habsburgse landen, 1475-1530* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2001), pp.180-182.

¹⁶ Jozef D. Janssens, 'Inleiding', in *Egidius waer bestu bleven*, ed. by Jozef D. Janssens, Veerle Uyttersprot and Lieve Dewachter (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 1992), p.10.

¹⁷ Scot McKendrick 'Lodewijk van Gruuthuse en de librije van Edward IV', in *Lodewijk van Gruuthuse, Mecenas en Europees diplomaat ca. 1427-1492*, ed. by Maximiliaan J.P. Martens (Bruges: Gruuthusemuseum, 1992), pp.153-9; Scot McKendrick, *The History of Alexander the Great. An Illuminated Manuscript of Vascau da Lucerna's French Translation of the Ancient Text by Quintus Curtius Rufus* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1996); Malcolm Vale, 'Manuscripts and Books', in *New Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. by Paul Fouracre and others, 9 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998-2005), VII: *c.1415-c.1500* (1998), ed. by Christopher Allmand, pp.278-86; Arjo Vanderjagt, 'The Princely Culture of the Valois Dukes of Burgundy', in *Princes and Princely Culture, 1450-1650*, ed. by Martin Gosman, A. MacDonald and A. Vanderjagt (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp.51-80.

¹⁸ An exhaustive overview of the manuscript trade in the Low Countries, with several high quality reproductions, is given in Gregory T. Clark, *Made In Flanders: the Master of the Ghent Privileges and Manuscript Painting in the Southern Netherlands in the Time of Philip the Good* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000).

¹⁹ Janet Brackhouse, 'The Royal Library From Edward IV to Henry VII', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. by D. F. McKenzie, D. J. McKitterick and I. R. Willison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999-2007), III: *1400-1557* (1999), ed. by Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp, pp.267-273.

Josephus manuscript directly from Gruuthuse himself.²⁰ In sum, it has now been recognised that one of the most significant English collections of texts in the early Renaissance drew its model and its contents from the Netherlands. Nor was this enthusiasm for Dutch books confined to Edward, as other English collectors followed his lead. John Russell, chancellor under Edward's successor Richard III, and Richard Fitzjames, chaplain to Henry VII, are also known to have purchased books from Bruges and Louvain.²¹

Nevertheless, this activity did not result in transmission of specifically Dutch literature to England. While Gruuthuse himself was an enthusiastic collector of vernacular manuscripts, most notably the famous lyric-collection known as the *Gruuthuse-liedboek*, most of these purchases were made after Edward had departed for England in 1471.²² By contrast, the king's collection was entirely francophonic, concentrating for the most part on chronicles and patristic literature. However, it does represent the first stages of a channel through which Dutch literature made its way into England. It shows some level of recognition in England of the burgeoning book-trade in the Netherlands, and even an appetite for Dutch books.

This appetite was only sharpened by the growth of the printing industry in the Netherlands, especially at Antwerp, then part of the Duchy of Brabant. Throughout the sixteenth century economic ties between England and Brabant gradually strengthened: as Lien Bich Luu documents, once English merchants began to export their goods to Antwerp and Bergen-op-Zoom rather than Bruges, owing to restrictive trade-laws in Flanders, 'relations between England and the Low Countries became even closer'.²³ Antwerp was ideally situated to become the largest printing-centre in

²⁰ See Jessica Dobratz, 'Conception and Reception of William of Tyre's *Livre d'Eracles* in 15th-Century Burgundy', in *"Als Ich Can": Liber Amicorum in Memory of Professor Dr. Maurits Smeyers*, ed. by Maurits Smeyers, Bert Cardon, Katharina Smeyers, Jan van der Stock, Dominique Vanwijnsberghe (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), pp.583-610; Thomas Kren and Scot McKendrick, *Illuminating the Renaissance: The Triumph of Flemish Manuscript Painting in Europe* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2003), pp.266-71.

²¹ Elizabeth Armstrong, 'English Purchases of Printed Books from the Continent 1465-1526', *The English Historical Review* 94 (1979), pp.268-290.

²² General information on the songbook can be found in Malcolm Vale, *The Princely Court: medieval courts and culture in north-west Europe, 1270-1380* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.291; Bas Jongenelen and Ben Parsons, 'Ten Poems from the Gruuthuse Songbook', *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 34 (2009).

²³ Lien Bich Luu, *Immigrants And The Industries Of London, 1500-1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p.28.

Europe. The conditions underlying this growth have been dissected by Werner Waterschoot. Waterschoot calls attention to the lack of supervision on printing, either in the form of publishers or civic and guild control, and the overall ‘dynamic economy’ of the city, which made available the considerable risk capital needed for printing.²⁴ But even more important were the city’s international trade-links. This is reflected in the sheer breadth of the Antwerp printers’ ambitions. Whereas other important printing-centres such as Louvain or Ghent produced books for a strictly local readership, the Antwerp printers could afford to cultivate an international clientele, encompassing France, Denmark and Spain. England also became an important foreign market. In many respects England was a logical choice for export. Not only did it have strong English trade-links to the city, and an existing interest in illuminated books, but its printing industry was relatively immature. This is clearly illustrated by Peter Cuijpers’ survey, which cites close to six thousand books printed in the Netherlands between c.1485 and 1525.²⁵ The amount of books printed in England in the same period amounts to about an eighth of this figure.²⁶

For the printers of Antwerp the English reading public presented a lucrative market, ill-served by its indigenous printers. From 1492, when Gerard Leeu republished Caxton’s *Iason and Parys*, a steady stream of English books were produced in the Antwerpian presses. This enterprise was not merely confined to one or two printers: Leeu was followed by Wilhelm Vorsterman, Govaert Bac, Maarten de Keyser and Adrian van Berghen, to cite but a few examples. The most industrious of these was Jan Van Doesborch, who printed over twenty English books between 1501 and c.1530.²⁷ Van Doesborch may even be termed a literary dictator, as his publications set the tone of the English book-market for a number of years: his *Frederyke of Iennen*, *Howleglas*, *Lac puerorum*, *XV Tokens* and *Virgilius* were later issued by

²⁴ Werner Waterschoot, ‘Antwerp: books, publishing and cultural production before 1585’, *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe: Golden Ages in Antwerp, Amsterdam and London*, ed. by Patrick O’Brien (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp.233-49.

