THE PICARESQUE TRADITION:
FEMINISM AND IDEOLOGY CRITIQUE

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Method

The central concern of this study is the relation between the forces of ideology and the powers of images. It focuses on subversively humorous art and visual culture. Such works of art and products of visual culture are ideologically alert and tend to expose concealed ideologies. It is worth exploring the question whether there are advantages in viewing transgressive and humorous feminist art within a broader picaresque tradition of visual culture. The idea is not only to explore a tradition of ideologically aware art, but also to draw methodological conclusions about ideology-critical art history and visual analysis.

The tradition in visual culture on which I focus has been defined as 'the picaresque tradition' by Calvin Seerveld who distinguishes several 'typiconic traditions' or imaginative 'casts' in the arts. His distinctions are based on the Dutch philosopher D. H. Th. Vollenhoven's (1892-1978) typology of Western thought structures or philosophical conceptions.[1] In extension of Vollenhoven's ideas, Seerveld seriously considered the visible and palpable manifestations of such traditions, as they are presented in the visual arts, literature, music, political action, ethics, academic discourse and confession. His spectrum of such directive imaginary frameworks includes the heroic, the paradigmatic or schematizing, the scenic, the mystic, the erotic or hedonic, the idyllic, the troubled cosmic and the picaresque traditions.

In Seerveld's transposition of Vollenhoven's philosophical typology into imaginary or visual terms, he evocatively and aptly used the term 'picaresque.' In literary criticism this term describes a specific novelistic genre. In literary circles there has been a debate about the range of the term 'picaresque novel',

considering whether it extends to more than specifically the era of the evolution of this genre. In recent approaches in literary criticism, specific motifs, *topoi*, metaphors and strategies used in the 'fictional world' of picaresque novels, written over many centuries, have been systematized.[2] To my mind it may be fruitful to expand such research and outline the features of the picaresque 'imaginary world' of a broad range of cultural products and actions, including visual culture. Moreover, instead of regarding the recurrence of motifs, *topoi*, metaphors and strategies in the 'fictional world' merely as a distinguishing feature of a literary canon or genre, their ideological potential in such an 'imaginary world' should rather be investigated. In the process of selecting and grouping recurrent motifs, metaphoric allusions and thematic *topoi* in the patterned picaresque visual cultural 'imaginary world', it becomes evident that such 'motifs' are dynamic directive 'motives',[3] revealing orientations in knowledge and belief systems. By taking motifs, *topoi*, metaphors and strategies as points of departure, I endeavour to broaden Seerveld's enterprise of transposing descriptions of traditions in philosophical conceptions. The enhancement of a visually present picture in the mind's eye, of the ideological values of the 'picaresque tradition', may be useful in histories of visual culture. Such focusing on metaphors is also in sympathy with Johann Visagie's (1990) "semiological hermeneutics for archival discourse", which he regards as a sub-theory of "archaeological discourse analysis". His theory facilitates the analysis of recurrent metaphors in both visual cultural products and art historical texts. The parallel existence of picaresque art and a picaresque art historiographic tradition thus emerges.[4]

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[1] Cf. Tol & Bril 1992: 224-260, Bril 1986: 5-6, 176-188. See my chapter 2.
[2] Cf. especially Ulrich Wicks (1971, 1972, 1974). See my chapter 3.
[3] Cf. Levin (1968, 1974).
[4] Cf. chapter 11.

In the selection and discussion of picaresque works of art from the 'Era of Art'[5] in Part 2, I focus on a number of significant motifs, which have acquired metaphoric significance within the picaresque imaginary world. However, many of these picaresque 'art works' were executed in less prestigious print media, catering for wider audiences than the established art public, often conferring to them a liminal or non-canonical position in relation to the 'high art' tradition of this 'Era'.[6] Their marginalized status and critical stance towards the 'high art' traditions of their times, prepare for the expansion of the idea of 'art' to that of images in visual culture. My focus on specific motifs, postures, gestures, physiognomy and narrative *topoi* become the bridge linking a wide range of visual cultural products of various eras, to be compared and juxtaposed in the final chapter 12 (Part 4), demonstrating their equally compromised ideological status.

In my description of the range of metaphoric allusions and thematic *topoi* which feature at the heart of the picaresque tradition, they are clustered around three main motifs of the *eye*,[7] the *fool*[8] and *monstrosity* (sometimes manifest in the grotesque).[9] My point of departure in Part 2 is metaphors of blindness and sight. I endeavour to characterize a typically picaresque point of view or 'world view' with reference to representations of the eye and motifs related to vision. Diseases of the eye, blind spots and other impediments in seeing are read to be metaphoric of 'diseases of world view',[10] of blindnesses, or of rigid ideological staring. This point of view is best personified in the conniving picaresque stance of the fool, the communicator of folly, of silly illusions, deceptions and false

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[5] Cf. my chapter 8, footnote 13. The term is used by Belting (1994).
[6] The picaresque works of Hogarth, Daumier and Toulouse-Lautrec are examples. Later artists like Roy Lichtenstein, Barbara Kruger and Ilona Granet self-consciously refer to and use the strategies of 'lower' art forms like comic strips, advertisements and street signs. See Part 2.
[7] Cf. chapter 7
[8] Cf. chapter 8 and throughout the study.
[9] Throughout the study, and in chapter 7 (section 1) and chapter 10 (section 4).
[10] The idea of the identification of 'diseases' of world view is a creative interpretation of a chapter in James Elkins's *The object stares back* (1996) in which he discusses eye diseases. In his article on world views Rowe (1989) suggests an 'cosmopthalmology' of world views.

appearances, of the ever ambiguous human experience of meaning.[11] The third main concern, is the typically picaresque way in which eruptive hysteria, madness and monstrosity is represented in an extravagantly humorous fashion, and by means of which the demoniac character of ideological forces are made evident. It should be clear that all these motifs and metaphors are closely related and that their implications will resonate in every discussion of each of them.

A basic assumption in this study is that seeing is not believing. In his recent book *The object stares back* (1996), James Elkins not only draws attention to the subjective fallibility of the person who perceives, but also to the power that objects exert in the process of seeing. The result is that things are not what they appear to be. Seeing is not a straightforward natural process; seeing involves commitment and interpretation. This implies that in order to understand the world we need to decipher various presentations of meaning. Cultural presentations of meaning are rooted in cultural traditions and bear ideological baggage. We might even say that meaning is always displayed in a false or deceptive way; that our view of things needs to be dis-illusioned; and that the interpretation of meaning entails the demystification of some illusions. Ricoeur (1970: 32-36) described this self-conscious method of interpretation of the "unconscious work of ciphering" as an exercise in suspicion. He uses the phrase in connection with the philosophies of Freud, Marx and Nietzsche, whom he groups together and dubs the school of suspicion.[12] One might describe my endeavour to lay bare the undercurrents of ideology in visual material as a hermeneutics of suspicion. By means of a mistrustful, wary and careful art of interpretation, surface appearances are doubted and conflicting nuances of meaning embedded in visual texts are searched for and brought to the surface. For me this entails a labour of hope and solicitude in spite of the fact that we are enmeshed in the irreconcilable struggle

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[11] Cf. chapter 8, as well as Chapter 4, section 1, and chapter 7, section 1.

[12] What they have in common for him is their "decision to look upon the whole of consciousness, primarily as 'false' consciousness" (Ricoeur 1970:33). Ricoeur further develops the idea in his *Lectures on ideology and utopia* (1986).

amongst ideologies in a topsy-turvy world.[13] My analytical strategies to hunt down, tease out and uncover underlying ideologies in visual material are modelled upon the example of those favoured in picaresque art, so that one might regard it as picaresque ideology critique or a picaresque hermeneutics of suspicion. This method of analysis of visual material is set into action in the final Part 4 of this study and entails the juxtaposition of seemingly disparate visual cultural products, linked by visually equivalent motifs, thereby metaphorically disclosing the hidden sites of their underlying prejudices. The method of analysing picaresque visual material from a mischievously picaresque point of view can be described as making the "...'conscious' methods of deciphering coincide with the 'unconscious' *work* of ciphering" (Ricoeur 1970: 34), in the way that Ricoeur has described the work of the 'school of suspicion'. This method has important implications for research in the field of the 'typiconic traditions', as discussed in part 1, section 5.1.

Michael Ann Holly (1990: 395) who argues that art historians do not only bring modes of interpretation to works of art, but that objects of art suggest rhetorical possibilities for their interpretation,[14] recognizes the effect of the 'power of images' on scholars selecting and analysing them:

> We have always known that objects of art have a numinous power about them. And yet, ironically, as art historians, we repress that power with a power play of our own: an attempt to explain or describe or capture that hypnotic hold through labels and schemes of our own devising.

Visual culture (including so-called high art as well as mass produced and popular visual material) is ideologically more powerful than we generally assume and

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[13] Ricoeur emphasizes that the disposition in interpretation of the school of suspicion is by no means sceptical or destructive, but rather a stance in order to extend "consciousness" (1970:32-36).
[14] For discussions of the problematics of the disjunctive mutuality between pictures and language, see Baxandall (1979) and Flax (1984).

human-made images affect us more deeply than we would usually admit. David Freedberg has shown in his *The power of images* (1989) that the presumably 'primitive' uses of powerful images are not as diminished for modern Western spectators, as well as for intellectual art historians since the Enlightenment, as we are wont to believe. "'Picture magic' in the looser sense is no more characteristic of early or primitive cultures than it is of more advanced or Western societies" (Freedberg 1989: 80). This power of images, manifest through the ages in phenomena like iconoclasm, meditation, devotion, arousal by image, healing by image, censorship and pornography, can be demonstrated to be as alive today in underlying 'ideological steering powers' (Visagie 1994a, 1996b) oppressively at work in visual material (Van den Berg 1996: 12, 13ff.). In the commonplaces in which people speak about works of art and about all imagery, their power is likened to popular perceptions of magic and wizardry. One often hears that "through good painting 'the faces of the dead go on living,' and a particular portrait is so good and skilful that it gives a sense of real speaking and moving presence". But Freedberg (1989: 46) concludes that "we know [...] that people feel just these things about pictures, and respond to them on just those bases". He asks why we ignore such evidence of the effectiveness and provocativeness of images:

> We dimly recognize [the resonances of commonplaces], or suppress them, or sublimate them; we talk about them in terms of the topos and commonplace; but we will not acknowledge that they are the same as those which we also conveniently describe as magical or superstitious (Freedberg 1989: 51).

The definition of ideology applied in this study is based on research by Johann Visagie, and pertains to the autonomization (in the sense of unduly privileging), glorification or idolatry of values. I have deliberately translated Visagie's (1994) concepts of 'autonomization' and 'idolization' of values by means of which he broadens our idea of ideology, with 'idolatry of values'. This is in order to conjure up the presumably 'primitive' uses of powerful images as idols, and "the

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contradiction of our iconoclastic yet idolatrous, our critical yet credulous, age" as Joel Black (1984: 195) describes post-modernity in his article on "Idolology: the model in artistic practice and critical theory". When Freedberg (1989: 388) draws attention to the deep paradoxes regarding iconoclasm, he might as well be interpreted as describing the ideological powers of images:

> We love art and hate it; we cherish it and are afraid of it; we know of its powers. They are powers that, when we do not destroy, we call redemptive. If they are too troubling they are powers of *images*, not of art.

In my endeavour to focus on bodily postures linking visual cultural representations across centuries, culminating in Part 4, I shall implement and critically expand Aby Warburg's concept of 'pathos formulae'. Warburg's attention to bodily gestures, stances and facial expressions and his alertness to the recurring idolatrous provocation provided by representations, render his work very useful in the study of ideology aware picaresque visual cultural products that mostly focus on human actions, and usually are narrative in character.

For Warburg (1969)[15] lucidity, control and freedom of thought and feeling is compromised in experiences of desire and anguish in extreme situations, and the limits of rationality are encountered through the expression of such experiences in *Pathosformeln*. In Warburg's approach *Pathosformeln* refer to "pathetically enhanced mimicry" or "enhanced bodily or spiritual expression" as found in antique visual representations, and which are constantly readapted in the history of visual culture. He refers to this phenomenon of their recurrence as the "Nachleben der Antike". The term *Pathosformel* can be parsed in its components in order to denote "the overwhelming nature of strong erotic experience e.g. of wild suffering" (Dittmann 1967: 98) on the one hand, and the formulae or expressive conventions by means of which this is depicted, on the

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other hand. This division is parallel to the opposition of *pathos* and *ethos*, so deeply rooted in Greek culture and referred to by Aristotle in his rhetorical and ethic writings. *Pathos* is momentary, direct, and fluctuating; *ethos* is lasting, rigid, and can be repeated in stereotypical formulae. *Pathos* describes emotions and passion; *ethos* is a spiritual abstraction transposed into visual form. This description reveals the inner tension or explosive power ("innere Sprengkraft") of the concept, making evident its richness and its fruitfulness (Settis 1997: 35-49). Iversen also praises Warburg's "equal concern for the losses incurred by too much rational detachment from 'the powers of darkness', that is, myth, tragedy, emotion or what we might call the unconscious" (Iversen 1993: 543).[16] It is exactly in the alertness to these 'dark powers' of images that Warburg's work is pertinent to an investigation of the ideological powers of images.

Although Warburg's field of research was the art of the Renaissance, in which he detected residues of primitive idolatry, he believed that "[t]he epoch in which logic and magic [...], grafted on one trunk, flourish, is actually timeless".[17] It is Warburg's alertness to the recurring idolatrous provocation provided by representations that renders his work very useful in the study of visual ideology. His attention to bodily gestures, stances and facial expressions is pertinent in picaresque ideology critique, although Warburg himself was not overtly fascinated by subversively humourous visual material. I regard the concept of *Pathosformeln* to be worth extending to include various other means by which the demonized powers of ideology in general is revealed. Visagie's (1995) perspectives will aid in transposing, deepening and stretching Warburg's findings

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[15] Cf. Gombrich 1970, Wuttke 1979, Hoffman, Syamken *et. al.* 1980, Ginzburg 1988, Ferretti 1989, Bredenkamp 1991, Kulturforum Warburg 1991, Iversen 1993, Kemp, Mattenklott *et. al.* 1997.

[16] This "dialectical grasp on the need for distanced reflection and intimate connection" for Iversen "anticipates in many ways feminist critiques of science and phallogocentric logic" (Iversen 1993: 541).

[17] "Die Epoche, wo Logik und Magie [...], auf einem Stamme geimpfet blühten, ist eigentlich zeitlos" (quoted in Dittmann 1967: 100).

in the history of visual culture from the level of the dialectics of reason and magic,[18] to the dialectics of good and evil, or sin and redemption.

The continental revaluation of Warburg's work by art historians who practised ideology-critical 'kritische Theorie' in the 1970's and who have since became associated with the 'Frankfurter Schule' (Berndt *et al.* 1992) , is understandable in the light of Warburg's demand for a 'kunstgeschichtliche Kulturwissenschaft'.[19] His theory of *Pathosformeln* is a response to the aestheticization of art history by his contemporaries. Warburg's mode of practising art history is not only relevant from an ideology-critical perspective, but also from a feminist point of view. In her article "Retrieving Warburg's tradition", Margaret Iversen (1993) revalues Warburg's work from this point of view. In her opinion Gombrich's (1970) contentious biography of Aby Warburg 'defused' the critical potential of Warburg's historiography in the English-speaking world. Her angle provides a healthy move away from the Anglo-American feminist critical focus (e.g. Griselda Pollock) on the tradition of the contextual social history of art, represented by T.J. Clark. It strengthens the relevance of the feminist perspective across the

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[18] Warburg's theory of symbolism is derived from Theodor Vischer's bi-polar symbol concept, oscillating between rational freedom and primitive magical bondage. This symbolic polarity is transferred to the history of human consciousness so that Enlightenment resolve and magical bondage remain inseparable. As a child of the Enlightenment Warburg experienced this phenomenon as a tragedy. However, for him the ability to symbolize remains inextricably bound to dark, unfathomable irrationality. "Die Auffahrt mit Helios zur Sonne und mit der Proserpina in die Tiefe ist symbolisch für zwei Stationen, die untrennbar im Kreislauf des Lebens zusamengehören wie Einatmung und Ausatmung" [The ascent with Helios to the sun and (the descent) with Proserpina in the depths are symbolic of two stations which are [...] bound together in the circular course of life like breathing in and out] (Dittmann 1967: 100). Warburg's ultimate conviction that all human aspirations to freedom are therefore futile and that reason is powerless, leads him to conclude that history is "eine Geschichte der menschlichen Leidenschaften, die sich in ihrer grauenvollen Einfachheit – Habenwollen, Gebenwollen, Tötenwollen, Sterbenwollen – in einer von der Zivilisation nur scheinbar überdeckten Daseinsschicht beständig gleichbleiben, und die der formverleihende Geist – gerade deswegen – in immer neuen Kulturgebilden zugleich offenbaren und bändigen muss" [a history of human passions that remains the same in its ghastly simplicity – the desires to have, to give, to kill and to die – on a level of existence that is only seemingly covered up by civilization and which is manifested and disciplined in ever renewed cultural images by form giving Mind] (Dittmann 1967: 101). Warburg's pessimistic conclusion is a result of his dialectic world view.
[19] Art historical cultural studies.

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spectrum of approaches to art history as not only pertaining to such more obviously ideology-critical approaches.

It might be inveighed that my method, by focusing on eloquent detail and replicating a weakness in Warburg's *kulturwissenschaftliche* method, does not promote respect for the integrity of an art work as a whole. However, in post-modern retrospect, the strength of Warburg's emphasis on the enhanced mimicry of *Pathosformeln* is that a visual cultural representation is thereby not regarded as a closed and isolated fictive world, but rather valued for its ideological allurement of and affects on spectators.

The suggestion of undercurrents of anxiety, pain, fear and desire in comic contexts, often mediated by a Fool figure, is an effective picaresque means to portray insight in the pervasive, but concealed nature of sin, folly and ideology. Fool figures suspiciously expose folly in everyone, and are even able to ridicule themselves, because of their insight in human ideological entanglement.[20] The postural ambiguity related to the metaphor of the Fool, e.g. in the fallen blind entertainers by Brueghel and Sherman (chapter 4), communicating both suffering and hope, fear and awe, humour and humility, discloses the 'explosive' significance of a *Pathosformel*. For Warburg there are various possibilities of meaning in identical expressive gestures. The passionate gestures of pathos formulae incorporate meanings and their opposites, and imbued with energy, they function as explosives ('Sprengmittel') with a polarizing effect (Warncke 1980b: 63). Through his theory of social memory Warburg explains "that the pagan world of forms is sealed into European expressive culture".[21] (Warnke 1980:131), and this includes both the 'apollinisch abklärende' (Apollonian enlightening aspects) and the 'dionysisch anstachelnden' (Dionysian instigating, irritating aspects) in pathos formulae. Although for Warburg postural

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[20] Cf. chapter 4, section 1, chapter 7, section 1, chapter 8, and chapter 12.
[21] 'die Einverseelung der paganen Formwelt in die europäische Ausdruckskultur'.

ambivalence communicated the residues of magic and superstition, not yet conquered by reason, the notion is worth expanding in order to convey the pervasive, "unreasonable", but concealed nature of sin, folly and ideology. In Part 4 a specific fool's posture of bared or protruded buttocks is the crux around which an ideology-critical analysis is made. In the context of the research report as a whole, the discussion of visual material referred to in Part 4 acquires more depth.

1.2 A definition of ideology

In his theory of ideology Johann Visagie (1994a: 1-73, 1995b, 1996b) distinguishes basically two different approaches to the definition of ideology. On the one hand ideology is considered to be involved with social relations of domination between people. On the other hand it is considered to refer to the domination of all people by certain ideas or values. The first approach is exemplified by that of the British ideology theorist and sociologist John Thompson (1990, 1990b) who understands ideology to be essentially linked to the process of sustaining asymmetrical relations of power *in society*. He defines ideology critique as pertaining to the role of symbolic forms in relations of social inequality such as gender and class. Any symbolic representation that relates to or perpetuates such socially constructed relations would be considered to fall within the field of ideology critique.

An example of the second approach would be the cultural critique of German ideology theorists like Horkheimer, Adorno and Habermas (cf. Klapwijk 1976, Frazer 1989: 113-143, Ricoeur 1986) who also start from the Marxist concept of domination, but expand the latter into the cultural imperialism of a cluster of values, such as economic or technological or bureaucratic ambitions. Michel Foucault's work (cf. Frazer 1989: 17-68) in which power is regarded as a network of anonymous relationships at work on the micro levels of society, sometimes

also lends itself to be interpreted as a representative of this approach (Visagie 1994a: 22-27). According to Honneth (Visagie 1994a: 180) both Foucault and Habermas ambivalently moves from social group to 'systemic' dominance. Visagie (1998: 3). regards philosophers in the reformational tradition, like Dooyeweerd, Ellul and Goudzwaard as of this approach too.

However, it is important to insist that a critical theory of ideology has to contend with both social domination and value domination. It seems that a combination and a redefinition of both these approaches in a structural conception of ideology, would deepen our understanding of the critical theory of ideology. Such an approach is opposed to a 'subjectivist' conception of ideology attending only to the human agents engaged in power struggles, as well as an 'objectivist' conception of ideology concentrating only on the cultural dominance of systems like science and technology (Visagie 1998: 3).

I concur with Visagie's broader view of ideology as pertaining to the autonomization (in the sense of unduly privileging), glorification, veneration, celebration, exaltation, worship or idolization of any value, be it social, conceptual or aesthetic, even if this does not obviously result in unjust power relations between social groups. Ideology emerges wherever a certain value is selected and exulted above other values so that its demands come to dominate a spectrum of values in a specific life-context. This dominating value actually robs other norms and values of their inherent meaning by forcing its own demands on them. Excessive power is granted to those glorified values and goals, from which some kind of order or meaning or redemption – for society at large and for our personal lives – is expected or desired. Hence, our social and cultural environment and personal life experience are fraught with ideological power struggles. These power relations that exist in and around us are interconnected in different ways, and thus form a complex network of value domination, influencing our everyday lives (Visagie 1994a: 1-73).

I have stated in the preceding section that, to heighten the usefulness of this definition for the field of visual ideology, I deliberately and concretely translate Visagie's 'idolization of values' in the above definition, with 'idolatry' in order to conjure up the more 'primitive' and 'crude' connotations of superstitious rituals involving image magic. It is interesting to note then that Bob Goudzwaard's (1981) definition of ideology in terms of four properties of idolatry exhibits many resemblances with Visagie's definition of ideology. He describes ideology as idolatry in the following terms:

> To begin with, something from created reality, something that is readily available, is isolated, shaped, and erected. This is the first characteristic of an idol: something from this world is set apart as holy, special and autonomous. Next it is consecrated, inaugurated, which implies that a life of its own is attributed to it: the second characteristic. After this, people kneel in front of it, bring offerings, and ask the idol what they should do. This is the third characteristic: veneration accompanied by a degree of renunciation of self-responsibility. The idol becomes the authority that declares the law, that reveals how we should live and act. In conclusion, it is expected of the god to repay all the respect, offerings and obedience in health, security, in wealth and fortune. This is the fourth characteristic: the idol is regarded as a healer, a Saviour; Someone that brings happiness. And therefore he can demand what he likes, sometimes the life of animals or even of humans (Goudzwaard 1981: 22-23).[22]

Although Foucault's description of a net of power relations reaching into the bodies and identities of individuals, controlling their knowledge and their actions,

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[22] Om te beginnen wordt iets uit de schepping, wordt iets uit wat natuurlijk voorhanden is afgezondert, bewerkt en overeind gezet. Dat is het *eerste* kenmerk van een afgodsbeeld: iets uit de wereld wordt apart gezet als iets heiligs, iets bijzonders, en derhalve verzelfstandigd. Daarna word het ingewijd, ingehuldigd, wat inhoudt dat er een eigen leven aan wordt toegekend: het *tweede* kenmerk. Vervolgens knielen mensen er voor neer, brengen offers, en vragen aan de afgod wat ze doen zullen. Dat is het *derde* kenmerk: verering, die gepaard gaat met een zeker afstand doen van eigen verantwoordelikheid. De god wordt degene die de wet stelt; die openbaart hoe we moeten leven en handelen. En tenslotte wordt van de god verwacht dat hij al die eerbied, offers en gehoorzaamheid terugbetaald in gezondheid, in veiligheid, in welvaart, in geluk. Dat is het *vierde* kenmerk: de afgod wordt gezien als een heel-maker, als een Heiland; Iemand die geluk

has a certain ring of truth to it, the great weakness of his analysis is that his peculiar concept of power does not really enable him to identify and to criticize the formation of idolized value systems in culture and society. In fact one can't find in his work clear criteria for distinguishing between normative authority and domination (Visagie 1994a: 1-73).

Visagie (1994a: 85-100, 1996b) designed an approach to modern ideological culture which he calls the 'Ideological topography of modernity'. The goal is a comprehensive analysis of 'ideological culture' with its inter-related dominating discourses, including everyday discourses, as well as the specialized discourses of art, philosophy and science. By means of this model he seeks to construct a topography of such discourses, showing how the formations generating these discourses, are socio-culturally positioned and how they are interconnected. Such a topography maintains plurality, in that "ideological culture is not equated with a monolithic colossus named 'science-technology' for example", nor are "relations of domination equated with just one kind of domination, for example class distinction" (Visagie 1998: 3). Although I shall neither use Visagie's terminology, nor locate the ideological powers referred to in my visual cultural analyses, on specific levels in Visagie's topography of modern ideologized culture, it is useful to expand on his map of the different layers of ideological culture in society, from macro to micro levels, because it gives an impression of the way in which ideologies are enmeshed, inter-related and variously nuanced in all symbolic cultural products:

> On the macro level will be located those formations that stamp this culture in terms of its overall structure and direction; on the ultimate micro level, those formations that operate in terms of their appeal to the individual in his or her most private circumstances. And between these 'upper' and 'lower' horizons will be other layers or levels, on which are

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brengt. En daarom mag eisen wat hij wenst, tot aan somtijds het leven van dieren of zelfs mensen toe (Goudzwaard 1981: 22-23).

situated groups of formations that can be ordered according to the different functions they perform in the whole of ideological culture (Visagie 1996b: 75).

On the macro level is found the *steering powers* of ideological modernity. They comprise formations more or less standardly targeted in critical theory, such as technology, economic and administrative power and so on. On an immediately lower level, a category of formations that support and sustain the operations of these steering powers by linking them to their own internal autonomizations: the "mythologizing grand narratives of Reason, Nature, History, Humanity", and so on. At this level the 'ideological topography of modernity' links up with Visagie's (1996a) theory of macromotives.

On the 'lowest' micro level there is a category of "pastoral havens" that provide the most concrete answers to the individual's quest for personal meaning, here and now. It is at this level of the consolations of love, sex, prestige, power, money and consumerism, art and moralism that the advertising industry finds a footing. In between there are those formations that serve to integrate individuals into society in a specific manner ("behavioural integrator-formations"), like selfism (narcissism), personal performance and achievement, those formations that involve politically powerful autonomizations ("mediating formations") like liberalism, ethno-nationalism, and so on, and those formations in which the ideological aspects of social movements (like feminism and ecology) come to expression ("social movement culture") (Visagie 1996b: 75).

The expansive thrust of this theory of ideological culture in which ideology negatively pervades all acts, representations, discourses and socio-cultural institutions, is that critical assessment of the underlying idolized values remains possible, even though ideology can never be suspended, and one can never escape the ideological powers that shape us historically. One of the implications of this definition of ideology for art history is that products of visual culture – for

instance an advertisement using a beautiful female form to sell a product, or a Willem de Kooning painting representing a woman as a mutilated and dangerous female monster – are not simply deprecated at face value for exhibiting a supposed form of gender ideology that perpetuates the social subordination of women, but rather, can be scrutinized for different nuances of meaning revealing the layered forms in which various enmeshed ideologies have an effect.

Visagie's 'Ideological Topography of Modernity' is a sub-theory of a comprehensive philosophical theory of discourse, which he calls a theory of 'Discourse Archeology' and by means of which the "origins, basic conditions and deep structures" of discourse can be investigated (Visagie 1998: 1). The other sub-theories involved are "firstly, a logosemantics that analyses how the human mind conceptualizes ground-ideas in the context of religion, philosophy or science, secondly, a figurative semiotics that studies the ways in which symbols, models, metaphors, etc. operate in discourse and, thirdly, the theory of discursive macro-systems, focusing on the history and rhetorical mechanism of the great cultural idols: Knowledge, Power, Personhood, and so on" (Visagie 1998: 1). It is especially his sub-theory of a figurative semiotics (albeit in interaction with the other sub-theories) that is pertinent to this study. His research on metaphors[23] as expressions of dynamic knowledge and belief systems (Visagie 1990) and his interest in the bodily effects of ideology[24] (Visagie 1995, 1994a: 230-240) are fascinating aids in this study.[25]

Blindness, darkness, illusion and idolatry are metaphors often associated with the definition of ideology. W J. T Mitchell (1986: 170) notes "the spell of the

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[23] Pertinent to my research in this theory are some 'root metaphors' like fighting, travelling, loving and playing that not only incite human behaviour to a great extent, but also become expressive of ontological stances towards reality. Root metaphors relate to human actions which are favoured motifs in ideology aware picaresque art. (Cf. Visagie 1990:10 and 1995). See chapters 9 and 11.
[24] He calls it delta hermeneutics after the human craving for *doxa* or glory, and according to which lifestyles and bodies are ideologically shaped. See chapter 9.
[25] See chapters 9 and 11.

optical symbolism of the theory of ideology". He analysed such recurring metaphors in the figurative language of Marx on ideology and commodity fetishism in terms of hyper-icons.[26]

The visual ideology critique proposed in this study has been defined as a picaresque mode of ideology critique or a picaresque hermeneutics of suspicion, using interpretative strategies matching those used in picaresque art, to uncover some ways in which visual material is wrought by underlying ideologies. As part of this project, such common metaphors as blindness, darkness, illusion and idolatry often associated with the definition of ideology, have to be re-described or re-aligned in terms of the above mentioned clusters of recurrent metaphors from the imaginary world of the picaresque tradition, to make such metaphors provocative in a new context. In this way, one's own picaresque blind spots might be acknowledged and critically assessed.

In picaresque art a dark and frightful underside to illusive appearances in the ideologized *verkeerde wereld* or topsy-turvy reversible world is often exposed by means of various strategies of inversion.[27] This inverted world is a monstrous realm of disproportionate priorities in which meaning becomes madness, in which human beings are blind to the variegated fullness and coherence of aspects in reality and are deceived by the illusions of everyday experiences. These characteristics are respectively covered by metaphors clustering around

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[26] He notes that the metaphor underlying Marx's concept of ideology, is the *camera obscura*, and that underlying the concept of commodity, the fetish or idol. Marx parodically treats the *camera obscura* as a mechanism for illusion, the 'phantoms', 'chimeras', and 'shadows of reality', instead of hailing its ability to give exact and scientific copies of reality (Mitchell 1986: 169). Mitchell notes that Marx's use of the metaphor of the *camera obscura* for ideology seems both rhetorically ineffective in the empiricist environment of his time, and potentially damaging to his own reliance on empirical premises (Mitchell 1986: 169).

[27] It is interesting that Marx's metaphor for ideology, the *camera obscura*, holds the connotations of inversions, shadows, reflections and representation (see Mitchell 1996:170).

the motifs of monstrosity (disproportion and madness), the eye (blindness) and the Fool (deception and illusion).[28]

One might now look for pictures that convey the picaresque perspective in an immediate manner and in which a picaresque representation of ideology can be interpreted to be made into a spectacle, in motifs clustering around the metaphors of monstrosity, blindness and illusion. Such images could resort with Mitchell's 'hyper-icons', or pictures explaining the nature of pictures that are used as mediating images in philosophical discourse (Mitchell 1986: 158).[29] In the context of this study I regard some works in the genre of 'fool's portraits' to be picaresque 'hyper-icons' – pictures picturing the nature of picaresque discourse. Images of this description made their appearance in Germany and the Netherlands during the first quarter of the sixteenth century; roughly concurrent with the rage for fool's literature (narrenliteratuur, like Sebastian Brandt's Narrenschiff, 1493). I shall interpret these represented fools as personifications of monstrosity, deceptive vision, and trickery – as authoritative images which have canonical value within the picaresque tradition.

These little studied portraits (Figures 1-4), not previously regarded as 'high art', usually portray a fool, laughing and supplied with fool's attributes like the marotte, spectacles, fool's cowl and bells, in bust or half length format. The fool is not presented in action, but laughs broadly for or at the viewer, revealing not only his teeth, but also his gums (Vandenbroeck 1987: 45-49). The portrayal of these fools is formalized, yet the traits of different fool types are discernible. Four

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[28] Goudzwaard's (1981: 25) definition of ideology stresses deception and illusion: "dat wat dictatuur is als de hoogste vrijheid kan worden voorgesteld, dat wat vernietiging inhoudt kan worden verkocht onder het etiket van levensredding. Ideologie is derhalve: leugen. Altijd verdraait ze de waarheid, de vrijheid, het recht, ...". [what is dictatorship can be represented as the highest form of freedom, what predicts destruction can be sold under the label of salvation. Ideology is therefore: falsehood. Truth, freedom and justice is always distorted ...]
[29] Examples mentioned by him are: "... the canonical examples (Plato's cave, Aristotle's wax tablets, Locke's dark room) [...] Wittgenstein's duck-rabbit, Foucault's Las Meninas, Lessing's Laocoön ..." (Mitchell 1986:158).

examples illustrate this. Two are by anonymous Dutch artists from the early sixteenth century (Figures 1 and 2), and one by an anonymous German master of the same period (Figure 3). Another fool's portrait is that by the German Master of the Angerer Portrait (Figure 4).

The German painting (Figure 3) depicts a squint-eyed fool eating an egg[30] and a piece of bread in an unrefined manner, messing a great deal and revealing very dirty fingernails. Although this might refer to his socially marginalized position, the coin, decorated with the bust of a dignitary or king and pinned to his jacket might signify that he is a court jester. The focus on food as a primary source of abjection is an ancient one and follows from its significance as an oral object:

> Food enters the body from the outside, crossing the dividing boundary between the self and that which is external to it. Mary Douglas's key insight in *Purity and Danger* is to recognize that, in this, the human body stands as a metaphor for social structures (Betterton 1996: 139).

In Douglas's terms the messy egg and bread, in their passage over the outer bodily margins to the inside, would have the potential to signify cultural anxiety and disgust. In its marginality, the Fool's body is a metaphoric site by means of which societal conventions can be humorously probed.

His lunatic expression and squinted double vision also bring the grotesque side of the Fool's nature to the fore. People with birth defects and people made abnormal by disease were considered to be 'natural fools' in Sebastian Brant's text. His ugly teeth, spectacularly revealed, identify him as a man of no worth who does nothing but babble and is arrogant, proud, light, and inconstant (Sullivan 1994: 79).[31] The interest in physiognomy and the moral import of facial

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[30] Egg yolk is another fool's attribute (Vandenbroeck 45-49).
[31] Sullivan quotes Johannes de Indagine's *Chiromantia* (1522), a detailed guide to the connections between appearance and character, from an English translation, *Chiromance &*

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features is evident from the number of manuals and calendars published on the topic in the first half of the sixteenth century (cf. Sullivan 1994: 78,166). The German woodcut likewise emphasizes the marginalized social position of this ugly vagrant with a runny nose, selling marottes. The sculpted heads decorating the marottes all wear sinister expressions.

The two Dutch fools (Figures 1 and 2) both hold one hand with fingers spread over the eyes. The fingers held loosely across the eyes may be a visualization of the expression "door de vingers zien", which means to overlook a mistake or to connive at something (Vandenbroeck 1987: 48). The meanings of conspiring, contriving, intriguing or scheming inherent in connivance, suggest the playful and socially communicative aspects of the fool's disposition, in spite of his marginalization. The fools' looks suggest that spectators are assumed to be in the know, and that the latter are invited to contrive with the fools. The spectacles held on their breasts indicate handicapped vision and that there is a variety of ways of looking at things, depending on the focus, the distance or the angle. Vision is deceptive and this provides opportunities and freedom for trickery.

The representation and rhetoric of these Dutch and German fools can be considered to be paradigmatic of the picaresque stance in art. In contrast with the German examples, there is an emphasis in the Dutch examples, not only on the constraints (self-imposed or otherwise) of the fool's vision, but also on the advantages of playfully exploiting such restrictions in order to expose their effects. The mad or ridiculous clown figure feigns blindness or impaired vision, but by sleight of hand exposes human folly.

Physiognomie (Lyons 1549: 147) to substantiate this physiognomic association. A large number of physiognomy manuals were published in the sixteenth century and attest to the widespread interest in 'reading' faces. Cf. Kleinspehn 1989.

These pictorial strategies could be translated into a ('troubled')[32] picaresque hermeneutics of suspicion or a self-conscious ideology-critical method for the analysis of visual culture, acknowledging some of its own limitations. To assume a picaresque methodology is to accept our ideological entanglement, and to exploit picaresque blind spots in order to expose hidden undercurrents of ideology. By wilfully juxtaposing seemingly disparate visual material, sometimes divided by centuries, embedded meanings are teased out in a provocative way. By means of the shameless and insolent stance of the clown, ideologies hidden from view are perversely uncovered. Such a method will be put into action in Part 4.

1.3 Ideology critique and feminism

The critique of gender ideologies in visual and other texts is as urgent an 'academic' assignment as it is a 'political' one, in the light of the broader definition of ideology sketched above. In this definition feminist 'academic' commitment is not more or less ideological than any other research endeavour. Joan Scott (1991: 42-43) relates how the evolution from feminism to women's studies to gender studies is often perceived as a progression from the narrow activist politics of the incipient movement, to the more academically, historically orientated women's studies, to the analytical thrust of gender studies, legitimized by its distance from political struggle. Obversely, in the same rendition of the evolution of feminism, this 'retreat' to academia is deplored for 'depoliticizing' it and rendering feminism socially ineffectual. It is apparent that from both points of view ideology is viewed very narrowly, obviously excluding the intellectual sphere. I would like to assert that it is in the general interest of feminism to clearly define an expansive notion of ideology and to align feminism as one strand within ideology critique.

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[32] See chapter 6, section 1 for an exposition of the significance of the qualification 'troubled' in this context.

The feminist slogan that 'the private is political' has served to draw attention to the pervasive nature of gender ideologies through the everyday world of trivial and personal detail. This negative intrusion of ideology is apparent also through the incessant and everyday flow of mass-culture texts and images and it has been in the interest of feminism to assert that "no vision, not even artistic vision, is neutral vision" (Devereaux 1990: 337).

The proposed broader definition of ideology gives greater depth to the feminist contention that all art, scientific research, discourse and social relations are affected by gender ideology. Gender ideology is thereby considered to be a complicating dimension affecting ideologies manifest in academic discourse, as well as in visual and socio-culture. This is so, because the grip of underlying ideological steering powers is manifested variously in the public and private lives of men and women. Ideology in this broad sense, which pervades all culture, is complicated by gender ideology. This is most evident in the different body experiences of males and females whose bodies are shaped by ideologies and whose body limits are transgressed by ideological powers in different ways. In Part 4 the effect of the exposure of male and female buttocks is thus compared to contrast the male and female roles of the Fool in society.

A more inclusive theory of ideology also has implications for the premise in gender studies that gender is a social construct. When ideology is considered to have sway over inter-personal relations of social domination only, an understanding of gender as (exclusively) socially constructed follows readily. The idea of the social construction of gender can be regarded as a reaction to the imbalances of power resulting from essentialist assumptions about women's 'natural' being. In this feminist reaction 'nature' is replaced by an idea of 'culture' as techno-social manipulation and control of human nature. A broader theory

provides a theoretical framework in which not gender difference in itself, but a given theorization of it can be considered to be ideological.