²⁵ Peter M. H. Cuijpers, *Teksten als koopwaar: vroege drukkers verkennen de markt: Een kwantitatieve analyse van de productie van Nederlandstalige boeken (tot circa 1550) en de ‘lezershulp’ in de seculiere prozateksten*, *Bibliotheca Bibliographica Nederlandica* 35 (Nieukoop: De Graaf, 1998).

²⁶ Pollard and Redgrave’s *Short-Title Catalogue* lists 752 books printed in England between 1485 and 1525.

²⁷ The best recent account of Van Doesborch’s activities, emphasising his connection to England, is Luuk A.J. Houwen, ‘*The Nobel Lyfe*: an Early English Version of the *Hortus Sanitatis*’, in *Schooling and society: the ordering and reordering of knowledge in the Western Middle Ages*, ed. by A.A. MacDonald and Michael W. Twomey (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), pp.61-72.

London printers, amongst them Wynkyn de Worde, William Copland and Robert Wyer. The book-trade in Antwerp built on the interest in Dutch-produced manuscripts, providing more abundant and more accessible supply of books.

The bulk of the books prepared for the English market were the work of English writers, many of them early Reformers. Texts by William Tyndale, Simon Fish, John Frith and George Joye were printed in Antwerp, alongside more orthodox works such as the Latin grammars of John Stanbridge and John Holt.²⁸ Another large share of the printer's output was taken up by translations from Latin, such as Piccolomini's *Historia de duobus amantibus*.²⁹ Even so, the Antwerp presses did succeed in transmitting something of Dutch literature to England. In particular, they provided a channel by which the vigorous theatrical culture of the *rederijerskamers* reached England. As a rash of recent studies has made increasingly clear to English readers, these 'chambers of rhetoric' are one of the landmark features of early modern Dutch literature.³⁰ They were in essence lay fraternities, largely made up of middle-class citizens, who styled themselves *rederijers* or 'rhetoricians'. While they had numerous functions, the chambers' most important role was the production of plays and poetry for religious civic occasions. Later, as these groups proliferated across the Low Countries, they came to organise lavish dramatic contests known as *landjuwelen* or *rhetorijckfesten*, in which several chambers would assemble in a single city for days, even weeks, of feasting and performance.

²⁸ On Holt and Stanbridge, see Nicholas Orme, *Education in early Tudor England: Magdalen College Oxford and its school, 1480–1540*, Magdalen College Occasional Paper 4 (Oxford: Magdalen College, 1998). During the seventeenth century the Netherlands continued to provide a safe base from which unorthodox English works could be issued: see Keith L. Sprunger, *Trumpets from the Tower: English Puritan Printings in the Netherlands, 1600–1640* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994).

²⁹ See Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini and Niklas von Wyle, *Tale of Two Lovers, Eurialus and Lucretia*, ed. by Eric John Morrall (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988).

³⁰ Recent English scholarship on the *rederijers* includes the essay-collection *Urban Theatre in the Low Countries 1400–1625*, ed. by Elsa Strietman en Peter Happé (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006). This is accompanied by a two-volume set of English translations from the drama: *For Pleasure and Profit. Six Dutch Rhetoricians Plays*, trans. and ed. by Elsa Strietman en Peter Happe, 2 vols. (Lancaster: Medieval English Theatre, 2006), I: *Three Biblical Plays (verschenen)*, II: *Three Classical Plays (binnenkort te verschijnen)*. Volume one of this set has also been published as *Medieval English Theatre* 26 (2004). Also worthy of attention are Gary K. Waite, *Reformers on Stage: popular drama and religious propaganda in the low countries of Charles V, 1515–1556* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000) and Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation And The Culture Of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.76–101, which provide important surveys of the part played by the *rederijerskamers* in disseminating Protestant ideas.

Of the English incunabla to survive, two volumes in particular show a strong connection to the chambers. The first of these is the ‘lyttell story’ *Mary of Nemegen*, printed by Van Doesborch in c.1518.³¹ *Mary* is probably derived from an earlier play-version, the *Wonderlijcke Historie van Mariken van Nieumeghen* (c.1500).³² This is self-evidently a *rederijker* play: it not only contains several of the elaborate verse-forms favoured by the *rederijkers*, such as the *rondeel* and *refereyn*, but also includes a long speech in praise of rhetoric itself. The English version, while it takes the form a prose ‘treatyse’, does preserve something of the theatricality of the play, especially in its heavy use of dialogue. The second of these pieces is the morality *Everyman*. *Everyman*’s exact link to the Antwerp book-trade has yet to be decisively established. Over thirty years ago, A.C. Cawley suggested that it may have been translated by Lawrence Andrewe, assistant to Van Doesborch: while this theory is widely cited, it is difficult to verify.³³ The source-text of the play is, however, certainly connected with the city and its printers. As is widely known, *Everyman* is derived from the Dutch *moraliteit*, *Den Spyghel der Salicheyt van Elckerlijc* (‘The Mirror of the Salvation of Everyman’): according to its Latin translator Christianus Ischyrius, *Elckerlijc* was entered into the Antwerp *rhetorijckfeest* of 1496. It was also printed twice there, in c.1501 and c.1518. At any rate, *Everyman* provides a further tie between England and the chambers. *Elckerlijc* contains several features that are typical of *rederijker* drama, most of which are retained by its English version. The very form of the play is characteristic of the chambers, as allegorical and instructive plays, or *spelen van zinne*, account for the bulk of their output.³⁴ Its lack of ‘ribald, knockabout comedy’ in comparison to the English moralities is also in keeping with the practices of the *rederijkers*.³⁵ As is clear from the work of Henk Hollaar, the *rhetorijckfesten* tended

³¹ The full title of the work is *Here begynneth a lyttell story that was of a trwethe done in the lande of Gelders of a mayde that was named Mary of Nemegen yt was the dyuels paramoure by the space of. vij. yere longe*, STC 17557. The latest edition of the text is *Mary of Nemegen*, ed. by Margaret M. Raftery, Medieval and Renaissance Texts 5 (Leiden: Brill, 1991).