1.4 Ideology critique and art history

It is only since recently, in the wake of Marxism and feminism, that art historians have explicitly uncovered certain embedded ideologies (in the more constricted sense, and here pertaining to class and gender) in high art forms.[33] Moreover, this endeavour remained secluded to a great extent to the social history of art school in art historiography.[34] Previously, 'lower' forms of visual culture, like caricatures and *Flugblätter*, which addressed wider audiences than the 'civilized' art appreciating communities, and which endeavoured to arouse feelings and evoke political opinions, were considered to be ideological (in the constricted political sense of the term). These art forms were assigned their lower position in the hierarchy of visual culture as a result. In contrast, 'high art' was not generally considered to be ideologically troubling or unsettling, because of its canonic elevation to a presumed domain of cultural freedom above overt, simplistic or propagandistic significance.

A much broader range of visual culture, including all high art forms, is drawn into the range of ideology critique if the more expansive theory of ideology, as defined above, is accepted. It may be asserted from such a stance that although there are differences in the ways in which various ideologies are reinforced and altered in art and interpretations of art, all visual culture, art and its interpretations (be it Marxist, feminist or even non-ideology-critical in intent), are in some sense touched by ideology. From this point of view, the sophisticated hermeneutic strategies that have evolved in the discipline of art history might well be applied to all visual culture, if a special eye is fostered, alert to the

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[33] Cf. e.g. Hauser 1973, Hadjinicolaou 1978, Berndt *et al.* 1992, Gouma-Peterson & Mathews 1987, Tickner 1988.

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pervasiveness of ideology in the most trivial and banal visual representations, but also for the radical depth of idolized values.

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[34] Clark 1985, Pollock 1991.

PART 1

THE THEORY OF A PICARESQUE TRADITION

This part outlines the meaning and derivation of the terms 'picaresque' and 'tradition'. Calvin Seerveld evocatively uses the literary term 'picaresque' in his transposition into visual and imaginary terms, of the philosopher D. H. Th. Vollenhoven's typology of philosophical conceptions. It may be fruitful to expand the more limited use of the term 'picaresque novel' and 'picaresque fictional world' in literary criticism against the background of Seerveld's definitions, in order to construct the contours of a broader 'picaresque imaginary world'. The proposition of such an 'imaginary world' may be a way of accounting for the recurrence of similar metaphors, themes, strategies in cultural products, spanning centuries. In the context of such an imaginary world, some questions are to be explored further in later parts of this study. The description of this picaresque 'world' takes ontological 'thought structures' as guideline, but starts out from concrete works of art and products of visual culture. Moreover, it uses the language of art history as a discipline, rather than that of philosophy or aesthetics. Seerveld's methodology is taken as the starting point and the ideology-critical perspective of Johann Visagie is meant to enrich it. An endeavour is also made to make the distinctive features of one typiconic tradition, the picaresque, more lucidly visible within the history of art and visual culture.

This part commences descriptively and concludes with creative criticism in the last sections, when the advantages of viewing feminist art from the perspective of 'typiconic traditions' are considered, and Seerveld's 'typiconic' distinctions are scrutinized.

CHAPTER 2: SEERVELD'S DEFINITION OF THE PICARESQUE TRADITION AS PART OF HIS 'CARTOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGY' FOR ART HISTORY

The Dutch philosopher, D. H. Th. Vollenhoven (1892-1978), together with Hermann Dooyeweerd, is considered a founder of reformational or neo-Calvinist philosophy. His *konsekwent probleem-historische* approach to the history of philosophy spawned his typology of Western philosophical conceptions. A characteristic of this method is the distinction between historical periods (*tijdstromingen*) and conceptual types. Epochs denote the discontinuous historical progression of philosophical discourse, whereas types denote continuous schemes, patterns or relationships of four fundamental ontological themes that recur through different epochs: the problem of structure and genesis, the problem of dualism or monism, the problem of universalism-individualism, and the problem of the changing place of the law as a criterion of periodization. Through various shifts of accents in each theme, and through different combinations of themes, disparate philosophical conceptions arise. In the history of philosophy a diverse collection of such patterns are evident:

> Every philosophical 'conception' is a combination of themes. Each theme, in turn, contains implicitly a *problem* (or complex of problems – *problematiek*) and the solution given to it. With this thesis Vollenhoven begins his *History of Philosophy*, I. [*Geschiedenis der Wijsbegeerte* I, 1950, ESH]. The immediate task at hand, therefore, was to trace the history of the chief themes of philosophy, in order to be able to sketch their various combinations against a well-illuminated background. 'In this way I arrived at the problem-historical method.' (18: 6) (Wolters 1979: 239).

This entails that each epoch has available as many types or traditions of thought as were developed in the epoch preceding it. Subsequent philosophers, in order to make new ideas comprehensible, have to contend with such traditions (cf. Tol & Bril 1992: 224-260, Bril 1986: 5-6, 176-188).

Vollenhoven's typology has inspired other attempts to map ideological power struggles at work in Western culture. Calvin Seerveld's cartographic methodology of 'typiconic traditions' or 'formats' in art historiography (Seerveld 1973, 1980a, 1991, 1993, 1995), and Johann Visagie's topography of ideologized modern culture (cf. Visagie 1994b, 1996b, 1998), are two Vollenhovian repercussions germane to this study.

Seerveld's cartographic approach to art history entails three basic co-ordinates. Firstly, there is the "synchronic reality of a period" which is the "communal unity" of a period at the level of life styles:

> Periods can be roughly dated somewhere; periods can run simultaneously, although they do not recur; and the more-than-individual hold on people, the principality of a period, is historically real, as real a compelling force as Nazism, for example or Hellenism (Seerveld 1980a: 148).

Secondly, there is a typological variety of perchronic (i.e. enduring through time) stances, "different, distinct types of worldviews" or "multiple, coexistent *Weltanschauungen* (and art traditions)" (Seerveld 1980a: 148). A third dimension is the diachronic reality of historical development. It seems as if this refers to "historical passage" in "long-range" terms (Seerveld 1980a: 148,149). Mary Leigh Morbey (1995: 70) describes this third co-ordinate as the "inheritance, or footprinted trail, that one generation gives over to the next, for good or ill".

The advantages of Vollenhoven's legacy of emphasis on plurality and difference, reworked and simplified by Seerveld, is phrased thus by Seerveld (1980a: 149):

> The force of the alternative historiographic method I have only sketched here is that an historical period is conceived concretely in three-dimensional structure, so that relative simplicity, complexity, and flexibility are structurally assured. Every art or literary artifact considered historically will be immediately scrutinized comparatively as to *current milieu*, *traditional matrix*, and *eventful import* [my italics, ESH].

Seerveld's 'typiconic formats' for the history of the arts which interest us here — representing the "traditional matrix" referred to above — are inspired by Vollenhoven's types. The use of the term 'typiconic' aids in defining the methodological project of tracing ontologies to their pre-conceptual *weltanschauliche* level[1] in order to formulate imaginative directives which become perceptible in visual representations. "*Typiconic format* refers to how the artist frames his or her artistic production to be imaginitively received" and "typiconic format is not conceptual, not semantic in nature, but is an imaginative apriori, which gives a specific cast, a typical cast, to an artist's work" (Seerveld 1993: 60). Seerveld provisionally distinguishes eight traditions, always stressing that such categorizing is "only valid for people with a sense of humour" (Seerveld 1993: 72). They are given here, as listed in his article "Vollenhoven's legacy for art historiography" (Seerveld 1993: 61,71), each with a clue to its Vollenhovian derivation in brackets (cf. Seerveld 1992). The lists of artists are extended by some from Morbey's (1995) lists:[2]

- The mystical tradition ("mythologizing[3] philosophy"), including artists like El Greco, Fuseli, Redon, Friedrich, Runge, Kandinsky, Brancusi, Rothko, Newman, Chagall.

- The heroic tradition ([geneticist] "deamonic Empedocles or Heracleitan wrestle"), including artists like Michelangelo, Rubens, Delacroix, Poussin, Pollock, Kiefer.

- The picaresque tradition ([geneticist] "interactionary monism"), including artists like Brueghel, Steen, Hogarth, Rauschenberg, Lichtenstein, Miro, Tinguely.

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[1] Seerveld (1973, 1975, 1980a) distinguishes between: (1) way-of-life, a subconscious *habitus* corporately held (2) *Weltanschauung*, articulated, reflective, quasi-synoptic, and literary suggestive and (3) philosophy, systematized, analytic.

[2] See the table provided by Mary Leigh Morbey (1995: 71).

[3] There are four fundamental answers to the problem of historical development according to Seerveld: the mythologizing, geneticist and structuralist answers, as well as the option of seeing history as a 'structural genesis'. The last answer is parallel to Vollenhoven's 'comogono-cosmological' option and the legitimate answer to historical development from a reformational or neo-Calvinist point of view. In my list I shall add the implied answers on this level of historical development, where they are not mentioned in this text by Seerveld, in square brackets.

- o The scenic tradition ([geneticist] "parallelism" or "parallelist monism"), including artists like Canaletto, Guardi, Van der Rohe, [the] late [works in the oeuvre of] Henry Moore, Diebenkorn.

- o The idyllic tradition ([structuralist] "schematist dualism with dichotomy in anthropology"), including artists like Van Eyck, Leonardo, Giorgione, Botticelli, Claude Lorrain, Watteau, Gainsborough, Reynolds, Constable, Damien Hirst, Escher.

- o The paradigmatic tradition ([structuralist] "dualism without dichotomy in anthropology"; "Monarchian"), including artists like Raphael, Vermeer, Chardin, Cézanne Braque, Hopper, De Chirico, Magritte, Warhol.

- • The hedonic tradition ([structuralist] "materialistic monism"), including artists like Correggio, Titian, Boucher, Ingres, Renoir, Klimt, 'Madonna'.

- • The troubled cosmic tradition [structured genesis][4], including artists like the late Rembrandt, late Goya, Manet, Van Gogh, Barlach, Rouault.

It is striking that no bracketed clue is added by Seerveld to the last 'typiconic format'.[5] The terms 'troubled' and 'cosmic' refer to 'direction' and 'structure' respectively. 'Structure' and 'direction' are philosophical concepts in some schools of neo-Calvinist reformational thought for creatureliness and religious direction or, to put it simply, referring to creation and sin/redemption.

The closest published description of the picaresque tradition provided by Seerveld himself, that I could find, is the following:

> Vollenhoven would have said, 'in de lijn van Brueghel en Jan Steen,' Bakhtin would refer to the 'carnival' vantage point of Dostoevsky — where the vitality of what is naturally lusty and rough-hewn is celebrated, where the wry, the incongruous, the bawdy comic, is real and appreciated (Seerveld 1993: 61).

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[4] In his article 'The pedagogical strength of a Christian methodology in philosophical historiography' Seerveld (1975) sets out his own position as regards the problem of historical development. When he places himself in the 'troubled cosmic' on his chart of typiconic traditions, we might assume that the answer of 'structured genesis' to this problem is implied here.
[5] More about this in chapter 6, section 1.

In an unpublished list of short approximations of Seerveld's typiconic traditions, Dirk van den Berg (1984: 49) defines the picaresque as follows:

> A comic geneticism related to the interactionary monism of a naturalistic Darwinism. The latter, in contrast to all dualisms, stresses the basic role of bio-organic vitality and physio-organic life instinct. Representations and depictions are comically cartoon-like and linear (a medium preferred to those using sculptural volumes and atmospheric colour) and [have] dance-like movements, but are simultaneously [preoccupied with] seriously robust, vital, unrefined, everyday activities. Such activities are usually presented in episodic, peasant-like, earthy, low mode manner, honouring manual labour, the seasonal passage of life, and the earthbound origin of all culture. In this 'genre' approach the vital origins of all important and favourite aspects of reality are emphasized, but [the idea of origin is] not necessarily limited and reduced to them.[6]

Other cryptic outlines of the picaresque tradition provided by Van den Berg (1992b) are the following:

> Terms like comic, satiric, peasant-like, boorish, earthy, scabrous, banal, unrefined, popular are used in critical literature to describe works of art in this tradition. Universal manifestations of turnabouts and reversions (Spierenburg 1987) and the subversive or iconoclastic effect of inversion on participants of such text worlds (among whom beholders/readers are included), characterize the picaresque world view type. *De verkeerde wereld, The topsy-turvy world,* or *The reversible word, The wheel of fortune, Der Narrenschiff* or *The ship of fools, Vrouw wereld* or *Fortuna* and carnivalesque processions, feasts, masquerades and manifestations of wildness are among the art historical topoi of this world view tradition (Van den Berg 1992b: 19).[7]

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[6] 'n Komiese genetisisme wat verband hou met die interaksionêre monisme van 'n naturalistiese Darwinisme wat in teenstelling met alle dualismes die funderende rol van bio-organiese groeikrag en fisio-organiese lewensdrif beklemtoon. Voorstellings en uitbeeldings het die komiese aard van 'cartoon'-agtige lyntekening (wat verkies word bo skulpturele massa en stemmingsvolle kleur) en dansagtige bewegings, maar terselfdertyd met die ernstige aard van die vitale, robuuste, ongerafineerde, alledaagse lewensaktiwiteite. Sulke aktiwiteite word meestal episodies, boertig, aards, platvloers aangebied met 'n waardering vir hande-arbeid, die seisoenale gang van die lewe, en die bodemgeworteldheid van alle kultuur. In hierdie 'genre'-benadering word die lewensoorsprong van alle belangrike en geliefde aspekte van die werklikheid beklemtoon, maar nie noodwendig daartoe beperk en gereduseer nie.

[7] Terme soos komies, satiries, volks, boertig, aards, skabreus, platvloers, ongekultiveerd, populêr word in die kritiese literatuur gebruik om kunswerke uit hierdie tradisie te beskryf. Universele

And:

Apart from Jeroen Bosch (Vandenbroeck 1987), Pieter Bruegel, Jan Steen, William Hogarth (Human 1990 and 1991) and Honoré Daumier that have been mentioned, there are well-known names among visual artists who work in this tradition – among others Karl Spitzweg, Toulouse-Lautrec, George Grosz (Van den Berg 1988), Otto Dix en Roy Lichtenstein (Steiner 1987). The worldview found in these works, can be characterized in philosophical terms as monistic (the natural basis of all culture, the earthbound nature of the most elevated values), geneticist (ontic structures and social hierarchies are relativized through processes of changing conventions) and naturalistic (faith in the organic substratum of instinctive vitality, pulsating growth and lower bodily functions) (Van den Berg 1992b: 21).[8]

With these bare outlines in mind I endeavour, in this study, to make the image of this 'typiconic tradition' more lucidly visible within the history of art and visual culture. The next step is to flesh out the skeleton by investigating the rich field of literary studies on the picaresque novel.

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manifestasie van wendings en omkerings (Spierenburg 1987) en die subversiewe of ikonoklastiese effek van inversies op die deelnemers aan sulke tekswêrelde (waaronder die betragters/lesers ook tel), kenmerk die pikareske wêreldbeeldtipe. *De verkeerde wereld, The topsy-turvy world,* of *The reversible word, The wheel of fortune, Der Narrenschiff* of *The ship of fools, Vrouw wereld* of *Fortuna* en karanavalske optogte, feeste, maskerades en manifestasies van wildheid tel onder die kunshistoriese topoi van hierdie wêreldbeskoulike tradisie (Van den Berg 1992b: 19).

[8] Benewens Jeroen Bosch (Vandenbroeck 1987), Pieter Bruegel, Jan Steen, William Hogarth (Human 1990 en 1991) en Honoré Daumier wat reeds vermeld is, tel bekende name onder die beeldende kunstenaars wat in hierdie tradisie werk – onder meer Karl Spitzweg, Toulouse-Lautrec, Georg Grosz (van den Berg 1988), Otto Dix en Roy Lichtenstein (Steiner 1987). Die wêreldbeskouing wat in hulle werke aangetref word, kan in filosofiese terme getipeer word as monisties (die natuurlike basis van alle kultuur, bodemgeworteldheid van die mees verhewe waardes), genetisisties (ontiese strukture en sosiale hiërargieë gerelativeer deur prosesse van konvensiewysiging) en naturalisties (vertroue op die organiese substraat van instinktiewe lewensdrif, groeikrag en laere liggaamsfunksies) (Van den Berg 1992b: 21).

CHAPTER 3: THE PICARESQUE GENRE IN LITERARY STUDIES

In Seerveld's transposition of the "geneticist interactionary monist type" in Vollenhoven's philosophical typology, in imaginary or visual and literary terms, he evocatively and aptly used the term picaresque, in a much wider sense than it had usually been defined in literary circles. From the perspective of typiconic traditions 'the picaresque' is neither bound to any specific literary or artistic form, genre or convention, nor to any specific subject matter. Yet it defines a distinct manner manifest in typical strategies and in the imaginative modes of presenting motifs, *topoi* and subject matter. The prolific research on the literary phenomenon of the picaresque novel[1] is, however, from this point of view, worth studying in order to define this manner more closely, with a view to getting a clearer picture of the 'cast' (Seerveld) or 'imaginary world' of the much more broadly understood picaresque typiconic tradition.

It is therefore worth our while to summarize very generally and concisely those most commonly mentioned characteristics of and strategies used in the picaresque novel[2] as they emerge from a selection of the critical literature on the subject. From the clues provided by such features, a closer description of

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[1] Two well-known bibliographies on the topic are those published by Heidenreich 1969, and Wicks 1972:193-216.

[2] To give a broad idea of the object of such research an (incomplete) list of literary texts often mentioned in the context of research on the picaresque novel is provided here: *Satyricon* (Petronius, first century A.D.), *Golden Ass* (Apuleius, second century A.D), *Roman de Renart* (c. 1165-1205), *Till Eulenspiegel (c. 1478), Lazarillo de Tormes* (Anonymous, 1554), *The unfortunate traveler or the life of Jacke Wilton* (Nashe, 1594), *Guzmán de Alfarache* (Mateo Alemán, 1599), *Der Abenteuerliche Simplicissimus* (Grimmelshausen, 1668), *Schelmuffsky* (Christian Reuter, 1696), *Don Quijote or El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* (Cervantes, 1605/1615), *Gill Blas* (Lesage, 1715), *Robinson Crusoe* (Defoe, 1719), *Moll Flanders* (Defoe, 1721), *Roderick Random* (Smolett, 1748), *Tom Jones* (Fielding, 1749), *The life and opinions of Tristram Shandy* (Laurence Sterne, 1759), *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (Eichendorf, 1826), *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Mark Twain, 1884), *Abenteuern des braven Soldaten Schweijk/The good soldier Svejk* (Hasek, 1921/22), *America* (Kafka, 1927), *The horse's mouth* (Carey, 1944), *Bekenntnisse des Hochstaplers Felix Krull* (Thomas Mann, 1953), *The adventures of Augie March* (Bellow, 1953), *The Ginger man* (Donleavy, 1955), *Lolita* (Nabokov, 1955), *Catch 22* (Joseph Heller, 1955), *Lucky Jim* (Kingsley, 1957), *De bende van Jan de Lichte* (Louis Paul Boon, 1957), *Die Blechtrommel* (Günter Grass, 1959), *Little big man* (Berger, 1964), *Giles goatboy* (Barth, 1966).

strategies and modes, that could also be applied to the visual arts, might be extracted.

In the history of literary criticism research on the picaresque genre has been inordinately fertile:[3]

> The sheer bulk of picaresque narrative produced in the Spanish Golden Age (both the number of works and their length) is matched only by the critical literature which has accumulated around them. The abundance and variety of this 'secondary' literature not only demonstrates the continued importance of the genre to a modern audience; it also suggests that picaresque narrative presents contradictions or problems which remain unsolved and which may, indeed, prove to be insoluble (Smith 1987: 88).

The problem in research on the picaresque genre, is phrased as follows by Heidenreich (1969: ix-xvii):

> As a category, 'picaresque novel' has firmly established itself in the major literary languages, but does that mean that we should use a term which defines a temporally and geographically located narrative type for everything between the *Satyricon* and *The Good Soldier Schweik* that shows similarities?

Dieter Arndt (1978: 8) traces the roots of picaresque narrative to the beginnings of literature: "Stories of rogues, related to the picaresque novel that emerged from it, has been an integral part of world literature since the mythic-archaic beginnings of writing".[4] However, it is accepted that the 'picaresque novel' denotes a genre that emerged at the end of the sixteenth century and during the seventeenth century in Spain, with the publication of the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) and Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599). The Baroque

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[3] See note 1, chapter 3.
[4] "Die Schelmen-Erzählung bzw. der aus ihr sich entfaltende Schelmen-Roman ist seit den mythisch-archaischen Anfängen des Schrifttums bis zur Gegenwart ein integrales Stück der Weltliteratur." The important element of humour introduced into this form of prose derives from, e.g. folklore material like popular medieval jokes, traditions of bumpkin wit, jest-books, medieval *fabliaux*, the crude practical joke or *burla* which was a commonplace in Renaissance fiction. Cf. Weiman 1970, Jolles 1969, Stamm 1959, Frohock 1967.

or Counter-Reformation period in Spain saw the fruition of several other important literary genres, like the literary expression of Spanish mystic theology in the writings of St John of the Cross and St. Theresa of Avila, as well as the dramas of Lope de Vega. Picaresque novels were distinguished from, and a reaction to the pastoral romance and novels of chivalry which preceded them in the literary history of Spain.[5] In contrast to the pastoral and chivalric works, the new settings of picaresque novels were the plazas, the markets, and the back streets of Seville and Toledo, rather than the enchanted forests and bewitched castles of the knights errant, or the Arcadian glens of the ever-amorous shepherds (Stamm 1959: 482-487, Geulen 1975: 189-293, Chandler 1969: 1-7).

It was only in the nineteenth century that scholars began to treat picaresque fiction as a distinct literary type: "though immensely popular, the picaresque fiction of sixteenth and seventeenth century Spain was ignored, or at most discriminated against, by literary critics" (Heidenreich 1969: ix-xvii).

Secondary literature on the picaresque genre can be roughly divided into two groups, comprising, on the one hand, those critics who are interested in defining the characteristics and socio-historical origins of the seventeenth-century literary phenomenon, regarding it in the positivist terms of Hypolyte Taine, as closely tied to a particular *race, moment* and *milieu*. Chandler's *The literature of roguery* (1907), as well as research done by De Haan (1903), Parker (1967) and Arndt (1978) are a few examples of this approach.[6] Ulrich Wicks (1972: 153-191, 1974: 240-249) has characterized this approach as "extrinsic" (borrowing the term from Warren and Wellek), "historistic", "closed" and essentially positivistic.

On the other hand there are those critics, usually of an idealist persuasion, who are more "open" and interested in the picaresque genre as a developing novelistic form or narrative convention which novelists in any geographical

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[5] This is what Guillén (1971: 135-158, 74, 97) refers to as 'countergenre'.
[6] More examples are discussed by Du Plessis (1985): Nerlich, Hirsch, Watt, Richetti, Knight, Toliver.

location or historical period has at their disposal to build upon. Such critics tend to de-emphasize socio-political contexts and period perspectives. They distinguish the historically situated picaresque genre from a picaresque narrative tradition. Guillén (1987),[7] 1971), Jolles (1969), Scholes (1967), Paulson (1967), Van der Will (1967) and Seidel (1979)[8] are a few examples of this approach.[9] Wicks's (1972, 1974) 'modal approach' could also be roughly classified with this group.

For our purpose, the "modal-generic awareness" of Ulrich Wicks (1974: 243) is the most obvious point of departure, although, from the limiting point of view of literary studies, his approach has been criticized for being too generalizing and abstract to be useful.[10] Wicks extends the endeavours of Claudio Guillén (1987) to define a "picaresque myth", and extracts a series of characteristics from a very wide variety of primary material, as well as secondary texts on the picaresque novel. By this means he endeavours to provide an idea of the "total picaresque fictional situation" (Wicks 1974: 243). In order to give a just overview of Wick's definition of the "fictional world posited by the picaresque mode" his pithy descriptions are mostly quoted.

3.1 The topsy-turvy world

As a first characteristic defining this fictional world, he describes it as:

> that of an unheroic protagonist, worse than we, caught up in a chaotic world, worse than ours, in which he is on an eternal journey of encounters that allow him to be alternately both victim of that world and its exploiter (Wicks 1974: 242).

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[7] Based on his Harvard dissertation of 1953.

[8] Cf. his distinction of "revisionary narratives". He regards Rabelais's *Gargantua and Patagruel*, and Cervantes's *Don Quixote* as "revisionary narratives", because they absorb structures, modes and properties of precedent forms and reissue them in ways that measure the larger inheritance of the Renaissance and the post-Renaissance imagination (Seidel 1979: 60).

[9] More examples are discussed by Du Plessis (1985): Jones, Pfandl, Northup, Wolff, Giddings, Miller, Bjornson, Alter, Schleussner, Van Gorp, Blackburn, Lewis, Hassan.

[10] Du Plessis (Du Plessis 1985: 66ff) gives a critical appreciation of the work of some major writers on the picaresque novel. However, this is not my aim in this section.

Wicks distinguishes between 'picaresque' and 'romance', because the picaresque can be seen as an antitype to romance, and because romance is the mode that picaresque often tends to mix with:

> By way of contrast, I would say that the *essential romance situation* – the fictional world posited by the romance mode – is that of a heroic protagonist in a world marvellously better than ours in which he is on a quest that confronts him with challenges, each ending in a moral victory leading toward a final ordered and harmonious cosmos. If the romance mode satisfies our impulse for vicarious participation in harmony, order, and beauty, then the picaresque mode satisfies our impulse for a vicarious journey through chaos and depravity. In picaresque we 'participate' in the tricks essential to survival in chaos and become victims of the world's tricks, just as in romance we 'participate' in overcoming the dangerous obstacles necessary for the establishment of harmony and order and become recipients of harmony's rewards (Wicks 1974: 242).

> Romance satisfies our craving for divine harmony, integration, beauty, order, goodness, and ultimate fulfilment. Picaresque satisfies our darker yearnings for demonic disharmony, dis-integration, ugliness, disorder, evil, and the gaping abyss (Wicks 1974: 242).[11]

3.2 A survey of human types and a Sisyphus rhythm

The second characteristic is the *panoramic structure* of narration in which the picaresque mode finds itself expressed at best.[12] This description of a whole world, non-transcendent, but infinitely differentiated, is an expression of "monism" in Seerveld's characterization of the picaresque. 'Panoramic structure' is a category Wicks adopts from Wolfgang Kayser who distinguished three kinds of novels, after Aristotle, according to their structural make-up: the novel of incident (*Geschehnisroman*), the novel of character (*Figurenroman*) and the panoramic

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[11] Most romance fiction would fall in the heroic and the idyllic traditions according to a typiconic perspective.

[12] The teeming pictures of Brueghel, Callot's expansive scenes of the miseries of war, the 'progresses' of Hogarth, and the caricatures of Gillray immediately spring to mind as examples of this type of compositional structure in visual culture.

novel (*Raumroman*). Individual characters are subservient to the large and diffused picture, comprehending the characters of life, disposed in different groups, and exhibited in various attitudes, for the purposes of a uniform plan:

> Furthermore, the *external rhythm* of picaresque narrative is what we might call the Sisyphus Rhythm. I quote Guzmán [de Alfarache, the protagonist of Máteo Alemán's novel of 1599, from Mabbe's version of 1623]: 'And being come now to the height of all my labors and paines-taking, and when I was to have received the reward of them, and to take mine ease after all this toyle, the stone rolled down, and I was forced like Sisiphus, to beginne the world anew, and to fall afresh to my work' (Pt.II, Bk. III, Ch. IV). *Volver de nuevo*, or 'to beginne the world anew', is the picaro's condition. *Subir la piedra*: the Sisyphus Rhythm demands an eternal 'falling afresh' to the task of survival in the landscape of the discontinuous, paralleled narratively by a continuously discontinuous (episodic) fictional form. [...] The episodes, individually and collectively, illustrate the perpetual rhythm of the picaresque, which is continuous dis-integration (Wicks 1974: 243/4).

This is a manifestation of the geneticist answer to the philosophical problem of historic development, characteristic of the picaresque typiconic tradition, as derived by Seerveld, from Vollenhoven's typology. Guillén (1969: 386ff) stresses the use of recurrent motifs, circular patterns, and incremental processes of reversal or inversion in picaresque narrative, which also confirms this geneticist directive frame.

3.3 First-person narration

The third characteristic according to Wicks, is the first-person point of view, "which is split between an experiencing 'I' and a narrating 'I' and thus gives us two levels, the plane of narration and the plane of action, the difference between which is called *narrative distance*" (Wicks 1974: 244). The self-conscious act of narration itself becomes a crucial part of the fiction:

There is thus *irony* between the quality of the events narrated and the narrating attitude of the protagonist, paralleled by the ironic gap between the social nonstatus of the protagonist and the presumptuous act of writing his autobiography ... (Wicks 1974: 244).

Ultimately, and this is a larger irony, the picaro's first-person narrative is itself a 'trick', a lure, the fictional analogy of the tricks of which his life and the world are composed (Wicks 1974: 244).[13]

The *act* of telling, at any rate, is itself a picaresque gesture of self-assertion by a lowly, insignificant outsider confessing himself to the reader by luring him into his world through ostensibly moral designs. First-person picaresque can thus be seen as a narrative version (between the picaro and the willing reader 'victim') of the tricks in the picaro's remembered life experiences (between the picaro and his landscape) (Wicks 1974: 244).[14]

Guillén, upon whose work Wicks (1971: 82) elaborates, adds that this perspective is a prejudiced and partial or limited point of view.[15] It has also been dubbed the 'worm's eye perspective'.[16]

3.4 The character of the *picaro*

The fourth characteristic is the nature of the protagonist, who is a *picaro figure* – the figure of a "geneticist" personality type, in Seerveld's terms, providing the name of the literary genre as well as the imaginary directive framework or 'typiconic tradition':

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[13] The role of the picaresque artist as Fool, who by means of tricking and sleight of hand, connives with or cheats the spectator, is the metaphor by means of which this phenomenon is described in this study. Good examples are my discussion of Jan Steen, but also of Lichtenstein's *I can see the whole room and there is nobody in it* ... (Figure 19) in chapter 10, section 3.

[14] The performance character of picaresque visual culture, and the penchant for role playing are evident in the work of Cindy Sherman and of feminist performance artists, preceded by e.g. the narrative pictures of William Hogarth and Jan Steen. The deictic manner of telling which makes a direct appeal to the spectator seems to be favoured. A narrative interest is typical of picaresque visual culture.

[15] The limitation of point of view is often spectacularly dramatized in picaresque visual culture, e.g. in Daumier's *Crispin and Scapin* (Figure 16) (to be discussed in chapter 7, section 2) and in cinematic art like Fellini's *Casanova* in which characters literally watch from below.

[16] See my article on 'A worm's-eye-perspective on focalization' (De Villiers Human 1995).

a pragmatic, unprincipled, resilient, solitary figure who just manages to survive in his chaotic landscape, but who, in the ups and downs, can also put that world very much on the defensive. The picaro is a protean figure who can not only serve many masters but play different roles, and his essential characteristic is his inconstancy – of life roles, of self-identity – his own personality flux in the face of an inconstant world. Paradoxically, nothing is more constant than inconstancy itself (Wicks 1974: 245).

3.5 Marginalization

The *picaro-landscape relationship* is described in typically "interactionary" terms, according to Seerveld's characterization:

Each incident of picaresque fiction moves from exclusion to attempted inclusion and back to exclusion: outside-inside-outside (Wicks 1974: 245).

The marginalization of the *picaro* is repeated in the actual marginalization of the picaresque genre by literary critics, in spite of its popularity, until the end of the nineteenth century. The frequency of feminist commitment to the picaresque tradition is understandable from this point of view, because picaresque fiction becomes the mouth-piece for marginalized culture.

3.6 Typical character types

Another characteristic is the vast gallery of *human types* who appear as representatives of the landscape: "Usually these are seen in generalized cross section as satirical portraits" (Wicks 1974: 245).

It is here that a physiognomic interest in body language, bodily postures, gestures and facial expressions, as well as in dress is especially pertinent in visual fiction. Daumier and other caricaturists are spectacularly interested in such

a rogue's gallery of human types or conventional roles, but most picaresque artists have this basic concern.

3.7 Self-reflexive parody of fictional types

Implied parody of *other fictional types* (romance) and of the nature of the picaresque itself, is another characteristic:

> Historically, picaresque was an alternative to romance and pastoral. Second, the picaresque fictional world often parodies the social norm and ideal harmony as well by including within itself anti-societies of rogues, which are more highly structured than society at large (and thus, parody of comedy) (Wicks 1974: 245).[17]

> Finally, there is an awareness of the picaresque itself as a tradition, and this awareness may be either internal (within the fiction) or external (the author's stated intent) (Wicks 1974: 245).[18]

3.8 Basic themes and motifs

As an eighth characteristic Wicks lists "certain basic themes and motifs" like vanity, or moral survival, freedom, hunger, and of primitive physical survival. About "moral survival" Wicks notes that:

> Picaresque fiction, because it does not give a structured vision of life, tends to be basically antiphilosphical and antithematic because it focuses on details, on surfaces, on fragments, and on discontinuous and fleeting experiences and reactions (Wicks 1974: 246).

> [T]he conceptual intent is soon partly negated by the obvious relish with which the picaro-narrator launches into the hurly-burly of his life's experiences, and he is thus

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[17] Hogarth, Steen and Lichtenstein's parodies of the genre of history painting are examples from visual culture. Hogarth's progresses represent the machinations of such anti-societies.
[18] Cf. chapter 4, section 4.2.3 below.

working against his ostensible purpose by dwelling on the very things that his narrative is intended to prove worthless (Wicks 1974: 246). [19]

Of 'hunger' Wicks notes:[20]

Another picaresque theme is 'Hunger, or Primitive Physical Survival,' which is a theme that grows primarily out of the fiction or narrated material rather than out of the commentary in the narrating process (Wicks 1974: 246).[21]

Wicks goes on to list a few typical picaresque motifs:

The motif of *unusual birth or childhood*: "The circumstances surrounding the picaro's entrance into the world are often unusual and thus they are omens of a sort, prefiguring his later entrance or 'birth' into a picaresque world and way of life" (Wicks 1974: 246).

The *trick motif*: "Tricks tend to serve as initiation rites to the world of chaos, but what begins as initiation is soon converted by the picaro into initiative" (Wicks 1974: 246).[22]

The *role-playing motif*: "Metamorphoses and changing roles are part of the picaro's survival kit – as the world is in flux, so he can change roles to face it. Picaresque life is

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[19] This is applicable to the reception of Jan Steen's work, as discussed in part 2, section 2 of this study. In another instance, Cindy Sherman has been accused of co-operating in the 'objectification of women' in her work, and of pandering to a public addicted to it.

[20] About the *fabliaux* Bloch (1983: 5) writes that: "the fabliaux are all in some extended sense narratives of lack: someone always wants something, whether sex, food, or money, or, as in this case [of the *Du Mantel mautaillié*], a story itself".

[21] In the light of feminist literary criticism it is an oversight by Wicks to say that it is not part of the narrating process itself. For the marginalized, the act of narration is an act of stealing as a result of the primitive hunger drive. Hélèn Cixous phrases it as follows: "I found myself in the classic situation of women who, at one time or another, feel that it is not they who have produced culture... Culture was there, but it was a barrier forbidding me to enter, whereas of course, from the depths of my body, I had a desire for the objects of culture. I therefore found myself obliged to steal them ... So that in a sense [culture] is always there [in my work], but there in a displaced, diverted, reversed way. I have always used it in a totally ironic way" (Cixious 1991: 335). Oskar Seidlin (1951: 183-200) notes the discrepancy between the lowly *picaro* and the effrontery with which he dares to say 'I' and tell his *vida*. Bloch (1983: 7) notes: "a characteristic association in the High Middle Ages involves the mutual implication of theft, poetry, and perversion. Thus the alienation of economic property implies linguistic disappropriation, alienation of the proper; and this deflection of both a natural economic and linguistic order implies sexual infraction. Poetry is sophistry, trickery, pimping, prostitution; and it is perceived as an act against nature ...". See also Arndt (1978) on this topic.

a constant change of masks on the world-as-stage ... The picaro is as illusory and as illusive as the very illusory world he confronts. Role-playing is one of his essential tools in that world, and it is part of what Stuart Miller has called his 'protean form' ... The very ability of the picaro to perform as many jobs as he does and to play as many tricks as he can resides in this large repertoire of many masks. He is not only the 'servant of many masters', but the master of many masks" (Wicks 1974: 247).[23]

The *grotesque or horrible incident*: "Picaresque fiction may often compress the blackness and horror of the debased world into one specific and very particularized incident [...] A primary function of the grotesque motifs in picaresque fiction [...] is to arouse some kind of shocked response from us, to pummel us into an awareness and reaction to the nightmare world of chaos, a decidedly blacker world than the disrupted norm of comedy (Wicks 1974: 247).[24]

The *ejection motif*: "Ejection is the picaro's second 'birth' – it comes immediately before the world's first trick on him and is thus a kind of initiation shock" (Wicks 1974: 247).[25]

Having given an overview of some results in research on the picaresque novel, it should be mentioned that there are other, sometimes related modes, genres or traditions that have been distinguished in literary theory which likewise (from the perspective of the typiconic traditions) often embrace picaresque material.[26]

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[22] In this study the Fool or Clown is regarded as the fundamental metaphoric role of picaresque artists (cf. chapter 8, sections 1 and 2). Their rhetorical tricks are played upon the spectator who, ideally, should connive with and play the game along the lines suggested by these 'Fools'.

[23] This is more than a motif in picaresque visual culture, but rather a basic bias in coping with the world upside down. It saturates most picaresque art as an interest in social conventions, artistic conventions, bodily postures, gestures and facial expressions.

[24] Exaggeration is one of the major strategies used in picaresque visual culture. The degree of exaggeration influences the movement on or across the borderline between comedy and the grotesque. In this study of the picaresque tradition in visual culture, the grotesque is considered to be constantly present as a dark, sometimes hidden, undertone, and made concrete in the motif of the monster.

[25] Social marginalization is a strategy by means of which cultural conventions can be critically judged.

[26] In his *Recent theories of narrative*, Martin (1986) discusses those narratives that have been called 'dual-voiced discourse' or 'defamiliarization' by Bakhtin (Martin 1986: 180). About such 'perverse narratives' he notes: "We find in literary history a continuous tradition of narratives that satirize or mix generic conventions, breaking the on-to-one relationship between convention and meaning" (Martin 1986: 179). Such narratives "call attention to the formal and ideological frameworks that govern literature and society, by showing that from another perspective the conventions involved may not depict the world or human conduct as it is or should be" (Martin 1986: 180).

These are carnivalesque literature (Bachtin (Bakhtin) 1985),[27] Menippean and dialogic literature (Bakhtin 1982, 1984),[28] écriture feminine (Irigaray 1985, Cixous 1991), and écriture corporelle (Sollers 1968).[29] Yet, although the strategies used to subvert mainstream textual conventions often show similarities, such literature also sometimes comprises dangerous Surrealist play (as in écriture corporelle), which falls outside the frame of reference of the picaresque tradition. Certain manifestations of the grotesque, like the sublime grotesque rather belongs in the 'mystic' traditional framework.

We have thus moved from a limited literary perspective on the picaresque novel, to the broader "total picaresque fictional situation" of Ulrich Wicks, and have expanded that, with reference to other literary forms like the carnivalesque and écriture feminine. Against the background of Seerveld's Vollenhovian transpositions embracing visual and other cultural products,[30] we might now endeavour to sketch the outlines of a more expanded picaresque imaginary world.