³² *Mariken van Nieumeghen and Elckerlijc. Zonde, hoop en verlossing in de late Middeleeuwen*, ed. by Willem Andries Wilmink and Bart A.M. Ramakers (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 1998), pp.35-150; *Mariken van Nieumeghen: A Bilingual Edition*, ed. and trans. By Therese Decker and Martin W. Walsh (Columbia: Camden House, 1994). On the *rederijker*’s characteristic style with its ‘reliance on patterns of repeated sounds or phrases’, see the engaging discussion in Ethan Matt Kavalier, ‘Renaissance Gothic in the Netherlands: The Uses of Ornament’, *Art Bulletin* 82 (2000), pp.226-51.

³³ *Everyman*, ed. by A.C. Cawley (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961), p.xiii; *Everyman*, ed. by Simon Trussler and G.A. Lester (London: Nick Hern Books, 1996), p.vi.

³⁴ Waite, *Reformers on Stage*, p.29. See also Wim Husken, ‘Civic Patronage in Early Fifteenth-Century Religious Drama in the Low Countries’, in *Civic Ritual and Drama*, ed. by Alexandra F. Johnston and Wim N. M. Husken (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997), pp.107-24.

³⁵ *Medieval Drama: an anthology*, ed. by Greg Walker (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p.281.

to distance the moral and the comic: *spelen* were composed on set topics which assigned buffoonery and instruction to distinct categories, awarding separate prizes to the ‘best serious play’ and the ‘best fool’.³⁶ *Elckerlijc*’s isolation of the moral and comic is therefore consistent with the chambers, which also treated them as discrete headings. The strong bourgeoisie outlook of the piece, which Roger Ladd has analysed at length, also recalls the chambers, which were predominantly comprised of urban, middle-class members.³⁷ In short, *Mary* and *Everyman* are rooted in the Brabantine chambers of rhetoric: the Antwerp printers served as a relay between England and the vibrant dramatic culture of the Netherlands. This fact has received a degree of scholarly emphasis in recent years. There is a growing tendency amongst some critics, such as Claire Sponsler and Lynette Muir, to treat early English drama as ‘part of a shared culture’ with the Netherlands, in which the early printers are a key point of contact.³⁸ Clifford Davidson’s new edition of *Everyman* even aims to encourage such a view further, urging a consideration of this ‘Continental’ connection ‘in the classroom, in anthologies, and in general theatre studies’.³⁹

Beyond the book-trade, there were further ways in which the Netherlands exerted influence on English literary culture. Dutch and Flemish scholars provided an important channel through which neo-classical ideas reached England. In the first few decades of the sixteenth century this was the work of a few individuals: later, a more complex and widespread network evolved. The most important early figure is Erasmus of Rotterdam, who visited England repeatedly between 1499 and 1514, and produced much of his Greek New Testament while at Cambridge.⁴⁰ While Erasmus’ influence on the English church remains an open question, which has prompted recent and very different discussions from Margo Todd and John O’Malley, his impact on

³⁶ *Spelen van Sinne vol schoone allegatien, drijderley referyenen – De Rotterdamse spelen van 1561*, ed. by Henk J. Hollaar (Delft: Eburon, 2006), p.14.

³⁷ Roger A. Ladd, “My condicion is mannes soule to kill” – *Everyman*’s Mercantile Salvation’, *Comparative Drama* 51 (2007), p.58.

³⁸ Claire Sponsler, *Drama and Resistance: Bodies, Goods and Theatricality in Late Medieval England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1997), p.96; Lynette Muir, *Love and Conflict in Medieval Drama: The Plays and Their Legacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.50-62; also Alexandra F. Johnston, ‘The Continental Connection: A Reconsideration’, in *The Stage as a Mirror: Civic Theatre in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. by A.E. Knight (London: Brewer, 1997), pp.7-24.

³⁹ *Everyman and Its Dutch Original, Elckerlijc*, ed. by Clifford Davidson, Martin W. Walsh and Ton J. Broos, TEAMS (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007); also available online at <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/davidson.htm>.

⁴⁰ Erika Rummel, ‘Fertile Ground: Erasmus’ Travels in England’, in *Travel and Translation in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Carmine di Biase (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), pp.45-52.

education and translation is indisputable.⁴¹ The list of his English followers is remarkably extensive. Taking stock of the English figures involved in setting forth ‘an Erasmian agenda’, James McConica names most of the leading teachers and writers of the Renaissance: John Fisher, John Cheke, John Colet, Nicholas Udall, Leonard Cox, Thomas Elyot, Richard Croke and Thomas Cranmer, amongst many others.⁴²

Nevertheless, recent scholarship tends to set Erasmus against the general background of the Low Countries as a whole. Erasmus was certainly not the only scholar from the Netherlands whose work was significant in England. Thomas Mayer’s work on Reginald Pole makes clear that the Hebrastic scholar Jan van Kampen had a similar, if limited, influence: while attached to Pole’s household in Padua he emerged as ‘one of the principal influences on Evangelical theology and scriptural interpretation’, his commentaries on the Hebrew Psalms circulating in England in both Latin and English.⁴³ A further important figure is Hadrianus Junius, a physician and scholar of Greek from the Countship of Holland. Junius was active in England between 1544 and 1547, during which time he tutored the children of Henry Howard, earl of Surrey. Even after Howard’s execution forced Junius to return to Holland, he continued to have designs on England. He dedicated works in turn to Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I, apparently in an attempt to secure patronage.⁴⁴ More importantly, Chris Heesakkers has highlighted his central role in the emblem tradition: his *Emblemata* (1565) was freely plundered by the English compilers of similar texts.⁴⁵

It may therefore be seen that Erasmus, despite his unrivalled centrality in the spread of early humanism to England, was by no means the only Dutch propagator of such ideas. The Netherlands as a whole served as a stable for early humanism: more than

⁴¹ Margo Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.53-95; John O’Malley, ‘*Fides quaerens et non quaerens intellectum*: Reform and the Intellectuals in the Early Modern Period’, in *Reforming the Church Before Modernity: Patterns, Problems And Approaches*, ed. by Christopher M. Bellito and Louis I. Hamilton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp.69-86.