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[27] As quoted above, Seerveld defines the picaresque tradition with reference to the 'carnival vantage point of Dostoevsky' as discussed by Bakhtin.
[28] In the feminist context see Russo 1986 and Yaeger 1988.
[29] "Philippe Sollers, in a long essay devoted to Bataille's book on eroticism [...] suggested that all modern literature, from Sade's *Juliette* to Bataille's *Histoire de l'oeil*, was haunted by the idea of a 'bodily writing' (*écriture corporelle*), to the point that the body had become the 'fundamental referent of [modern literature's] violations of discourse'" (Suleiman 1990: 75). Suleiman quotes from Sollers's *L'Ecriture et l'experience des limites* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1968: 122).
[30] In the world of music, it could be argued that the composers Erik Satie and Sergei Prokofiev produced picaresque works. This is not only evident form the titles of some of their pieces, but also form the distortion, acerbity and mockery in the sound textures they produce. Some titles by Satie revealing this alliance are: *Three pieces in the shape of a pear, Dried embrios, Veritably limp pieces, Chilled pieces*. Titles by Prokofiev are: *Things in themselves, Devilish suggestion, The buffoon* (a ballet), and *Love for three oranges*. The cruel humour, reckless enticement, and deliberate circus- and cabaret-like parodies of honoured musical works, and the joyful marauding of existing forms and musical vocabulary could be interpreted to form part of a picaresque imaginary world. I owe these insights to Japie Human.

CHAPTER 4. THE PICARESQUE IMAGINARY WORLD AND ITS STRATEGIES

In this chapter the contours of a picaresque imaginary world (as opposed to Wicks's fictional world of literature) is adumbrated against the background of what we have sketched so far. The idea of an imaginary world is inspired by and adapted from both Paul Ricoeur's (1984) and Nicholas Wolterstorff's (1980) notions of worlds projected respectively "in front of" and "behind" texts or "works of art".

Ricoeur's (1984:81) description of the function of "re-figuration" as part of a hermeneutics that "aims less at restoring the author's intention behind the text than at making explicit the movement by which the text unfolds, as it were, a world in front of itself". Another description by Ricoeur (1984:79) of the world projected by the text is the following:

> What a reader receives is not just the sense of the work, but, through its sense, its reference, that is, the experience it brings to language and, in the last analysis, the world and the temporality it unfolds in the face of this experience.

Wolterstorff (1980: 89) believes that

> there is always *a world behind* the work, of which the work is an expression; and that often the religion of the artist, or his particular version of secularism has a central role in that world.

However, in my outline of a picaresque imaginary world it is the shared features among the imaginary worlds of cultural texts of all kinds – visual cultural texts in the context of this study – that are stressed. This emphasis adjusts the subjectivist "world-view" inclinations, not only of Wolterstorff's notion of a "world", but also of the idea of the typiconic traditions. The picaresque imaginary world[1]

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[1] The concept of the 'imaginary world' is also in sympathy with Alfred Schutz's (1962) distinction of 'multiple realities' or various separate worlds, different from ordinary reality, to which people immigrate, e.g., the worlds of dreams, the theatre, of any intense aesthetic experience, playing,

sketched in this chapter, is the context within which some questions are to be explored further in this study. The topics of these avenues of exploration are suggested by the headings.

4.1 The Fool

In research on the picaresque novel, the presence of the *picaro* as first-person narrator is seen as the major identifying characteristic of the picaresque novel. In literary criticism this entails that his[2] character as protagonist not only colours the picaresque fictional world, but that a typically ironic work/reader relationship is established by his self-conscious act of narration. In this study I want to propose the motif of the Fool as the key metaphoric figure for picaresque artistry. As a starting point for such a proposition, Jan Steen's self-reflexive concern with the *persona* of the Fool in his comic self-portraits, will be explored in chapter 8, in which the conclusion is reached that the role is created for himself by the artist, but is also pre-fabricated for him in a tradition of picaresque artistry.

The figure of the Fool has widely embracing characteristics, including the functions of various (male and female) comic and role-playing people, like *picaro's*, clowns, knaves, rogues, court jesters, flirts, even jongleurs, tricksters and so forth. The Fool can be seen as an aggregate of ambiguously comic and satiric roles and as such lends itself not only to become representative of a typical picaresque fictional character, or instigating a specific kind of ironic work/spectator relationship, but more broadly to become metaphoric of inter-personal relationships within an imagined community, of picaresque works, characters, and spectators or readers. In chapter 12 representations by feminist

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religious experience or of the scientist engaged in passionate intellectual pursuit. In each world a separate sense of reality is experienced which cannot be readily translated into that of any other world or of everyday reality, so that one can only enter it by means of a 'leap'. Cf. Berger's (1997: 6-8) description of Schutz's contributions.

[2] There are very few *picaras*, the most well known being *Picara Justina* (1605) and *Moll Flanders* (1721). The phenomenon is discussed by Van Praag (1936), reprinted in Heidenreich (1969).

artists, of women as clownish monsters of society, who amuse by their beauty and inspire the fear of the *femme fatale*, will be investigated.

It should be noted, however, that the motif of the Fool is not confined to the picaresque imaginary world, but it can be, and indeed is, appropriated in different 'typiconic' contexts. Picasso and Apollinaire's renderings of alienated clowns are not at all picaresque and neither are Watteau's depictions of melancholic *commedia dell'arte* characters. Only in the picaresque interpretative tradition does the Fool find an enduring home and only in this tradition is it elevated to the key position of representing the typical artistry of that tradition. Moreover, picaresque appropriations of the role of the Fool can be characterized to stress certain vital aspects of that role, like the following:

4.1.1 Laughter and anxiety

In the picaresque imaginary world the Fool's allure is anxiety-provoking and there is an ominous dimension to his/her role that associates it with magic. This magic element could be traced to some Dionysian rites, to the late medieval synthesis of Folly and Death which found expression in the carnival-like *Totentanz* or dance of death,[3] or to Harlequin's medieval association with the mythical and diabolical 'wild hunts' of forest beings. In modern usage the terms *fool* and *folly* refer either to stupidity or to sinister madness, and certain Fool's attributes like the cap and bells still refer to the "trickster connection" of the Fool (cf. Berger 1997: 80,73, Vandenbroeck 1987: 133-136, Welsford 1935: 123). The Fool is best suited to represent the distinctive picaresque blending of anxiety and laughter. An inclination to suppress anxiety and terror into an undercurrent, in favour of humour on the surface, seems a common phenomenon in picaresque art. Laughter seems to be more than a distancing device by means of which unappetising material is made more palatable. By means of redeeming laughter

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[3] Cf. chapter 7, section 1, on Brueghel's *Parable of the blind*, in which Sedlmayr is quoted as seeing resemblances between these clownishly pathetic figures and medieval dance of death figures.

the horror is overcome, and the acceptance of the circumstantial limitations of reality is refused. This resilience which is characteristic of the Fool, seems to be a typical feature of the picaresque imaginary world.

4.1.2 Bodily postures and gestures

The Fool is known to communicate most effectively through bodily postures and gestures. This gift is of special interest to a visual cultural characterization of a picaresque imaginary world. In the history of the Fool this attribute found its finest expression in the theatrical tradition of the *commedia dell'arte.* The major conventional limitation of the *commedia* was the use of masks for the five major stock characters. All the stock characters performed a histrionic language of gestures and this art of the gesture extended from choreographed expressive poses and postures to the most exacting gymnastics. Especially Harlequin, who, with his own face masked, projected his character's emotions and character traits with his body, was known for his agile acrobatic stunts and feats of pantomime and mimicry. Harlequin's walk was an impertinent, arrogant, self-mocking stiff-legged, flat-footed strut, which reminds modern audiences of the idiosyncratic walk not only of Charlie Chaplin, but also of Buster Keaton, Stan Laurel, Harry Langdon, and Groucho Marx. It is Charlie Chaplin's backward kick, for example, that, while conveying many attitudes and nuances, most obviously communicates the vital resilience of the Fool (cf. Madden 1975, Nicoll 1963, Esrig 1985). This interest in the body, and more specifically the ribaldry of the lower body, conveys a basic picaresque low mode sensibility. The carnal and corporeal dimensions of life are often invoked in order to humorously reverse the celebration of mind and intellect in more refined circles.

4.1.3 The Fool's vision

In visual culture the association of Fools and deceptive vision is quite common. In the sixteenth-century genre of 'fool's portraits', Fools are represented with

squinted double vision, with eyes covered by fingers, or with spectacles. However, such visual constraints are not associated with handicapped vision, but rather with the privileged perspective of the Fool. The 'worm's eye perspective' or prejudiced and partial or limited point of view, often 'from below', provides the Fool with uncommon foresight and uncanny insight.

The marginalized or lower social rank of the Fool is one such limitation which specially equips him/her to discern aspects which remain hidden to a bourgeois, aristocratic,[4] or socially assimilated spectator. Standing apart from 'normal' humanity the 'all-licensed' Fool speaks with impunity.[5]

Moreover, visual constraints are even regarded to enhance the use of humour, liberating the laughter of *Narrenfreiheit*. Vico, for instance claims that to see the truth is to see nothing humorous, "but second rate minds, which see things only partially, are inclined to recognize the ludicrous" (Bloch 1983: 19).

It is in the Fool's nature to either connive with an audience in the know, or to trick the audience by keeping it in the dark at its own expense. The uncanny wisdom of the Fool is revealed in this mischievous game of hide-and-seek played with the spectator. This ambivalence in the role of the Fool is discernible in the fact that in history Fools have been both derided and venerated; considered to be both wise and foolish; holy and degenerate.[6]

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[4] Cf. Hans-Joachim Raupp (1983: 405) on a Duke's reception of a low mode Adriaen Brouwer painting depicting Spanish soldiers playing cards. He quotes Houbraken (I, 330) about 'the Duke's' fascination for it: "waar in de Hertog groot gevallen had ... En zonderheid om een die in't verschiet zat te kakken, waar in het drukken, als wilde het zig niet gemakkelyk ontlasten, zoo natuurlyk en potsig vertoont was, dat men 't zelve zonder te lachen niet konde aanzien". Cf. Raupp's (1988) review of Vandenbroeck's *Bauernsatiren* and Howard Bloch (1983: 2) on the fabliaux.

[5] This could be regarded as a negative parallel to transformation figures like the saintly ascetic, the visionary mystic, the wise philosopher, the prophetic demagogue and so forth.

[6] Early opera can be considered to descend form the *commedia dell'arte* and in such opera the Arlecchino figure is often celebrated. In Pagliacci's operas he is a character who is wiser, more ingenious, and more benevolent than the social leaders, politicians and judges of society. I owe this insight to Japie Human.

4.1.4 Monstrosity

The Fool's portraits of the sixteenth century also provide us with images of the ugly, deformed, disagreeable and often monstrous appearance of Fools. In the picaresque imaginary world the grotesque is often used as a mode or strategy befitting this appearance of the Fool. By means of the grotesque[7] the demonic powers in a conventionalized world are brought to the surface for critical scrutiny. In the picaresque imaginary world aberrant social or artistic conventions are often described in metaphors of distortion, cancerous growth or monstrosity, as in Brueghel's representations of folly,[8] Hogarth's 'progresses'[9] and in deformity, atrophy, hypertrophy, and the natural results of incest in *Marriage à la Mode*.[10] However, the picaresque use of the grotesque is characterized by the combination of anxiety, anger, fear or horror, with amusement.

4.2 The topsy-turvy world

The theme of the topsy-turvy world (*verkeerde wereld* or *verkehrte Welt*) is more than merely a recurring *topos* in the picaresque tradition. More basically, it is related to the enduring directive framework of the picaresque tradition, on the depth level of "ground motives" (Dooyeweerd), or on the level of questions and answers around "ontological problems" (Vollenhoven), or what Johann Visagie (1996) has simplified into and thought through as "macromotives" in his illuminating article 'A theory of macromotives'.

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[7] In his stage by stage definition of the grotesque Philip Thomson (1972: 20) notes that "The most consistently distinguished characteristic of the grotesque has been the fundamental element of disharmony, whether this is referred to as conflict, clash, mixture of the heterogeneous, or conflation of disparates."

[8] Cf. chapter 7, section 1.

[9] Cf. chapter 10, section 1.

[10] James Lawson (1998) argues in his "Hogarth's plotting of 'Marriage à la Mode" that the userer who assists the fathers in arranging the marriages in this story, in fact is the father of both the partners in the marriage being arranged. "Here is a deeply evil panderer performing his office in scene 1. The blackest evil is forged in the crucible of knowledge ... A narrative that can trace the tragedy to beginnings in folly denounced society rather than Nature ..." (Lawson 1998: 277).

4.2.1 The prioritization of 'lower' natural processes

The desired and fateful world from a picaresque perspective is an integral world in which there is no disjunction between the spiritual and the natural or organic. However, this world is out of joint, because of human intervention, folly, evil and cruelty, so that the vitality of human naturalness is marred by cultural artificiality, by rigid man-made structures, conventions, formulae, habits, customs, stereotypes and clichés. As a result, the picaresque imaginary world is a topsy-turvy and chaotic world – an natural breeding ground for comic situations.

The naturalism characteristic of the picaresque tradition has its effects in art on the manner in which motifs, themes, *topoi*, poses, gestures, physiognomy, facial expressions are presented metaphorically. In its reaction against other-worldly spiritualism and the brave cult of the heroic, it favours the lower orders in all hierarchies. Its use of the low or comic mode is linked with an interest in banal everyday life and detail. This association of *naer 't leven* 'realism' and comedy became institutionalized since Aristotle's normative definition of comic characters as "worse than reality" and the requirements since Cicero and Donatus that comedy should be a truthful mirror of ordinary daily life, having moral instruction as its aim: *imitatio vitae, speculum consuetidinus, imago veritatis* (Raupp 1983: 409).[11] 'Realism' or representation *naer 't leven* was considered to be characteristic of those genres lower than history painting. The picaresque tradition became associated with the comic low mode, and at times even marginalized and subversive forms of visual culture. 'Familiarity' or what could be called an immediate or deictic narrative style is part of this low mode rhetoric.

Naturalism also motivates the picaresque interest in lower bodily functions, immodest gestures and rude poses. The Fool surrenders shamelessly to his bodily appetites and natural desires, and he is regularly characterized by his

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[11] Imitation of life, mirror of morality and image of truth.

hunger, thirst, lust, and obsession with obscenities. I shall refer back to this picaresque interest throughout the study.

The secular optimism inherent in the picaresque imaginary world and manifest in the humour of subversive inversion, is fundamentally linked to a geneticist belief in eternal physio-organic becoming and recurrence – the Sisyphus rhythm referred to by Wicks. Stultitia, delivering her own eulogy in Erasmus's *The praise of Folly* (1509) portrays herself as the personification of all natural instincts, she claims to be the life-force in the universe and argues that it is only she, Folly, who keeps men from committing suicide.[12] Resilient convictions that this chaotic world can benefit from the humorous exposure of human follies, that subversive artistic intervention is worthwhile and that the improvement of this world is imaginable, usually have their bases in the belief in the eternal renewal, the organic rhythm, and the perpetual generosity of Nature. For Wicks this rhythm is manifest in the protean character of the ever adaptable *picaro*, and in the episodic structure of the picaresque novel. On the level of artistic conventions, I notice its effects in emplotment metaphors,[13] and in the bounteousness that is often ridiculously exaggerated in carnivalesque explosions and eruptions.[14] Werner Hofmann (1989: 253) notices a geneticist interest even in the contours of Daumier's etches:

> The ducts swell and shrink organically, if by this is understood that in a glance, the whole, rather than parts and limbs, is imparted. Organic also means that these line-events are to be read analogous to growth processes, and it suggests that the same creative denominator rules over the formal process as a whole: what serves for a nose, serves for a hat.[15]

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[12] Träger (Hrsg.) 1986: 32.
[13] Cf. chapter 10, section 1 on Hogarth's 'serpentine line'.
[14] Cf. chapter 10, section 2 on Kentridge.
[15] "Der Duktus Schwillt an und ab, er mutet organisch an, wenn darunter verstanden wird, dass die Summe sich dem Blick einprägt, ehe er ihre Teile und Gliedmassen wahrnimmt. Organisch bedeutet auch, dass diese Linienereignisse in Analogie zu Wachstumsprozessen zu lesen sind,

4.2.2 The social world of habits, conventions and institutions

A critical awareness that social conventions are ideologically charged, is an outstanding characteristic of the picaresque imaginary world, and it will be returned to in most instances in which visual material is discussed in this study.

Social habits, conventions and institutions are considered to be 'unnatural', alienating cultural artifices, and therefore subject to criticism and change. The representation of the 'underside' of 'acceptable society', e.g., prostitution and theft as the underbelly of marriage and investment, is a favourite way of demonstrating the precariousness of established human standards, because of the very fact that they are alterably human. The vitality of human naturalness is often idealized as being a norm for social behaviour and monsters are shown to be produced in a society where Nature is not respected.

The emancipatory potential of carnivalesque parodying of social norms and mores has been optimistically celebrated by Bakhtin (1982, 1984). On the other hand, anthropologists, historians and other cultural theorists have noted that the transgressions of carnival are licensed and 'contained' by dominant culture, thereby attributing to carnival the function of enhancing and revitalizing social mores, and diffusing social tensions.[16] In picaresque contexts, however, the carnivalesque often serves to bring to light the pretensions of social role-playing, and to rekindle society's vigorous natural 'roots'.

An eighteenth-century example of the invocation of naturalness is Hogarth's appeal to the standard of 'common sense' in his *Analysis of Beauty*,[17] and a twentieth-century example is Cindy Sherman's exposure of mass media and fine

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und es besagt, dass ein und derselbe Gestaltnenner über den formalen Gesamtverlauf gebietet: wie die Nase, so der Hut".
[16] Cf. Willis 1989, Hirschkop & Shepherd 1989, and Stallybrass & White 1993.
[17] Cf. chapter 10, section 1.

art stereotypes of female beauty.[18] Aberrant social conventions are often described in metaphors of disease or cancerous growth. In recent visual cultural production, especially since the onslaught of AIDS, the sexual body has been explored through viral and visceral metaphors which display both disease and aberration (Betterton 1996: 138).

4.2.3 The artistic world of forms, conventions and institutions

As in picaresque literature, an acute self-awareness of the picaresque mode is often present in picaresque visual culture, and this provides a strong basis upon which the inter-medial outreach of the picaresque tradition can be posited. Hogarth's self-conscious interest in and affinities for the picaresque genre in literature is visible from illustrations he made for Apulius's *Golden Ass* (1724); his title page and one illustration for Laurence Sterne's *The life and opinions of Tristram Shandy* (published in 1759); his two series of 12 illustrations each for Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* (published after the example of *Don Quixote*, in 1723-1730); illustrations he made for *Don Quixote* (1726); and his inclusion, in the first plate of his *Industry and Idleness* series (1747), of a representation of a page from Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*,[19] nailed to Tom Idle's loom. On the other hand, he also showed an interest in picaresque visual culture, e.g. in the work of Jan Steen, who was a major influence on Hogarth's development of the new genre of the 'conversation piece' (cf. Paulson 1974). Further examples are Fellini's confession of "love" for Toulouse-Lautrec (Huisman & Dortu 1973: 5); Daumier's fascination with *Don Quixote* upon which Adhémar bases his observation that Daumier is "the soul of Don Quixote in the body of Sancho Pansa" (Hofmann 1989: 253); Heinrich Heine's eulogy of Jan Steen in chapter 11 of his picaresque novel *Aus den Memoiren des Herren von Schnabelewopski*

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[18] Cf. chapter 7, section 1.
[19] In "Hogarth's graphic palimpsests: intermedial adaptation of popular literature", Wagner (1991: 335) argues that it is important that Hogarth portrays a page with a ballad based on Defoe's best-seller, rather than a page of the novel itself.

(1834), and Bertolt Brechts well-known attraction to the work of Pieter Brueghel.[20]

An awareness of the artificiality and ideological character of artistic forms is apparent for example in Lichtenstein's 'comic strip' paintings; Hogarth's 'comic histories' and Steen's history paintings in a genre-like style, that are all parodies of the genre of history painting. The absence of heroes,[21] the presence of anti-heroes[22] and the comic degradation of the heroic style (e.g. the little boy urinating on Goliath's head in Steen's *The triumph of David*[23] of 1671) reveal a deliberate positioning within the picaresque tradition against the heroic tradition and its respective ideological fictional world.

The strategy of literalization that is often used in picaresque visual culture,[24] is a means to draw attention to the artificiality of social and artistic conventions, and underscores the picaresque interest in the simplistic and the concrete.

In short, the world I have sketched is a topsy-turvy world, populated with Fools, associated in carnivalesque social settings – the perfect subject for comic histories and narratives.

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[20] Fragmentary notes as well as more polished essays are proof of Brecht's research in the visual arts on effective visual strategies, in his project of developing a Marxist aesthetic or a revolutionary materialist drama. Some notes on eleven well-known works by Brueghel are for instance entitled "Verfremdungseffekt in den erzählenden Bildern des älteren Brueghel" [Alienation effects in the narrative pictures of Brueghel the Elder] (Cf. Schäfer 1972, Coombes 1986).
[21] Lichtenstein's *As I opened fire*, cf. chapter 10, section 3.
[22] As in Hogarth's progresses, chapter 10, section 1.
[23] Oil on canvas, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.
[24] See e.g. Brueghel's representations of ludicrous literal performances of proverbs, and Barbara Kruger and Jenny Holzer's literalizations of colloquialisms of the marketplace (Isaak 1997).

CHAPTER 5: THE PICARESQUE TRADITION AND FEMINISM

A main concern in feminist scholarship, particularly in literary criticism (*l'écriture féminine*) but also in art history, is the discovery and establishment, on various levels, of female traditions, or genres, or sisterhoods, or penchants, stressing commonalities among female scholars, artists, writers, thinkers. This concern is understandable as one of the fundamental justifications for feminist academic and artistic commitment.[1] Such searches for trans-generational links across class and cultural distinctions, are parallel to the project of the delineation of typiconic traditions. However, it is a hypothesis of this study that feminist art has various links with the past, one of which is the picaresque tradition.

In Frances Borzello's (1998: 32) recent book on female self-portraiture, she observes that "critics and historians have tended to see women artists as isolated freaks of nature rather than a link in a chain of women artists". She notes that the "the teacher-pupil pattern is also absent" – this is usually a significant factor in the formation of typiconic traditions, as has been demonstrated.[2] She also observes that "so many women artists of the past have hesitated to associate themselves with other female artists" (Borzello 1998: 47). On the other hand, one of the constraints of women artists was that "many of the most striking [male] self-portrait types were of little use to women" (Borzello 1998: 32) and that female artists extended and inflected the range of self-portraiture. She concludes that female self-portraiture deserves to be treated as a genre or a tradition in its own right. However, although a few themes like motherhood and musical ability recur in female self-portraits through the centuries, it is only "possible to speak of a female self-portrait tradition in connection with contemporary artists who have

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[1] Cf. Tickner 1978, Abel 1982, Whitbeck 1983, Ruether 1985, Harding 1987, Gouma-Peterson & Mathews 1987, Tickner 1988, Dobie 1990, Hageman 1990, Hein 1990, Devereaux 1990, Scott 1991, Halbertsma 1993, Braidotti 1994, Cornwall & Lindisfarne 1995.
[2] Cf. section 4.2.3.

absorbed the findings of three decades of feminist art-historical research"
(Borzello 1998:193-194).[3]

This art historical concern to establish links among female artists over centuries[4]
is problematic in many ways, as is evident also from the prolific research on
l'écriture féminine. If female cultural production is relegated to separate or
'alternative' female traditions, it has no relevance for, and can have no significant
impact on patriarchal culture. Such a view obscures the analysis of the ways in
which women have negotiated and disrupted, and still are negotiating and
disrupting, artistic, social and other cultural conventions in order to open up a
gender sensitive cultural space. I regard Calvin Seerveld's cartographic approach
to art history useful in addressing some of these problems. His distinction of a
variety of typological directive frameworks within the historical passage
(described as art historical periods), abolishes the search for monolithic female
traditions in e.g. self-portraiture, humour, themes or imagery. Rather, it redirects
attention to the links and gendered contributions of female art to various age-old
cultural traditions in visual culture. His methodology might also clear some
problems in the prolific research on the relationship between feminism and post-
modernism[5] in which many recurrent picaresque traits have been attributed to
the 'post-modernism' of feminism (e.g., to a "Brechtian perspective").[6] Seerveld's
cartographic methodology on the one hand typologically narrows down and
differentiates the field of a feminist search for commonalities. On the other hand,
it broadens this field by including earlier historical male contributions to typiconic
traditions. The spectre of biological and cultural essentialism is thereby removed.

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[3] Other recent art historical studies which stresses traditions in female art production, are
Betterton (1996) and Isaac (1996).

[4] There are studies outside art history which are pertinent in this respect. Barreca (1988)
endeavours to find a common female tradition in humour. One of the earlier attempts in finding a
distinctively female literary tradition with reference to "coherence in theme and imagery"
pertaining to madness and hysteria, in a group of female literary texts, is Sandra Gilbert & Susan
Gubar's *The madwomen in the attic. The woman writer and the nineteenth-century literary
imagination* (1979).

[5] The relationship of feminism and post-modernism is discussed by many writers like Morris
(1994), Creed (1994), Probyn (1987), Wolff (1990a), Waugh (1992a), Bordo (1990), Barzman
(1994), Owens (1983), Huyssen (1986a, 1986), Suleiman (1990).

[6] A good example of such an argument in art history is Griselda Pollock (1988: 155-199).

The picaresque tradition was long defined on the strength of and in resonance with a broad range of art works by male artists. It is only since the 1970's that picaresque projects were produced in large numbers by female artists. The picaresque is a human stance. If the complementary nature of male and female in human existence is accepted, it follows that there must be subtle nuances and accents in, e.g., the use of motifs and metaphors in recent feminist picaresque products of visual culture that have not been exploited before and which have not yet been incorporated into our cultural heritage and assimilated into the idea of a picaresque tradition. A study of picaresque art by female artists therefore has the potential of enriching our idea of this tradition. By showing that the 'grand Western tradition of canonical works' is differentiated into various traditions, the feminist contribution is recognized by its incorporation into various canonical traditions. It is illuminating to differentiate the representation of a large spectrum of favourite motifs, themes, metaphors, strategies and techniques of female artists adumbrated in so many literary and art historical feminist writing, in various typiconic traditions, assessing their idolizations or redeeming features. It enriches our appreciation of visual cultural products by female artists, to evaluate them as to their compromised positions within, and ideological obligations to patriarchal culture. It is a point of view which expands and nuances the field of inquiry of feminist visual and literary history.

I notice a strong picaresque strand weaving through contemporary feminism. Jo Anna Isaak's recent publication *Feminism and contemporary art: The revolutionary power of women's laughter* (1996), as well as Rosemary Betterton's *Intimate distance. Women, artists and the body* (1996), for instance, are veritable compendia of picaresque feminist art.

As a broad trend in cultural production, feminism creates fertile soil for the picaresque tradition to flourish in. From the perspective of those picaresque traits that have been discussed in chapter 4, there are many shared picaresque and

feminist interests. The feminist concern for the gendered body is part of a trend away from the interest in the history of ideas towards the fascination with material culture. Feminists like Luce Irigaray and Hélèn Cixous[7] have endeavoured to describe the effects of the gendered body on intellectual cultural production, writing, philosophy and scholarship. Many feminist artists have exploited and ironized the widespread association of 'woman' and 'nature'.[8] Feminists have stressed the importance of the lowly and petty details of everyday existence in art,[9] criticism,[10] and research (*Feminist scholarship as lived research,* Fonow & Cook, 1991).[11] Their social marginalization has contributed to the acuity of their ideological critique.[12]

In much art by female artists since the seventies gender is foregrounded by the representation or performance of the (their own) female body (bodies).[13] The propensity to use representations or performances of the gendered body in order to subvert, intervene with social ideologies is shared by picaresque and much feminist art. The carnivalesque overlap between feminist and picaresque art is the delight in the earthy vitality of the body as a site to display the petrification, artificiality and violence of social and artistic conventions. Humour, laughter and the grotesque are often employed as aesthetic strategies to enhance this. A conspicuous trait in art by female artists is the concomitant manifestation of

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[7] Most explicitly in Irigaray's *This sex which is not one* (1985). Hélèn Cixous (1991), however, rather than Irigaray, might be considered to show a picaresque sensibility. Her position is analysed in chapter 11 of this dissertation.

[8] Cf., e.g., Nicole Jolicoeur (Isaak 1996: 162ff, Lamoureux 1991), Nancy Spero (Isaak 1996: 20ff.) and Frida Kahlo (Edholm 1992).

[9] Cf., e.g., the Los Angeles *Womanhouse* project (1972) (Broude & Garrard 1994); the craft-like quilting of Faith Ringgold (Rosen & Brawer 1989, Gouma-Peterson 1987, Schor 1991), knitting by Elaine Reichek (Isaak 1996: 68ff.), embroidery at the Manchester *Subversive Stitch* exhibition (1988) (Deepwell 1995: 76ff.); the (life-size) ceramic sculptures of Wilma Cruise (Nel 1996, Arnold 1996:109-114). About feminism and decorative traditions, see also Kämpf-Jansen, 1987, Garb 1986, McNeil 1994, Gouma-Peterson 1986.

[10] Cf. Naomi Schor's *Reading in detail* (1989).

[11] Also Westphal 1994.

[12] Cf. Frazer 1989, Collins 1991.

[13] Cf. Carolee Schneeman (Sayre 1989b, Kultermann 1983, Elwes 1985, Klinger 1991), Hannah Wilke (Rosen & Brawer 1989, Jones 1996, Isaak 1996), Nancy Spero (Rosen & Brawer 1989, Isaak 1996), Cindy Sherman (Sayre 1989).

anger and pleasure, or sensuous delight and subversion, when dealing with the female body.[14]

Many instances of feminist foregrounding of the vital gendered body could be viewed as part of a broad picaresque trend subverting the ideological acceptance of the reduction of knowledge to conceptual knowledge associated with the metaphor of the eye, as opposed to a more full-bodied acceptance of the role of the lower body in cognition.[15] Feminism has a stake in combating such an impoverished idea of knowledge, since the polarization of masculinity and femininity has strengthened it by the association of highly assessed 'objective' conceptual knowledge with masculinity and of 'subjective' naïve knowledge with femininity (cf. Lloyd 1984, Harding 1992).

For women, the search for a 'voice' or a 'system of representation' (*l'écriture féminine, la peinture féminine*) and for a female body image or corporeal representation in bodily postures and gestures which are not socially limiting and repressively objectifying, are intimately bound together.[16] Likewise, picaresque art is preoccupied with the social and ideological rhetoric of gesture.

Picaresque and some feminist art endeavour to reach larger audiences than the usual refined art public around the distinctive art institutions of various periods, and both kinds of art self-consciously often associate with 'lower' art forms like caricature,[17] graffiti,[18] the comic strip, *Flugblätter*, advertisements,[19] the mass communication media,[20] photography,[21] posters[22] and other widely transmissioned and easily accessible media in order to exploit their political

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[14] Hanna Höch (Lavin 1993: 10-12), Cindy Sherman (Siegel 1988).
[15] Kathy Prendergast (Isaak 1996: 165ff.).
[16] Cf. Lomas 1993, Isaak 1966.
[17] Ilona Granet's *Emily Post Street Signs* (Isaak 1996: 34ff).
[18] Jenny Holzer (Siegel 1988, Owens 1992, Isaak 1996).
[19] Barbara Kruger (Linker 1990).
[20] Hannah Höch (Lavin 1993, Held & Schneider 1993, Dech 1989).
[21] Cindy Sherman (Williamson 1992).
[22] Sue Williamson (Williamson 1989).

potential. They also have the aim in common to move, shock or activate their audiences.

The picaresque fascination with the banal, with everyday reality, the simplistic, the genre-like, low, private, petty and concrete, often coincides with a feminist interest in the marginalized intimate female world of trivial detail.[23]

The theme of grotesque female body horror, or the "monstrous-feminine" (Creed 1986: 44) in which many women artists and scholars are currently interested, is often approached from a picaresque transgressive stance. This type of bodily transgression, foregrounding gender, has become potent in the past few decades.[24]

However, it must be stressed that although especially the feminisms of the nineties seem to create fertile soil for picaresque dynamics in which to flourish, similar feminist interests in 'lowly' female craft traditions and lower bodily, vaginal imagery in the 'first wave' feminism of the seventies, produced many visual cultural products in the heroic tradition. Judy Chicago's *Dinner party* (1979) is a good example, and the exhibition catalogue of the 1996 exhibition *Sexual politics. Judy Chicago's 'Dinner party' in feminist art history* makes this clear.[25] The same conditions also witnessed a flourishing of feminist art in the mystic tradition. The work of a few artists discussed by Eleanor Lauter in her *Women as mythmakers. Poetry and visual art by twentieth century women* (1984), are examples.

In the Introduction I have proposed a vantage point of analysis within a picaresque directive framework, appropriate to the visual material being

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[23] Cf. Dottie Attie (Kozloff 1991, Isaak 1996: 60ff.). In the field of aesthetics, see Donovan (1993).
[24] Cf. Russo 1986, Schor 1990 and 1993, Douglas 1991, Gallop 1992, Barr 1992, Duncan 1993, Bryson 1993, Bal 1994, Betterton 1996.
[25] Other sources discussing many 'first wave' feminist art products in the heroic tradition are Tickner 1978, Rosen & Brawer 1989, Pollock 1991, Broude & Garrard 1994, 1994a. Artimisia Gentileschi is an earlier female artist in this tradition.

analysed. Such a perspective could aid in the production of more aesthetically disclosed and analytically nuanced art historical texts. In her article "Past looking" (1990) and her book by the same title (1996), Michael Ann Holly endeavours to move away form the idea of art historians' voyeuristic point of view, and recognizes their entanglement, in the wake of the discovery of a "politics of vision" (Bryson 1988: 107). Her argument for the acknowledgement of a match between "the rhetorical composition of the art historical text" and "the formal virtuosity and iconic ingenuity of the images about which it speaks" (Holly 1990: 372) is useful, if the distinction between the work of art, on the one hand, and the aesthetically disclosed scholarly text, on the other hand, is respected:

> The issue is one of a productive correspondence of rhetorical ideologies between image and text. Representational practices encoded in works of art continue to be encoded in their commentaries (Holly 1990: 385).

Although, in her example of Burckhardt's *Civilization of the Renaissance* (1860), her attention is directed more to (in Seerveld's terms) the diachronic and synchronic co-ordinates in historiography, her arguments should also apply to its perchronic or typological dimension.

The proposed method of analysing feminist picaresque visual material from a picaresque point of view, thereby recognizing the ideological entanglement of art historians and spectators, is further explored in chapter 11 and 12.

CHAPTER 6: THE PICARESQUE TRADITION IN IDEOLOGY-CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

6.1 The hypothesis of a 'troubled picaresque' tradition

One of the premises of this study is that it does not suffice to say that traces of a deep awareness of the import of sin and redemption is to be discovered most radically in the 'troubled cosmic' tradition. Rather, it should be stressed that such an awareness is possible from the communication between the 'troubled cosmic' and the other ideologically committed traditions. Although there is always dialogue between traditions, it is especially important to emphasize the dialogue between the 'troubled cosmic' tradition and all the other traditions. The significance, in all the other traditions, of sin or suffering, but also of redemption, should not be underestimated and a 'troubled' alternative could be posited for each of them in acknowledgement of ideological entanglement.

The problem of ideological self-entanglement is an extremely difficult issue, and the inclination to self-critically communicate personal ideological involvement might be attributed to an ethos of communication and a concept of 'erasure' (symbolized by the motif of the cross), characteristic of the Jewish-Christian tradition.[1] Michael Edwards (1990: 25,26) has noted in his article "Not I" that, to agree (under the aegis of Marx and Freud) that we are products of society and history:

> is to forego the substantial unity of the soul. It is to agree one derives from contingence, that one does not possess oneself, that one is indefinitely displaced. 'I' and not my own presence; 'I' am not the voice of one. It is also to abandon the idea of a 'world', of a self-existing external reality similarly equipped with its own unchanging truth and unity. And what is perhaps more, it is to allow what Foucault calls 'the disappearance of subjectivity in the withdrawal of origin'.

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[1] This insight was communicated to me by Johann Visagie.

Yet, Edwards (1990: 26) shows that in the Christian perspective, there is a deeper understanding of the de-centred self, exemplified in the writings of St Paul (Romans 7: 20) where the 'I' associated with self-awareness and intention "is, as it were, unhoused, and obliged to observe a strange power [sin] which has replaced it as a terrifyingly novel form of inwardness".

Seerveld may well have deemed it necessary to clear a separate space on his chart, for a radical[2] awareness of the created yet broken nature of this *verkeerde wereld* of ideologized culture, because Vollenhoven had been accused of standing outside the map of his own typological constructions. Albert Wolters (1979: 258) describes Vollenhoven's position thus:

> The conclusion that Vollenhoven himself stands outside the Box,[3] appears from the fact that he does not, with one exception, accept as valid the *probleemstellingen* which determine its structure, and thus cannot choose for the existing alternatives. The choice between dualism and monism is a false dilemma which must be rejected by the Christians. The same applies to the trilemma universalism/partial universalism/individualism. Only in the case of the trilemma touching the myth is it legitimate to choose: the myths, being by definition paganistic, are to be rejected, as is the extreme reaction against them which relativizes all 'genesis'. That leaves the cosmogono-cosmological answer as the legitimate alternative. As for the fourth (actually first) fundamental problem of philosophy, the question of the place of the law, the alternative solutions given by subjectivism, objectivism and realism are all to be rejected.

And:

> A radically Scriptural philosophy, which has orientated itself well in the history of philosophy, [supposedly, ESH] stands above such contending parties of the modern

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[2] From conversations with Dirk van den Berg it seems as of the 'radicality' and complexity of the awareness of the impact of sin and wholeness is taken to be an outstanding characteristic of the 'troubled cosmic' tradition.

[3] Wolters (1979: 252) constructed a schematic three-dimensional box or cube with 18 co-ordinates, pinpointing the various possible answers to Vollenhoven's 'problems' of (1) mythology and genesis, (2) dualism and monism and (3) the universal and the individual, leaving aside the problem of the 'place of the law', which is a timestream rather than a typological matter.

age and refuses to take sides. Only it can be truly 'impartial'. With the help of the problem-historical method the Christian thinker can be rescued from the insidious influence of a long and powerful pagan tradition (Wolters 1979: 259).

If it was indeed Seerveld's intention to accommodate the 'troubled cosmic' position in the co-ordinates of the map (where he places himself) with this dilemma of ideological self-entanglement in mind, the solution is limited, since he still seems to reject the validity of the same *probleemstellingen* that Vollenhoven rejected, and like Vollenhoven, only accepts the "cosmogono-cosmological"/"structured genesis" option as valid. The 'troubled cosmic' is the only tradition defined by Seerveld without comparative reference to Vollenhoven's structural problems and historical answers (e.g. dualism/monism), exactly since Vollenhoven did not inscribe his own position on his charts. Seerveld defines his personal stance implicitly only in his writings (but not on his charts), to the problem of historical development (i.e. structured genesis) and to the answer of heart/body in stead of dualism/monism.

In Dirk van den Berg's (1997: 94) positioning of himself and/or his academic writing in a separate 'troubled cosmic' tradition on the chart of 'typiconic traditions', too, the inevitability, even "as [...] the mother tongue taught us in our youth", of contact between this tradition and the blind spots of others, in order to be able to see, is maybe under-emphasized:

To the degree that we do indeed have some choice regarding our historical habituation in the cultural traditions that frame our personal and communal dispositions, I would position *myself* [my italics, E.S.H.] [4] in the 'troubled cosmic' tradition with its *chiaroscuro* awareness of both the glory and the misery of the world, the depth of sin and redemption. Thus my evaluation of the 'scenic' tradition's contributions, my recognition of its strengths and blind-spots, are coloured by the 'broken cosmic' perspective with its own *ideological baggage* [my italics, E.S.H.].[5] *As with the mother tongue taught us in our youth, we only become aware of the critical implications of the cultural frames we*

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[4] Not 'my work', but 'myself', which reveals a 'world-view' emphasis. See section 3.4.4 below.

inherit from earlier generations when we come into contact with alternatives [my italics, E.S.H.]. An ambiguous tone, critical as well as appreciative, is a prominent feature of the 'troubled cosmic' tradition's stance towards the city (cf Van Riessen 1953, Ellul 1970, Nijkamp 1984) (Van den Berg 1997: 94).