⁴² James McConica, *Erasmus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁴³ Thomas F. Mayer, *Thomas Starkey and the Commonwealth: Humanist Politics and Religion in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.170; Thomas Frederick Mayer, *Reginald Pole: prince and prophet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.67-8.

⁴⁴ See Arnoud S. Q. Visser, *Joannes Sambucus And The Learned Image: The Use of the Emblem in Late-Renaissance Humanism* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p.27.

⁴⁵ Chris L. Heesakkers, ‘Geffrey Whitney’s Use of Hadrianus Junius’ *Emblemata*’, in *Living in posterity: essays in honour of Bart Westerweel*, ed. by Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen (Hilversum: Verloren, 2004), pp.139-46; John Manning, *The Emblem* (London: Reaktion, 2002), pp.83-4.

any individual genius, the wider context of the Low Countries shaped the outlooks of these scholars. This point is firmly underscored by James Tracy's biography of Erasmus. From the first this takes issue with the tendency to regard humanism as a nationless 'republic of letters', stressing that the Dutch neo-classicists were largely products of the political climate of the Burgundian Netherlands. For instance, their recurring emphasis on 'a spiritual commonwealth made up of learned believers' is best understood as a reaction to 'the densely corporatist character of civil and religious life' in the cities of Holland and Flanders.⁴⁶ The cultural climate of the Netherlands fostered these figures, and impressed itself upon their ideas. Other commentators also stress this fact, even if they do not agree on how this climate came into being. Frank Huisman notes that the Netherlands made contact with Italian ideas at an early stage, one notable centre being the abbey of Aduard in Friesland.⁴⁷ Charles Nauert offers a slightly different view, suggesting that the roots of Dutch humanism were developed locally: at the new university of Louvain, where Erasmus, Van Kampen and Junius were active, 'a simplified and more classical approach to the teaching of Latin grammar' had emerged as early as the mid fifteenth century.⁴⁸ Either way, it is clear that the Netherlands provided an environment conducive to neo-classical ideas. The fact that English intellectuals were keen to access this knowledge, and offered patronage and employment to its practitioners, was a major cause of the spread of humanism in England. This humanism, as Tracy implies, was however coloured by specifically Dutch concerns.

This movement of Dutch academics to England only increased throughout the sixteenth century, as several scholars were among the Protestants seeking refuge in English cities. The influence of the Netherlands on English literary culture increased accordingly. An initial surge of Dutch migrants came in the reign of Edward VI, as persecution of Calvinists and Anabaptists began in earnest in the Low Countries, especially in the Spanish-controlled *Zuidelijke Nederlanden*. In Antwerp alone there

⁴⁶ James D. Tracy, *Erasmus of the Low Countries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp.3.

⁴⁷ Frank Huisman, 'Medicine and Health Care in the Netherlands, 1500-1800', in *The History of Science in the Netherlands: Survey, Themes, and Reference*, ed. by Klaas van Berkel, Lodewijk Palm and Albert Van Helden (Leiden: Brill, 1999), p.244.

⁴⁸ Charles Garfield Nauert, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.111.

were over two hundred arrests and a hundred executions during the 1550s.⁴⁹ While the accession of Mary sent this pattern into decline and even reverse, as ‘perhaps a thousand Protestants left England during the Catholic persecution’, the 1560s saw a further spike.⁵⁰ Aachen expelled its Protestant population in 1560, and the revolt of the United Provinces in 1566 created further exiles, as the Duke of Alva ruthlessly reimposed Spanish rule.⁵¹ The effect of this turmoil on England’s migrant population is clear. The censuses analysed by L.H. Yungblut chart a steady rise in London’s ‘strangers’ throughout the decade, from four and half thousand in 1562 to over nine thousand in March 1568. Although French Huguenots account for a good proportion of these newcomers, some seven thousand are listed as ‘Dutch’.⁵²

Among this group were a number of significant scholars and poets. As Jan Van Dorsten first emphasised in the 1970s, these figures made London into the hub of an international community of intellectuals, spanning England and the Low Countries.⁵³ Two chief nodes in Van Dorsten’s network were Emmanuel van Meteren and Johan Radermacher, also subject of a recent monograph by Karel Bostoën.⁵⁴ Both were active ‘merchant/scholars’ based in London, who served as artistic patrons and mediators between other figures who shared their concerns.⁵⁵ Van Meteren is especially crucial as a cultural go-between. He was part of the first wave of refugees admitted under Edward VI, and remained in England as consul to the merchants of the Low Countries until his death in 1612. His own writing in many ways signals his intermediate position between his actual and adopted homelands. His work on the history of the Netherlands attracted the attention of English readers: his *Historicae*

⁴⁹ Guido Marnef, *Antwerp in the age of Reformation: underground Protestantism in a commercial metropolis, 1550-1577*, trans. by J.C. Grayson, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science 1 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp.77-86.

⁵⁰ Peter Marshall, *Religious Identities In Henry VIII’s England*, St Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Bodmin: MPG Books, 2006), p.227.

⁵¹ A compellingly intimate account of the period, derived from the writings of the Utrecht lawyer Aernout van Buchell, is given in Judith Pollman, *Religious Conflict in the Dutch Republic: the Reformation of Arnoldus Buchelis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

⁵² Laura Hunt Yungblut, *Strangers Settled Here Amongst Us - Policies, Perceptions and the Presence of Aliens in Elizabethan England* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp.20-35.

⁵³ J.A. Van Dorsten, *The Radical Arts: first decade of an Elizabethan Renaissance*, Publications of the Sir Thomas Browne Institute 4 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

⁵⁴ K. J. S. Bostoën, *Bonis in Bonum: Johan Radermacher de Oude (1538-1617), humanist en koopman* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998).

⁵⁵ Ole Peter Grell, ‘Merchants and Ministers: the foundations of international Calvinism’, in *Calvinism in Europe, 1540-1620*, ed. by Andrew Pettegree, Alastair C. Duke and Gillian Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp.254-73.

Belgicae was partly translated by Thomas Churchyard and Richard Robinson, and he personally assisted Edward Grimestone in compiling the *General Historie of the Netherlands*, according to Grimestone's own preface.⁵⁶ He also composed work on England for Dutch readers, such as an entertaining description of England incorporated into the *Historicae*.⁵⁷ This dual outlook also characterises Van Meteren's personal and professional life. As his own *liber amicorum* makes plain, he was in the orbit of several leading figures in England, his associates including Richard Mulcaster and Richard Hakluyt.⁵⁸ Joad Raymond adds that he was 'well known as a conduit of information from the Protestant Low Countries' by the likes of Gabriel Harvey and Francis Walsingham.⁵⁹ He was also familiar with fellow exiles Lucas de Heere and Jan van der Noot, writers committed to the new forms in poetry: their major collections contain the first examples of the sonnet composed in Dutch.⁶⁰ This network of associates was further extended by links abroad. A cousin of Van Meteren's was the mapmaker Abraham Ortelius, and the two were lifelong correspondents.⁶¹ Other contacts included Janus Dousa, founder of the university of Leiden, whom Marijken Spies terms 'one of the most important mediators of the literary renaissance in the Netherlands'.⁶² As Van Dorsten first asserted, and later commentary has confirmed, the Dutch emigres possessed far-reaching links. They provided a vital bridge between the academic and political circles of England and the Netherlands.

⁵⁶ Emmanuel Van Meteren, *A true discourse historicall, of the succeeding gouvernours in the Netherlands, and the ciuill warres there begun in the yeere 1565...Translated and collected by T.C. Esquire, and Ric. Ro. out of the reuerend E.M. of Antwerp. his fifeene bookes Historicae Belgicae* (London: Felix Kingston, 1602), STC 17846; Jean François Le Petit, *A generall historie of the Netherlands...continued vnto this present yeare of our Lord 1608, out of the best authors that haue written of that subiect: by Ed. Grimeston* (London: A. Islip, and G. Eld, 1608), STC 12374.

⁵⁷ An 1895 translation has been reissued in William Benchley Rye *England as Seen by Foreigners in the Days of Elizabeth and James the First* (Boston: Elibron Classics, 2005), pp.67-73.

⁵⁸ See Frances Yates, *The Valois Tapestries* (London: Routledge, 1999), p.29.

⁵⁹ Joad Raymond, *News, Newspapers, and Society in Early Modern Britain* (London: Franks Cass, 1999), p.20.

⁶⁰ W. Waterschoot, 'Marot or Ronsard? New French Poetics among Dutch Rhetoricians in the Second Half of the 16th Century', in *Rhetoric-Rhetoriciens-Rederijkers*, ed. by Jelle Koopmans, Mark A. Meadow, Kees Meerhoff and Marijke Spies (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1995), pp.141-156; Bas Jongenelen and Ben Parsons, 'The Sonnets of *Het Bosken* by Jan van der Noot', *Spenser Studies* 23 (2007).

⁶¹ Notes on their relationship are given in Giorgio Mangani, 'Abraham Ortelius and the Hermetic Meaning of the Cordiform Projection' *Imago Mundi* 50 (1998), pp.74, 82.

⁶² Marijke Spies, *Rhetoric, Rhetoricians and Poets: Studies in Renaissance Poetry and Poetics* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999), p.144.

This powerful series of connections had a direct impact on a number of canonical English authors. One writer who bears strong witness to its influence is Edmund Spenser, who was probably introduced to the emigre circle by Mulcaster, his schoolmaster at the Merchants' Taylors School.⁶³ Spenser's debt to the group is direct and unequivocal. The Dutch community provided him with the basis of his first published work, a translation of the epigrams in Van der Noot's *Het Theatre oft Toon-Neel*.⁶⁴ Although the English *Theatre* does not directly credit Spenser, his authorship is clear from the *Complaints* (1591), which contains revised versions of the poems, collected under the titles 'Visions of Bellay' and 'Visions of Petrarch formerly translated'.⁶⁵ Richard Danson Brown and Katherine Craik have examined Spenser's motives for 'reclaiming' the *Theatre* poems in the *Complaints*: this has revealed that these pieces had an enduring significance for Spenser, and were not, as earlier critics argued, merely 'the inferior efforts of an unknown schoolboy'.⁶⁶ Such research argues that the Dutch community not only instigated Spenser's career, but had a central resonance throughout it.

A further figure to come under the influence of this circle was Philip Sidney. Sidney's involvement with the Low Countries is well-known. In 1585, after the Treaty of Nonsuch made the United Provinces a protectorate of England, he was appointed governor of Flushing. He died a year later, of wounds sustained while fighting with the Earl of Leicester at Zutphen. However, as early as 1577 Sidney was active in the Netherlands, visiting Brussels, Louvain and Antwerp on missions to the court of William of Orange. Here he became acquainted with the Dutch humanists: he may have already known the London-based members of this group, as his friend Daniel Rogers was related to Van Meteren.⁶⁷ Sidney was enthusiastically received by the

⁶³ Richard Rambuss, 'Spenser's Life And Career', in *Cambridge Companion to Spenser*, ed. by Andrew Hadfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.17.

⁶⁴ Jan Van der Noodt, *A Theatre for Voluptuous Worldlings*, trans. by Theodor Roest and Edmund Spenser, ed. by L.S. Friedland (New York: Scholar's Facsimiles and Reprints, 1936).

⁶⁵ See the discussion in Joseph Lowenstein, 'Spenser's Retrography: Two Episodes in Post-Petrarchan Bibliography', in *Spenser's Life and the Subject of Biography*, ed. by Judith H. Anderson, Donald Cheney and David A. Richardson (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), pp.99-130.

⁶⁶ Richard Danson Brown, *The New Poet: Novelty and Tradition in Spenser's Complaints* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), p.64; Katharine A. Craik, 'Spenser's *Complaints* and the New Poet', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 64 (2001), pp.63-79; Robert MacKill Cummings, *Edmund Spenser: The Critical Heritage* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1971), p.4.