To make matters more intricate, Seerveld and Van den Berg, in defining their own positions, join the ranks, of kindred spirits like both the 'late Rembrandt' (i.e. the later works in the oeuvre of Rembrandt) and the 'late Goya' (i.e. the later works in the oeuvre of Goya), according to their charts. Rembrandt, an esteemed artist from the reformational point of view,[6] does the 'troubled cosmic' tradition proud, but from many of Goya's works a loss of hope emanates. It seems as if there is a division in the 'troubled cosmic' tradition between those oeuvres which reveal a radical awareness of the impact of evil forces, and those imparting the effects of both sin and redemption. I argue that the same is true for other traditions. The proposition of a 'troubled picaresque' tradition (to which Rembrandt would show affinities), as part of the picaresque tradition, seems feasible. In this study some paintings by Jan Steen are interpreted as 'troubled picaresque'.[7] At least some works in the oeuvre of Rembrandt may be presented as fitting the directive framework of the 'troubled picaresque' tradition: *The Rape of Ganymede* (1635)[8] as interpreted by Hadjinicolaou (1978) and *Self-portrait with Saskia* (1655)[9] as interpreted by Kahr (1973) and De Jongh (1986) are examples.

In typically picaresque vein, I am troubled by the separate and maybe esteemed status assigned to the 'troubled cosmic' tradition in that the distinction between despairing and redemptive images is provided for only in this tradition. It might be

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[5] The definition of this 'ideological baggage' is not made clear in their descriptions of the typiconic traditions by either Seerveld or Van de Berg.
[6] See Seerveld's discussions in *A Christian critique of art and literature* and his references to, e.g., Wencelius (Seerveld 1995: 52ff). See also Smith 1985.
[7] See chapter 7, section 3 and chapter 8.
[8] Canvas, 177 x 129 cm. Dresden: Gemäldegalerie (Salvesen 1991: 24).
[9] Canvas, 161 x 131 cm. Dresden: Gemäldegalerie (Borenius 1944: 30).

a 'troubled' awareness of the philosophical prejudice (blindspot) of "monism" associated with the picaresque tradition, that highlights this issue!

James Elkins (1996: 121) describes how powerful images of fear, pain or sexuality have the ability to 'bend vision away' and to induce moments of blindness. Especially when subjects are charged with sexuality or with danger, it is impossible to see all of it or to see it in a relaxed and measured way. This is one of the grounds upon which he bases his argument that blindness is not the opposite of vision, but its constant companion, and even the foundation of seeing itself: "[n]o seeing sees everything, and no skill or practice can alter that." "Every field of vision is clotted with sexuality, desire, convention, anxiety, and boredom, and nothing is available for full, leisurely inspection". Seeing is also "inconstant seeing, partial seeing, poor seeing, and not seeing, or to put is as strongly as possible [...] seeing involves and entails blindness; seeing is also blindness" (Elkins 1996: 95).

Elkins's (1996: 95) supposition that "blindness is not the opposite of vision, but its constant companion, and even the foundation of seeing itself" provides a metaphor for compromised ideological seeing and knowledge, that presupposes blind spots. Although the identification and critical awareness of the blind spots of idolized value systems in culture and society does not preclude our entanglement in it, it provides both a distrust of what seems apparent (illusion), and a depth of vision, otherwise denied to us. From this point of view the lack of definition of the 'troubled cosmic' blind spots are not only a liability with regard to depth of vision, but also seems to disavow the radical entanglement in ideological culture, of the work of every artist and scholar.

In a broader, ideologically compromised but ideology-critical view, the distinction of typiconic traditions in art is itself also regarded as an ideological act and it implies that representations in each of these traditions are, in the negative sense, ideological in nature. However, the thrust of Visagie's theory of ideology, which

propounds an ideological world in which all our acts, representations and socio-cultural institutions are negatively pervaded by ideology, is that the possibility exists to assess critically the underlying idolized values and rehabilitate ideological culture. Klapwijk's 'idea of transformational philosophy' is a similar project.[10] This highlights the proposal that it is conceivable to rehabilitate each typiconic tradition. If ideology is described in visual terms as a kind of oblivious staring that remains unconscious of blind spots, then ideology critique might be described as the consciousness of the disturbing presence of blind spots and the realization that blind spots are humanly inevitable. One might conjecture that in each tradition a characteristic type of awareness of the brokenness[11] as well as the redemption of reality should be discernible.

The typically picaresque insight into our enmeshed position in a network of ideologies, is metaphorically related to the characteristic self-mockery of the Fool figure.[12] I have stressed earlier the relationship of the figure of the Fool to magic and sinister forces. It is through this dark underside of the role of the picaresque Fool, often revealed in grotesque ways, that I consider the forces of idolatry to be detectable. On the other hand, however, for the 'troubled picaresque' reader there is a 'troubled picaresque' legacy in which the Fool could also be described as having numinous associations, revealing not ideology, but redemptive features. The phenomenon of holy Fools who appeared during various periods in history are examples of such religious connections in the history of the Fool. Christ himself who was crowned with thorns and rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, exemplifies the humility referred to in 1 Cor. 1: 27-28:

> God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in
> the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even

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[10] Cf. Klapwijk 1991.

[11] The establishment of different types of renderings of the radical implications of the *verkehrte Welt* as sin, would be part of a Vollenhovian project pointed out by Seerveld: "because Vollenhoven takes the absurd reality of sin seriously, Vollenhoven believes it belongs to the responsibility of an historian to judge, in keeping history, whether whatever is made of an inheritance is historically good or evil, wasteful or redemptive" (Seerveld 1993: 52).

[12] This idea will be elaborated upon in chapter 8.

things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might
boast in the presence of God.

In the 'troubled picaresque' imaginary world laughter and subversion can
sometimes be suggestive of joy and wholeness, so that our ideas concerning
what is real and what is illusory are reversed and the prospect of a redeemed
world becomes just as real (cf. Berger 1997).

In the light of the above I want to propose the viability of a 'troubled picaresque'
legacy within the broad picaresque tradition. I want to describe the 'troubled
picaresque' tradition in art and other texts as a humorous subversive manner of
visual cultural production which is attuned to a critique of power relations in
society and of humankind's propensity to impoverish reality by explaining the
meaningful world according to a few idolized values alone. In such visual (and
other) texts cultural endeavours are thematized and criticized with a view to
changing culture for the better.

It is a tradition in which humility is central. This is evident not only in the low
mode humour and "low", often banal subject matter, like lower bodily functions
and everyday occurrences depicted, but also in a realization that an ideologized,
sinful world is worth trying to change. Its answers suggest that priority is given to
naturalness, as opposed to technological manipulation or excesses in spirituality.
It is a tradition optimistic in its belief in the enduring vitality and the
developmental potential of the banal and concrete. Neither idyllic escapism from
the real world, nor the heroic assumption of power in order to make the world a
better place, is to be expected here.

I believe that the deep meaning of natural human vitality can be explored from a
picaresque stance, without necessarily succumbing to the need to explain reality
exclusively in terms of the processes of Nature. I believe the picaresque tradition
to be a possible stance from which to appreciate the broken nature, as well as

the awesome meaning of everyday existence and human naturalness with a view to its importance in the coherence and variety of reality. I believe that the typiconic traditions offer historical imaginative casts from which it is possible to glimpse, in different ways, the fullness of the variety and meaning of reality, in spite of and because of their blind spots.

The method of a picaresque hermeneutics of suspicion elaborated upon in the introduction can now be more closely qualified as a 'troubled' picaresque hermeneutics of suspicion. I prefer not to confess to a 'troubled' picaresque world-and-life-view. Rather, in so far as I regard the distinction of 'typiconic traditions' as an ideology-critical endeavour, I prefer only to critically acknowledge such entanglement in this chosen method of analysis.

In chapter 7, section 3, I shall demonstrate the significance of the witness function in the implied roles of the 'troubled picaresque' viewer and narrator of picaresque art.

6.2 The bodily effects of ideology: metaphoric postures and gestures

This study endeavours to extend the definition of the picaresque in such a way as to be able to account for picaresque strategies, picaresque rhetorical devices, and the impact of the picaresque 'cast' not only on the representation of subject matter, but also on compositional structures, narrative emplotments and the metaphoric signification of postures, gestures and facial expressions. This is important in view of the fact that I consider artistic conventions to be ideologically charged, and bodies to manifest the effects of ideology.[13] It is a premise not only from the picaresque artistic perspective, but also from the assumed expanded definition of ideology. It could be argued that to define any of the traditions from this angle, is to expand the research initiated by Seerveld, since in his description of the imaginative 'cast' of each 'typiconic tradition' Seerveld has de-emphasized,

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[13] Cf. chapter 9.

according to Luttikhuizen (1995: 88), the importance of genres, subject matter and iconographical motifs:

> When discussing Seerveld's notion of the perchronic, one should keep in mind his interest in style, in how an artist frames her or his interpretation. Seerveld believes style is the best category for discovering an artist's worldview. Unlike genres (e.g., portraiture, landscape, and still-life), subject-matter (e.g., paintings of the Rape of Europa and depictions of the Last Supper), or iconographical motifs (e. g., lambs, bagpipes, and swings), the category of style explicitly reveals the perceptual understanding of the artist, the ways in which content is predicated and meaning is given.

In the light of Johann Visagie's research in the field of ideology critique such recurring metaphors and motifs in picaresque and picaresque feminist art may be regarded as more than mere suitable subversive tools. They become metaphoric communicators of underlying beliefs and ideologies, revealing ontological stances towards reality (Visagie 1990: 16, 1994b). They are often affiliated in patterns which divulge much about the underlying assumptions of various traditions in ideology.

This study is partly concerned to concretely define the picaresque tradition in terms of representations of ambiguous bodily postures, gestures, physiognomy and facial expressions, bodily movements and modes of behaviour, presuming that the traditions could all be presented to display a typical metaphoric countenance in this way. As most picaresque visual material is about human nature and social reality and it favours the depiction of human actions and figures, I shall endeavour to search such motifs for the tell-tale symptoms of ideology. There are some advantages in exploring the 'typiconic traditions' from this angle. Metaphoric postures represented in visual culture and revealing directive frameworks, demonstrate how the effects of ideology diffuse through all human dimensions of being, negating dualistic disconnections of the spiritual, the intellectual and the physical. The emphasis on the ambiguity of postures,

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gestures and facial expressions as signs, focuses the attention on socially situated artworks and products of visual culture, rather than on the worldviews of their artists or producers. To my mind, it is only by a relentless focus on visual and palpable traces of directive traditions in visual culture[14] and the manner in which they impact on socially situated and gendered spectators, that the theory of 'typiconic traditions' can productively be explored.[15] Moreover, to 'cut a figure' is to create a fleeting impression in the movement in and out of a posture. Any one posture can be convincingly interpreted to reveal various subtle nuances of meaning. Such an emphasis softens the boundaries between the various categories posited in the theory of 'typiconic traditions' – and maintains the above mentioned 'sense of humour' Seerveld requires for the use of his categorizations which, he emphasizes, are 'not meant for legalists'!

In ideology theory the bodily effects of ideology is not an altogether unfamiliar topic and research by Johann Visagie will be transposed to the study of visual culture.[16] Visagie's (1995: 23-25) concept of postural ambiguity, communicating the irreconcilable struggle of darkness and light, is especially fruitful in connection with the art historical research done by Aby Warburg on bodily gestures, stances and facial expressions (cf. Hofmann *et al.* 1980).[17] Warburg's concept of *Pathosformeln* reflects a similar ambiguity, although the tension for

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[14] This does not amount to a confession of a belief in the "death of the author", since from a feminist point of view such a confession would mean suicide. My contention is that gender is often visually and palpably evident in works of art and therefore often contributes to the signification thereof.

[15] It is too simplistic to relapse in direct references to artists and their world-and-life-views, instead of focusing on the reading process of visual clues in specific works in specific contexts. In such references the jump between the living artist and his of her lifestyle, the role-playing artist projected in his/her work, and so forth, and the work itself, is not significantly differentiated. See my brackets and note 4 above, as well as Seerveld's explanation of typiconic formats in terms of artists's actions: "...I have identified several basic ways artists (including music composers, novelists, architects, choreographers, cinematic auteurs) prefabricate, as it were, their symbolic presentations of meaning" (Seerveld 1993: 60).The process of threefold mimesis analysed by Ricoeur (1984: 71), stresses not only "prefabrication", but rather the interaction of artist's pre-figuration, figuration in the text, and the intersection of the text and the world of the hearer or reader.

[16] In his discussion of the topic, Visagie (1994b) mentions the sociologist Robert Bellah's *Habits of the heart* and Erich Fromm, among other sources on this phenomenon.

[17] Cf. chapter 1, section 1.

him is between rational freedom and primitive magical constraint, rather than between idolatrous bondage and redemption.

Our broader theory of ideology which includes the art historical, theoretical and aesthetic spheres in its field, concurs with the reality that in picaresque art, critique is not directed at socio-cultural matters alone, but distinctly at prevalent representational and artistic forms and conventions as well. In the picaresque tradition these forms and conventions are considered to be ideologically contentious. The critical interest therein can aptly be described to be embedded in the 'corporeality' or 'materiality' of systems of representation. In this study attention is directed more specifically at the underlying significance of repeated motifs and metaphors in visual, literary and scholarly discourse in the picaresque tradition, and at the embodiment of such metaphors in gestures, stances and postures in visual representations.

6.3 High art and mass and popular culture ·

Although Seerveld "has not written about popular culture specifically, at least not in terms of contemporary cultural studies" (Romanowski 1995: 25), Seerveld's "single, unifying vision" for aesthetic life (Seerveld 1974: 7ff, 1980a: 42ff) provides a framework for dismantling divisions between high art and mass culture – a project often in sympathy with picaresque sensibilities, even before it became fashionable in post-modern and feminist discourse and visual culture. However, in order to abandon such divisions, the dangers of subjectivism looming in all theories of world view,[18] will have to be taken seriously. Rather than dealing with (uniquely creative) artists and their visions, the focus should be on the visual evidence in works of visual culture. Such a perspective is not a

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[18] Rowe sums it up in the following way: "The problem with the worldview idea is that it obliges us to construe this creature 'Man' as a subject in the first place. If we are hoping for a philosophical account of Subject which avoids subjectivism altogether, we wait in vain" (Rowe 1989:157) and "The essence of the *subiectum,* its 'subjectivity', consists in its being a 'power of perception', a faculty of sight. Thus the subjectivity of the modern Subject is the consciousness that represents and pictures its object" (Rowe 1989: 167).

submission to the post-modern textualization of reality, but is rather in awe of the meaningful 'inscape' of created reality which is adumbrated in products of visual culture. Such a perspective respects representational traditions exploiting such meanings across the whole spectrum of visual culture, including so-called high art as well as mass and popular culture. In visual terms a *Maidenform* advertisement (Figure 93) can be analysed to reveal various ideologies in intricate nuances of meaning, inherent in the choice of subject matter and the manner of its presentation – meanings which were probably not at all in the minds of those who created it.

The dismissal of mass and popular culture by ideology theorists like Adorno and Baudrillard, and by art critics like Clement Greenberg, is well known. A more inclusive notion of ideology, acknowledging its pervasive effects in our everyday world, as well as the world of art and theory, facilitates resonant comparative interpretations of high art forms with products of mass visual culture. Such a theory facilitates a more nuanced view of the origins and affiliations of mass and popular visual culture in and with high art forms of the past. Instead of merely professing its superficiality, its similarities to kitsch, its pervasive influence, the ideology-critical visual culture analyst is enabled on the basis of such a theory to unveil the subtle perpetuation of various age-old ideological traditions by means of mass visual culture. An analysis of the alliances between the overexposure of the female body in Western art and in the mass communication media is one such field which I shall be exploring in chapter 12 of this dissertation.

6.4 Ideology-critical methods in visual cultural analysis

If the distinction of typiconic traditions in visual culture is regarded as an ideological act, it implies that the exploration of viable ideology-critical art historical and/or visual cultural methods is an urgent assignment. Ideology-critical approaches to visual culture is a relatively young development in art history, probably not older than Marxism, feminism and the Frankfurter Schule. There is

much work to be done in this field from the perspective of an immanent (as opposed to transcendent) cultural critical perspective sensitive to the idolatry of values. An attempt at such an ideology-critical approach to visual culture is made in chapter 12.

I have endeavoured to describe and to expand the notion of a 'picaresque tradition' and to indicate some avenues along which such a notion might enrich the study of visual culture. In the following parts of the study these avenues will be explored.

PART 2

METAPHORIC CLUSTERS IN A PICARESQUE VISUAL ARTS TRADITION

Having suggested in the previous section, that the idea of an 'imaginary world' might adjust the subjective 'world-view' inclinations of the idea of the 'typiconic traditions', I now argue that 'motifs' are dynamic 'motives' within the context of the directive imaginary framework of the picaresque imaginary world, generating and divulging its ideological orientations. In this part of the study the metaphoric significance in picaresque visual art, of motifs related to vision, the Fool, foolish bodily postures, and playful narrative emplotments, is scrutinized.

The prevalence of the metaphoric association of knowledge and vision in 'ocularcentric' mainstream Western culture at least since Greco-Roman antiquity, make metaphors related to vision important barometers of ideological directive frameworks. In the first chapter examples of picaresque works of art since the beginning of the "Era of Art" are probed in search of peculiarly picaresque ocular prejudices, and manifestations of the patterns of the picaresque 'typiconic' imaginative cast are discussed in Part 1.

In the next chapter themes and motifs associated with the character of the Fool, are unravelled in order to explore his/her metaphoric role as the epitome of picaresque artistry, performing various functions with and in picaresque texts. After having systematized the types of metaphoric bodily postures and gestures that are related to the playfully subversive nature of the Fool, pictorial narratives are considered in order to assess how playful metaphors of actions and events divulge underlying picaresque orientations in narrative contexts.

My definition of metaphor is in resonance with that of Paul Ricoeur who outlines in *The Rule of Metaphor* (1977) "the power of the metaphorical utterance to redescribe a reality inaccessible to direct description." He suggests that:

> 'seeing as", which sums up the power of metaphor, could be the revealer of a 'being-as' on the deepest ontological level (Ricoeur 1984: xi).

This notion of metaphor is supported by Johann Visagie's contention that we do not only 'live by' metaphors (cf. Lakoff & Johnson 1980), but that their presence and use reveal motives, "ground motives" and "macromotives" (Visagie 1990).

CHAPTER 7: THE EYE: METAPHORS OF BLINDNESS AND SIGHT IN THE PICARESQUE TRADITION

In this chapter metaphors of vision, and their related motifs (the eye, spectacles, the bodily postures accompanying the actions of watching, looking, peeking and gazing and so on), as they are represented in picaresque works of art, are investigated. Metaphors of vision are chosen, precisely because the metaphoric association of knowledge and vision seems to have been prevalent in 'ocularcentric' mainstream Western culture at least since Greco-Roman antiquity. Here the principal metaphors for thinking, knowledge, and truth itself (*Wesenschau*) somehow have to do with seeing: central and powerful notions such as perspective, speculating, revealing, illuminating, casting light on a problem, being enlightened, insightful, clear, distinct, or brilliant are only the symptoms of this relation which has, in the course of many centuries, become deeply ingrained in thought processes. The persistent metaphoric mentalization of vision is understandable if those characteristics of the sense of sight which distinguishes it from the other senses are considered – its mobility and freedom of movement, its capacity to be directed at something, and the faculty to react voluntarily and intentionally, as well as reflexively.

Martin Jay notes that, depending on one's point of view, the prevalence of such metaphors will be accounted an obstacle or an aid to our knowledge of reality. Yet, blinded to their importance, we will compromise or even damage our ability to comprehend our world (Jay 1993: 1). My argument is that the way in which metaphors of vision are utilized not only reveals stances towards cognition, but also reveals orientations with regard to directive imaginary frameworks. The blind spot in the human eye, where the optic nerve connects with the retina, suggests a metaphoric 'hole' in vision (Jay 1993: 8). This physiological constraint of the embodied eye reminds us of the metaphoric ideological blindspots in the

rationalistic mentalization of disembodied vision. By describing and analysing visual representations of motifs related to vision, typological definitions of various imaginary directive frameworks in art and visual culture might become clearer.

With this project in mind, Seerveld's map of imaginative frameworks in art history could be redescribed as a historiographic cartography of the 'sites' of ideological blind spots, or of the ideological tunnelling of vision. The term 'visuality' – "the distinct historical manifestations of visual experience in all its possible modes" (Jay 1993: 9) – describes the broad field within which it is proposed that a picaresque strand of 'visuality' might be distinguished. Although the picaresque tradition is characterized by a reaction against 'decarnalized' and 'transcendentalized' vision, it seems that the metaphor of vision itself is an inevitable one. The question is not whether it is possible to replace the metaphor of the eye with that of the ear or any of the other senses[1] to connote knowledge, cognition and power, but rather, what various metaphors of the eye hide and reveal about vision and 'visuality' and how these metaphoric constellations might be typologically differentiated. By mapping the various dimensions of vision highlighted and suppressed in each tradition, it should be possible to gain a collective picture of the typiconic potential of the metaphor of vision in the light of which its contested position[2] might be re-evaluated.

Feminist scholars like Evelyn Fox Keller & Christine Grontkowski (1983) have taken first steps in such a re-appraisal of vision by arguing that the voyeurism of Western philosophy and science has elevated de-eroticized visual experience to

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[1] Relevant texts in this regard, in the context of this dissertation, are Irigaray 1985, Geertsema 1992. Others are Jonas 1954, Ong 1982, De Chapeaurouge 1983, Ellul 1985.
[2] I am referring to the critique of the allegedly superior capacity of metaphors of vision to provide access to the world, put forward especially by French philosophers of the twentieth century, and elucidated by Martin Jay (1986,1988,1993).

vision *per se*, and thus missed the communal, non-objectifying potential of vision:[3]

> the question of a possible male bias to an epistemology modelled on vision has become considerably more complex than originally might have been thought. In particular, two facets to the metaphoric functions of vision need to be separated. The emphasis on the 'objectifying' functions of vision, and the corresponding relegation of its communicative – one might even say erotic – function, needs to be separated from the reliance on vision as distinct from other sensory modalities (Keller & Grontkowski 1983: 220).

Artworks in the picaresque tradition can be read to reveal peculiar ways of metaphorically isolating certain (marginalized) dimensions of vision and 'visuality' in order to criticize related (mainstream) ocular biases. It seems to be a worthwhile endeavour to analyse the particular ways in which mainstream prejudices about seeing are subverted, and everyday experience of embodied vision restored, in the picaresque tradition, in order to reveal those dimensions of vision that are screened off in art works in other ideological traditions. Part of this project is the appreciation of picaresque feminist contributions to infusing this interrogation of vision with a sensitivity to gender.

In this chapter examples of picaresque works of art produced since the beginning of the "Era of Art" are interpreted with a view to reveal such peculiarly picaresque ocular prejudices, manifesting the patterns of the picaresque 'typiconic' imaginative cast discussed in Part 1. In each section a more or less established example of a picaresque work is juxtaposed with a feminist example to highlight how attention to gender significantly augments the problematics of vision. It also suggests a continuity in the picaresque tradition between the picaresque and picaresque feminist art.

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[3] Most feminist work in this regard of course presupposes the ground-breaking work by Luce Irigaray (1985).

Works from the 'Era of Art' were chosen, keeping in mind those central metaphors of the Fool, the Eye, and Monstrosity, around which most metaphors referred to in this study revolve. However, it might be equally true to say that once the works were chosen, they seemed to readily display an affinity to these central metaphors. In the ideology-critical analysis in Part 4 a few central examples of art products discussed in this section will be referred to again. Their various contexts will be examined in greater detail here (Part 2), in order to facilitate cursory references to them in Part 4 of the dissertation.

Each of the following four sections (7.1 to 7.4) gives a glimpse of an established field of research around the central metaphor of the eye, namely the 'male gaze' (section 7.4), the metaphoric opposition of the gaze and the glance (section 7.2) and narrative focalization (section 7.3). The limitations and constraints of vision represented and interpreted in these picaresque examples of visual culture are understood metaphorically to reveal the special insights and ideological blind spots of this tradition.

7.1 Picaresque blindness

James Elkins's central thesis is that blindness is the constant companion of sight, a conviction that he explains from various angles in his fascinating book *The object stares back* (1996):

> The way I see is a little like the way a blind man taps along the street: he knows just that one spot where his cane touches down, and he hopes he can pretty much guess the rest (Elkins 1996: 97).

He notes that the most common visual problems are not total blindness but ordinary nearsightedness, astigmatism, and other difficulties we have in bringing the world into focus. He argues that all of the common pathologies of vision

correspond to habits in ordinary seeing and that closer inspection of such visual handicaps might enlighten us about metaphorical blindnesses, including the nature of the blurred vision of different ideologies (Elkins 1996: 216-219).

In the *Parable of the blind* (1568) (Figure 5) by the sixteenth-century Flemish artist Pieter Brueghel the Elder, the physiological pathologies of various eye diseases leading to the loss of sight are depicted (Hoekstra 1994: 52). It may be worth investigating how blindness is depicted as 'motifs' in this picaresque work[4] and, on the other hand, what the typical picaresque blindnesses, as 'motives', in this painting are.

I regard the typiconic resemblances that I surmise to exist between the oeuvre of Pieter Brueghel and that of the American post-modern feminist artist, Cindy Sherman,[5] to be a singular key to her work. The most obvious picaresque correspondence lies in their use of the grotesque – the co-presence of blinding horror and laughter. Brueghel's *Parable of the blind* presents an occasion for comparison with Sherman's photograph, *Untitled #156* (1986) (Figure 7), from her *Disasters and fairy tales* phase.[6]

The awed and awe-inspiring posture and facial expression of the second figure from the right in the group of blind men in *The parable of the blind* (Figure 6) resemble the hysterically blind, groping female figure in Cindy Sherman's *Untitled #156*. Both figures have their faces turned upwards in submission towards the spectator who looks down upon them. Both monstrous figures

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[4] My identification of this work as picaresque is based on the characteristics that have been described in section Part 1 of this dissertation, and is borne out by the earliest descriptions and interpretations of his oeuvre, e.g., by Carl van Mander in his *Den grondt der edel vry schilderconst* (1603/4) (cf. Miedema 1973), and is substantiated by those traits distinguished by Fraenger upon which he bases his comparison between the oeuvres of Brueghel and Rabelais (Fraenger 1923,1977).

[5] Cf. Scheldahl 1982, Siegel 1988, Garber 1989, Sayre 1989, Weiss 1990, Williamson 1992, Krauss 1993, Fuku 1997.

appeal for sympathy from a wincing spectator. Whereas the eyes of Brueghel's blinded man are obliterated, the Sherman character's eyes are invisible because of a dark shadow falling across them. The mouths of both grimacing faces are slightly open. Both characters are grotesque in their fallen state and they are not in control of their rigid movements. Both pictures are suggestive of fear and violence, yet each of the two figures is presented in such a way as to elicit wry laughter from the spectator. The comparison of the similar postures of the two characters divided by centuries, has the 'explosive' significance of a *Pathosformel*.

In his analysis of this painting by Brueghel, Hans Sedlmayr (1959b) stresses that the simultaneous presence of awe-inspiring, and laughter-inducing qualities was obvious to Brueghel's contemporary spectators.

In Brueghel's time representations of ungainly blind and cripple figures were considered comic. The blind men represented in the painting are probably pilgrims and beggars, or "fahrendes Volk". The fallen leader of the group carries a harp designating him as a mendicant musician. Such figures were classed with other vagabond types considered to be deceivers and tricksters, like fools, jugglers, acrobats and con-men.[7] By means of the contrast between the ridiculously dressed comic figures represented in a 'classically' structured composition, Brueghel reveals his parodic intent. A blind leading a blind is one of

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[6] Sherman's oeuvre has been systematized by Rosalind Krauss (1993) in an early *Black and white film stills* phase (1975-1989), up to a *History portraits* phase (1988-1990).

[7] "During the Dark Ages, the figure of the Clown becomes blurred. He flourished, no doubt, but he is lost in a medley of acrobats, jongleurs, minstrels and bear-leaders, who can hardly be disentangled from one another. In the later Middle Ages, however, he begins to re-emerge as an amateur or professional actor assuming the dress, and mimicking the ways, of the official court-jester; but like other institutions of the ancient world, his real life begins again in the Renaissance" (Welsford 1935: 274). In her history of the Fool, Welsford (1935) describes the gradual severance of comedy from actuality. This difference is apparent in the contrast between our discussions of Brueghel and Jan Steen. Steen formally identifies with the comic poetic or theatrical manifestation of the Fool. Today almost the only extant variety of the comic fool is the theatrical clown who is rapidly becoming absorbed in the film-star.

the major examples in lists of impossibilities or *adynata* in the *verkeerde wereld* or topsy-turvy world.[8]

On the other hand, the second and the fourth man from the right in the group are probably not blind but have been blinded, introducing a tone of violence and fear. These vagabonds[9] are marginalized strangers who do not have permission to use main roads, but rather stick to by-routes to pass the town. The leader of the group has fallen down a steep dam wall into dark and marshy water and will probably be the first one of the group to drown in it. Their facial expressions suggesting fear and misgiving, and their awkward bodily postures of stumbling and falling remind us of representations of powerless figures on the Wheel of Fortune, of the Dance of Death and of the hell zones above cathedral portals.

We learn from Stridbeck's (1977) and Sullivan's (1994) research that Brueghel must have had a thorough humanist education. It has been proven on the other hand (Sedlmayr 1959b: 34ff), that his art and life were greatly influenced by his Baptist beliefs. In this painting he overturns the classical humanist interpretation of blindness as it was later formulated in Ripa's *Iconologia* (1644). In Ripa's representation the stick denotes the bodily senses and material drives which are unreliable when they are not checked by Reason.

To Brueghel, however, the painting is a mirror of folly and the second blind man in the group who turns his frightful face entreatingly in the direction of the spectator, emphasizes this. Brueghel depicts the way in which blindness (human folly or even heresy) affects all dimensions of human existence, similar to the way that folly was portrayed in the *Narrenliteratur* or Fool's literature which came

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[8] Ernst Curtius (1979: 420) traces one view of the world as madhouse, or "the world upside down," back to a classical formula called "stringing together impossibilities." Archilochus, shocked by an eclipse of the sun in 648 B. C., imagined that if Zeus could darken the earth anything was possible – the beast of the field might eat the food of the dolphin. Cf. also Babcock 1978.

[9] The Vagabond or Nomad traveller, not going anywhere, is a popular post-modern subversion of the High Traveller to Truth.

into fashion by the end of the fifteenth century. Vandenbroeck demonstrates how, since the fifteenth century, the opposition of reason and foolishness gradually became fused with the opposition of virtue and vice – clowns and devils thus became associated. In Fool's literature (*Narrenliteratur*), like Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* (first published in Basel in 1493), foolishness and sin are closely associated with each other (Vandenbroeck 1987: 42).

The ophthalmic affliction of each man in Brueghel's painting is shown to affect his ludicrous bodily posture and movements, with the allegorical sense that each one's particular incapacity to perceive the way in which he is controlled by idolatrous or heretic values, is signified. Eye diseases become metaphoric for 'diseases' of world view.[10] Sedlmayr (1959b: 349) thus sums up his interpretation of the work: "How topsy-turvy human actions are, how fickle human conduct, how disastrous human heresy, how ridiculous and awe-inspiring human appearance!"[11] The awesome and comic appearance of these men is the locus in which the demonizing powers of ideology becomes most plainly evident. According to Sedlmayr, Hubert Schrade was the first scholar to note that the placement of the church in the background of the composition was too conspicuous to be merely a formal element or to be simply fortuitous. Sedlmayr argues that one of the allegorical meanings of the painting is its reference to religious or moral-religious beliefs of his time. Whether a specific contemporary heresy is referred to by Brueghel is not considered important to Sedlmayr (1959b: 339-340).

The ungainly figures in tattered clothes move rigidly to their downfall. Their impaired vision, narrow-mindedness and inflexibility in movements are emphasized in the mixtures of austere hues of grey, brown and violet in the

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[10] The idea of the identification of 'diseases' of world view is a creative interpretation of a chapter in James Elkins's *The object stares back* in which he discusses eye diseases. In his article on world views Rowe (1989) suggests a 'cosmopthalmology' of world views.

portrayal of their robes, suggesting diminished life, grief, poverty and despondency. Their blindness to the richness of colour in the world is accentuated by the stark contrast between the faded colours of their tawdry and stale world, and the warm earth colours used to portray the background landscape.[12] As in *Landscape with the fall of Icarus* (1558) (Figure 8) the fall of the protagonists similarly go unheeded and vegetative nature continues undisturbed in its cyclic course. The disparity between nature's bounty and human poverty is accentuated by means of the use of colour.

The movements of these biased characters are obsessive and maniacal. The most extensive portrayal of manic behaviour in a topsy-turvy world is Brueghel's emblematic painting of *The Netherlandish proverbs* (1559) (Figure 9). Proverbs are unquestioned and generally accepted assumptions we live by – as inconspicuous as ideology. Brueghel literalizes these proverbs to unsettle their meaning, and by this means reveals the underlying macabre significance of accepting such conventions of wisdom. Sedlmayr (1959a: 289) sums up the scenes in this painting:

> There are monsters with ten legs and three heads, the drummer on kitchen pots reminds of an executioner, the walker on stilts of a cripple, the contortions caused by the games, of epileptic cramps, the strange toys of magic apparatus, the whole performance resembles an 'indescribable mania'.[13]

Sedlmayr's description uncovers how the obsessive behaviour of these characters has a dark, unfathomable aspect which reveals primitive bondage. This alienation from everyday reality is heightened in *The beekeepers* (ca. 1568)

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[11] "Wie verkehrt ist das Tun des Menschen, wie töricht seine Handlungen, wie verhängnisvoll sein Irrglaube, wie lächerlich und furchterregend seine Erscheinung!".
[12] This contrast in colouring is noted by Sedlmayr (1959b: 353).
[13] "Da gibt es Monstra mit zehn Beinen und drei Köpfen, der Topfschläger erinnert an einen Scharfrichter, der Stelzengänger an einen Krüppel, die Verrenkungen, die das Spiel erzeugt, an Krämpfe von Epileptikern, das sonderbare Spielgerät an magische Apparate, das ganze Treiben erscheint als eine 'unbeschriebene Manie'".

(Figure 10) which is inhabited by strange figures who have fashioned eye shields in order to protect them from bees, and allegorically have developed blinders to the richness of life. *The fight of the blind* (1569) (Figure 11) depicting blind men engaged in a demented fight with one another intensifies this alienation; a battle of Fools in a topsy-turvy world. According to Welsford (1935: 229) medieval *sotie* dramas would end with the turbulent fighting of Fools, bringing their own constructions tumbling about their ears.[14]

Sedlmayr (1959a: 284) lists Brueghel's favourite motifs in his oeuvre: peasants, children, defective humans (cripples, blind men, epileptics, clowns), crowds, monkeys, madness.[15] He suggests that they are linked in that they represent marginal forms of human existence and lowly circumstances in which the fullness of humanity is threatened, suppressed, distorted, deformed or mimicked.

Brueghel's works are addressed to the Christian Stoics in the Antwerp humanist circle (Sullivan 1996: 5-46), although it is concerned with lowly everyday subject matter. Similarly, Cindy Sherman's photographs are directed at an art public proficient in the visual rhetoric of the mass communication media.

Her photographs are 'performances' in the sense that spectators are made aware of her as female director, garderobe director, make-up artist, photographer and model. She leaves deliberate traces of her manipulating hand in the process of production, by disturbing the usual ease and poise of the typical model of fashionable clothes, or by visibly displaying the cord of the remote control of the camera. She artfully exposes our bias in privileging vision as a means to acquire truth and certainty – the empiricist belief that 'seeing is believing' – especially with regard to photography, by repeatedly redefining her

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[14] In his *Stages of the Clown* (1970: 101) Richard Pearce compares this fight of fools to the climax of Nabokov's picaresque novel *Lolita* (1955).

[15] "... die Bauern, die Kinder, die Defekten (Krüppel, Blinde, Epileptiker, Narren) die Masse, die Affen, der Wahnsinn" (Sedlmayr 1959a: 284).

female identity in her photographs. There is a pervasive suggestion of fear and violence in her work. The protagonist seems isolated, scared and vulnerable, creating discomfort in the spectator. Her victimized poses are often apparently precipitated by a supposed or implied character outside the frame of the photograph, a strategy by means of which the narrative character of her work is also underscored.

Sherman's oeuvre has been systematized by Rosalind Krauss (1993). *Untitled #156* (Figure 7) that is compared to the Brueghel above, is from the *Disasters and fairy tales* phase (1985-1989). The immediate predecessor phases are the *Centrefolds* (1981) and *Costume dramas/Fashion photography* (1983-1984) phases. Her photographs from both these phases are closely related to the work under discussion.

Her photographs in the *Centrefolds* phase, like *Untitled #92* (1981) (Figure 12) and *Untitled #86* (1981) (Figure 13), evolved when she was:

> asked to propose a project for *Artforum*, which included a centrefold project. And I liked the idea of mocking traditional centrefolds, so that's how the format of the oblong rectangle came about. But I wanted to make the viewers embarrassed or disappointed in themselves for having certain expectations upon realizing that they had invaded a character's life. That was my intention (Siegel 1988: 275).

These photographs not only ironically refer to the sexual implications of pornographic centrefolds, but also to those of the huge horizontal "high art" Abstract Expressionistic canvasses of Jackson Pollock, upon which the artist stood domineeringly in order to drip upon them.[16] Her 'bulimia-pictures' from 1987 (Krauss 1993: 126-165) in which carefully arranged fluids and objects give

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[16] Sherman experimented with this point of view in her 'centrefold' phase, and the strategy reappears in her 'bulimia' phase of 1987 (Krauss 1993: 126-165).

the impression that vomit has been photographed, carry the grotesque implications of the horisontal format even further, by feminizing the fluids.[17]

Her *Disasters and Fairy tales* like *Untitled #156 (1986)* (Figure 7) and *Untitled #145* (1985) (Figure 14) which are hilarious send-ups of the image of 'heroin chic' or 'grunge' fashions, have the same quality that makes the viewer feel like an intruder in a private scene – in the case of these examples, perhaps in a mental institution. The narrative character of the images does not fit the frozen movement aspired to in fashion photography. The images are not as slick and polished as we are used to in advertising and fashion photography. Spectators are conscious of awkward detail like the obvious artificiality of make-up and wigs. The photogenic mask of femininity which is donned in order to become worth a photograph, is exposed, and a treasury of poses is lifted from advertisements, films and fashion magazines to draw attention to this masquerade. Her projects are directed at a public proficient in the patriarchal visual rhetoric of the mass communication media.

Untitled #156, with its perspective from above and its exaggeration, to the point of hysteria and madness, of the supposed attractiveness of oblivious and drugged looking chic, is indebted to both the *Centrefold* and *Costume drama* phases. Craig Owens suggests in his discussion of 'posing' in an article with the same title, that violence and fear, which Sherman so persuasively conveys in this photograph, is inherent in the art of photography (Barthes 1981). He writes:

> To strike a pose is to present oneself to the gaze of the other as if one were already frozen, immobilized – that is already a picture (Owens 1992: 210)

and

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[17] Bulimia is a distinctly female affliction.

> What do I do when I pose for a photograph? I freeze – hence, the masklike, often deathly expressions of so many photographic portraits [...] I freeze, as if anticipating the still I am about to become; mimicking its opacity, its still-ness; inscribing across the surface of my body photography's 'mortification of the flesh' (Owens 1992: 211).