⁶⁷ See J.A. van Dorsten, *Poets, Patrons, and Professors: Sir Philip Sidney, Daniel Rogers, and the Leiden Humanists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp.9-77; J.A. van Dorsten, 'Mr Secretary

circle, as both Dousa and the Brabantine philosopher Joost Lips dedicated work to him.⁶⁸ But perhaps the most significant contact he made here, at least in the context of his own work, was Philips van Marnix.⁶⁹ In an important essay Gijsbert Siertsema has suggested that Van Marnix may have had a deep effect on Sidney's own writing.⁷⁰ Van Marnix was a minor nobleman at Zeeland, and an advisor to Prince William. His literary output includes two of the best-known pieces of early modern Dutch literature: the nationalistic hymn 'Wilhelmus van Nassau' (c.1574), and the scathing anti-Catholic satire *De bijenkorf der Heylighe Roomsche Kercke* (1569). These two works demonstrate Sidney's familiarity with Van Marnix. Sidney's song 'Who hath his fancy pleased' is set 'to the tune of Wilhelmus', while the English translation of *De bijenkorf* is dedicated to 'the right Worshipfull, wise, and vertuous Gentleman, Maister Philippe Sidney, Esquire'.⁷¹ But more importantly, Van Marnix also shared Sidney's interest in the psalms. In 1580 he published a metrical translation of the entire psalter.⁷² As Siertsema points out, in this enterprise Van Marnix was able to draw on a fertile tradition of psalmody in Dutch. His work is predated by the popular *Souterliedekens* of Clemens non Papa and Gherardus Mes, lyric versions of the psalms set to popular songs.⁷³ Owing to their mutual interest in vernacular translation of the psalter, it is possible that Van Marnix introduced Sidney to these Dutch versions during their encounter. In the process he may have supplied Sidney with a

Cecil: Patron of Letters', in *The Anglo-Dutch Renaissance: seven essays*, ed. by J. van den Berg and Alastair Hamilton (Leiden: Brill, 1988), pp.28-37.

⁶⁸ For a useful review of recent scholarship on Lips, see A.H.T. Levi, 'The relationship of Stoicism and scepticism: Justus Lipsius', in *Humanism and Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. by Jill Kraye and M.W.F. Stone (London: Routledge, 2000), pp.91-106.

⁶⁹ For a bibliography of scholarship on Van Marnix, see Henk Duits, 'Bibliografie van de Marnix-studie 1940-2000', in *Een intellectuele activist: studies over leven en werk van Philips van Marnix van Sint Aldegonde*, ed. by H. Duits and A. van Strien (Hilversum: Verloren, 2001), pp.107-121.

⁷⁰ Gijsbert J. Siertsema, 'Sir Philip Sidney and the Dutch Connection', in *The Great Emporium: the low countries as a cultural crossroads in the renaissance and the eighteenth century*, ed. by Cedric Charles Barfoot and Richard Todd (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992), pp.11-28.

⁷¹ The occasion for the song is discussed in Michael G. Brennan, *The Sidneys of Penshurst And the Monarchy, 1500-1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p.71; Philips van Marnix van St. Aldegonde, *The bee hiue of the Romishe Church a commentarie vpon the sixe principall pointes of Master Gentian Heruet, a Romish Catholike his booke*, trans. by George Gilpen (London: Thomas Dawson, 1579), f.3, STC 17445.

⁷² See the facsimile edition Philips van Marnix, *Het boeck der Psalmen Davids. Wt de Hebreische Spraecke in Nederduytschen dichte*, ed. by Gert-Jan Buitink, Jef Sterck and Ad den Besten (Antwerp, 1985).

⁷³ See Louis Peter Grijp, 'The Souterliedekens by Gherardus Mes (1561). An enigmatic pupil of Clemens non Papa, and popular song of the mid-sixteenth century', in *From Ciconia to Sweelinck: Donum Natalicium Willem Elders*, ed. by Albert Clement, Eric Jas (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), pp.245-54.

firm model 'upon which to base his own poetics'. Siertsema concludes, 'what began as an envoy for political ends turned out...to provide a major source for his art'.⁷⁴

Aside from their influence in composition, the Dutch refugees were also important in the practical side of English textual production. Elizabeth Evenden has demonstrated that John Day's press was heavily reliant on the expertise of emigres from the Low Countries.⁷⁵ This dependence is most marked in one of the cornerstone English works of the Elizabethan period, John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. It is common knowledge that the book was an enormous undertaking for Day. At close to two thousand pages in length, with varying typefaces, marginal notes, and extensive woodcuts throughout, it was a work on an unprecedented scale: its production was further complicated by the fact that Foxe 'added a considerable amount of text during the actual printing of the *Book*'.⁷⁶ The project would, as Evenden stresses, scarcely have been conceivable without the assistance of more experienced Flemish and Dutch printers. It also seems probable that migrants were responsible for one of the *Book*'s most striking features. It has been suggested that the illustrations accompanying the volume might have been the work of the Flemish artist Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, who also produced the woodcuts for Van der Noot's *Het Theatre*.⁷⁷ Again the migrant community had a direct hand in English literature during the first decades of Elizabeth's reign, supporting its production as well as stimulating its composition. As Van Dorsten states, the seedbed for many of the central Elizabethan cultural achievements was provided by 'that unique London centre of cultural activity, the exiled Franco-Flemings'.⁷⁸

Following the death of Elizabeth, however, there was increasing hostility between England and the United Provinces. Even during the first decade of James' reign disputes erupted over trade, focusing particularly on fishing, whaling and the textile

⁷⁴ Siertsema, 'Sidney and the Dutch Connection', p.27.

⁷⁵ Elizabeth Evenden, 'The Fleeing Dutchmen? The Influence of Dutch Immigrants upon the Print Shop of John Day', in *John Foxe at Home and Abroad*, ed. by David Michael Loades (Bodmin: MPG Books, 2004), pp.63-78.

⁷⁶ John N. King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), especially p.88.

⁷⁷ Ruth Samson Luborsky and Elizabeth Morley Ingram, *A Guide to English Illustrated Books, 1536-1603* (Tempe: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998), pp.57-8; James A. Knapp, *Illustrating the Past in Early Modern England: the representation of history in printed books* (Bodmin: MPG, 2003), p.191.

⁷⁸ Van Dorsten, *Radical Arts*, p.87.

industry. These contributed to a widespread resentment, which A.J. Hoenselaars has detected in several Jacobean and Caroline dramas.⁷⁹ However, a further and more potent flashpoint was provided by the colonial ambitions of the two countries. As Alistair Hamilton summarises: ‘Holland and England were both naval powers, highly dependent on trade...by the early seventeenth century they were hot competitors all over the world, in America, Africa and Asia’.⁸⁰ One of the ‘hottest’ incidents in this rivalry came in 1623, when the Dutch East India Company executed ten English merchants at Amboyna, in modern-day Indonesia. Robert Markley has examined the strong pull that this affair exerted on the imagination of English writers.⁸¹ It was tirelessly invoked throughout the seventeenth century: during the First Dutch War of 1652-4, pamphlets circulated ‘retelling the atrocity in full’, even recasting it as a ‘martyrdom’.⁸² Twenty years later Dryden used it as the basis of a tragedy, specifically ‘to consolidate support’ for the Third Dutch War.⁸³

Yet in spite of these increasing tensions, there remain some important points of contact between England and the Netherlands in the reigns of James and Charles, as the Low Countries influenced English culture along well-established lines. For example, the movements of the Franciscus Junius, a pioneer in Old English philology, closely resemble those of earlier itinerant scholars, especially his namesake Hadrianus. Initially based at Leiden and Rotterdam, Junius served as a tutor in the household of Thomas Howard, earl of Arundel between 1621 and 1642, and dedicated work to Charles I.⁸⁴ The Dutch community of London also retained an important intermediary position between intellectuals in England and the Low Countries. Jacob Cool, elder of the Dutch church in London from 1624 until his death in 1628, was a

⁷⁹ A.J. Hoenselaars, *Images of Englishmen and Foreigners in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries: a study of stage characters and national identity in English Renaissance drama, 1558-1642* (London: Associated University Presses, 1992), p.200.

⁸⁰ Alastair Hamilton, ‘Introduction’, in *Friends and rivals in the East: studies in Anglo-Dutch relations in the Levant from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century*, ed. by Alastair Hamilton, Maurits H. van den Boogert and Alexander H. de Groot (Leiden: Brill, 2000), p.1.

⁸¹ Robert Markley, *The Far East and the English Imagination, 1600-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp.17-9, 143-76.

⁸² Steven C. A. Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism: Ideologies and the Making of English Foreign Policy, 1650-1668* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.59.

⁸³ Bridget Orr, *Empire on the English Stage 1660-1714* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.60.

⁸⁴ See Kees Dekker, *The Origins of Old Germanic Studies in the Low Countries* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp.94-103; *Franciscus Junius and his Circle*, ed. by Rolf Bremmer (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998).

correspondent with Ortelius and an associate of Jonson.⁸⁵ English writers continued to make vital contact with Dutch scholars abroad. While in Paris Milton deliberately sought the acquaintance of Hugo Grotius, ‘a most learned man...whom I ardently desired to meet’.⁸⁶ The encounter seems to have had a strong formative impact on Milton’s work, as work by Barbara Kiefer Lewalski and Victoria Silver attests.⁸⁷

The period’s most far-reaching intersection between Dutch and English culture also took a familiar form. The workshops of the Low Countries continued to produce new innovations in printing which came to affect the English reading public. The most significant of these was the development of the corantos, gazetti and other regular news-sheets, which were in production in Amsterdam from 1618.⁸⁸ When these texts reached England, they were simply an offshoot of the Dutch presses. In a study of Amsterdam ‘as a centre of information supply’, Clé Lesger emphasises the uneven relationship between the English and Dutch news-presses: ‘the amount of information available in the city and the large number of newspapers made Amsterdam in the first half of the seventeenth century the centre and cradle of the modern periodical press...for a long time, England and France were content to rehash the Dutch materials’.⁸⁹ In fact Nathaniel Butter and Nicholas Bourne, who ‘secured an exclusive right to print news sheets’ in London between 1621 and 1632, not only modelled their ‘corants’ on Dutch versions but directly translated them.⁹⁰ Even the irregular news-books Butter and Bourne issued before 1621 were based on Dutch pamphlets,

⁸⁵ J.A. van Dorsten, ‘The Rediscovery of a Modest Dutchman in London’, in *Anglo-Dutch renaissance*, pp.8-20; Ole Peter Grell, *Dutch Calvinists in Early Stuart London: The Dutch Church in Austin Friars, 1603-1642* (Leiden: Brill, 1989).

⁸⁶ John Milton, *Second Defence of the English People*, in *The Major Works*, ed. by Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.321.

⁸⁷ Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p.89; Victoria Silver, *Imperfect Sense: The Predicament of Milton's Irony* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p.130; *Paradise Lost, 1668-1968: Three Centuries of Commentary*, ed. by Earl Miner (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 2004), p.103.

⁸⁸ Otto S. Lankhorst, ‘Newspapers in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century’, in *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Sabrina Alcorn Baron (London: Routledge, 2001), pp.151-9.

⁸⁹ Clé Lesger, *The Rise of the Amsterdam Market And Information Exchange: Merchants, Commercial Expansion and Change in the Spatial Economy of the Low Countries, c.1550-1630* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p.235.

⁹⁰ Joseph Loewenstein, *The Author's Due: Printing and the Prehistory of Copyright* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p.158.

‘faithfully translated according to the Dutch copie’.⁹¹ As Lesger stresses, the early English news-books were in reality only a wing of the Amsterdam presses.