It is this "mortification of the flesh"[18] that Sherman adeptly counters by using her own living and performing, yet grotesquely transformed, horror-inspiring body.[19] Death-reminding yet horribly present monstrosity has overcome the slick glossy surface of mass media images. The dark underside of violence, concealed by the glossy surfaces of media stereotyped images of 'femininity' is brought to the surface. The clownish hysteric in Sherman's self-posed photograph, is an exaggeration and in some respects an inversion of the fear-inspiring *femme fatale* stereotype.

Both in the images of Brueghel and that of Sherman the strategies of exaggeration and inversion are used in order to lay bare the interminable flow of ideological undercurrents. To Brueghel's contemporaries the blind characters in his painting are presented as ludicrous deceivers, maniacally moving to their downfall, representing perpetual human folly. To the present day spectator, Sherman's protagonist is the comically and grotesquely exaggerated victim of the obsessive and unremitting masquerade of 'femininity'. Luce Irigaray (1985), in her *This sex which is not one*[20] notes the role-playing fate of females in patriarchal society and discourse and distinguishes two options. Masquerade (*la mascarade*), an alienated or false version of femininity arising from the woman's awareness of the man's desire for her to be his Other, permits woman to experience desire not in her own right, but as the man's desire situates her. Mimicry (*mimétisme*) is an interim strategy for dealing with the realm of

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[18] See Barthes (1981) and Bal (1994).

[19] One is also reminded of J. H. van den Berg's (1967: 272) proposition of 'het meervoudig gezicht' or 'the manifold face' which only became manifest in photographic portraits some time after such photographs were first made. In posed photographs the sitter watches her/himself through the eyes of the viewer and in that way is shaped by the gaze of the viewer.

discourse. Here the speaking subject is posited as masculine. The woman deliberately assumes the feminine style and posture assigned to her within this discourse in order to uncover the mechanisms by which it exploits her. Sherman is concerned with both kinds of role playing in her work.

The staggering and fallen Brueghel and Sherman figures both engage postures of suffering, yet, incorporated in these same bodily stances, are flashes of hope, exposed through humour. They are ambiguous postures of fear and awe, lacking spiritual equilibrium, yet in them are reflected postures of humility in response to overpowering forces. The Sherman figure represents hysteric blindness or madness. Yet, in that we are reminded that Sherman is role playing as a monstrous madwoman, an occasion is presented to gain pleasure, as if in refusal to be oppressed by traumas and provocations.[21] Her role playing expresses an invulnerable spirit of hope even though bondage becomes visible through grotesque exaggeration. It is also a gesture of resistance against the specular appropriation of feminine beauty. Her clowning in the image of depravity is a *Pathosformel* in which her exaggerated miming of stereotypical conventions representing feminine beauty, breaks loose or erupts from the stereotypical formulae, refusing to be covered by it. In chapter 12 further reference is made to this tension prevalent in the ambiguous posture of suffering and of hope.

In the next three sections various ways are discussed in which the mentalization of sight is subverted in picaresque works of art. All have the limitations and constraints of vision as their themes, and are interpreted so as to reveal ideological blindnesses.

7.2 The picaresque glance

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[20] Originally published in French under the title *Ce sexe qui n' en est pas un*, 1977.

Bryson argues in his *Vision and painting: the logic of the gaze* (1983) that deictic reference, the recognition of the contingent here and now of every visual act, is generally avoided or repressed in dominant Western pictorial traditions.[22] There is a tendency to refute the bodily presence of both the painter and the spectator:

> the image that suppresses deixis has no interest in its own genesis or past, except to bury it in a palimpsest of which only the final version shows through, above an interminable débris of revisions (Bryson 1983: 92).

The aspiration to "invisible visibility", as Foucault puts it (Jay 1986: 182), has been fundamental to Western thought since Descartes' privileging of internal vision or mental insight above the senses as a source of knowledge.[23] In order to highlight a continuous presence of opposition to such presuppositions in the picaresque tradition, Bryson's assumption needs to be nuanced. An idea that has held sway since the Renaissance, is that a painting is a 'per-spective' on meaning that lies beyond the work itself; or that a painting is disappearing illusion.[24] The picaresque imaginary framework has long been one of the alternative and marginalized traditions of resistance against this notion.

Re-carnalization, not only of vision, but also as a result, of the representation of the gendered body in visual culture, is a project that typiconically connects Daumier to some twentieth-century feminist artists. In his monograph on Daumier, Eduard Fuchs (1930: 18, 19) lists more than sixty examples from

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[21] On the connection between carnival, hysteria and feminism, see Willis (1989). On the recurrence of the theme of monstrosity in women's texts, see chapter 10, section 4.

[22] For a discussion of Bryson's work, cf. Erjavec (1996). Cf. also Bryson 1988.

[23] The gaze is used in philosophical discourse to refer to this oculocentric epistemic perspective in Western rationalism (Jay 1986: 182).

[24] It should be admitted, however that painting, like all the arts has an inherent referentiality – an allusion referring to imaginary worlds beyond the physical boundaries of the work. Cf. Jay 1988.

Daumier's oeuvre in which bodily acts of vision like seeing, peeping, watching, gazing, showing, exhibiting and so on are made into a spectacle.[25]

Daumier's inordinate interest in 'visuality' might be explained partly from the perspective of significant historical changes in visual culture in the middle of the nineteenth century in France. The invention of the camera, "the most extraordinary technical innovation in vision during the nineteenth century, indeed perhaps in human history" (Jay 1993: 124-147), played a distinct role in the increased interrogation of sight by Daumier's contemporaries, and even in the anti-ocular debate in the twentieth century. Jonathan Crary (1988: 42) summarizes the situation as follows:[26]

> The collapse of the camera obscura as a model for the status of an observer was part of a much larger process of modernization, even as the camera obscura itself was an element of an earlier modernity. By the early 1800's, however, the rigidity of the camera obscura, its linear optical system, its fixed positions, its categorical distinction between inside and outside, its identification of perception and object, were all too inflexible and unwieldy for the needs of the new century. A more mobile, usable, and productive observer was needed in both discourse and practice – to be adequate to new uses of the body and to a vast proliferation of equally mobile and exchangeable signs and images.

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[25] He writes: "Die meisten seiner Stoffe sind irgendwie mit dem Problem des Schauens verbunden, oder knüpfen sich direkt daran [...] In den zahlreichen Theaterbildern ist der Zauschauer (sic) stets das Hauptmotiv. In den Zuhörern beim Konzert und bei Vorlesungen ist das in sich hineinschauen gestaltet; im Wagen dritter Klasse begegnet man verschiedenen Formen des Schauens; in einer ganzen Anzahl von Darstellungen – und dies besonders in seinen Lithographien – ist sogar der Voyeur in seiner erotischen Urform, als Astlochgucker, Schlüssellochgucker usw. behandelt" (Fuchs 1930:38). "Das Sehen hat, wie man weiss, verschiedene Ziele. Es heftet sich an einen konkreten Vorgang [...] es geht unbestimmt ins Weite, und es geht nach innen, in die eigene Seele, und es baut dort eine Welt auf. Daumier hat alle Formen des Sehens und Schauens gestaltet, und alle gleich suggestiv und alle mit der gleichen Leidenschaftlichkeit" (Fuchs 1930: 39). He concludes that Daumier must have had a passion for the motif of seeing: "Einen solchen Umfang kann das Motiv des Schauens im Werk eines Künstlers nur dann erreichen, wenn es für ihn selbst keine grössere Leidenschaft gibt" (Fuchs 1930: 39).
[26] See also Crary (1990).

Indeed, Daumier's topical lithograph *Nadar raising photography to the height of art* (1863) (Figure 15) in which Nadar (Gaspard-Félix Tournachon), the greatest photographer of the nineteenth century, is seen taking aerial photographs from his specially constructed (also in 1863) airship *Le Géant*, has been interpreted as "emblematic of the state of ocularcentrism itself in the late nineteenth century" (Jay 1993: 146).

> It deals with aerial photography, which, together with the intrusion of Japanese art, was to have a decisive influence upon the new optical approach – the bird's-eye view – of the impressionist painters; it satirizes an actual personality among the early French photographers and his passion for showmanship; it ridicules the rapid growth of the photographic profession and in a sarcastic way raises the serious question whether photography should be considered an art or a purely mechanical procedure.[27]

And

> The unmoving gaze from afar that the Enlightenment – exceptions like Diderot aside[28] – could identify with dispassionate cognition was beginning to be shaken by the force of new cultural winds. The widespread dissemination of new visual experiences brought about by social as well as technological changes had introduced uncertainties about truths and illusions conveyed by the eyes (Jay 1993: 146).

To the socio-historic and philosophical dimensions of this interpretation, the consideration of some of this work's picaresque traits might also be added. The Nadar figure depicted here with his camera, elevated above a city (of photography studios) for an improved gaze, paradoxically, is also represented as precariously swaying in the cabin of his balloon. The motif of the hat toppling from Nadar's head highlights the deictic temporality of this business of seeing, and of the process of 'eternalizing' this act of seeing in a photograph.

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[27] Quoted by Jay (1993:146), from Schwarz (1987: 141).
[28] That there are more exceptions than what is admitted to here, is assumed in this chapter on picaresque prejudices about visuality.

Associations of photography with the 'pure presentness' and the stripping away of narrative time is thereby subverted. Not a disincarnated gaze on a photographed eternal present, but rather a narrative of a viewing subject, is represented here. Vitality, rather than Barthes' (1981: 14) "mortification" of the flesh is stressed.

Daumier's *Crispin and Scapin* (ca. 1878) (Figure 16) stages the gendered re-carnalization of vision even more theatrically. In this painting two actors on a *commedia dell'arte* stage are gossiping and leering secretively. What or whom the characters are watching is visualized in terms of the way in which they are perceiving, because in this narrative image they are the messengers of off-stage events. The two bodies are bent towards each other and the characters are conspiring with evident glee. They are motioning with their eyes and bodies towards the off-stage butt of their discussion, not presented to the spectators' view, but strongly suggested to be licentiously human. Rather than fixed gazes, Daumier represents mobile glances; subversive, disorderly, fleeting gestures of watching from a bodily point of view.[29] Spectators are addressed deictically[30] and these figures of spectator engagement suggest responses that are not generalized in terms of gazing, but rather elicit bodily affects. Crispin 'heeds' the spectators of the work as if they are in an audience in front of the stage, and spectators of the work are drawn in to connive and leer subversively through the eyes of these characters.

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[29] The concepts of the 'gaze' and the 'male gaze' has been prolifically debated, cf. Mulvey 1975, Berger 1982, Doane 1982, Bryson 1983, Bernheimer 1987, Gammon & Marshment 1988, Bryson 1988, Simons 1988, Snow 1989, Brooks 1989, Erjavec 1996.

[30] In linguistics aoristic and deictic time refers to the relationship between action and the narration of this action. Deictic tenses include all the compound present tenses. In a broader sense deixis includes all speech acts in which information about the narrator's own relative position in space and time (here, there, earlier, later, long ago) is passed. Deixis is an utterance in bodily form. The deictic mode finds an addressee or audience and refers to a speaker's perspective (Bryson 1983: 87-93).

Attention is drawn to Crispin's eyes which are bulging and set wide apart. His whole body is extended in the direction of his glance, emphasized moreover, by that of his nose which is extraordinarily large and prominent as in a caricature. Fuchs (1930: 18) describes this nasal kind of spying thus:

> Daumier characters watch [...] literally with the tip of the nose; the nose is practically extended into a visual organ. And this is the most intensive form of watching.[31]

The phallic allusion of the nose is common in the *commedia dell'arte* context and it becomes clear that the depiction of bodily stances and other body parts in action, apart from eyes, aid in characterizing low mode voyeurism, which is the theme of the work. The choice of sexually implicative carnivalesque bodies at the focus of his composition is suggestive of a carnivalesque fictional world more widely embracing than could ever be conjured up in a single text.[32]

Barbara Kruger, a twentieth-century feminist artist shares Daumier's interest in 'visuality' and the expanded domain of visual communication. Some of her numerous poster installations related to this theme are *Now you see us now you don't, Surveillance is your busiwork, Tell us something we don't know, You are*

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[31] Die Daumierschen Menschen schauen [...] förmlich mit der Nasenspitze; ihre Nase ist gleichsam zu einem Sehorgan verlängert. Und das ist die höchstgesteigerte Form des Schauens.

[32] Aspects of this kind of fictional world have been referred to in what has come to be called 'grotesque realism' (Bakhtin 1982, 1984, Bachtin 1985), *écriture feminine* in twentieth-century feminism (Cixous 1991), and *écriture corporelle* in the history of twentieth-century avant-garde literature (Sollers). A major spokesman for feminist *écriture féminine*, Hélèn Cixous, wants to "break open the chains of syntax, escape from the repressiveness of linear logic and teleological 'storytelling', and allow for the emergence of a language 'close to the body'" (Suleiman 1990: 128). Philippe Sollers, in his long essay on Bataille's "The pornographic imagination" (1967) suggests that modern literature since Sade and Bataille "was haunted by the idea of a 'a bodily writing' (*écriture corporelle*), to the point that the body had become the 'fundamental referent of [modern literature's] violations of discourse'" (Suleiman 1990:74). *Écriture corporelle* is associated with the tendencies of "privileging certain concepts (heterogeneity, play, marginality, transgression, the unconscious, eroticism, excess) and mounting heavy attacks on others (representation, the unitary subject, stable meaning, linear narrative, paternal authority, Truth with a capital T)" (Suleiman 1990: 13). Cf. chapter 9.

giving us the evil eye, You are not yourself, Your gaze hits the side of my face, Remember me.[33]

Whereas Daumier addressed a journal reading and printshop frequenting public through printed lithographs, Kruger communicates through photographic posters on billboards and other advertising spaces. Whereas groups of Daumier's images are often related in thematic series to give the journal readership a critically humorous impression of contemporary life in Paris, Kruger's images address a public proficient in thematically relating photographic reproductions and fragmentary images spread on billboards across wide geographical areas. The slogan-like verbal copy of Kruger's posters communicates in quick flashes, whereas Daumier's verbal text is more humorously descriptive.

The invisibility or absence of women in contemporary culture, in spite of the visual cultural over-saturization of representations of women in the "society of the spectacle",[34] is one of the major pre-occupations in her oeuvre (cf. Linker 1990). In an interview with W.J.T. Mitchell she states:

> When embodiment – not just in a literal sense of embodiment – but when that which is embodied, or lives, is no longer there, there is a rampant sort of rushing-in of caricature and stereotype and repetition (Mitchell 1991: 446).

Impoverished regimes of looking are mediated through the shimmering surfaces of the movie, television, or video screen, the billboard or magazine advertisement:

> Whereas modernism, or what I take it to be ..., was meaningless to people because of its inaccessibility. What the media have done today is make a thing meaningless through its accessibility (Mitchell 1991: 448).

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[33] All these poster installations are referred to in Linker 1990. Cf. also Deitcher 1991, Foster 1982, Kruger 1994, Mifflin 1992, Mitchell 1991, Siegel 1988.

And:

it's basically not about making meaning. It's about dissolving meaning. To reach out and touch a very relaxed, numbed-out vegged viewer. Although we are always hearing about access to information, more cable stations than ever (Mitchell 1991: 447).

Kruger imitates and intercepts various media strategies to interfere in this mass communication in order to re-carnalize the body, or put the body back into stereotypes.

If we juxtapose the two works *(Untitled) You are not yourself* (1982) (Figure 17), and a later work *(Untitled) Buy me. I'll' change your life* (1984) (Figure 18), the resemblance of the grotesque misplacement of eyes in both the reflection of a woman looking in a broken mirror (in the first poster), and the squeezed Donald Duck stuffed toy (in the latter poster), strikes our attention. The disarrangement of the eyes have a pathetic effect in both characters.

You are not yourself is a black and white photographic image of a youthful woman who holds a mirror that has been shattered by a hard blow or shot at its centre. Her face is reflected in fragments, so that some features like her eyes and nose are repeated many times. Apart from these fragments of a face, only a few fingers with varnished nails, and the arch of a hand is visible to suggest a woman's presence. *Buy me ...* is a photographic poster of a mangled soft toy pathetically confronting the viewer. In its presentation both images remind of Roy Lichtenstein's *Him* (Figure 19) which is to be discussed in the next section.

In an interview with W.J.T. Mitchell, Barbara Kruger states that her aim with regard to the strategies of the mass media is "not just [to] re-create the spectacle

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[34] A phrase coined by Debord 1994.

formally, but to take the formalities of the spectacle and put some meaning into it" (Mitchell 1991: 448). In these works she succeeds in re-introducing meaning by means of unexpected suggestions of violence and the grotesque. The reflecting broken mirror in *You are not yourself* represents turmoil, pain and fragmented vision; even hysteria. The incongruously disfigured stuffed toy in *Buy me. I'll change your life* suggests the carnivalesque confusion of the marketplace, with its hectic consumption and hysteric desire. Nigel Wheale (1995: 10-14) notes that both the words in 'hectic consumption' were originally associated with tuberculosis. The word 'hectic' was used since medieval times to describe the feverish all-consuming state of this illness. 'Consumption' was the term for tuberculosis in the eighteenth century, which likewise described the dizzying dynamic character of contemporary city life. The mangled glances suggested by the contorted positioning of the eyes infuse both works with an undercurrent of hysteria and frenzy – another formation of blindness. In both posters humans are absent, but for the presence a hand clutching onto an object. However, the suggestion of physical and mental distress in the absence of human bodies, is an effective means of re-directing attention to the de-carnalized body on the slick surfaces of the mass communication media.

The disorderly and fleeting glances discussed in this section, can also occur in narrative contexts where they are of special significance in the organization of narratives.

7.3 Picaresque focalization

The discussion of 'focalization' under the rubric of vision needs some elucidation. The rekindling of the visual associations of the word, and its concomitant concretization, might partly be attributed to the contribution of feminism.

Genette introduced the concept focalization which he derived from the theories of cinema and photography, into narratology in 1972. The technical origins of the term emphasize its manipulating function and in true stucturalist fashion Genette limits his inquiry to the technical, grammatic and syntactic aspects of narratives. He explicitly denies the suggestion of visuality in the term he chooses:

> To avoid the too specifically visual connotations of the terms vision, field and point of view, I will take up here the slightly more abstract term focalization which corresponds, besides to Brooke's and Warren's expression, 'focus of narration' (Genette 1980: 189).

For Genette focalization refers to the filtering, regulation and retention of information in a narrative:

> So by focalization I certainly mean a restriction of 'field' — actually, that is, a selection of narrative information ... The instrument of this possible selection is a situated focus, a sort of information-conveying pipe that allows passage only of information that is authorized by the situation (Genette 1988: 74).

The term has become very popular in narratology, but it is seldom used in Genette's sense (cf. Liebenberg 1994, Edmiston 1989). There has been a tendency to personalize the term into 'focalizer', a narrative instance who may even be a character in a story, and to vivify the visual suggestiveness of the term, as with Mieke Bal. For instance, Bal (1980 (1978): 109) argues:

> [W]hen no distinction is made between the two differing phenomena, ["the person who sees" and "the person who says"], it is difficult, even impossible to adequately describe the function of texts in which something is seen and the vision is narrated.[35]

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[35] [W]anneer geen onderscheid wordt gemaakt tussen die twee verschillende instanties ["wie ziet" and "wie zegt"], is het moeilijk, zo niet onmogelijk, het functioneren van teksten waarin iets wordt gezien én die visie wordt verteld, adaquaat te beschrijven.

Genette (1988: 72) in turn refers to Bal's "unreasonable desire to set up focalization as a narrative instance (or agent)".[36] It seems that Genette uses the term focalization not in the sense of 'angle of vision' as Bal would interpret it, but rather in the sense of textual 'point of convergence' or 'point of equivalent focus' ('brandpunt') of the story, perhaps related to Ricoeur's use of 'emplotment'. That is, he refers to the organizational centre of the story, which need not necessarily be associated with a character in that story.

Whereas Genette focuses on the linguistic construction of the text, Bal realizes her broader 'project' to investigate 'subject positions' in works of art,[37] by associating focalization and character. Bal's position can be seen as part of a feminist expansion of the issues of narratology.

In her article "Toward a feminist narratology", Susan Lanser (1991: 610) shows that "narratology has had little impact on feminist scholarship, and feminist insights about narrative have been similarly overlooked by narratology".[38] However, one of the aspects of narrative that has concerned feminist critics more than any other aspect of narrative, is character. A conspicuous trait in such writing is the treatment of characters largely as if they were persons, whereas most non-feminist narratologists "treat characters, if at all, as 'patterns of recurrence, motifs which are continually recontextualized in other motifs'" (Lanser 1991: 613).

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[36] "Mieke Bal seems to have – and sometimes to attribute to me [...] – the idea that every narrative statement includes a focalizer (character) and a focalized (character)" (Genette 1988: 72). Genette's answer to Bal is: "For me, there is no focalizing or focalized character: focalized can be applied only to the narrative itself, and if focalizer applied to anyone, it could only be the person who focalizes the narrative – that is, the narrator, or, if one wanted to go outside the conventions of fiction, the author himself, who delegates (or does not delegate) to the narrator his power of focalizing or not focalizing" (Genette 1988 (1983): 73).

[37] Ernst Van Alphen (1988: 8), editor of an anthology of essays dedicated to Bal, describes the broad "project" of Bal's research as "de wil en noodzaak rekenschap af te leggen van die subjectgebonden visies in culturele uitingen en [...] het ontwikkelen van alternatiewe, emanciperende visies op culturele uitinge".

[38] Lanser (in 1986) lists the "only direct efforts to link feminism and narratology" of which she is aware: Brewer 1984, Bal 1986, Warhol 1986, Lanser 1981, Blau Duplessis 1985.

Embracing Susan Suleiman's (1986: 17) proposal of "a moratorium on the implied reader", Robyn Warhol (1986) designs the category of the "engaging narrator" in order to account for the insistence by some female narrators (Gaskell, Stowe, and Elliot, in her investigation) that their characters are 'real', that they are human, rather than textual. Such narrators intrude "to remind their narratees – who, in their texts, should stand for the actual readers – that the fictions reflect real-world conditions for which the readers should take active responsibility after putting aside the book" (Warhol 1986: 815).

This 'ethical' response to art has been called the "witness function" of the viewer/reader of post-modern visual culture, by Jonathan Bordo.[39] Paul Ricoeur analyses this function of 'solicitude' in his *Oneself as another* (1992). It is interesting that Dirk van den Berg (1996: 21) attributes typiconic significance to this function by associating such viewer responses with the 'troubled cosmic' tradition. He describes the "implied personae for spectators" suggested in visual cultural products in the 'troubled cosmic' tradition as those of the "caretaker, custodian, keeper and factotem", and the corresponding "implied personae for artists" in the 'troubled cosmic' tradition as those of "witness, critic, vindicator, confessor, mentor, sympathiser, admonisher, counsel, envoy, servant, pessimist and judge". However, in my view, all typiconic imaginary worlds provide cues for such possible roles. The deficiencies of the proposal of a separate 'troubled cosmic' tradition, rather than a 'troubled' alternative for each compromised tradition, are made apparent. In this dissertation I am concerned only with the picaresque tradition and the more self-conscious 'troubled picaresque' option within it.

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[39] Jonathan Bordo (1996:183) argues for this position of the viewer in post-modern art: "The line of argument I adopt [...] problematizes just that positioning of what has come to be called the "gaze" in terms of the emergence of the tropological figure of the witness, and claims that what constitutes the viewing of such cultic objects as artworks is most basically testamental, an act of witnessing. It is not a passive reception but an act of bearing witness through sight."

The injunction suggested in some art, that the viewer/reader should take active responsibility in real life, is also stressed in the Marxist tradition of *Aneignung* (cf. Feist *et. al.* 1990). Yet it is neither a feminist, nor Marxist monopoly, nor is it a picaresque monopoly. In this section I shall demonstrate the significance of the witness function in the implied roles of the 'troubled picaresque' viewer and narrator of picaresque art.

As a strategy to address 'actual readers', and to concretely affect the 'real' world, first-person narration has been playfully exploited through the ages to cross fictional boundaries in ideology alert art. Feminist artists have contributed by fostering a sensitivity to the actual reader/spectator's gendered body and its situatedness in patriarchal culture.

As we have seen in section 3 of chapter 3, the ironic and transgressive dramatization of the fictionalizing act is characteristic of the classic picaresque first-person novel.[40] Focalization through the first-person is a means by which the contrast between the 'real life' experiences, and the often humorously exaggerated fictional narration thereof, is highlighted.

In a defensive passage in *Narrative revisited,* Genette (1988: 77) seems to accede that in the case of first-person narration, one may resort to personalized focalization:

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[40] The characteristics commonly highlighted when referring to "first-person" narration in picaresque novels are: readerly estrangement, self-reflexive thematization of the process of narration, deictic presentation, limitation of the narrator's perspective, distortion as a result of the keyhole or "worm's-eye"-perspective (Frohock 1967), discordance between action and narration, and exposure of folly by means of the narrator's lies or role playing. See, e.g., Seidlin 1955, Jauss 1957, Frohock 1967, Schmidt 1969, Guillén 1969 and 1971, Chandler 1969, Weimann 1970, Wicks 1971, 1972, 1974, Geulen 1975, Arndt 1978. "The first-person point of view, which is split between an experiencing 'I' and a narrating 'I' and thus gives us two levels, the plane of narration

at least twice I used an expression that is fairly heterodox with respect to my own definitions, that of 'focalization through the narrator', which I assert is 'logically implied by the 'first-person' narrative.' What we are obviously dealing with is the restricting of narrative information to the 'knowledge' of the narrator *as such* — that is to the information the hero has at that moment in the story as completed by his subsequent information, the whole remaining at the disposal of the hero-become-narrator. Only the hero at that moment in the story deserves *stricto sensu* the term 'focalization'; for the hero-become-narrator, we are dealing with extradeigetic information, which only the identity of person between hero and narrator justifies us, by extension, in calling 'focalization'.

Genette, wary of 'extradeigetic information' in general, is somewhat shaken by that aspect of first-person focalization that highlights the contrast between the experiencing and the fictionalizing or narrating 'I'.[41]

In the following discussion the narratological concept of first-person focalization is expanded to include pictorial narrativity.[42] In line with Bal it is emphasized that the personalized act of watching is sometimes essential to the organization of the narrative. This is so especially in works of art that take acts of watching as their themes.

In my choice of visual material to be discussed I focus on such art products that suggest transgressions of the actual space of viewers, in order to remind them that art has the power to influence the real lives of human beings. Thus Abigail Lane's (Figure 20) picaresque emphasis on the affective power of art on the

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and the plane of action, the difference between which is called narrative distance. The narrating process itself is thus a crucial part of the fiction" (Wicks 1974: 244).

[41] This is the classic position of the picaresque narrator. Arndt (1978: 26) describes it as follows: "Er ist als Erzähler im Zwiespalt zwischen Leben und Bewusstheit, zwischen reproduzierter Torheit und hoher Reflexion Repräsentant einer krassen Spaltung, die, unaufhebbar, allenfalls aufgehoben werden kann im ironischen oder satirischen Spiel. Sein Erzählansatz verdient zuvörderst Aufmerksamkeit, ehe die sich immer wiederholenden Motive seines Handelns und die immer wiederkehrenden Strukturen seiner Erzählung beachtet werden können."

[42] An argument for the augmentation of the concept is put forth in greater depth in De Villiers Human (1995).

actual, real-life gendered body of the viewer, contrasts with Lichtenstein's (Figure 19) less carnal picaresque engagement of the viewer. The use of the strategy of the first-person eyewitness in the work of Jan Steen (Figure 21) reveals the significance of its 'troubled picaresque' imaginary directive, stressing 'solicitude'. The examples are not discussed in chronological order, but rather introduce these problems systematically. Lichtenstein's work presents us with a visual arts instance of first-person narration, in order to demonstrate the power of such a strategy to simultaneously estrange from and impinge on the world of the viewer. The carnalizing impact that art can have on a gendered spectator, is demonstrated by Abigail Lane's work. A discussion of Steen's work projects the phenomenon backwards into the history of the picaresque tradition, suggesting that in that tradition there is an acceptance that although folly permeates reality, it is worth changing the *verkeerde wereld.*

In many works by Roy Lichtenstein perception in fiction is playfully explored, e.g. in *Image duplicator* (1963), *Finger pointing* (1963), *Nurse* (1964), *Frightened girl* (1964), *Golf ball* (1962), *Ball of twine* (1963), *Fastest gun* (1963), *Pistol* (1964) and *Draw* (1963). In my view his specific interest in characters that directly confront viewers, is part of his fascination[43] with the narrative possibilities of painting. [44]

In Lichtenstein's *I can see the whole room and there's nobody in it* ... (1961) (Figure 22) the narrator 'focalizes through the first-person'. This character is narrating his own act of surveillance while he peeps from the fictive space of the painting through a depicted port hole towards the real space of the spectators in front of the picture. Although the spectators' presence is verbally denied by him and they are thereby designated the position of voyeurs in front of the painting, the speaker is depicted as facing us deictically as if in conversation. From their

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[43] Lichtenstein himself denied any interest in narrative painting, but this is understandable in the light of the reductionist views of narrative during the modernist era. See chapter 10, section 3.

privileged and concealed position in the darkened room (if the suggestion in the painting that the speaker is gazing into a darkened room is playfully acceded – a suggestion that would be supported if the work were projected as a slide) spectators may judge the negatory words of the speaker to be ironic.

I can see the whole room and there's nobody in it ... could be regarded as an inverted tableau scene in which the spectator's space becomes the focus of the tableau. By means of this clever inversion of the Albertian *finestra aperta* the fictional world is projected, not behind the picture surface, but in front of it, impinging on and fictionalising the spectator's world.

In *Him* (1964) (Figure 19) the minimal detail of long fingernails suggests that a female is holding a framed photograph of her sweetheart longingly. The viewer is invited to look at the picture through her eyes, uncritically and subjectively; to see from the perspective of the romantic female in her flight of fancy in which this dimpled prototype of male good looks becomes enhanced in a cloud of love, admiration and enchantment.

The focus of *Him* could be read as a tableau scene, a representational strategy by means of which is focused on a picture within a picture or on an iconic fragment in the story, and by which the spectator is implied as onlooker. The spectator regards the spectacle of narrative itself. The device has its origin in the milieu of the theatre, not unlike Daumier's preoccupation with gestures of showing, exhibiting, and spying. Mary Maclean (1988: 34) describes it as follows:

This device, eminently theatrical, stresses the iconic value of the portrayal of selected moments [...]. The framed spectacle has a particular iconic and deictic function. It serves not only the obvious purposes of enhancement and illustration, but by acting as

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.[44] See Alloway (1983) and Cowart (1981).

the frozen moment within the sequence it functions as microcosm to the macrocosm of the text

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The reader is thus made aware of the double nature of speculation, the double bind of spectatorship. He or she is tempted by the specularity, the mirroring, of identification but at the same time reminded that spectatorship, with the realization that one is a spectator, involves critical estrangement, and with it the penalties and pleasures of speculation.

Russian literary theorists have developed a theory around *skaz* that emphasizes readerly estrangement concomitant with this type of performative narrative focalization.[45] In *I can see the whole room and there's nobody in it...* the limitations of the first-person narrator's perspective is dramatized and deictically defined in bodily terms as the speaker reports on his limited view into a dark expanse. In *Him* the prejudiced view of the lover is dramatized. Stanzel (1985: 124) characterizes this form of first-person narration as an 'Ich-mit-Leib' (an 'I' with a body) and distinguishes it from 'bodiless' first-person-narration.[46]

However, although Lichtenstein's first-person narration is not 'bodiless', it is less corporeal (with greater stress on its ficitve character) than the personalized address to the gendered spectator in Abigail Lane's installation, *Blue print* (1992) (Figure 20). The re-carnalization of the gendered viewing subject is made much

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[45] Stanzel (1985: 18) emphasizes that in literature focalization through the "first-person" dramatises the mediatory and intermediate character of representation: "Tatsächlich liegt der wichtigere Teil der Handlung im Erzählakt selbst, und dieser Erzählakt dramatisiert Mittelbarkeit in ganz erhöhter Weise".

[46] Der Ich-Erzähler unterscheidet sich demnach vom auktorialen Er-Erzähler durch körperlich-existentielle Verankerung seiner Position in der fiktionalen Welt. Mit anderen Worten der Ich-Erzähler verfügt über ein 'Ich mit Leib' in der Welt der Charaktere, der auktoriale Erzähler, der auch 'ich' sagt, wenn er sich auf sich selbst bezieht, verfügt dagegen weder innerhalb noch ausserhalb der fiktionalen Welt der Charaktere über ein solches 'Ich mit Leib' [...] Ganz anders der Ich-Erzähler der 'klassischen', d.h. der quasi-autobiographischen Form des Ich-Romans; sein Ich ist ganz konkret ein 'Ich mit Leib', d.h. seine Körperlichkeit ist Teil seiner Existenz, die als

more obvious in this installation of a chair with a felt ink-pad saturated with blue ink for a seat, located in front of a framed blue imprint of a seated bum. The chair which facilitates the spectator's steady and long contemplation of the print, simultaneously reminds him/her of his/her corporeal participation and understanding of the work, seated as he/she is in order to gaze at the print. The spectator slowly catches on that he or she could be duped, that his of her 'real' presence completes the process of the installation. Gender difference is playfully conjectured and the importance of the lower body in the process of signification is brought to the attention in a physical and humorous way.

If Abigail Lane's installation draws attention away from the eyes to the lower body by suggesting physical contact, Jan Steen has made an earlier picaresque contribution to the carnalization of focalization.

Jan Steen is notorious for playing the comic roles of Fool, profligate or rogue in many of his genre and history paintings, like *As the old sing, so pipe the young* (1663-1665),[47] *Merry company on a terrace* (1673-1675) (Figure 41),[48] *Easy come, easy go* (1661)[49] and *Anthony and Cleopatra* (c.1668-1669).[50] Steen's inclusion of himself as eyewitness in his pictures proclaim the veracity of his images, in keeping with the genre requirement of "realism" as far as low mode genre painting is concerned (Raupp 1983: 404-5).

Steen performs the role of the Fool in many narrative genre scenes which have the objective of *docere et delectare*. In *Twelfth Night* (1662)[51] (Figure 21) he acts

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erlebendes Ich dem Leser bekannt gemacht wird. Aber auch dem erzählenden Ich haftet diese Körperlichkeit noch an (Stanzel 1985: 124).

[47] Canvas, 134 x 163. Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritzhuis, The Hague (Chapman 1996: 23).

[48] Canvas, 141.5 x 131.5. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Chapman 1996: 48).

[49] Canvas, 79 x 104. Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam (Chapman 1996: 15).

[50] Canvas, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam (Chapman 1996: 11).

[51] The scene is a depiction of the Feast of the Epiphany or Twelfth Night which was traditionally celebrated in the Netherlands on 6 January with a meal where friends and relatives gathered to eat and make merry. *Driekoningenavond* originated as a medieval church feast with public

as the jester who lewdly sticks out his tongue at a prim couple at the table, while thrusting his phallically decorated staff in their direction. The gentleman is characterized as a Mennonite. Mennonites were known for their overly spiritual life style and stiffness in demeanor and dress (De Jongh 1987: 45).

Shunning a heroic role at centre stage, the jester in this painting acts as the role-playing agent providing a clue to the mode in which the narrative is to be read. The fool offers an episodic side-show, ridiculing excesses in spirituality. The use of the strategy of first-person narration here strongly contrasts the real world and fiction. The narrator-fool personifies the sensual and deceptive powers of art by means of which it is worth changing the *verkeerde wereld*. The representation of the role playing of the fool in the portrait of Steen himself, is a device by means of which earthy sensuality, the inverse of extremist spirituality, is laid bare from where it lies hidden and repressed in the trappings of societal propriety.

The practice of including oneself in a larger work as a mark of authorship, though rooted in antiquity, took hold in the Renaissance. According to Vasari and Van Mander many fifteenth- and sixteenth-century artists portrayed themselves in important commissions. Alberti advised the painter to include a *rhetor* figure addressing viewers to draw them into the *historia* and establish a link between narrative action and audience. By transforming those bystanders into self-portraits it is suggested that artists are eyewitnesses giving them special authority or faith to narrate or comment on their historical or biblical subjects.

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performances and festivals re-enacting the story of the magi's search for the new-born Jesus and of the Massacre of the Innocents at Herod's command. At the meal a 'king' was chosen among the celebrants, often by finding a bean in a cake baked for the occasion. Many of the songs at Twelfth Night referred to Herod, who, according to legend, remained in his palace while the three kings searched for Christ. Reputed to be a drunkard, he was in all respects a mock king, unworthy of his crown. This is how he is depicted in paintings by Jacob Jordaens, David Teniers the Younger, Gabriel Metsu, Jan Miense Molenaer and Steen. (Wheelock 1996: 157). Steen when he moved to Haarlem may have been induced once more to turn to Flemish art for inspiration as he had done when he was in Haarlem at the beginning of his career. Many peasant genre scenes grew out of Brueghelian traditions that Adriaen Brouwer (1605/1606-1638) transported to Haarlem in the 1620's (Wheelock 1996: 159).

Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), who appears as the only earthly being in the Landauer altarpiece, the *Adoration of the Trinity*, claimed for the artist a special closeness to God by virtue of his creative powers (Chapman 1996: 17). Rembrandt's participant self-portraits may have provided the most immediate model for Steen's inclusion of himself in his pictures. Like Steen's paintings, Rembrandt's *Self-portrait with Saskia* probably proclaims an alternative role for the artist in the era of academies. However, it was Adriaen Brouwer who was instrumental in formulating an alternative to the dominant ideal of the learned painter, by fashioning himself and two painter colleagues as vulgar peasants, inspired by wine and tobacco in *The smokers*.[52] Extending this practice in the picaresque tradition, Steen makes the low mode or comic part that others played once or twice in their oeuvres, into a consistent *persona* of the roguish fool (Chapman 1996: 19).

It seems justifiable to conclude that Steen succeeds in enhancing the *docere et delectare* requirement of the genre painter, by fusing its laudatory tenor in the ambivalent *persona* of the Fool who is able to laugh at his own follies as well as those of others. Steen's insight in the pervasive presence of sin is the comic counterpart of what Rembrandt achieved in his *Raising of the cross* (c.1633) (Figure 23).[53] In this painting Rembrandt appears as one of the henchmen helping to hoist Christ's cross, fitting within the convention of the self-portrait *in malo*. He thereby identifies with Christ's tormentors in order to confess his own guilt and sin, proclaiming his humble devotion and inspiring the viewer to do the same. This representation has been associated with a well-known poem by Jacobus Revius from the same period in which the poet sets himself up as the one responsible for Christ's execution (Chapman 1990: 113). De Jongh lists more poems from the seventeenth century with first-person narrators as sinners. He also refers to the prologue to a volume published in 1639 by Johannes

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[52] Oil on panel. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
[53] Oil on canvas. Munich: Alte Pinakothek.

Orisandt, a long forgotten author from Van de Venne's circle, who identifies with the Fool laughing at himself as well as others. We "thoughtless worldlings," says Orisandt, cannot laugh at the world "without jeering at ourselves, for the foolish world is within us" (De Jongh 1996: 51).[54] Steen's fools attest to the permeation of Folly throughout human reality and the dark presence of folly or ideology is revealed in those moments of wildness or lewdness that surface wherever the Fool makes his appearance. Steen's work falls within the 'troubled picaresque' strand in the picaresque tradition.

7.4 The picaresque voyeur

Since Laura Mulvey's influential essay on film theory in which she introduced the concept of the "male gaze" into feminist research, much has been written about the concept, within and without the fields of feminism and art history.[55] Even though her work depends upon psychoanalytic theory, has been misread as making a limited and political point, and has been accused of simplifying the act of perception, it actually contributed a great deal to setting the scene for much more nuanced valuations of the act of looking, including "male voyeurism", that appreciates its intricacies. Elkins comes to the conclusion that:

> Looking is much too complex to be reduced to a formula that has a looking subject and a seen object. If I observe attentively enough, I find that my observations are tangled with the object, that the object is part of the world and therefore part of me, that looking is something I do but also something that happens to me (Elkins 1996: 35).