While the news-books were important in their own right, they also had a key influence on the playhouses, as a number of dramatists engaged openly with this new medium. The discussion which has attracted most commentary is Jonson’s *Staple of News* (c.1625), a satire on the ‘publish’d Pamphlets of *News*, set out every *Saturday*’.⁹² For a number of critics, Jonson’s play is an important yardstick for establishing the corantos’ place in London’s ‘economy of communication’.⁹³ A reading of the play is, for instance, the centrepiece of Roger Chartier’s work on popular print.⁹⁴ When examined in this way, the *Staple* only seems to assert the power of the Dutch-led news-presses. For Marcus Nevitt, the *Staple* was a rearguard action, as ‘Jonson attempted (and failed) to preserve the boundaries of the stage’s newsworthiness’, in the process only ‘conceding that the news pamphlet was about to succeed the stage as the main medium for distributing news’.⁹⁵ Don Wayne reaches a similar conclusion, arguing that the *Staple* ‘betrays anxiety about the status of that form of information more properly termed knowledge or truth over which the poet in Jonson’s conception presides’.⁹⁶ Jonson evidently conceived the news-trade as a direct threat to his own position. His work thus shows that the Dutch printers had initiated a small revolution in the consumption of English texts, one which challenged existing frameworks for disseminating information.

However, it is also apparent that other playwrights regarded the news-press with less animosity, at least in its early stages. Dorothy Auchter calls attention to Fletcher and

⁹¹ *The true description of the execution of iustice, done in the Grauenhage, by the counsell of the Generall States holden for the same purpose, vpon Sir Iohn van Olden Barnauelt* (London: Nathaniel Newbery, 1619), STC 18804.

⁹² Ben Jonson, ‘To the Readers’, in *The Staple of News*, ed. by Anthony Parr (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p.153.

⁹³ Martin Conboy, *Journalism: A Critical History* (London: Sage, 2004), p.20.

⁹⁴ Roger Chartier, *Inscription and Erasure: Literature and Written Culture from the Eleventh to the Eighteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), pp.46-62.

⁹⁵ Marcus Nevitt, ‘Ben Jonson and the Serial Publication of News’, in *News Networks In Seventeenth-Century Britain And Europe*, ed. by Joad Raymond (London: Routledge, 2006), p.65. See also D.F. McKenzie, ‘The Staple of News and the Late Plays’, in *A Celebration of Ben Jonson: papers presented at the University of Toronto in October 1972*, ed. by William Blissett, Julian Patrick and Richard W. Van Fossen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), pp.83-128.

⁹⁶ Don E. Wayne, ‘The “exchange of letters.” Early modern contradictions and postmodern conundrums’, in *The Consumption of Culture, 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text*, ed. by Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (London: Routledge, 1995), p.155.

Massinger's *Tragedy of Sir John van Olden Barnaveelt* (1619), a play which recounts the fall of Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, an Advocate of Holland who was executed in 1619.⁹⁷ Auchter notes the perils of writing about 'a controversial execution' by a 'living foreign ruler', but argues that 'playwrights were willing to risk censure in order to benefit from the timeliness of the subject matter'. She also notes the central role that the news-press played in this decision: 'several pamphlets about Barnaveelt's case were circulating in London during the summer of 1619, and the play was sure to have popular appeal'.⁹⁸ The news-press not only supplied material for the play, but also made this subject attractive, guaranteeing some prior audience interest. *The Tragedy* certainly had an unprecedented topicality: as Ivo Kamps notes, it was performed just over a hundred days after the events it depicts.⁹⁹ What is more, this was not the first time that Fletcher and Massinger had used the news-books in this way. The final volume of Fletcher's collected works mentions the *Jeweller of Amsterdam* (c.1616-17), a lost play written in collaboration with Massinger and Nathan Field.¹⁰⁰ This was most likely based on the killing of the *hoffjuwelier* Jan van Wely, an event which was reported widely in Dutch and English news-pamphlets.¹⁰¹ Once again, Fletcher and Massinger seem to have regarded the news-press as a useful resource to exploit, not only as a fund of narratives, but as a barometer of popular interests. It would seem that the theatre had a more vexed relationship with the news-press than one of straightforward hostility.

In sum, over the last few decades critics have increasingly appreciated that the Low Countries exerted a continuous influence on English literary culture during the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Whereas scholars such as De Vries

⁹⁷ A recent account of the Van Oldenbarnevelt affair is given in James D. Tracy, *Europe's Reformations, 1450-1650: Doctrine, Politics, And Community* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), pp.171-90.

⁹⁸ Dorothy Auchter, *Dictionary of Literary and Dramatic Censorship in Tudor and Stuart England* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), p.334.

⁹⁹ Ivo Kamps, *Historiography and Ideology in Stuart Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.140-68.

¹⁰⁰ Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*, ed. by Fredson Bowers, 10 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966-94), X (1994), p.4.

¹⁰¹ *True recitall of the confession of the two murderers John de Paris, and Iohn de la Vigne touching the horrible murder committed vpon the person of Mr. Iohn De Wely, merchant-i Jeweller of Amsterdam* (London: Thomas Snodham for Nicholas Bourne, 1616), STC 19208.5. On the Dutch sources see Nicolaas de Roever, 'Jan van Wely, de vermoorde hofjuwelier', *De Amsterdammer* 42 (1888), part of a series of articles on *oud-Amsterdamsche verscheidenheden*, 'old Amsterdam miscellanies'. See also 'Levensbericht van Mr. Nicolaas de Roever', *Jaarboek van de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde* (1893), pp.369-99.

found only a series of disparate ‘names...on the pages of history’ when discussing Dutch influence on the English Renaissance, it is now clear that England and the Netherlands were engaged in a complex nexus of literary relations.¹⁰² The printers at Antwerp and Amsterdam revitalised the English publishing industry, leading the market in its earliest stages, and introducing further innovations later on. Parallel to this influence, and often reinforcing it, is the migration of intellectuals, from the Louvain scholars in the first half of the sixteenth century to the Protestant refugees in the last half. In short, contemporary scholarship has made clear that the Burgundian Netherlands and the United Provinces had a profound impact on the development of English literature during the early Renaissance. As Andrew Pettegree has stated, these links are so fundamental that it is often difficult to dissociate the ‘English’ Renaissance from similar trends in the Netherlands.¹⁰³

¹⁰² De Vries, *Holland's Influence*, p.14.

¹⁰³ Andrew Pettegree, ‘Introduction’, in *The Education of a Society: Humanism and the Reformation in Britain and the Netherlands*, ed. by N. Scott Amos, Andrew Pettegree and Henk van Nierop, St Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999).