And:

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[54] De Jongh quotes Van Vaeck: "dien wijtberoemden Philosooph Democritus, die de Werelt met al haren aenhangh te recht uytgelacchen en bespot heeft [...] onbesinde Wereltlingen [...] sonder ons selven uyt te lachen; want de geckelijke Werelt is in ons."
[55] Cf. Mulvey 1975, Doane 1982, Berger 1982, Bryson 1983, Bernheimer 1987, Simons 1988, Gammon & Marshment 1988, Snow 1989, Brooks 1989, Erjavec 1996.

Looking immediately activates desire, possession, violence, displeasure, pain, force, power, obligation, gratitude, longing [...] there seems to be no end to what seeing is, to how it is tangled with living and acting (Elkins 1996: 31).

It is exactly this complicated fullness of the act of seeing that is stressed in much feminist research[56] and art. However, in the picaresque tradition notions about the incriminating gaze of the voyeur is humorously subverted in many ways, contesting reductionist views on male voyeurism[57] and the gaze.

The picaresque works of both David Salle (b. 1952) and Dottie Attie (b. 1938) are intriguingly narrative, humorously disturbing, at once embarrassingly intimate and coldly estranged, and preoccupied with the voyeuristic 'gaze'. Both Salle and Attie's oeuvres subvert impoverished notions about the relationship between knowledge and vision.

David Salle's art production has come under feminist attack for its nostalgic representations of desirable *Playboy*-style bodies of women.[58] Salle in paintings like *Symphony Concertante II* (1987) (Figure 24). seems to insensitively persevere in introducing the artist-model scenario in spite of its chauvinist overtones. However, in the post-modern environment in which the witness function of the viewer of art is often stressed,[59] such fantasies can no longer be indulged in uncritically and Salle knows that "his hand is right in the fuse" (Whitney 1994: 48). In his works the brazen pornographic look is counteracted by emptiness and distance. The perspective of the voyeur is frustrated: although the spectator is seemingly presented with a gynaecologist's perspective, the female images are in fact rendered as remote and dim as after-images of sexual

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[56] See Irigaray 1985, and Keller & Grontkowski 1983.

[57] The role of the spectator as voyeur is defined by Michael Fried (1980), to distinguish "absorptive", from "theatrical" works of art in eighteenth-century France. In this section I propose a picaresque form of voyeurism.

[58] Cf. Schjeldahl 1987, Storr 1988, Heartney 1988, Smith 1991, Adams 1994, Whitney 1994, Wei 1995, Whitney 1994.

[59] See my reference to Jonathan Bordo (1996: 183) in note 38 above.

encounters. This distancing effect is enhanced by the use of grisaille and the non-tactile and thin application of paint. David Whitney (1994: 49) writes: "Salle's pictures may evoke suspended states of erotic reverie but they make no direct libidinal appeal." This paradoxical effect is reminiscent of the ambience of the television medium, which is cold yet simulates the warmth of childish reactions. The many superficial references to works by other artists also seem appropriate in the visual cultural environment created by the television medium.

Salle blends concealment and disclosure of the nude figure. In the case of concealment the spectator is confirmed as knowing more than the image reveals. In the case of apparent disclosure the "knowing subject" is undermined. By compromising and imposing on the spectator Salle's work endangers the supposed distinterested neutrality of the modernist aesthetic gaze.

Dottie Attie's work[60] uncovers submerged aspects of the act of perception by means of her unusual focus. Her series *The Voyeurs* (1987) consists of small, six-inch-square painted close-up copies of the areas between eyes and mouth, of self-portraits by 'old masters' like Dürer and Ingres. The re-framing of these fragments of portraits reveals to us how these artists have gazed upon the world. Their faces stare at us as if from too small windows, portholes or prisoners' cells. They are stripped of all surroundings, clothes and attributes and the only clues to their characters left for interpretation are their facial expressions.

In her appropriation and re-presentation of 'old-master' self-portraits to the view of the spectator, Attie betrays her own role as that of the snooping voyeuristic artist, and attributes the same peeping role to the spectator. She also displays these male artists as they were looking intently at their own reflections in mirrors while painting their self-portraits. Moreover, hanging in a gallery, *The Voyeurs* mimic the gazes of the visiting scopophiles.

Attie's method in most of her other painting series, is that of excerpting wayward passages from old-master paintings, which she then presents as fragments from the whole, usually in six-inch-squares. The square canvases are sometimes laid out horizontally, as in *Interest in anatomy* (1988) (Figure 25), or in the form of a grid, allowing for up and down reading, as in the forty-panel *A violent child* (1988) (Figure 26). The selected and repossessed details are usually much reduced in size compared to their models, and accompanied by invented narrative texts which hint at incidents in the lives of the painter of the original work. It is a method of isolation of suggestive passages and their animation by means of close imitation of the original textures and brush strokes. It is as if Attie becomes

> sensuously hypnotised by that historical culture, choosing to quote and displace certain
> of its works so as to distil from each of them some new fragrance of sex, anxiety or
> menace ... (Kozloff 1991: 102).

It is as if she reads these original paintings slowly with an intimacy of contact, as if her hand imitates the idiosyncratic movements of the brushstrokes of the masters, as if she impersonates them while working. She gets underneath the polished, finished look of the surface of these paintings, as if to unearth disturbing clues through the ritual act of painting. Beholders are made to discover aspects in plain sight that they had never noticed before, watching from unusual perspectives, disclosing to us how our assumptions about what is of interest, directs our acts of seeing. She defines the roles of artist and viewer as that of voyeur, in that she animates isolated passages and fills them with erotic desire, eliciting excitement from the viewer in the act of perception.

The appended narrative texts usually hint at personal experiences in the lives of the original painters. Her narrative approach to her subject matter is that of the

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[60] Kozloff 1991, Isaak 1996.

picaresque gossip or the scandalmonger. Her discussed narratives are intriguing and extravagant, as in *Violent child*, and her compositional perspectives unusual. In a fascinatingly humorous way her works brings to the surface a painful underside where ideology is palpable. Yet, as narrator, she remains sensitive to being enmeshed in the prejudices and snares of human perception.

In *Violent child* the laconic narrative, in stencilled text on some of the square panels, is about the young Caravaggio's duties as an apprentice, which involved helping his master with anatomical experiments in a secluded room. Such private experiments and stealthy efforts at visual discovery by curious artists, is presented with a sinister slant. She reveals how all seeing is violent and creates pain, how every glance hurts in some way by freezing and condensing what's seen into something that it is not. The suggestions of violence and mutilation in the accompanying panels, depicting fragments from a number of Caravaggio's paintings, many of which depicts bodies in pain, refer obliquely to the murder that Caravaggio was guilty of in real life. The narrative text, juxtaposed with the face of Judith killing Holofernes, leads us to speculate about the events of Caravaggio's murderous act. Watching this painting, Kozloff (1991: 105) is

> prompted to believe that the apprentice artist had come upon a female victim, horridly
> within his power, the memory of whom he later transformed into the image of a heroine
> killing a grown man with — as we now know — Caravaggio's own features.

The scientific spirit or objectivity of the artist's experiments is shown to be underwritten by lust and violence. The combination of Attie's erotic attentions to detail and Caravaggio's domineering and lustful cruelty exposes "a demonic sexual content that obsesses and afflicts both genders" (Kozloff 1991: 105).

However, the richness of Attie's exploration of the act of perception lies not merely in her inclusion of both genders in the corruptive act of seeing, as Kozloff

might suggest. Attie's work not only leads us to focus on the voyeur, but also on the fact that it is reductive to assume that human subjects are usually simply doing the looking, as Elkins has suggested. In the works of art she chooses to quote from, she focuses on details that are like hooks that snare her. Lifeless blobs and smears of paint gleam and glint in such a way as to catch her eye. She seems to fall victim to the seductions of such sensuous fragments. There is no hint of a controlling gaze, critically selecting offending segments. By suggesting this intimate involvement in her working technique, she exposes the extent to which our idea of vision has too much invested in the subject, precluding the power of objects. Attie demonstrates seeing to both alter the thing that is seen and to transform the seer.

In theory of perception Elkins has broadened our idea of the gaze, suggesting that:

> To see is to be seen, and everything I see is like an eye, collecting my gaze, blinking, staring, focusing and reflecting, sending my look back to me (Elkins 1996: 51).

And:

> there is no such thing as just looking, and there is also no such thing as an object that is simply looked at by something else called an observer (Elkins 1996: 31).

His theory could be re-interpreted to give a glimpse of the meaningfulness of created reality, the significance of which is not dependant on the gaze of human subjects.

We can conclude that, not only is the metaphor of the eye prevalent in picaresque works of art, but motifs related to the eye also has a strong potential for metaphoric iconoclasm. The picaresque endeavour to re-carnalize disembodied vision, is significantly augmented and intensified by alertness to

gender. In the abundant and inter-disciplinary research around the central metaphor of the eye, a re-appraisal of vision is stirring. The differentiating perspective of typiconic traditions, by means of which the concealment and disclosure of various dimensions of vision are highlighted, can make a meaningful contribution to this critical endeavour.

CHAPTER 8: ARTIST AND SPECTATOR ROLES: THE PICARESQUE METAPHOR OF THE FOOL

In research on the historic development of the role of the 'Fool' in drama, literature and society, scholars like Welsford (1935), Vandenbroeck (1987), Zijderveld (1982) and others, treat it as a broad category bonding certain characteristics and spanning all these fields:

> the Fool or Clown is the Comic Man, but he is not necessarily the hero of comedy, the central figure about whom the story is told, nor is he a mere creature of the poetic imagination whom the final drop-curtain consigns to oblivion ... As a dramatic character he usually stands apart from the main action of the play, having a tendency not to focus but to dissolve events, and also to act as an intermediary between the stage and the audience. As an historical figure he does not confine his activities to the theater but makes everyday life comic on the spot. The Fool, in fact, is an amphibian, equally at home in the world of reality and the world of the imagination ...The serious hero focuses events, forces issues, and causes catastrophes; but the Fool by his mere presence dissolves events, evades issues, throws doubt on the finality of fact (Welsford 1935: xii).

It includes many associated types and historical forms of development like the clown, *artiste*, comic actor/actress, *commedia dell'arte* character, trickster, wildman/woman, juggler, acrobat, con man/woman, *picaro*, knave, rogue, court jester, flirt, jongleur.

I have suggested that it should be productive to explore this role of the Fool in its function of conveying implied narrator and spectator roles in art. The Fool personifies play. The play impulse, the desire to invent and experiment, is a factor in all artistic creation, but is unusually strong in ideology alert art where the critical breaking down, deconstruction and restructuring of familiar societal and artistic conventions and habits are at stake. Such debunking and resistance takes place by playing the fool, through improvisation, parody, banter, scoffs and derision. Not only is the Fool a popular subject in picaresque art, it also seems

that there are certain representational strategies that could be associated with the role of the picaresque Fool. An obvious example of the latter, that has been discussed earlier,[1] is the first-person narration of the *picaro*. The Fool is a motif that can be represented in many different ways, but from amongst a large array of Fool portrayals, a typically picaresque strand in its representation seems to be extricable.

We now need to recapitulate what we have established so far about the picaresque Fool in many references throughout the study.

In the context of this study, some Fools' portraits from the sixteenth century are considered to be 'hyper-icons', or pictures on the nature of pictures, paradigmatic of the picaresque stance in art.[2] The implied narrators' and viewers' roles suggested in them are those of conniving, conspiring, contriving, intriguing and scheming. The Fool's limited and prejudiced 'worm's eye perspective' from below provides special insight. He personifies the relationship of trickery in the picaresque work/spectator relationship, whereby spectators are either kept in the dark, or connived with.[3] The Fool is the major character inhabiting the picaresque imaginary world. He or she personifies the concomitant presence of laughter and anxiety inherent in this world.[4] The Fool's reliance on the communicative value of ribald bodily postures and gestures reveals a picaresque interest in the lower body, in order to humorously subvert celebrations of mind and intellect.[5] The ugly, deformed, disagreeable and often monstrous appearance of fools is a manifestation of popular picaresque strategy of the exploitation of grotesque means to bring the demonic powers in a conventionalized world to the surface for critical scrutiny.[6] The typical self-mockery of the Fool reveals insight into our enmeshed position in a network of ideologies. The Fool sometimes personifies

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[1] Chapter 7, section 3.
[2] Cf. the introductory chapter 1.2.
[3] Chapter 4, section 4.1.3.
[4] Chapter 4, section 4.1.1.
[5] Chapter 4, section 4.1.2.
[6] Chapter 4, section 4.1.4.

the laughter and subversion that is suggestive of joy and wholeness in a redeemed world. This is most evident in the role-playing, sometimes focalizing Fool-narrators in Jan Steen's work.[7]

A basic assumption in this study[8] is that seeing is not believing. Ideology, sin, and folly is most palpable in the undercurrents of anxiety, pain, fear and desire embedded in visual texts, and often brought to the surface by means of grotesque exaggeration. The grotesque suggestion of such undercurrents in comic contexts is often mediated by the metaphor of the Fool.[9] In the metaphor of the Fool, associations of deception, illusion and magic, in a sinister as well as in a numinous sense, are often contracted.

From various histories of the role of the Fool it becomes evident that it has a worthy as well as a sinister side to it. On the one hand the Fool is known for special insight into human nature, which enables him to uncover human weakness and folly. Yet on the other hand the Fool is associated with foolishness, stupidity, vice and bondage, as in the Ship of Fools *topos*. The early history of the origins of the character of the Fool, as well as the history of the rise of conventionalized types, reveal a dark undercurrent of primitive wildness and lewdness:

> Harlequin appears first in history and legend as an aerial spectre or demon, leading that ghostly nocturnal cortège known as the Wild Hunt (Welsford 1935: 288).

And:

> It is established that Harlequin, as leader of the Wild Hunt, exhibited mythic and diabolic, fear-inspiring characteristics (Vandenbroeck 1987: 133-136).[10]

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[7] Chapter 7, section 7.3.
[8] Cf. the introductory section.
[9] Chapter 7, section 1, and chapter 4, section 4.1.4.
[10] Vast staat dat Hellequin (*Harlequin*) als leider van de Wilde Jacht mythische en diabolische, angstaanjagende trekken vertoont.

And:

> it was mainly through religious drama that Harlequin developed from an aerial demon
> into a comic devil, and so was prepared for his final migration to the Italian comic stage
> (Welsford 1935: 288).

The association of the Fool with magic and sinister forces conveys another dimension of his significance. Cornelius Saftleven's *Tovenaar als harlekijn* (1660)[11] portrays this aspect of the Fool's nature. There is an archetypal Fool type animated by a spirit close to that of the medieval demon. The origins of certain Fool's attributes like the cap, colourful attire, fox's tail, cat and marotte in later representations of fools testify to the "trickster connection" of the Fool (Welsford 1935: 123, Vandenbroeck 1987: 134).[12]

Vandenbroeck demonstrates how, since the fifteenth century, the opposition of reason and foolishness gradually became fused with the opposition of virtue and vice, so that clowns and devils became associated. While moral categories became defined in terms of knowledge and reason, wildness and indecency associated with the clown, denoted sexuality, base passion and corporeality. It might be concluded that representations of the figure of the marginalized Fool (and related types) reveal the dark and unfathomable underside of civilized and refined society in which Knowledge and Reason are overvalued. These undercurrents often manifest themselves in carnivalesque situations.

The association of art and deception, illusion and magic, in both a sinister and a numinous sense, however, is also part of the history of art in general, at least since Plinius' founding anecdote of the painting competition between the Greek

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[11] Copenhagen (Vandenbroeck 1987:134).

[12] Welsford (1935:123) quotes Chambers who suggests that "not only the calf-skin and fox-tail but also the traditional eared hood and coxcomb may be conventionalized survivals of the old sacrificial *exuviae"* Also: Harlequin's "black mask, his bat, his fox-tail, his uncertain nationality and his chameleon-like nature, set him somewhat apart from other masques, and suggest ritual or legendary origin" (Welsford 1935:291).

painters Zeuxis and Parrhasios (Bann 1989: 27-40). Gombrich traces such associations back to the myth of Pygmalion:

> it tells of an earlier and more awe-inspiring function of art when the artists did not aim at making a 'likeness' but at rivalling creation itself. The most famous of these myths that crystalize belief in the power of art to create rather than to portray is the story of Pygmalion. Ovid turned it into an erotic novelette, but even in his perfumed version we can feel something of the thrill which the artist's mysterious powers once gave to man (Gombrich 1983: 80).

Peculiar to the picaresque work/spectator relationship of collusion, such general attributes of art are often humorously, grotesquely and carnally exploited. The suggestions of the Fool roles of trickster and dupe for implied narrators and viewers respectively, are often exploited to highlight the contrariety between surface appearances and hidden undercurrents.

8.1 The artist as picaresque trickster

In his *Likeness and presence. A history of the image before the era of art* (1994),[13] Hans Belting describes how the era of the powerful cultic image is succeeded at the beginning of the Renaissance, by the 'Era of Art'. Bätschmann (1993: 31) conjectures that the museum era may well be considered to usher another change - the end of the 'Era of Art' and renewed exorcism of magical and numinous powers.

He describes the slow process of the transformation of everyday objects into museum art, involving many people and institutions. The modern transformation of found or crafted objects into museum art requires an artist (often a cult figure, like Marcel Duchamp or Joseph Beuys) who is the initiator of this change. The process is continued in the artworld by spokespeople, adversaries, the art market, the media, museums and art historians who either accept it, resist it,

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[13] *Bild und Kult. Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst* (1990).

defend it or ignore it. After its transformation the object is considered sacrosanct. Beholders are invited to see it, but prohibited from touching, changing, copying or reproducing it. It is protected by vitrines, alarm systems, security guards and insurance policies. Bätschmann (1993: 31) suggests that this transformation process may well be described as a modern magical event. These rites call to mind the consecration ceremonies detailed by David Freedberg (1989: 82-98), entailing washing, anointing, crowning, or blessing, which in similar fashion are intended to bring about a change in the sacred status of an image. However, it may well be argued (cf. chapter 1) that the magical powers of art has never been expelled, despite the Enlightenment drive to secularize and demythologize the concept of art. The picaresque insight in the pervasive but concealed perseverance of idolatry and magic in visual culture, is related to the picaresque interest in the humorous and subversive exposure of the suppressed undercurrents of anxiety, pain, fear and desire where the oppressive power of ideologies are most palpably present.

The resurgence of the association of art and magic to more than an undercurrent in the twentieth century, has been persuasively discussed by Werner Hofmann (1979: 62-81, 1998). He describes how the modernist aesthetic culture of the museum had domesticated 'primitive' art by simply submitting it to the contemplative concept of art and culture. Medieval hell scenes, fetishes from Africa, and Renaissance portraits were all transformed by the exclusive aura of 'exhibition value' in the secular cultic spaces of museums. As 'works of art' these objects are supposed to have lost their magical powers. Their closed fictive worlds pose a distance of contemplation between spectator and 'work'.

Hofmann describes how, in one type of reaction against the closure of an aesthetically contemplative concept of culture (and its exhibition window, the museum), post-modern artists have endeavoured to explode, confuse or break down such limiting notions by reverting to the trans-aesthetic ambivalence of 'primitive art'. Since the Dadaists, artists have striven to disrupt the conceited

tradition, with its peculiar associations of art-making and trickery, the association of art and magic has been kept alive through centuries in a peculiarly humorous way.

Two of the most well-known cult figures of the twentieth-century artworld are Joseph Beuys, the shaman, and Andy Warhol, the clown or *picaro*.[14] A comparison of the artists' roles fashioned by and for these two artists, might demonstrate two different typiconic strands in post-modern artists' reversion to magic.

The term 'cult figure' refers to the high profiles these fascinating public images enjoyed in the media, but also to the element of worship in the relationship of the public to these culture idols or icons (Black 1984). Literature on Beuys often has a hagiographic character. Of Warhol, Arthur Danto (1987: 128) writes that in the definitive catalogue of his work, his life must be registered as an item.

The shaman-artist Joseph Beuys has fashioned an image for himself which is as multi-interpretable as his installations, performances and multiples. His felt fedora, blue jeans, white shirt, pilot's vest, often with rabbit tail or other rabbit parts protruding from the pockets, and soft suede boots created an image that can be regarded as a fascinating self-portrait performance (Figure 27). The subtle nuances of the characters of the nomadic shepherd, the anarchistic cowboy, the innocent fighter for social causes, the free pilot, the shamanic transmitter and maybe the neat Dandy as well, are synthesized in this artist's *persona*. Beuys has referred to his appearance as a 'type of iconography' and the rabbit fragments support the idea that he was referring to sacred iconography. His appearance can be considered to be more than a mere costume or mask, but rather as part of his identity. We know that Beuys definitely considered his hat part of himself. This is substantiated by a story about his hat, told by a former student. She relates how members of a group of students,

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[14] Mary Leigh Morbey (1995: 71) sees 'paradigmatic' typiconic traits in Warhol's oeuvre.

Gruppe Yuip, took his hat from his head in the presence of a filming television camera. The three Yuips then each replaced it with a Fool's cap, one on top of the other. "In the end Beuys watched sorrowfully and like a martyr"[15] (Groblewski 1993: 37-68). Perhaps unaware of its sinister associations, the role of the Fool did not suit him.

Andy Warhol is well-known for his attitude of refusing individuality in interviews. Subverting the everyday rituals of art journalism, he opted for a strategy by which he only confirmed the clichés that other people made of him. A photographic portrait taken by Duane Michals in 1958, in which Warhol poses (or does he?) with both hands covering his face (Figure 28), is the visual equivalent of this image of interchangeable identity. We must now ask what this protean image of the artist reveals about Warhol's artistry.

A common characteristic of Warhol's representations of cult portraits, advertising images, and media pictures of disasters, is the application of colour in silkscreen technique without attention to the fit of colours and contours. This imitates cheap printing processes of the mass media, but has also been interpreted not only to emphasize abstract values, but also to suggest colour lying on top of the painting like too much make-up on a skin. Indeed, Warhol has commented that people would buy his image of an electric chair, if only the colouring suits their interiors. The common theme of all these representations seem to be the fascination with the mask, the hollow face of social flux. It has been argued that Warhol's cult portraits of Marilyn or Jackie or Joseph Beuys, and his disaster works of death and violence are related like two sides of a coin. The social image of the media star is the corpse of the actual person. Warhol has been described as the magician who can transform anyone into a social star (Von Graevenitz 1993: 80-87).

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[15] "Beuys blickte am Ende leidend und wie ein Märtyrer".

Warhol has depicted himself as a mere shadow, among mythical media like Superman, Mickey Mouse, Batman, Greta Garbo and Elsa Maxwell in *Myths* (1981) (Figure 29). Emptied identity and vital colouring are contrasted, as if the lost energy of the cliché image has been transferred to the colours. The brazen happiness of the figures to the left of the work, become bizarre, even grotesque in the figures to the right where Warhol's silhouette is also found. An undercurrent of the grotesque that makes one want to laugh and cry at the same time becomes evident. In the light of this, one begins to wonder if Warhol has ever depicted himself in the role of the Fool.

He has indeed been described as the clown of the post-modern art world. According to Danto (1989: 130) "the highly successful commercial artist, Warhol himself, was able to achieve the status of a highly successful high artist without changing a thing. Warhol rose to the top by turning the art world inside-out and upside-down" and William Feaver (1989: 95) notes that "Warhol, casting himself as the artless newcomer to the world of aesthetics, was more the Chaplin figure, twirling his cane and creating alarm and chaos wherever he went. Thus he took advantage of whatever was held invaluable or sacred."

It has been suggested that in his wish to camouflage himself, in *Camouflage self-portrait* (1986) (Figure 30), he has given us the image of the clown, as society would like to see him. The laying on of colour over a photograph of himself resembles the splashes of integrative coloured light covering disco dancers. Again colour and contours do not fit. Yet the cosmetics of pleasure cloaks a scared Warhol whose hair stand on end, conferring to his image the ambivalent semblance of the archetypal Fool. There is indeed a photograph of Warhol wearing a clown's nose which he permitted his major photographer, Christopher Makos to attach to his face (Von Graevenitz 1993: 85). If appropriate Fool's roles are sought for him in the history of the development of the Fool, his protean

character finds its ultimate manifestation in the *picaro* and trickster types, whose identities are forever changing, to suit circumstances or merely to survive.[16]

The role of the artist in the playful and subversive role of the trickster, deceiving, tricking, making magic and reminding of lurking anxieties and pain, however, has a longer tradition in the picaresque tradition. In order to demonstrate this, some paintings by Jan Steen, an earlier role-playing artist in this tradition, will now be discussed.

In Houbraken's biography of Steen in his *De Groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* (1718-1721), he merges Steen's real and his pictorial lives, in the same way that Van Mander had done in his description of the life and work of Pieter Brueghel the Elder or 'Pier den drol' in his *Den grondt der edel vry schilderconst* (1603/4) (cf. Miedema 1973). Houbraken pictures the 'droll' Steen as a jocular sot, a hapless ne'er-do-well, constantly in financial straits, who nevertheless was unsurpassed as a master of a lower, comic mode of painting (Chapman 1996: 13). Steen's critical fortune over centuries is marked by the various receptions of Houbraken's conflation of his art and his life. Lyckle de Vries (1973: 230) concludes that from both Houbraken's anecdotes from Steen's life, and the descriptions of his paintings, Steen emerges "as a sort of Tyl Uilenspiegel, who is not only witty but can also be ruthless or even dangerous". Only since the mid-nineteenth century, when scholars turned to a more documentary, archival approach, did Steen's biographical reputation begin to be cleared. Today it is assumed that Steen was an unusually accomplished, sharply intelligent, highly self-conscious, and theatrically minded person, a personality radically at odds with the roguish identity that Houbraken fashioned in his biography and that Steen himself constructed in paint (Chapman 1996: 17).

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[16] Cf. chapter 3, section 4.

It seems that Steen the artist, fashioned a fictive *persona* in his paintings[17] conforming to definitions of genre painting and to the *topos* in literature on art, of the rogue as prefabricated role for the comic genre painter. It is conventionally assumed in seventeenth-century literature on art, that the class and life style of the artist determines his *metier*.[18] Houbraken (with special reference to the lives of Jan Steen and Adriaen Brouwer) often emphasises that the choice of a specific genre and its concomitant mode or style, is determined by the character and personal inclinations of the artist.[19] Within the parameters of genre painting various imaginative preferences are possible. However, in Steen's consistent identification with the figure of the rogue and Fool throughout his oeuvre, he is unique among genre artists in his time.

In his ground-breaking article on seventeenth-century Dutch genre painting Hans-Joachim Raupp (1983: 400-418) endeavours to find a theoretical basis for its interpretation. By analysing descriptions and references to genre paintings in Houbraken's *De Groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* (1718-1721), Van Hoogstraeten's *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst: Anders de zichtbaere Werelt* (1678), Gerard de Lairesse's *Groot Schilderboek* (1707) and other relevant texts, he concludes that, although neither a systematically worked out theory of genre painting, nor even a definition existed in or outside of the Netherlands during the seventeenth century, there had always been a system of norms and categories that made a positive judgement of genre painting possible. This he finds in the theory of comic poetry which can be traced to Cicero and Donatus and which propounds that comedy has moral instruction as its aim and is a truthful mirror of ordinary daily life: *imitatio vitae, speculum consuetidinus, imago veritatis.*[20]

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[17] This has been referred to in Part 2, section 1.3.

[18] Cf. my M. A. report *'Het Gulden Cabinet vande edele vry schilderconst' by Cornelis de Bie*, University of London, Courtauld Institute of Art, 1983.

[19] According to van Mander, Pieter Brueghel the Elder made incognito forays to country *kermissen* and weddings in order to observe the manners and customs of the peasants to draw them *nae't leven* (Miedema 1973).

Aristotle's definition of comic characters as 'worse than reality' (*Poetics* 1448a, 1)[21] is transformed in seventeenth-century comic theory into the idea that the comic character is of low or bourgeois origin, using low dialect, acting and feeling to satisfy sensual desires. What is new is therefore the matching of what is lowly and peasant-like with what is burlesque and comic. Representation in the comic mode according to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century concepts, is the non-idealizing representation of characters of low birth with the aim of instructing morally. This definition and its categories were transferred to the descriptions and interpretations of genre images by writers like Houbraken and Lairesse. Apart from the Plinian division of high and low modes, Houbraken in academic vein, distinguished three kinds of figural painting: high history painting, a median bourgeoise genre and a lower peasant genre. So called 'realism' or representation *naer 't leven* was considered to be characteristic of those genres lower than history painting. Raupp argues that it is limiting to apply comic theory to only those genre paintings that are obviously humorous and that it rather applies to all genre painting.

In the light of this definition of genre painting Steen's roguish identity in both Houbraken's biography and Steen's paintings, is understandable.

Steen painted only one formal *Self-portrait* (1670) (Figure 31) conspicuous for its simplification of the usual conventions of self-portraiture (cf. Chapman 1996: 228). In *Self-portrait as a lutenist* (1663-1665) (Figure 32) he portrays an even more casual image of himself in Spanish dress, laughing and playing the lute, thereby specifically characterizing himself as the comic actor (Raupp 1984: 220-221).[22] He is wearing the same red slashed beret and broad smile as in his *The*

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[20] Imitation of life, mirror of morality and image of truth.

[21] Tatarkiewicz 1970: 157.

[22] In Houbraken's *De Groote Schouburgh* Steen's character is contrasted with the seriousness and bourgeiose virtue of Van Mieris's, in both his written biographies and the portraits illustrating them. The portraits of the two artists, both dressed as comic musicians, are combined on one plate for the benefit of this comparison. Van Mieris's sober and dignified facial expression, in keeping with his status as painter whose metier is bourgeoise genre art, is contrasted with the

merry threesome to be discussed later (Figure 41). He has removed himself from a studio setting and eliminated all artist's paraphernalia. The way in which he depicts one leg over the other exhibiting his graceless shoes, is a deliberate breach of *decorum*. The tankard on the table replaces the attribute of Bacchus (grapes), and the oversized lute the attribute of Venus (goat), as the inspiration of the artist with the *Sanguigno of Blygeestige Complexie* (sanguine or high-spirited complexion) as it was known from the 1644 Dutch edition of Ripa's *Iconologia*. In portraying himself as the comic actor (Raupp 1983: 414, Raupp 1984: 258-260, Chapman 1996: 180) Steen not only claims the privilege to tell the truth through laughter - *ridendo dicere verum* - but also exhibits his ability to laugh at himself. Steen exposes folly by playing the role of comic Fool whose nature is ambivalently both worthy, and weak and indecent. His self-caricature is proof of his critical conscience.

In his oeuvre both the characters of the Fool and of the quack[23] introduce the themes of trickery. Jan Steen's interest in the pleasures of the dangerously illusive and deceptive powers of images is revealed in his enchantment with the characters of the Fool and the quack. Yet it is striking that Steen never poses as the quack himself, but rather as the Fool exposing the quack's deceptions. He seems to distinguish between acceptable deception and cheating. It is instructive in this respect that Emmens (1981: 167) has noted that during the seventeenth century the "bad" painter was considered to be a swindler and identified with the quack.

In the characters of the quack and the doctor in whom Steen too combines his *docere et delectare* with comments on the sensuous and deceptive nature of the art of painting, the attributes of the rogue and the Fool are expanded.

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naughty and complicitous look of the painter of peasants, Steen, wearing his slashed beret, similar to the one he wears as the fool in *The merry threesome*.

[23] Oskar Seidlin (1955: 35) has noted that mockery of ridiculously 'learned' quacks is a favourite motif in the picaresque novel. The medicinal polemics in Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759), Dr Düsing in Thomas Mann's *Felix Krull* (1953) and Guzmán de Alfarache's trickery of two surgeons in Mateo Aleman's *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599) are typical examples.

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The male doctor's visit to a lovesick maiden is one of Steen's favourite subjects and he depicted it, with subtle variations, numerous times during the 1660's. This picaresque *topos* is related to the common depiction on the *commedia dell'arte* stage and the *rederijkerstoneel*, of the 'unsuitable couple' consisting of a foolish elderly man like Pantaloon, flirting with a young maiden. In *The doctor's visit* (c.1668-1670) (Figure 33), Steen himself, wearing his familiar beret, poses as the Fool who amuses and points out folly. Here his function is to forecast the elderly doctor's diagnosis of the love-sick maiden by brandishing a herring and two onions, a comestible reference to the male organ (De Jongh 1996: 45). In *The doctor's visit* (c. 1661-1662) (Figure 34) the tone of the painting as a whole is set by Frans Hals's *Peeckelhaering* (c.1628-1630) (Figure 35), which is present as a painting-within-the-painting. The pompous doctor does not seem to use any of the analytical methods traditionally recommended for diagnosing the illness of lovesickness.[24] The Fools in these paintings have the function of giving the impression that his doctors are charlatans, deceivers and tricksters to whose charms many gullible citizens remained susceptible.

Steen was not alone in his fascination for the topic and many contemporary artists painted it. Frans van Mieris,[25] in his *Doctor's visit* (Figure 36) casts himself as the quack tending to a lovesick maiden, depicted as a portrait of his wife (Nauman 1981: 97-103). In Dou's *Quacksalver* (1652),[26] the painter's ability to deceive is likened to that of a quack doctor (Emmens 1981: 167). Like Steen's doctor in *The lovesick woman* (c. 1661-1663) (Figure 37), the outfit worn by Van

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[24] For a description of these, see Wheeler 1996.

[25] Steen's artistic sympathies were close to those of his friend Frans van Mieris the Elder (1635-1681), who shared his interest in the comical treatment of amorous subject matter. In the late 1650's and early 1660's, the two artists worked practically in tandem, producing naughty or suggestive doctor's visits, music lessons and oyster meals that have the same risqué quality. However, Van Mieris treated these mildly salacious themes with a veneer of refinement and it must have appealed to a clientele that took particular delight in the combination of polished style and elegant costumes with less refined love imagery (Chapman 1996: 128). Naumann (1981: 48ff) notes how Van Mieris moved away from his teacher Dou's peasant subject matter to more "aristocratic" scenes.

[26] Oil on panel, 112 x 83cm. Rotterdam: Museum Boymans-van Beuningen.

Mieris's doctor had long gone out of fashion in the artists' time and contrasts anachronistically with the fashionable attire, worn by the lovesick women in both paintings. Gudlaughson (1975) has shown that the costume worn by Steen's doctor identifies him with a character of the comic Dutch theatre, inspired by the commedia dell'arte character of *Il Dottore*. *Il Dottore* himself attracted attention by his dark and formal attire, the outrageously antiquated cut of which must have been at least several generations behind the fashion of the day:

> Descending from the clouds of his learning, he has difficulty in finding his way to the present, while his contacts with real life situations lead without exception, to catastrophe, major or minor. It is usually love, above all other things, which proves to be his Achilles heel (Gudlaughson 1975: 15).

It seems as if the figure of the quack had been substituted for the protagonists of representations of doctor's visits by the 1660's (Gudlaughson 1975: 18). Sensuality and comic deception are thematically combined in Steen's representations of quacks and doctors.

Steen's designed *persona* for himself as Fool and comic entertainer and his depiction of 'bad' artists as quacks, suggest a picaresque differentiation of self-reflective artistry, pre-figuring the way that the role of the artist has been broadened since the historical juncture of Dada. In the ambiguous combination of popular street entertainer and refined court jester, the Fool's role presupposes a wider audience and Steen's 'presence' even in his history paintings, as the artist-as-Fool, testifies to his playful subversion of barriers between history and genre painting. The metaphors of the exhibitionist Fool-artist, and of charlatan quack, have been, and still are exploited in the picaresque tradition.

A post-modern image that perpetuates such picaresque representations of artistry, fusing the ideas of the vulnerability of the artist's role as entertaining *artiste*, and the artist's manipulative role as magician, is Stephen Murphy's *Self-portrait as a rabbit* (1992) (see Kent 1994) (Figure 38). It is a computer

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manipulation of a photograph of the artist, 'morphed' into the image of a rabbit. The rabbit's intelligent look and seeming willingness to communicate with the beholder, is disarming. Advances in computer technology have made it easier to deceive by means of, and to manipulate digital visual images. The rabbit is a *persona* fashioned for and by the artist, seemingly produced from a magician's hat. Murphy refers to the age-old theme of artistic deception, by the association of computerized image generation and the attributes of the magician.

Other artists who have exploited the metaphor of the Fool-artist in a postmodern context are Jeff Koons who, for a 1987 photographic project for *Artforum,* chose as a kind of symbolic self-portrait, a ceramic statuette of *Don Quixote* (Wallis 1992: 27), and the feminist performance artist Hannah Wilke.

In Wilke's final exhibition, *INTRA-VENUS* (1992-1993), which was shown posthumously, she documented in thirteen larger-than-life photographs, set out like the twelve stations of the cross, her confrontation with her own death from lymphatic cancer:

> In her signature style of humorous self-assured exhibitionist, she plays her last role - that of the grotesque dying crone. Bald, naked, bloated, scarred by chemotherapy and bone marrow treatments, hooked to IV tubes, Wilke assumes the whole array of stereotypical poses she has always assumed: rigging herself up in the same calendar girl contortions she assumed in her 1975 *Invasion Performance*, or the martyred beautitude of the Virgin Mary with downcast eyes and bent head shrouded in a blue shawl (Isaak 1996: 223).

In one of these photographs, *January 30, 1992: #1* (Figure 39) she clowns, with a body covered in medical apparatus, like the South American dancer and movie star, Carmen Miranda, balancing a bouquet of plastic flowers on her head. It is as if her whole oeuvre is re-assessed in this final clownish exhibition.

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Wilke's previous performances like *Hannah Wilke: Super-T-Art* and *S. O. S. - Starification Object* (1974) were condemned for their exhibitionism and narcissistic indulgence, because of the obvious similarities between her seductive posing and the attractions of the *femme fatale:*

> The *femme fatale*, the ambiguous woman capable of many disguises, is the character
> in *film noir* who most embodies deception and deceitfulness, 'a woman whose promise
> of surplus enjoyment conceals mortal danger '... (Isaak 1996: 221).

In her final exhibition her disguise is that of the clown. The *femme fatale's* ability to beguile, enmesh and ensnare is likened to the lures of the trickster. In a final trick she inverts the menacing associations of the *femme fatale* and death,[27] by posing as the dying clown. The monstrous aspects of the Fool is highlighted. The feminist predilection for the metaphor of the monster will be explored later.[28]

The illusive and deceptive powers of art are exploited in humorous, ironic, grotesque and carnal ways by the picaresque artists discussed above. The suggestion of the implied narrators' and viewers' roles of the Fool as trickster and dupe respectively, serve to bring hidden undercurrents of idolatry and ideology in the 'Era of Art', to the surface.

8.2 The spectator and the pleasures of deception

In the picaresque tradition artists often humorously exploit the associations of art, and magic, illusionism and deception, in order to shock, move or activate their audiences. In ideology alert picaresque art, even before the museum age, the creation of intimate, surprising and playful relationships with spectators, has subverted the distanced appreciation of isolated art objects.

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[27] Creed 1993: 151-166.
[28] Chapter 10, section 4.

Jan Steen painted a number of works that explore the deceptive illusionism of the art of painting. This thematic concern was in vogue in Leiden among Steen's contemporaries. Examples are Gerrit Dou's *Self-portrait* of about 1650,[29] with its *trompe l'oeil* curtain that evokes the legend of the painter Parrhasius whose painted curtain fooled even another painter, Zeuxis, and his *Quacksalver* (1652), which has been referred to before, which likens the painter's ability to deceive to that of a quack doctor (Emmens 1981b: 163-168).

Steen's most exquisite evocation of the deceptive illusionism of the art of painting is his *Girl offering oysters* (1658-1660) (Figure 40), which creates an interplay between sexual and artistic seduction. The intimacy of this fine rendering of a wholesome-looking young woman who flirts with the viewer as she sprinkles salt on an oyster, is reinforced by the small size and arched frame. The direct inviting glance leaves little doubt that the girl is offering her favours along with the delicious oyster. Not only the oysters, but also the curtained bed behind her suggest a sexual proposition. The half-length figure is close to the picture plane and this makes the work more private and direct. The fine brushwork and precise rendering of the different sensuous textures of fur jacket, sparkling ribbon, wispy hair, soft flesh and the juicy succulence of the oysters, strengthens the seductive power of the image. One of the precedents for this work was probably Dou's *A girl with a basket of fruit at a window* (1657)[30] which is a subtly erotic image of a maid with a market basket in an illusionistic architectural frame (Chapman 1996: 126-128). The girl's invitation in Steen's picaresque work, however, is far more earthy and unabashed and Steen succeeds in fusing the themes of salacious sexual seduction and artistic deception.

In another painting Steen augments the thematic combination of libidinous and artistic deception by introducing not only the character of a lecherous Fool, but by painting himself as the impersonator of this lustful role.

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[29] Dresden: Staatliche Gemäldegalerie (Raupp 1984: pl. 170).
[30] Oil on panel. The National Trust Waddeston Manor and The Courtauld Institiute of Art, London.

In *The merry threesome* (1670-1672) (Figure 41), another variant on the picaresque *topos* of the 'unsuitable couple', a middle-aged violinist laughs indulgently and unashamedly at a woman half his age who robs him, while an old crone distracts him with a glass of wine. This character is portrayed as a portrait of Steen himself, wearing the same red slashed beret and broad smile as in his *Self-portrait as a lutenist* (c. 1663 -1665) (Figure 32). His floppy collar and blue striped sleeves identify him with stock Fools from the *rederijker* theater who often inhabit his paintings.[31]

Steen's use of the three-quarter length compositional format makes the image arresting and immediate. Not only has he limited the number of figures and brought these stock figures close to the viewer, but he has also eliminated any extraneous details, his usual disarray of cluttered, often symbolic objects (Chapman 1996: 237). What strikes us about this representation is that the lecherous protagonist is more willing victim than innocent prey. The thievery is surprisingly unfurtive and the girl makes an unusual display of lifting the coin from the purse. With an exaggerated rhetorical gesture she openly points to her other thieving hand. The Steen character is a complicitous Fool, participating in the game of deception from which both participants benefit. The character of the Fool personifies the ambivalence of praise and suspicion that has accompanied historic assessments of the sensuous pleasures of artistic deception since Plato.

It might have seemed far-fetched to conclude that in his self-portraits as Fools Steen implies roles for his own artistry and for the reception of his paintings, if Steen had not repeatedly represented himself in the role of the Fool, while commenting on the art of painting.

In *Rhetoricians at a window* (1663-1665) (Figure 42) the painter's deceptive abilities are likened to the rhetoricians art of verbal persuasion. From an open

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[31] See Gudlaughson 1975.

window hung with vines, the orator of the chamber of rhetoricians peers through his glasses to read from the paper he holds. The heading on the paper, LOF LIET, song of praise, suggests that we are watching his reading of the epideictic oration of praise, a classical rhetorical form used on ceremonial occasions. Behind him is the poet who composed the verse he is performing. Opposite these two figures, separated by a window frame, are two figures whose critical stances corresponds to the rhetoric of blame. The sceptical man in a melancholic pose who holds a tankard and has a pipe in his hat, may be a critic. Behind him his comic counterpart, the jester, identified by his red Fool's cap with a cock's feather, addresses the viewer directly. Perry Chapman notes that his broad grin and raised finger, which seem to say 'watch out' or 'take notice', signify his dual function to provoke laughter and, at the same time, expose and rebuke human folly. This is portrayed as the common aims of both the comic theatre and the art of painting. In him too critics have recognized Steen's features (Chapman 1996: 178/9).

Galligan (1998: 147) has shown that Steen's theatrical mode of self-presentation in the role of a specific character, is related to the popular device of seventeenth-century genre artists to appear in their own works, mirrored in still-life objects. He relates both modes to the recurrent theme of *trompe l'oeil* in seventeenth-century aesthetic texts. He concludes that:

> by pushing mimesis a step beyond mere description, such paintings problematize the position of the beholder standing before them (Galligan 1998: 148).

It is as if the Steen characters in his paintings look into a mirror so as to register their own place or prospect, within each narrative, in the mode of first-person focalization. The Steen character thereby affirms to himself (and the subsequent beholder) that he is the author of the composite representation. In other words there is a conflation of the author, narrator, and a principal character in the painting, which finally implicates the beholder as an integral participant in the

construction of the text's meaning (Galligan 1998: 149). The fact that the surface of the picture is congruent with that of a mirror, makes spectators realize that they are implicated in judgements and pleasures. The picture surface becomes a mirror of folly. Their committed and interested stance in the interpretation of art is uncovered. It is in this embarrassingly intimate provocation that the ideological character of art is revealed, e.g., in the foregrounding of the gender of the spectator in the *Girl offering oysters*.

In Belting's terms Jan Steen is an artist who lived and worked during the 'Era of Art'. Yet it has been demonstrated that by means of various picaresque strategies Steen succeeds in interfering with the distance of contemplation between work of art and spectator. The oyster offering girl's direct sexual proposal to a male spectator, the fool's brandishing of phallic objects; the creation of an intimate and playful relationship with the spectator, shocking in its earthiness, contribute to generating closeness with the beholder and preventing a distanced appreciation of the isolated 'art object' of the museum age.

In a more ironic way Lichtenstein's *Him* (1964) (Figure 19), which has been referred to in another context,[32] also employs the metaphor of love and romantic seduction, in order to comment on the reception of modernist art.

There is said to have been a new surge in popular romance fiction in the fifties and sixties in America (cf. Thompson 1990: 308-312) and in *Him* the viewer looks uncritically and subjectively through the eyes of the romantic heroine and first-person narrator, gender-identified only by painted fingernails. The similarity between the romantic awe of this point of view, and the modernist veneration of autonomous museum art, is evident in the context of Pop art, and the viewer is made to feel uncomfortable in this cloying idealizing role. The realization that there are correspondences in techniques of communication in high art and

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[32] Chapter 7, section 3.

popular visual culture, deflates the pretension of elevating high art to a separate cultural sphere.

If Lichtenstein ironically and subtly reminds us that art cannot be separated from the ideological prejudices of everyday reality, Jana Sterbak's feminist picaresque *Flesh dress for an albino anorectic* (1987) (Figure 43) brings the repugnant and violent effects of gender ideologies permeating everyday aesthetic styling and art, to the fore by means of the grotesque association of chic design and the horror of decay.

The female spectator is duped into a closeness with this garment, that is immediately and ironically, even grotesquely, expunged by various picaresque means in order to bring gender ideologies to the surface. The fact that the dress hangs on a dress maker's hanger, *prêt-à-porter*, is an invitation to the female viewer to try on this feat in dress design. Indeed, Sterbak had it modelled by a professional female model.

However, the cusps cut into the 'seam' of the dress reminds of Fool's attire. The function of role playing for social entertainment by both Fools and females, is thereby suggested.

The cutting and sewing of meat in the making of the grisly dress, suggest the violence of social shaping. This fashionable design is sewn together from flank steaks. As a food type, steak is one of the most expensive meat cuts, associated with virility, strength and masculinity[33] and the use of this 'material' suggests the pains taken to enhance heterosexual attraction. This monstrous artistic design reveals how close to the body the effects of gender ideologies are in our everyday experiences.

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[33] As opposed to innards which is not only less expensive, but has a lower social status (Sahlins 1990: 94-101).

The closeness of female sexual seduction, monstrosity and death is made palpable and discernible in the decomposition and stench of dead flesh. In Mieke Bal's (1994: 379) "Dead flesh or the smell of painting" she refers to the

> Violation of clarity that comes with the opening of the body in slaughter, in sex, and in representation.

In the appropriation of the female associations of monstrosity and seduction, and in the disgust and horror generated by it, the idolatrous provocation of stereotypical images is made grotesquely evident. The significance of the female reproductive body as prototype of most definitions of the monstrous is discussed by Barbara Creed in *The monstrous-feminine* which is referred to later.[34]

I would like to argue that the marginalized and low mode picaresque tradition in art has continuously opposed the idealization and isolation of art in a separate sphere, where it became disempowered to affect everyday reality. In this aspiration, the deceptive lures of the Fool as metaphor for picaresque artistry, and of the spectator as dupe, has been exploited in various ways in order to bring attention to the negative pervasion of ideologies through both art and our intimate lives. Ideologically aware picaresque and picaresque feminist products of visual culture by Abigail Lane,[35] Barbara Kruger,[36] Cindy Sherman,[37] Hannah Wilke[38] and Jana Sterbak, have contributed, each in a different way, in perpetuating this awareness of the ability of art to affect our real lives.

In the above discussion aggregates of themes and motifs congealed – or were made to congeal – in order to outline a picaresque "character type", performing various functions in picaresque texts and epitomising picaresque artistry. In the next chapter attention will be focussed more closely on the motifs of bodily

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[34] Cf. chapter 10, section 4.
[35] Cf. chapter 7, section 3.
[36] Cf. chapter 7, section 2.
[37] Cf. chapter 7, section 1.
[38] Cf. chapter 8, section 1.

postures and gestures, related to and often focalized by this metaphoric "character" – the Fool.

CHAPTER 9: THE METAPHORIC POTENTIAL OF BODILY POSTURES

The appreciation of the importance of significant bodily postures and gestures in pictures is already evident in Roman rhetorical texts like Quintillian's (ca. 35-95) *Institutio oratoria:*

> Nor is it wonderful that gesture which depends on various forms of movement should have such power, when pictures, which are silent and motionless, penetrate into our innermost feelings with such power that at times they seem more eloquent than language itself (*Inst. orat.* XI, 3, 66) (Tatarkiewicz 1970: 302).

During the Renaissance the idea of painting as 'mute poetry' strengthened the emphasis on visual clues provided by the gestures and postures of the characters depicted in visual narratives. During this time the emancipation of the visual arts was proven with the aid of quotations from texts on poetics and rhetoric from classical antiquity, in which the liberal art of poetry was compared with painting. A climax in these quotations was that of *ut pictura poesis*, a passing remark by Horace in which he advised poets to take painting as their example in descriptions. The notion was elevated to a dogma and the inversion *ut poesis pictura* also accepted. Painting had never been regarded more than a craft during classical antiquity, and the new phenomenon of the acceptance of painting as a liberal art was paradoxically proven to be a revival, with the aid of texts from classical antiquity. For Leon Baptista Alberti (1404-1472), who applied Ciceronian rhetorical concepts to the art of painting:

> A painting moves the soul when the people represented on it show their emotions (*Della Pittura*, Lib II) (Tatarkiewicz III 1970: 98).

From Alberti onwards, the "nature" of art is as important as "nature" itself (Miedema 1973: 307, 308, 437, 438). Mimesis was originally a rhetorical term. The comparison between painting and poetry was based on the fact that both arts are imitative. The concept of *ars imitatur naturum* originally derived from

Aristotle and was applied to the visual arts when it began to aspire to a position among the liberal arts devising its own laws. The clever use of gestural language in a representation transmits a message not only because it derives from its 'precedents' or 'models', but owes an understanding of its significance, in some measure, to its presence in the living experience of everyone (Settis 1984: 202).

Gesture, posture and comportment became increasingly standardized in social behaviour during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe. Charles Lebrun's (1619-1690) *Méthode pour apprendre à dessiner les passions proposée dans une conférence sur l'expression générale et particuliére* (1698), emphasizing variation and richness of meaning in gestures and miming, is a well-known example pertaining to the visual arts (Larsson 1990: 186). Constants and conventions in the significance of gestures are also discernable from the perspective of rhetoric, since the *actio* or action is always regarded within the larger rhetorical context. The *actio* or *pronuntiatio* is that function that pertains to the performance of the orator, comprising the use of voice, facial expression, posture and gesture.[1] The early modern interest in the rhetorics of the vernacular and the marketplace, is paralleled with a new regard for *naer 't leven* studies of everyday life.

During the twentieth century, the era of mass visual communication, self-presentation, appearance, gesture and the careful staging of public and corporate images have gained in importance. Through the mass media, visual communication has increased to such an extent that non-verbal and verbal communication has become equally important. In this century the eloquence of bodily postures and gestures has received attention especially in the disciplines of psychology, semiotics, sociology and communication studies, compensating for the void that arose with the decline of the study of rhetoric since the late nineteenth century (Kapp 1990: 7). Erving Goffman introduced non-verbal

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[1] The functions are: *inventio* (invention), *dispositio* (the ordering, structuring of arguments), *elocutio* (style, choice of words, diction), *memoria* (memorising with the aid of spaces and visualization), and *pronuntiatio* or *actio* (performance).

communication as a research topic in the field of sociology, and from an ideology-critical perspective, such recent writers as Robert Bellah (1985), and Erich Fromm (1979), as well as Michel Foucault have investigated the bodily effects of ideology.

Johann Visagie (1994b: 235) argues for a separate, practice-oriented hermeneutics of the "visually present material sub-structure of ordinary life, in its most mundane and profane aspects". The subject of such a hermeneutics would be:

> a social practice, a cultural mechanism, a form of power that would be extremely close to our skin, as it were; not esoteric and noble, but somewhat banal in its earthly and fleshly singularities (Visagie 1994b: 231).

Visagie calls the interpretation of such everyday actions and objects 'delta-hermeneutics', to refer to 'd' for *doxa*. All people need to experience some measure of glory or *doxa* in their lives. *Doxa* refers to that human drive to be recognized in society. The power of *doxa* manifests itself in self-presentation[2] and social role-playing; in appearances, bodily postures and gestures created in a society in which constellations of values and images are 'packaged' as guiding images. The human motivation to acquire recognition results in lifelong transactions with such 'charisma packages'. A wide range of embodied, 'postured' expressions of the power of *doxa* is possible. For Visagie the three most prominent ideologically driven images, commanded by *doxa*, in contemporary society are the images of the commanding and aggressive executive, the affectionate and attentive therapist and the critically detached intellectual radical. There are resemblances between his distinctions and those made by Robert Bellah *et al.* in *Habits of the heart* (1985). Visagie's emphasis on the 'acquisition' of recognition moreover, reminds of Erich Fromm's *The acquisitive society* (1979) (cf. Visagie 1994: 233, 237). However, to Visagie (1994b: 237) it is obvious that ideologized bodies are:

subjugated by a terrifying power that is inhuman even while being created in the very image of humanity.

In this study[3] visual representations of bodily stances, gestures and postures are read, with the aid of tried and tested art historical strategies, to be expressive of – or embodiments of – underlying directive frameworks. I thus interpret the recurrence and re-adaptations in visual cultural representations of such pathos formulae, sometimes spanning centuries (as observed by Warburg),[4] to reveal the tension of the demonized powers of ideology and the opposing powers of redemption.[5] A presupposition of this study is that all art and visual culture is somehow touched by ideology. This alerts to the recurring idolatrous provocation provided by all visual representations, which perform a guiding and sustaining function with regard to various domineering cultural values. The focus on the representation of bodily postures and stances in all types of visual culture, including advertisements for the mass communication media, as well as so-called 'high art',[6] draws attention to the pervasion of ideologies through 'high culture' to the most banal and everyday contexts. In chapter 12 the bodily posture of a female model in a 1987 *Maidenform* advertisement is scrutinized for its ideological import, in comparison with similar postures in 'high art' works. The advertisement is a visualization of the values of the 'pastoral havens'[7] of personal happiness and consumerism in the most intimate lives of its potential magazine reading spectators.

If the representation of gestures and postures are deemed to be expressive of underlying and enduring directive frameworks, some typiconic order or pattern should be discernable in their variously focalized representations. Johann

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[2] Cf. references to Goffman (1976) in chapter 12.
[3] Culminating in the analysis around a crucial motif of foolish bodily posture in chapter 12.
[4] Cf. chapter 1 (Introduction) and the final chapter 12.
[5] Cf. e.g. the discussion of the fallen postures of figures by Sherman and Brueghel in chapter 7, section 7.1.
[6] Cf. chapter 6, section 2, and the ideology critical analyses in chapter 12.

Visagie's (1990) proposition of 'root metaphors' in a sub-theory of his theory of 'Discourse Archeology',[8] is a useful aid in scrutinizing representations of human actions for their typiconic significance.

Visagie sees 'root metaphors' as thematic centres around which many other metaphors are clustered, and which involve some basic human actions, like playing, fighting, travelling, serving and loving, to which I add eating, each involving a variety of bodily postures and gestures. Such key metaphors reveal themselves in texts of various kinds. Furthermore, they not only embody and incite human behaviour to a great extent, in the sense that Lakoff & Johnson (1980) and Johnson (1987) have argued, but also are expressive of dynamic knowledge and belief systems. It may be conjectured that in texts they are often affiliated in patterns[9] which divulge much about the underlying ideological pressures of various directive imaginative frameworks.

It may prove to be a very fruitful enterprise to discover how various basic actions and bodily postures represented as visual 'motifs', become directive imaginary 'motives' in the history of their representation, unfolding a spectrum of metaphorical meanings to which traditional directive imaginative frameworks or 'typiconic traditions' are linked in their own characteristic ways.[10] I believe that a contribution can be made to the explication of the various traditions distinguished by Seerveld, by focussing on variously focalized representations of bodily postures, gestures and facial expressions clustering around 'root metaphoric' human actions, through which ideologies are filtered. In this way it can be demonstrated how the effects of ideology diffuse through all human dimensions of being, negating dualistic disconnections of the spiritual, the intellectual and the physical. Such a concentration on the visual and palpable traces of directive

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[7] For Visagie 'pastoral havens' are imaginary realms of escape in which meaning in the very intimate spheres of life is sought. Cf. chapter 1, section 2. (Visagie 1996b: 75).

[8] Of which his 'Ideological Topography of Modernity' is another sub-theory, and by means of which the "origins, basic conditions and deep structures" (Visagie 1998: 1) of discourse can be investigated. Cf. chapter 1.

[9] In 'habituated' patterns, to use a term of Seerveld.

traditions also focuses the attention on socially situated artworks and products of visual culture, rather than on the worldviews of their artists or producers.[11]

It might be conjectured that each 'typiconic tradition' favours a specific root metaphor or cluster of metaphors, and that other root metaphors are often presented from the vantage point of the postures, gestures and facial expressions accompanying this metaphoric action. In the heroic tradition, e.g., in which combat is favoured, epic rebellion, agonistic struggle and tragic conflict are pervasive, even when such actions as loving or giving birth are the motifs of representation. In the picaresque tradition, on the other hand, representations of battles, fights, combat and disputations are mostly made into a mockery in a playful manner. However, although playing is the preferred root metaphor in the picaresque tradition, a breadth of interest is peculiar to this directive framework. The motifs, *topoi*, and themes most often recurring in the picaresque tradition, as it has been distinguished in research on the picaresque novel,[12] seem to be clustered around a whole spectrum of root metaphors. It seems to be a result of the ideology-alert concern within this tradition, to reveal idolized values not only in human actions and social practices, but also in thought and art. It is understandable that history painting and narrative genre painting, in which such significant human actions are traditionally explored, are favourite butts of parodic adaptation in the picaresque tradition.

In the picaresque tradition the indispensable function of corporeal experience in full-bodied human cognition is a favourite theme. The ability of visual images to move and mobilize an audience is often related, in this tradition, to the corporeal appeal of representations of gestures, stances and bodily postures.[13] Picaresque visual representations often draw attention to the bodily arousal or commitment of its audience and I have stressed, with reference to Warburg and Freedberg,

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[10] Cf. in this regard Dirk van den Berg's 'A rhetorical typology of traditions of visual power' (1996).
[11] Cf. chapter 6, section 6.2.
[12] For a summary see Arndt 1978.
[13] Cf. chapter 7, section 7.3.

and to first-person focalization,[14] that it is exactly in such embarrassingly 'primitive' modes of art reception that the ideological disposition of visual images is most palpably revealed.

An ingenious picaresque example of the power of gestures is found in Rabelais's second book of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (1532). The eloquence and effect of gestures and bodily postures is most ludicrously suggested in a low mode gestural debate between two famous scholars, parodying the Renaissance tradition of erudition at the Sorbonne.

It is told how an English scholar Thaumast voyaged to Paris "with an intent only to see him [Pantagruel], to try thereby, and prove whether his knowledge in effect was so great as it was reported to be" (Rabelais 1934: 247), and to dispute with him in public on certain philosophical passages about which he was unsure. At first sight Thaumast was shocked and struck with fear:

> seeing him [Pantagruel] so great and so tall ... and said unto him, Very true it is, (saith Plato the Prince of Philosophers,) that if the image and knowledge of wisdom were corporeal and visible to the eyes of mortals, it would stirre up all the world to admire her (Rabelais 1934: 247).

Thaumast then insisted on debating by means of bodily gestures rather than in Sophistic dialectical terms:

> But see in what manner, I mean that we shall dispute: I will not argue pro & contra, as do the sottish Sophisters of this town, and other places: likewise I will not dispute after the manner of the Academicks by declamation: nor yet by numbers, as Pythagoras was wont to do, and as Picus de la Mirandula did of late at Rome: but I will dispute by signes only without speaking, for the matters are so abstruse, hard and arduous, that words proceeding from the mouth of man, will never be sufficient for unfolding of them to my liking (Rabelais 1934: 249).

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[14] Cf. chapter 1, section 1.1 and chapter 7, section 7.3.

In preparation "Pantagruel stretched his wits as high as he could, entring into very deep and serious meditations, and did nothing all that night but dote upon, and turn over the book of ..." [and a list of scholarly texts since Antiquity follows] (Rabelais 1934: 250). Panurge, his butler, when he saw his master in such distress, offered to go into debate with Thaumast. In preparation, in contrast, "Panurge spent the night with tipling amongst the Pages, and played away all the points of his breeches at primus secundus, and at peck point, in French called Lavargette", having assured Pantagruel that "to morrow I will make this vain-glorious Englishman to skite vinegar before all the world" (Rabelais 1934: 251). In readiness "Panurge had set at the end of his long Codpiece a pretty tuft of red silk, as also of white, green and blew, and within it had put a faire orange" (Rabelais 1934: 252). One of his most persuasive and decisive responses in the long gestural debate which is verbally narrated in minute detail was when he "took his long Codpiece, and shook it as hard as he could against his thighs" (Rabelais 1934: 256).

Thaumast was not only satisfied with the result of the debate, he was also filled with admiration for Pantagruel, the "incomparable treasure":

> You have seen how his [Pantagruel's] disciple only hath satisfied me, and hath told me more than I asked of him: besides, he hath opened unto me, and resolved other inestimable doubts, wherein I can assure you he hath to me discovered the very true Well, Fountain, and Abysse of the Encyclopedia of learning (Rabelais 1934: 257).

Rabelais drives his point home by describing Thaumast's eagerness to verbally transcribe the whole debate and to have it printed:

> But in fine, I will reduce into writing that which we have said and concluded, that the world may not take them to be fooleries, and will thereafter cause them to be printed, that every one may learne as I have done (Rabelais 1934: 257).

In this passage from Rabelais the "highest" ("stretched his wits as high as he could" (Rabelais 1943: 250)) knowledge of the mind is communicated by means of the lowest body language ("took his long Codpiece, and shook it as hard as he could against his thighs" (Rabelais 1934: 256)). A mentally taxing disputation, becomes a gestural altercation between fools, whose audience is duped. Academic and philosophical knowledge which is often associated with dignified contemplation and the gaze of reason, is conveyed by means of erotic bodily antics or foolish trickery. Arousal and action is contrasted with contemplation and thought. The erotic and grotesque lower body of the Fool, inviting an interested response, is pitted against the aloofness of academic reason. It is through the deceptive lures of fools' low mode gestures that attention is focussed on the ideological prioritization of Reason above bodily drives and senses.

In the following sections bodily postures and gestures are grouped around the transgressive character of the Fool. I do not intend to go into detailed discussion, but rather to give an inkling of the results of the systematization of picaresque themes around ranges of metaphoric actions, focalized from a playfully subversive picaresque perspective. This serves to give more substance to the discussion in chapter 12, in which a playful fool's posture of protruded buttocks is the crucial motif around which an ideology-critical visual analysis is articulated.

9.1 Playing

The Fool is known to communicate most effectively through ambiguous bodily postures and gestures. The picaresque tradition favours metaphors of play, and it is in this connection that the Fool is seen to be metaphoric of picaresque artistry. There are various layers and nuances of meaning that are implicit in the foolish ribaldry of the lower body and its representations, when such basic human actions as fighting, travelling, loving, serving, giving birth and eating are portrayed in playfully subversive contexts. Carnivalesque episodes and masquerade scenes in eighteenth century English novels have been identified in

literary criticism as narrative contexts or sites of reversal which characteristically leave in their wake a world upside down (Castle 1984: 903-916).

The favourite motifs related to such foolery which recur in picaresque and in picaresque feminist art are associated with actions, figures and sites of reversal like trickery, the *ingenu*, (when a character or the audience is cast as the butt of irony), carnival, jokes, wildness, hysteria (in the sense of excessive ecstasy), insanity, madness (going over the top), monstrosity (characters presented as grotesques or caricatures), (humorous forms of the) grotesque, hyperbole, eruption, irony, humour, subversion, childishness, variety, prodigality, mimicry, charade, role-playing.

9.2 Eating

I add this "lower" activity of succumbing to the desires of the flesh, to Visagie's list of root metaphors. It has been noted earlier[15] that the depiction of bodily desires, needs and processes in the playfully subversive context of carnival, is vital to transgressive art and *écriture corporelle*.

Examples that immediately spring to mind are the *picaro's* basic bodily drive for food, Bruegel's culinary imagery often associated with voracious gluttony, hunger and emaciation, and Gargantuan appetites, often associated with rabid consumerism, as in the work of Barbara Kruger. The problematics of 'birth and origins' (Suleiman 1990: 129) and hunger (Yaeger 1988) are seen to be recurrent in transgressive feminist literature. The *topos* of hunger, and the description in extraordinary terms of the rare circumstances surrounding the birth and origins of the picaro has been evidenced as characteristic of picaresque novels (Wicks 1974: 246). The act of stealing, in compensation for neglected bodily needs and desires is a well-known *topos* in picaresque literature and the *picaro's*

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[15] Chapter 3, section 3.8.

association with the god Hermes, the god of merchants and thieves, is explained in this way (cf. Arndt 1978, Frohock 1967: 50).

The feminist Hélèn Cixous's (1991: 335) explanation of her situation is telling:

> I found myself in the classic situation of women who, at one time or another, feel that it is not they who have produced culture [...] Culture was there, but it was a barrier forbidding me to enter, whereas of course, from the depths of my body, I had a desire for the objects of culture. I therefore found myself obliged to steal them [...] So that in a sense [culture] is always there [in my work], but there in a displaced, diverted, reversed way. I have always used it in a totally ironic way.

Barbara Kruger similarly describes the female experience of women in the 'marketplace' as comparable to that of the picaro: "we loiter outside trade and speech and are obliged to steal language" (Isaac 1996: 40).

Subversive and parodic art often flagrantly and promiscuously copies from divers sources.[16] Bertolt Brecht, when accused of plagiarism, thus berated himself for being only a petty thief when what he really aspired to was to be a great criminal like Shakespeare (Isaak 1996: 61).

9.3 Fighting

The heroic and self-aggrandizing aspects of idealized competition and conflict is often comically deflated in mock-heroic picaresque contexts.

In the academic tradition the narrative genre of history painting depicts "the significant actions of great men" according to the directive Aristotelian definition. This more often than not entails subjects of war and fighting. Lichtenstein's fragmentary comic adventures produced in a media-filled world, can be said to be in the same transgressive tradition as William Hogarth's (aptly named) 'comic

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[16] In a feminist context Dottie Attie and Sherrie Levin are examples.

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histories'. Hogarth had inverted the hierarchy of the genres by producing history paintings which represent comic actions and low life scenes; narrative 'progresses' which in fact represented not grand quests, but social and human degeneration. Hogarth experienced the inception of industrialization in eighteenth-century England just as Lichtenstein could still experience the effects of nineteenth-century American industrialization during its global expansion in the postwar decades. Although separated by two centuries of development and social modernization, they seem to share certain views in their responses to the changing social conditions of modernization. Heroic idealization of human progress, struggle and strife is deflated by both artists. Hogarth and Lichtenstein succeed in wittily inverting the grand historical beliefs of ideological meta-narratives through seemingly insignificant and trivial everyday events and objects from popular culture.

The following list gives an inkling of the popularity of parodies of the theme of fighting in the picaresque tradition: Brueghel's *Fight of the blind* (1569) (Figure 11) and *The battle of carnival and lent* (1559), Hogarth's *The battle of the pictures* (1745), Daumier's interest in Don Quixote's clashes with windmills, Lichtenstein's *As I opened fire...* (1964) (Figure 88), Barbara Kruger's *Busy going crazy* (1989), the violence and mayhem of the *lazzi* repertoire in the *commedia dell'arte* tradition, like Laurel and Hardy's savage encounters with objects in *Two tars* and *The finishing touch* (Madden 1975: 68), and *Little Big Man's* recountings of Custer's Last Stand.

9.4 Travelling

In the picaresque tradition there is an affinity for the socially marginalized wanderer. Travelling, pilgrimage or tourism forms the basic structure of the episodic picaresque novel in which the lowly *picaro/picara* experiences a broad range of levels and stations in life (cf. Wicks 1974: 243, 244). The *topos* of wisdom attained through the journey of life is inverted in his/her persistence of

folly as in Hogarth's 'progresses' discussed by Ronald Paulson (1976) in his 'Life as journey and as theater: Two narrative eighteenth-century narrative structures'.

In a feminist context the theme of the pioneering travels and explorations of 'great men' is subverted. Thus Kathy Prendergast explores "the interconnectedness of the activities of exploration and map-making, the desire to scrutunize, inscribe, and control the female body and the colonial control of other lands through mapping and naming" in *Enclosed worlds and open spaces* (1983), and *To alter a landscape* (1983) (Isaak 1996: 167).

9.5 Serving

Sympathy with and good-natured mockery of the lowly figure of the underdog is a typically picaresque trait. The *topos* of the master/servant relationship is common in picaresque novels since *Lazzarillo* (Paulson 1967a, Wicks 1974: 247). Sancho Panza is an archtypical servant figure in the picaresque tradition. The exemplar of this role of subordination, is the farcical *commedia dell'arte* character Gilles or Pierrot, the fearful, coarse and stupid valet, who was generally pushed around and unsuccessful in everything he undertook. Daumier often depicts the pathetic Gilles in his unenviable role of attracting spectators for shows during the advertising sessions of the *parades* (cf. Haskell 1987: 117-128). Charlie Chaplin perpetuates this tradition e.g. when he gets his ears continually boxed as a circus employee in *The Circus*.

9.6 Loving

The parody of societal norms concerning love and romance is a common occurrence in the picaresque tradition. Recent examples are Jeff Koons's portrayals of his 'wife', the soft porn actress Cicciolina's orgasmic ecstasy in his *Made in heaven* (1989) (Figure 122), Cindy Sherman's *Centrefold* photographs[17]

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[17] Discussed in chapter 7, section 1.

(Figure 12), and David Salle's provocative nudes-and-voyeur in *Symphony concertante*[18] (Figure 24). Earlier examples are Hogarth's progresses[19] (Figures 46,49), Steen's *Girl offering oysters*[20] (Figure 41), and Lichtenstein's *Him*[21] (Figure 20).

Having given a brief overview of the types of metaphoric bodily postures and gestures that are related to the playfully subversive nature of the Fool, it might be investigated what metaphors of actions and events divulge about underlying picaresque orientations in narrative contexts.

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[18] Cf. chapters 9 and 12.
[19] Cf. chapter 10, section 1.
[20] Cf. chapter 8, section 2.
[21] Cf. chapter 7, section 3, and chapter 10, section 3.

CHAPTER 10: NARRATIVE EMPLOTMENT METAPHORS

I coin the term 'emplotment metaphor' in resonance with Ricoeur's definitions of metaphor, emplotment, narrative and interpretation. Mimesis or interpretation for Ricoeur is a threefold process, consisting of action ("pre-figuration"), emplotment ("figuration") and reading ("re-figuration") (Ricoeur 1984: 53).

As far as action, the first stage in the process of threefold mimesis, is concerned, a significant contribution of Ricoeur's theory is that the structure, temporal nature and readability (symbolic dimension) of human actions are stressed, denying its chaotic nature and meaninglessness. By contrast, in most narratological theories, the "dissonance of our temporal experience" is often juxtaposed to the "simple triumph of 'order'" of the plot (Ricoeur 1984: 73). On the other hand, in post-modern texts a lack of narrative order is often held to replicate the chaos of experience: "Today it is said that only a novel without a plot or characters or any discernible temporal organization is more genuinely faithful to experience, which is itself fragmented and inconsistent" (Ricoeur 1985: 13). Ricoeur argues for the continuity between narrative and everyday reality. Narrative in this sense is not an aesthetic invention with which artists control, manipulate or order their experience (cf. Carr 1985, 1986).

The third stage in the process of threefold mimesis is reading, and corresponds to what Hans-Georg Gadamer, in his philosophical hermeneutics, calls 'application' (Ricoeur 1984: 70). Mimesis-3 "marks the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the hearer or reader"; the intersection, therefore, of the fictional world configured by the text, and the world of real actions (Ricoeur 1984: 71). The written work is a sketch for reading and the reader completes the work, consisting of "holes, lacunae, zones of indetermination", which challenge the reader's capacity to re-configure meanings (Ricoeur 1984: 77).

The following definitions of metaphor and narrative inspired the idea of 'emplotment metaphors'. Ricoeur (1984: ix) shows that:

> Although metaphor has traditionally belonged to the theory of 'tropes' (or figures of discourse) and narrative to the theory of literary 'genres', the meaning-effects produced by each of them belong to the same basic phenomenon of semantic innovation. In both cases this innovation is produced entirely on the level of acts of language equal to or greater than the sentence.

When reading a visual or literary narrative text "the mimetic function of the plot rejoins metaphorical reference" (Ricoeur 1984: xi). Ricoeur is here referring to the connection between the power of metaphors within a narrative, and the emplotment (dynamic structure or process of the plot) of a narrative whole.[1] He explains this connection in an earlier text:

> The explication of metaphor as a local event in the text contributes to the interpretation itself of the work as a whole. We could even say that, if the interpretation of the local metaphors is enlightened by the interpretation of the text as a whole and by the disentanglement of the kind of world it projects, then the interpretation of the poem as a whole is controlled, reciprocally, by the explication of metaphor as a local phenomenon (Ricoeur 1978: 148).

My term 'emplotment metaphor' aims at describing that metaphor or that cluster of metaphors in a specific text, by means of which the nature of the emplotment (the dynamic narrative plot structure) of that text can be characterized. In concurrence with Ricoeur's idea in the above quotation, this emplotment metaphor usually is in consonance with the 'local metaphors' in the text, as well as with 'the kind of world the narrative projects'. This world, in my terms, is the imaginary world of a typiconic tradition, divulging its peculiar cluster of ideological

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[1] Ricoeur (1984: 80, 81) augments Francois Dagognet's concept of 'iconic augmentation' to "every mode of iconicity, that is, to what we are here calling fiction", and he uses Eugen Fink's concept of *Bild* (Fink compares *Bild* with "a 'window' whose narrow opening looks out into the immensity of a countryside"). Gadamer's concept of *Bild* ("the power of bringing about an increase in being in our vision of the world which is impoverished by everyday affairs") is also

blindspots and idolatries of values, through its metaphors. It means that one should be able to identify peculiarly picaresque emplotment metaphors in playfully subversive picaresque texts. In visual culture, such emplotment metaphors often manifest as basic metaphors linking groups of works.

I shall endeavour to characterize four such options by discussing some narrative works in the oeuvres of Hogarth, Lichtenstein, Kentridge, and of some feminist artists, in which classical plot structures are undermined. In the first section on Hogarth's narrative 'progresses', the subversion of the classical linear emplotment metaphor with its concomitant ideals of progress, and its consummate development from inception and climax, to denouement, is shown to be opposed by means of an episodic plot structure favouring variety and playful pursuit. In the next section on Lichtenstein's narrative art, proof is found for his predilection for mechanical emplotment metaphors which ironically subvert the colonial idealization of industrial progress and technological advancement. In the video production by William Kentridge, continuous interruptions starting new directions, and the thwarting of completion and our expectations, reveal a basic emplotment metaphor of organic growth, suggesting metamorphoses, fertility and bounty. In the final section, as in the final sections of more or less each chapter or section, the object of discussion is feminist art. The recurrent use of the emplotment metaphor of monstrosity in much feminist art, subverting wholeness, ease and elegance of emplotment, is discussed. Once more the advantages of viewing feminist art as part of a broader picaresque tradition, is considered.

In the progress of this chapter a few stages in the history of narrativity is covered. Hogarth's narratives are shorter subversions of larger romance plot structures of heroic quests. Lichtenstein's comic book works are more fragmentary extracts in which narrative closure increasingly fails. The suggestion of the abbreviation of narrative sequences is explored even further in Kentridge's method of erasure in

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applied in this comparison by Ricoeur (1984: 80, 81) of the emplotment of a fictive work, with the power of metaphor.

his sketched narratives in the video medium. In the feminist art production of the later twentieth century, successive phases in the working careers of such artists as Cindy Sherman[2] and Barbara Kruger[3] have been discerned, in which they incessantly explore various possibilities of and approaches to specific themes. In this way disparate images are linked in their oeuvres in a narrative way, although there are no specific or intended narrative connections between them.

Accordingly, my discussions in each section will become increasingly abbreviated. The section on Hogarth in which the parameters for discussion are set, is the most minute and elaborate.

10.1 Playful pursuit

Hogarth's pictorial narratives are often compared to the pages of a book.[4] Paulson (1975: 44) writes:

> For the Hogarthian progress was structured by the linearity of prose narratives as they appear on the printed page ... Hogarth and his readers naturally read as they wrote, from left to right; and he arranged his prints for the left-to-right movement of the eye on a printed page — in each print as well as in the set of six or eight.

Hogarth's interest in the comparison of the power of words and pictures is often read negatively as his tacit recognition of the greater eloquence of words. His option for the serial organization of pictures is regarded as a concession to linear succession which is believed to be characteristic of literary narrativity. Referring to Hogarth's *Self-portrait with a pug* in the Tate Gallery (Figure 44), Paulson (1982: 4) comes to the following conclusion:

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[2] Cf. Krauss 1993.
[3] Cf. Linker 1990.
[4] On the relationship of words and images in Hogarth's oeuvre, cf. Wittkower 1977b, Kroeber & Walling 1978 and Silver 1983.

Hogarth supports his palette on a pile of books, the works of Shakespeare, Milton and Swift, and we know he read more deeply in Shakespeare than he studied the works of the old masters ... The word and the concept were privileged in various ways over the image in the act of painting.

I would like to argue, however, that Hogarth in both his etchings and paintings contributed to the emancipation of typical pictorial narrativity from verbal domination, and that his ability to make this contribution was promoted by his picaresque inclinations.

It is a common modernist misconception that the advent of vanishing-point perspective restricted the visual arts to an adherence to the unities of time and space in the representation of action. The following exposition by Wendy Steiner (1988: 23) is an example:

it is ironic that the institutionalization of pictorial realism in the Renaissance made pictorial narrative as we have defined it an impossibility. In painting with vanishing-point perspective and chiaroscuro, the assumption is that we are observing a scene through a frame from a fixed vantage point at one moment in time. Nothing could be more foreign to Renaissance realism than the juxtaposing of temporally distinct events within a single visual field, as is commonly found in ancient and medieval art. Thus, though narrative was inextricably connected with realism, paradoxically the strict adherence to the norms of Renaissance realism precluded narrativity from the visual arts.

Steiner anachronistically applies the neo-classicist aesthetics of Lessing to the art of the Renaissance. In his *Laocoön* (1766) Lessing categorized the visual arts as 'spatial' and the literary arts as 'temporal', thereby promoting the neo-classical idea of growing autonomy of the distinct art media. But temporality was considered by Lessing as "a linear succession of instants" (Ricoeur 1981a: 180). Lessing's metaphysical definition of time and of the various art media disqualified succession as a valid instrument of pictorial narrativity (cf Schnakertz 1980).

Paul Ricoeur, however, has broadened the ideas of time and narrative in our century, to express his "deeper experience of time". His expansion of the theory of narrativity to include visual texts as well as social and imaginative actions, can be usefully employed to re-evaluate pictorial devices of narrative wholeness. He defines 'plot' as "the intelligible whole that governs a succession of events in any story", and describes the function of plot as "eliciting a pattern from a succession". These definitions can aid us in recovering something of the narrative richness implicit in the early modern idea of composition and vanishing-point perspective (cf. Warncke 1987) which is lost in the reductive specialization of modernist theories of autonomous art. It bears repetition that Alberti required in his *De Pictura* that:

> Everything the people in the painting do among themselves, or perform in relation to the spectators, must fit together to represent and explain the *historia* (Grayson 1972: 83).

If we shift our perspective in this way to consider the unifying strategies employed by William Hogarth in his narrative series, we realize that it is not merely an order of 'progress' or succession, like the deciphering of the letters in script, or the turning of the pages of a book, that connects the various episodes in his stories, nor is it 'one moment in time' that is depicted in each plate in a series. It is my thesis that at a crucial time for the modern emancipation of the visual arts, Hogarth exploited compositional devices of narrative wholeness that are often regarded as archaic and simplistic, but which contributed to the establishment of a modern, characteristically pictorial narrativity.

In the research on Hogarth his love of allegorical allusions and his predilection for narrative have always been regarded uncomfortably as oppositions:

In his article on *The Harlot's Progress* (Figure 45) Michael Godby (1987: 29-32) thus comes to the conclusion that having started with what is now plate 3 (Figure 46) of the series, Hogarth gradually changed his mind and produced a narrative:

The decision to extend this single painting into the series was effected by Hogarth's move from an obviously emblematic structure to a more simple narrative method.

Godby stresses the emblematic quality of the plate and realizes that the harlot's pose is suggestive of Ripa's emblem of *Temperance* (Figure 47).

I would like to suggest that Hogarth discovered in this first of his known picture cycles, the very narrative potential of the emblem – an idea that he developed into complex pictorial story-telling in his apparently simple series *Industry and Idleness* (1747) (Figure 48).

Industry and Idleness is renowned for having left many researchers perplexed at its transparency. Sean Shesgreen (1976) summarizes these "commonplaces of disfavour and neglect". However, in his reassessment Shesgreen (1976: 589), stressing the social topicality and the documentary quality of the work,[5] still struggles to overcome the opposition of 'didactic allegory' and 'narrative realism'.[6] He comes to the conclusion that:

> Hogarth's powers of observation were keen, discriminating, and thorough, and his complementary method as an engraver transcended the narrowly propagandistic and didactic.

However, I would now like to consider some mental configurations that Hogarth suggested pictorially, in order to invite his spectators to read *Industry and Idleness* as a narrative whole. Hogarth's *The Analysis of Beauty* provides clues on this.

Hogarth's serpentine line,[7] the central concept in *The Analysis of Beauty* (see Figure 49), is often interpreted in a restrictively formalistic manner as a perfect example of the Rococo predilection for shell-like forms. However, finding

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[5] Cf. De Villiers Human 1991.
[6] Cf. Antal 1952, Arndt 1972, Schuster 1975, Wittkower 1977, Herding 1989b.

examples of serpentine forms in his work has often caused embarrassment. Even Meltzoff (1978: 574), with his semiotic bias, writes:

> For all the delights of his work, [Hogarth] was never able to draw a whole figure containing his line of beauty in its pose in such a way as to make it beautiful.

It is evident, however, from a closer look at the relevant verbal and pictorial arguments in *The Analysis of Beauty*, that Hogarth had much more in mind with his serpentine line.

Plate II of *The Analysis of Beauty* (Figure 50) depicts a dance hall teeming with life in the central scene. This is framed by analytic diagrams, each in turn being framed and numbered. The order of the numbers are random in the picture, but organized according to the verbal sequence of arguments, thereby graphically stressing the contrast between the respective processes of reading verbal an visual texts.

Hogarth explains figure 71 (Figure 51) in the top left corner of the plate with reference to the movements of the dancing figures in the central scene in such a way, that it is required of the reader-viewer to virtually enlarge the strange hieroglyphics in figure 71, and mount it over the central scene like a mask (Figure 52).

Hogarth (1969: 151) comes to the conclusion that this reading of the movements of each figure alone as if suspended at "one moment in time", produces a picture that is "somewhat unnatural and ridiculous".

In contrast, the choreographic figure 123 (Figure 51) depicts the floor route of this elegant country dance. He describes this "figure of the dance" like this (Hogarth 1969: 151):

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[7] Cf. Dieckmann 1974, Dobai 1975 and Podro 1981.

the figure of it altogether, is a cypher of S's, or a number of serpentine lines interlacing, or intervolving each other, which suppose traced on the floor, the lines would appear as fig 123, top plate 2.

It is evident that the serpentine line is not meant to represent visible grace directly, but rather it is intended as a schematizing (in Ricoeur's sense of the term) or imaginary organizing device. Hogarth explicitly stresses that this configuration of narrative meaning is generated with the imaginative co-operation of the reading spectator (Hogarth 1969: 29):

and therefore all [the serpentine line's] variety cannot be expressed on paper by one continued line, without assistance of the imagination, or the help of a figure.

From *The Analysis of Beauty* we have taken the cue that to Hogarth a compositional system of serpentine lines, like the system of vanishing point perspective, is not a mere harmonic arrangement of parts, but rather a pictorial system of narrative organization that elicits the re-configurative participation of the reading spectator. Hogarth's predilection to focus on the audience in many of his works, like *Scholars at a lecture* (Figure 53) and *The laughing audience* (Figure 54),[8] might also reflect his reliance on the creative response of beholders.

In similar fashion, eighteenth-century English novelists often used visual aids to draw attention to the reading process of the novel. Sterne and Richardson use typographics like asterisks (Figure 55) to suggest ellipses and hermeneutic voids, little hands (Figure 56) to draw attention to telling detail, and explicit cross-references by means of footnotes. Sterne's novel *Tristram Shandy* is also renowned for its blank and marbled pages, and even various Hogarthian 'figures of the narrative' (Figure 57). Novelists went to these lengths to remind us that we

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[8] See my article, De Villiers Human 1991.

are not reading for the script on a page, or the pages of a book, but are obliged to make imaginary connections in the thread of the story.

We can now consider his series *Industry and Idleness* (Figure 48) as a narrative configuration. Modernist readers of narrative series normally concentrate on the inner structure of each single picture in a series. Although Hogarth is one of the first artists with whom the narrative cycle attained the status of an autonomous work of art, each scene resembling the Albertian open window, he seems to invite the spectator of *Industry and Idleness* (cf. e.g. Figure 61) to consider the cycle as a pictorial whole by illusionistically surrounding each plate in a wall-like frame, detailing bricks, *cartouches* and volutes to make it seem part of a building. This use of the architectonic frame as a narrative device of wholeness serves to remind us of the non-autonomous role played by the narrative cycle in medieval and early modern architectural windows, frescoes, friezes or tapestries. On the other hand, it is reminiscent of fashionable early modern title page designs, depicting an entrance to a building in order to suggest that the text is entered like a building.

Wolfgang Kemp (1987) demonstrated – *contra* Bryson (1983) – that the formal constraints that Gothic architecture had imposed on visual expositions of verbal narrative in stained glass windows, were exploited as an effective means of emancipating pictorial narrative from verbal domination. Hogarth exploits imaginary constellations or emplotment metaphors as peculiarly pictorial narrative devices, during a crucial period for the emancipation of the visual arts.

If, in a progressively picaresque vein, we were to transpose in diagrammatic form the Hogarthian 'figures of the narrative' or reading patterns generated by our various readings of *Industry and Idleness*, it could look like the diagram in Figure 58. The first diagram schematizes a reading of the narrative as linear sequence. The second diagram reveals a reading with insight into the fact that two lives are being narrated, in contrast to each other, retarding the flow of the so-called

'progress' by repeated comparisons. The rhythmical portrayal of the lives of the protagonists, with equal time spans dividing the episodes in their lives, conveys that in the act of telling, a plot scheme is superimposed on narrated events. The design of the whole emphasizes the artificiality of the act of narration and intimates the active interpretative role of the reader of parables and of eighteenth century novels.

The third diagram (Figure 59) indicates that plate 8 (Figure 61) is not contrasted with a scene in the life of 'Idleness'. Diagram 4 (Figure 59) schematizes a reading pattern which recognizes that the chronological sequence of events are jumbled from plate 8 onwards.

The final 'figure of the narrative' (Figure 60) summarizes all this information in a picaresque manner, and reveals a telling twist in the tale!

Having concluded that all readings lead to and from plate 8, we can now focus on plate 8 (Figure 61) with its caption "The industrious 'prentice grown rich and sheriff of London". This plate had already distinguished itself in our previous readings of the series, by the absence of the protagonists from the main action, in contrast to their central position in all the other plates. Our eyes are led to focus on the foreground scene of feasting guests on the left and the petitioners on the right. Only then do we detect the presence of the host Francis Goodchild, or Industry, seated in the background of the picture. The foreground is sharply contrasted with the background and Hogarth obviously does not use one point perspective and chiaroscuro merely for an optically correct or harmonious arrangement, but rather as a device of narrative focalization. Perspective, just like the 'figure of the narrative' that transcends the single frame, "die bildübergreifende Figur" (Kemp 1987), helps to elucidate and disclose the meaning of the narrative whole.

The grotesque bodily postures and gestures in the foreground scene is an image of gluttony and the obvious example for this scene is the emblem of Gluttony from the many existing series of the seven deadly sins, like the illustration from Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* (*Ship of Fools*), dating from 1494 (Figure 62). In plate 8, gluttony is thus associated pictorially with Industry, the epitome of success in the rising capitalist system of eighteenth-century industrializing England. The fast development from cottage industry to mass production and entrepreneurship, is evident from the sequence of plates 1, 4, and 6 in the series (Figure 63). Plate 1 shows only a few looms, whereas in plate 4 an increase of machines and labour is evident. Plate 6 depicts Goodchild's rise from apprentice to owner by his astute marriage to the factory manager's daughter.

The archaic emblem of Gluttony is invoked as a critique of capitalism, just as the traces of the emblem of *Temperance* (Figure 47) had been conjured up by the pose of the harlot in the *Harlot's progress* (Figure 46) to suggest an ironic narrative commenting on the ambiguity of social conventions. Hogarth's resonant use of metaphoric "narrative images" (Kolve 1984) as visual devices to attain imaginative vividness, is reminiscent not only of the age-old rhetorical concept *enargeia,* but is also in keeping with so-called 'pictorialism', the eighteenth-century demand for a poetry characterized by an imagery which enabled the reader to imagine objects as visually present (Hagstrum 1987, Van den Berg 1996b).[9]

Hogarth's choice to mentally and imagistically suggest the particular emblem of Gluttony and to associate it with the protagonists' vices of greed and theft is a

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[9] Hagstrum (1987:11) describes the origin of *enargeia* or "pictorial vividness" as follows: "...it originated in rhetoric, where it was used to describe the power that verbal visual imagery possessed in setting before the hearer the very object or scene being described." It implies the achievement of a pictorial quality in verbal discourse. *Enargeia* has been interpreted rationalistically as "pictorialism" during the eighteenth century (Scott 1988), but it is not in this impoverished sense that I choose to use the term. *Enargeia* could also be interpreted to refer to sublime vividness of the unintelligible, but it is in the sense of allusive illumination that I choose to use it here. Cf. De Villiers Human 1995. On pictorialism, cf. Scott 1988.

striking way of associating carnal and mental vision. Visual detail suggest a mental image which in turn shapes the emplotment and focalizes the narrative.

Plate 8 is a crucial scene of transformation and inversion in the narrative. The scene as a whole seems to be a descriptive digression in the story. However, exactly this character of the scene makes it eye catching, and stimulates our insight into its *enargeic* significance. It could be described as a 'reading frame' which not only stands out in the spectator's memory,[10] but also is an *agent de change*.[11] This is the kind of descriptive scene Phillipe Hamon (1981:25) has in mind in his "Rhetorical status of the descriptive":

> description might be that place in the text where the generative power of language might show itself most clearly and as quite unmanageable.

The "generative power" of this description of the greedy postures and gestures of the guests lies in the *enargeic* accomplishment of the emblematic image of Gluttony to precipitate an about-turn in the significance of the story. Sympathies are not aligned unequivocally with Industry any more, and the seemingly simplistic and crude emblematic opposition of Virtue and Vice at the beginning of the story is revealed to be far more ambiguous. The story ends hyperbolically with two climactic carnivalesque scenes depicting the trial of the criminal Idleness, and the inauguration of Industry as Lord Mayor of London.

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[10] Mary Ann Caws's definition of "reading frames" in *Reading frames in modern fiction* (1985) is an extension of her concept of "texturality" in *The eye in the text* (1981). She defines it as follows: "[C]ertain passages stand out in relief from the flow of the prose and create, on so standing, different expectations and different effects. We perceive borders as if signaled by alterations of pattern and architectural, verbal, or deictic clues. In an intensification of focus, the included elements are heightened visually and stressed verbally, as the surroundings are cropped off at the sides. These larger-than-life situations seem to hold the essence of the work, and not infrequently it is remembered by them, each as a metonomy for the larger picture" (Caws 1985: xi).
[11] "The opposite of blank spaces or neutral counters or silences permitting the interruption of the narrative of discursive flow or the nondistinctive noise in order to make form and sense, these highly charged moments or scenes are the bearers of meaning and intensity, the conveyors of revelation and insight" (Caws 1985: 7, 8).

It is telling that Hogarth depicts suitably grotesque bodies to accomplish ironic narrative inversions of plot. Stallybrass & White (1986: 9 and 124) thus describe the subversive potential of the representation of carnivalesque bodies:[12]

> Grotesque realism uses the material body – flesh conceptualized as corpulent excess – to represent cosmic, social, topographical and linguistic elements of the world.

> it is not too much to claim that as the fair and the carnival were scripted as the alien space of undifferentiation, filth and excess, they simultaneously encoded the most powerful linguistic repertoires of the 'Imaginary'.

Carnivalesque episodes were common in contemporary eighteenth-century English novels. In her "The carnivalization of eighteenth-century English narrative" Terry Castle (1984: 903-916) concludes that masquerade scenes were narrative cruxes with emblematic significance, which characteristically leave in their wake a world upside down.

Hogarth's choice of this particular descriptive scene to focalize the narrative *enargeically* not simply reveals a resemblance to the function of carnivalesque scenes in contemporary novels, but seems to align it with broader picaresque narrative traditions, in which the *topos* of hunger has a special place.[13]

But the emphasis on the spectator-reader's reflective role is not only evident in Hogarth's use of *enargeic* images, illusionistic frames and in the design of the whole, but also in the construction of each separate plate, resembling the layout of an emblem. The caption of each plate fulfils the *inscriptio* function of the emblem, introducing the picture beneath it, whereas the Bible text framed in the *cartouches* below is the obvious emblematic *subscriptio*.

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[12] Cf. Atherton 1978, Eitner 1978, Paulson 1984, Kromm 1985, Martin 1987, Kiaer 1993 and Lawson 1998.
[13] See chapter 9, section 9.2.

Emblem literature emerged in the seventeenth century as a synthesis of medieval and Renaissance allegorical methods and, although misappreciated since the nineteenth century, is one of the richest of the pictorial allegorical forms. It is characterized by its open, rhetorical structure in which the spectator-reader is assigned the task of drawing the conclusion, although the solution is given in the enigmatic combination of its parts (cf. Warncke 1987). By the use of this picture puzzle (*Bildrätsel*) format Hogarth assigns a specific role to the spectator, invoking this age-old hermeneutic tradition in which meaning is disclosed in the process of looking and reading.

I have endeavoured to show how the visible detail and arrangement of a scene in a narrative, together with the mental images it conjures up to the mind's eye, contribute to the focalization of the narrative and have metaphoric emplotment functions. Such emplotment metaphors divulge much about the underlying picaresque orientations of the narrative.

Hogarth's exploitation of the narrative potential of metaphor is not disturbingly didactic nor heavily moralistic if we allow Hogarth to (in his own words) "lead the eye a wanton kind of chace". Hogarth demands playful re-configuration. He states in his *The Analysis of Beauty* (Hogarth 1969: 42,43):

> It is a pleasing labour of the mind to solve the most difficult problems; allegories and riddles, trifling as they are, afford the mind amusement.

10.2 Destructive mechanization

Roy Lichtenstein's fascination with the influence of mechanization on the American frame of mind is evident throughout his oeuvre. His early efforts reveal his interest in the dissection of complex machines into their components and their re-assembly into operative wholes – the basic principles of industrial mechanization. This early interest is related to later works in his oeuvre that show

contemporary perceptual understanding of wholes and detail to be related, not only to the understanding of machine technology and the mass communication media, but also to the reading of narrative wholes and detail. I shall argue that many of his works reveal that mechanization has effects, not only on the understanding of narrative, but also on the fabrication of myths, legends and history in the machine age. By using machines and their cogs as emplotment metaphors, Lichtenstein's work ironically subverts the myths of progress and the American faith in technological advancement.

I can see the whole room ... and there's nobody in it! (1961) (Figure 64) is most effective when projected as a slide in a darkened room, and it was probably made with its reproduction in mind. The stark contrast of surrounding darkness and the focussed well-lit central image makes us conscious of the process of slide projection. It has been said that "reproducing a Lichtenstein is like throwing a fish back into water" (Steiner 1987: 100) and we can readily assume that Lichtenstein foresaw the illimitable replication of his works and its frequent projection as slides.

Slide projection and the use of the tachistoscope, an instrument of applied technology by which objects are lit or exposed to the eye for very brief and measured moments to viewers in a darkened room, formed an important part of Lichtenstein's art training.

There are examples of visual designs projected as slides in a 'flash room' by Professor Hoyt Sherman, the 'guiding spirit' and co-founder in 1948 of the Visual Demonstration Center of the Ohio State University where Lichtenstein studied. Lichtenstein has been quoted as saying that Sherman was the most important influence during his formative years. When Lichtenstein later taught at this university and even later was assistant professor at the New York State University, Oswego and at Douglas College, Rutgers University, New Jersey, he

propagated Sherman's idiosyncratic *Gestalt* theory of perception (cf. Busche 1988: 22-38).

The Visual Demonstration Center was an establishment for "the investigation and demonstration of visual perception" where students from various departments and even marine pilots and baseball players were taught visual skills by practising to distinguish wholes from detail. Sherman taught art students by using a tachistoscope and by flashing slides (Figure 65) in quick succession so that students could "become attentive to visual qualities and relationships ... breaking ... crusts of conventional reactions and introducing a fresh approach to the seeing act", as he explains in his *Drawing by seeing*, published in New York in 1947 (Busche 1988: 27).

Lichtenstein's working process also included slide projection. When producing his comic-strip works he projected sketches onto his canvas and traced them in order to enlarge them. However, in spite of this very laborious method, he is at pains to conceal any trace of his manual labour so that the work has a polished, industrial look which is easily transferable into various media.

Lichtenstein's ironic references to the mechanical process of the reproduction of comics and of art works as slides in *I can see the whole room ... and there's nobody in it!* is an aspect of his deep interest in tools of mechanization, devices of perception and strategies of communication by means of which we make immediate sense of and shape the world. Although references to industrialization may seem abbreviated and minimal in a comic book painting like this, it is rewarding to view these comic book works for which Lichtenstein became so well known, in the light of his whole oeuvre, especially his neglected early works.

Lichtenstein has been quoted by Swenson (1963) as saying:

America was hit by industrialism and capitalism harder and sooner, and its values seem more askew. I think the meaning of my work is that it's industrial, it's what all the world will soon become. Europe will be the same way, so it won't be American; it will be universal (Coplans 1973: 55).

Since 1948 when Lichtenstein produced his first works, he chose to depict mechanical curiosa and seemed to take pleasure in the exploration of their detail. This is reflected in titles like: *The racing car* (c.1948), *The radio* (c.1954), *Gears* (c.1954), *Mechanism, cross-section* (c.1954), *The valve* (c.1954), *Watch mechanism* (c.1954), *Blueprint* (c.1954) (Figure 66), *The cotton gin* (c.1954) (Figure 67), and *Electric clock* (c.1954). However, just as the tachistoscope training teaches us to see the significance of the whole in the tiny details, so Lichtenstein wants to reveal the historical significance of these seemingly trifling objects.

Also in 1948 when Lichtenstein began painting these subjects, Siegfried Giedion's *Mechanization takes command* was published. Giedion's (1955: 3) thesis is that tools and mechanical objects are products of fundamental attitudes to the world and he writes about mechanical inventions that: "[i]n their aggregate, the[se] humble objects ... have shaken our mode of living to its very roots". These sentiments had been brought across in a lighter vein nine years earlier in Charlie Chaplin's film *Modern Times* (Figure 68).

The influence of mechanization on the American frame of mind is evident from paging through a *Popular Mechanics* magazine from the fifties (Figure 69) in which inventive tools are introduced, solutions for 'home problems' (Figure 70) are suggested and various do-it-yourself jobs are explained (Figure 71). In various kinds of diagrams and schemata, complex machines are dissected into components in order to explain to the man in the street how they work (Figure 72).

When Lichtenstein's *Flying Machine* (1954) (Figure 73) is compared to a *Popular Mechanics* diagram (Figure 74), Lichtenstein's fascination with the division into components and the re-assembly into wholes, the basic principles of industrial mechanization, is evident. However, I would like to argue that this interest in the operative relationship of parts and wholes is not only related to his preoccupations with perceptual *Gestalt* theory and industrialization, but also to his curiosity about narrative and historical signification.

Lichtenstein's sense of the irony of the American enthusiasm for machine technology is most evident in his *Exhuming the Mastodon* (1951) (Figure 75), a painting based on Charles Willson Peale's canvas by the same title, of 1806-1808 (Figure 76). Lichtenstein's painting forms part of a group of explorations of the genre of history painting referring to Americana and produced by Lichtenstein for about six years after 1951. This group of works takes the political history of America, the conquest of the West, the cowboy, the outlaw and the Indians as subject-matter and include for example ironic adaptations of canonic American history painting, like Emmanuel Leutze's *Washington crossing the Delaware* (1951) (two years before Larry Rivers's better known version) and Benjamin West's *The death of General Wolfe* (1951).

Peale's canvas depicts the excavation of the skeleton of the mastodon, a giant snouted animal from the geological tertiary period, the discovery of which was regarded as proof of the American continent's independent development from Europe, strengthening feelings of nationalism in the young Republic. Peale's painting documents the intricate machinery and demonstrates and explains the complicated process of excavation which in fact comprised three different stages. On the left of the painting Peale himself, the scientist and artist, is proudly displaying his projected drawing of the skeleton about to be revealed.

Lichtenstein focuses frontally on the intricate mechanical mill-wheel which facilitated the exhumation and in a naive folk and child art style he exaggerates

its size in his schematic version. Together with the giant-sized Peale, the hero of the occasion, the machine presides over the skeleton. Through the obvious manipulation of the spectator's point of view Lichtenstein draws attention to the disproportionate veneration and legendary stature that the patriotic hero, and the promise of progress through industrialization, have acquired in the American dream. The disparity between the exulted subject-matter and the simplistic style makes clear the irony of a nation's propensity to construct heroic myths and legends to make sense from its surroundings under the sway of nationalism.

The guiding myth of American culture is shown to be the balance between its unfailing belief in progress through mechanization and the nostalgic idealization of its national past. This sense of anticipation and reminiscence in the meta-narrative of the American dream, and the manipulative power of point of view, are the bases of narrative and historical signification (cf. Carr 1986: 18-72). Lichtenstein's underlying narrative interest is evident from his explorations of the relationship between parts and wholes, point of view and of protention and retention at various levels.

At this point in the argument we realize how Lichtenstein ventures to reveal a sense of the machinery of historical understanding in the detail of a small cog. This propensity to use the shortest, wittiest and most everyday signs to denote the most complicated matters is a picaresque characteristic. In a similar way, Hogarth, the empiricist, ventured to 'analyse' the elevated art historical concept of 'beauty' in eighteenth-century practicalistic terms. In the illustrative plates in his *The Analysis of Beauty* (Figure 77, 78) everyday objects are dissected to explain the workings of some august Enlightenment ideas on art and how they operate.

Similarly, in a modernist way, Lichtenstein explores some of the high art ideals of his day by means of pictorial wit and the abbreviated devices of everyday mass culture. He produced many works which explore similarities in the inter-medial

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modernist signification processes in advertising, films, comics, do-it-yourself kits, and 'high art'. However, I would like to argue that his interest in the means of communication through images does not seem to be merely an artistic comment on autonomous art, as modernist readings of his work would suggest.

When *Fastest gun* (1963) (Figure 79) and *Pistol* (1964) (Figure 80) are viewed together, we realize that Lichtenstein is referring to the visual communication process. In a related work *Draw* (1963) the word 'draw' is a pun on the art of 'drawing' and the aggressive act of shooting or accosting the viewer in the art gallery. In *Pistol* the directness of the aggressive impact on the viewer not only brings to mind the irony of the similarity between modernist modes of representation in high art and the persuasive techniques of the art of advertising, but also problematizes the process of viewing pictures in general. He parodies the notion that the perception of visual art is direct, a-temporal, sudden and to be understood in a single revelatory flash.

Furthermore, all attention is focused on the viewer, so that the tables are turned and the viewer is made self-conscious about being the target while looking at the picture. It makes the viewer realize that in view of the limited pictorial clues available, the responsibility to conduct a dialogue with the painting and wittily generate meaning from it, is his/hers. Lichtenstein addresses viewers schooled in the abbreviated devices of mass communication, and draws attention to the fact that visual art only acquires meaning in a social context.

But Lichtenstein is not only referring to the manipulation of the viewer by pictorial means in high art and popular culture. In *Fastest Gun*, the reference to the mythical cowboy, the questionable hero of the frontier who took part in the taming of the West, is not accidental.

In 1951, in the heyday of Abstract Expressionism, the so-called 'triumph of American art', Lichtenstein had produced this *Cowboy on horseback* (Figure 81).

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The legendary character of the frontier presents himself frontally and self-consciously to the viewer and the schematic, playful representation transforms him into a fairy-tale knight. At a time when the 'heroic' post-war generation of American artists were producing vast canvases and large Public Works of Art Project murals, Lichtenstein painted small framed easel paintings with mythical subjects, like this one and *Killing the dragon* (1950) (Figure 82), suggesting the illusion and anecdote of history painting and ironically referring to the social function of the fabrication of romanticized national legends.

Another hero of the frontier who serves as a metaphor for the American Abstract Expressionist artist, is the explorer. Lichtenstein ironized the advertising industry's exploitation of social myths, for the first time in *The explorer* (c. 1952) (Figure 83), based on an advertisement for Libby McNeill and Lirry's cooked corned beef reproduced in *Life magazine* of 1949 and dating from the Californian gold rush of the 1850's (Figure 84). In his painting Lichtenstein exaggerates the typical 'explorer' gesture of the left arm and the dynamic forward strides of the enterprising hero bent eagerly in the direction of his goal. The cooked corned beef held in the right arm is encircled to stress its significance to this clean, energetic, well-fed miner. Lichtenstein thematizes the pervasiveness of the ideal of dynamism and progress in American society. The ironic reference to the typical macho image of the American Abstract Expressionist painter and the characteristic drive of the *avant garde* artist cannot escape us.

We have noticed that Lichtenstein's interest in the processes of perception and the process of mass communication leads him to explorations of pictorial devices of narrative organization.

Lichtenstein often explores patterns of perception, skirting the boundary between commercialized design and narrative. In the *Entablatures* (Figures 85, 86) which Lichtenstein produced between 1971 and 1974 he employs light and shade to

create repetitive patterns "like percussive notations or metronomic beats, consuming real time to scan" (Cowart 1981: 32).

The delicate distinction between the parts and wholes of a visual *Gestalt*, of the temporal scanning of a pattern, and of the reading of a narrative configuration becomes evident when one of these works and *Grapefruit Triptych* (1973) (Figure 87) are viewed together. In the *Grapefruit Triptych* we could assume that we are looking at the same scene three times, the grapefruit having been rearranged by human intervention. Although no human actions are portrayed protention and retention are suggested by the uncertainty as to whether the grapefruit were moved from panel 1 to 2, or from panel 3 to 2. This is a narrative reading which presupposes the eventful temporal character of human action. The triptych format is a convention in history painting which denotes the temporality of human actions – a potent reminder of the received significance of format.

The impact of *I can see the whole room ... and there's nobody in it!* (Figure 64) is as fast and slick as an advertising image. However, as Hilton Kramer has noted, pop art is "so beguiling to talk about ... the conversation piece par excellence – for it requires talk to complete itself" (Stich 1987: 13). A great deal of the evocativeness of this work lies in its fragmentary character. We have a sense of perceiving a detail from some larger narrative whole. The speaker's limited view into the darkness makes him ironically negate our irrefutable presence in front of the picture and our reaction is to laugh at him, peeping at us without knowing that he is being observed.

The genre of history painting, which Lichtenstein has been shown to be attracted to, traditionally portrays the significant actions of great men. In the triptych *As I opened fire* (1964) (Figure 88), however, the destructive power of an absent hero's war machine is depicted. Our angle of incidence with each of the three panels is different and our view very limited and fragmentary, as if we are looking through the zoom lens of a camera at the retarded action of an edited montage of

shots. We never see the hero who is also the narrator, nor do we see the target which is the object of the story. Lichtenstein's emplotment metaphor of destructive mechanization suggests the assembly line combination of equally important fragments or parts. His awareness of the artificiality and ideological extremes of popular social and artistic forms is picaresque, and the comic topsy-turvy and chaotic world is the result.

For Lichtenstein ideology is manifest in the tiny mechanical parts of watches and mill wheels. His fascination with diagrams and schemata dissecting complex machines into component parts, is the visible image of his fascination with the topography of ideological forces steering American society. In a similar manner the American pre-occupation with tools and mechanical objects as it presented itself in the nineteen-fifties, mirrors for him a fundamental belief in dynamism and progress.

In the wake of research on time and narrative by Ricoeur (1984) we should restore some of the richness that the concepts of *compositio* and *historia* once possessed for Alberti and his contemporaries, before these rhetorical concepts came to be restricted formalistically to autonomous high art. For Alberti their relation is that of part and whole. Moreover, he emphasizes the function of composition in the process of constructing a narrative (Grayson 1971: 71,73,83; Vickers 1988: 345,361,362).

I have ventured to demonstrate that Lichtenstein's emphasis on form and style is an aspect of his interest in the processes of perception and in narrative organization and that this is indissolubly linked to his sense of social, cultural and historical signification. His ironic use of the emplotment metaphor of destructive mechanization, reveals his picaresque ideological alliances.

10.3 Organic metamorphosis

The Johannesburg native William Kentridge (b. 1955) (cf. Ollman 1999) has a predilection for drawing in charcoal, and turned to the video medium in order to capture the continual process of sketching, erasing and over-drawing, and to exploit the narrative potential of this drawing method. He has been making animated films from his "drawings for projection" since 1989, when his first film *Johannesburg, 2nd greatest city after Paris* was produced. One of his favourite motifs used in almost all of his animated narratives and "drawings for projection", is that of water. It is the metaphoric potential of water to erase, cleanse, wash away, cover up and regenerate that relates it to his working process.

Similarly, the settings of almost all his video narratives are in the scorched landscape surrounding Johannesburg. These resemble the charcoal medium in which he works: It is the custom to set the veldt alight once a year in order to revitalize the grass, and standing in this landscape of burnt down grass outside Johannesburg, for a television interview, Kentridge describes it as "charcoal underfoot". The water in his narratives, almost like the annual veldt fires in the landscape, is an overwhelming diluvial force, paralleled by the re-generative, palimpsest-like drawing process and its recording on video. His narratives, furthermore, are set in a period of political flux in South Africa when structures of power, social relations and systems of rights are reformulated, erased and drafted.

In Kentridge's computer-animated production *Easing the passing (of the hours)* (1992) (Figure 91) emplotment metaphors can be described to cluster together to resemble in some ways, Hogarth's flowing serpentine line of playful pursuit.

The main character in this political narrative of animated charcoal drawings, is a general (Figure 90) whose lower body has been mutilated by war in such a way

that his feet, knees, legs, bottom, genitalia, and anus, symbolising the carnivalesque lower body, seem to have been destroyed completely. With his prosthesis he resembles a canon in his wheelchair, a hybrid combination of human body and machine technology. The incongruence of this truncated body that is still alive resembles the picaresque war-mangled beggars painted by Otto Dix – as in *Prague Street* (1920) (Figure 92) – rather than the cyborg-like humans of the scenic tradition. The general's character is not only associated with violence (appearance of a canon) and technology (wheels), but also with status (his medals) and power (his title).

In spite of the destruction of his progenerative organs, the general, ironically, has erotic dreams generating more dreams. The paintings in the art museum the general visits, in order to isolate himself from the reality of the uprisings against his regime, are at first silent and static, removed from life. But as the insurrectionary proletariat begins to undermine law and order, so the planned order of the art museum is overturned, and a substratum of teeming life threatens to invade the general's isolation. The emptiness, restriction, barrenness and idleness of his handicapped existence contrasts sharply with the luxurious excess of media strategies used to animate, deform, change and erase museum pieces, to vivify dreams, and to multiply masses of political protesters.

The inherent dynamics and energy, the continuous and excessive action, the verve and hastiness, the spontaneity and impulsiveness with which the narrative is presented, is distinctive of comics, caricature, animation films, silent movies, slapstick and computer design. These are all popular or lower cultural media associated with play, amusement, leisure; with 'easing the passing of the hours', but they are also media suitable to subversion and festive critique.

Transition, continuous transformation and denial of closure characterize the emplotment of this narrative. There is a continuous thwarting of our expectations and of completion, and there are interruptions to start new directions. This kind of

emplotment structure can be and has been metaphorically described. Hogarth's *enargeic* image of the serpentine line to explain his idea of the abstract concept of Beauty in his *The Analysis of Beauty* has been discussed. In his description of this line he stresses its sensuousness and its capacity to suggest movement and variety (Hogarth 1969: 42, 43) (cf. Figure 50).[14] I have argued above that where Hogarth refers to the serpentine line to discuss the "figure of the dance" he gives the reader a cue to interpret his spiral as a narrative figure. In his description of the "wanton kind of chace" associated with the serpentine line, Hogarth's (1969: 42,43) underlying metaphor seems to be that of aleatory pursuit:

> It is a pleasing labour of the mind to solve the most difficult problems; allegories and riddles, trifling as they are, afford the mind amusement [...] Intracacy in form, therefore, I shall define to be that peculiarity in the lines, which compose it, that leads the eye a wanton kind of chace, and from the pleasure that gives the mind, intitles it to the name of beautiful

The aptness of the motif of the serpentine line and its metaphoric allusion to aleatory pursuit, suggest the geneticist bias of typically episodic emplotments, characteristic not only of Hogarth's own narrative pictures, but also of Kentridge's video, is confirmed by W.J.T. Mitchell's (1983: 127) description of the spiral:

> There is no less 'accomplished' form than the vortex or spiral; it cannot 'last' in any self-identical shape because its very structure suggests continuous transformation and denial of closure, coiling inward toward a perpetually vanishing center and outward toward a never attained boundary ... The spiral simply demands [...] a mode of thinking that sees the world, in Alfred Whitehead's words, as 'forms of transition' rather than 'static forms'.

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[14] "And that serpentine line, by its waving and winding at the same time different ways, leads the eye in a pleasing manner along the continuity of its variety, if I may be allowed the expression; and which by its twisting so many different ways, may be said to inclose (tho' but a single line) varied contents; and therefore all its variety cannot be expressed on paper by one continued line, without assistance of the imagination, or the help of a figure [...] where that sort of proportion'd, winding line, which will hereafter be called the precise serpentine line, or the line of grace, is represented by a fine wire, properly twisted round the elegant and varied figure of a cone" (Hogarth 1969: 29).

This emplotment metaphor is evidently an alternative for the more common Aristotelian teleological metaphor of the 'story "line"', which implies linear succession and development towards fulfillment in a climax.

10.4 Uncovering monstrosity

So far I have analysed how the emplotment metaphor of the serpentine line, signifying playful pursuit, is manifest in one narrative series by Hogarth. I have discussed how the significance of the representation of machines and technology in ironic contexts links many works in the whole oeuvre of Roy Lichtenstein. I have also discussed how video production by William Kentridge is linked to the metamorphic nature of the emplotment structure of comics, caricature, animation films, silent movies, slapstick and computer design. It is clear that I have moved from the smaller narrative context of one series, to the increasingly broader narrative contexts of an oeuvre and of genres. In this section my aim is not to analyse how motifs of various monstrosities in a particular narrative series, or in the pictorial narrative oeuvre of a specific female artist, or of groups of female artists, cluster together to characterize a dynamic narrative plot structure or emplotment. Rather, my objective is to shift the parameters of research on the significance of the recurrence, in feminist art in particular, of divers motifs linked to various kinds of monstrosities, abjection, horror, madness or hysteria. Such metaphors are often grouped together in various contexts, but might also become emplotment metaphors in a 'monstrous' or grotesque meta-narrative within the picaresque imaginary world.

The prevalence of motifs of female-related monstrosity in art, literature and the cinema has been noted in various contexts. In grouping together literary texts by female writers, Marleen Barr (1992) used the image of the monster to indicate the marginalized status of such texts:

> Feminist fabulation is an integral part of literary postmodernism. It is time to canonize the monstrous (Barr 1992: 82).

Jane Gallop, in her article "The monster in the mirror" (1992) comments upon the use of the term 'monster' to describe the collaborative authorship of seven female Ivy League scholars who published their research in *Yale French Studies* in 1981. In the journal their collaboration is presented thus:

> This is a very unusual issue of *Yale French Studies*, in that its guest editor is a seven-headed monster from Dartmouth (*Yale French Studies* 62, 1981: 1) (Gallop 1992: 48).

Barbara Creed coined the term 'monstrous-feminine' in her discussion of science-fiction horror movies, in order to emphasize the importance of gender in the construction of monstrosity. She argues that in such horror movies the feminine appears in an alien form as what must be repressed and controlled in order to secure and protect the social order (Creed 1986: 70).

In literary criticism a well-known early feminist study on motifs of monstrosity in literature is that by Gilbert & Gubar (1979), who noted that motifs of enclosure, entrapment, confinement and escape recur in literature by female writers from the nineteenth century, ultimately revealing their common impulse to struggle free from the confinement of social and literary conventions in the literature of patriarchal culture, as well as from those stereotypical masks by means of which women have been presented in such literature. The two extremes in the spectrum of 'eternal types' that have been generated in such a literary culture, are the 'angel' and the 'monster'. Virginia Woolf (1942: 236-238) declared that, before women can write they must "kill the angel in the house", meaning that women must kill the aesthetic ideal through which women have been "killed" into art. According to Gilbert & Gubar (1979: 17):

> the images of 'angel' and 'monster' have been so ubiquitous throughout literature by men that they have also pervaded women's writing to such an extent that few women have definitely 'killed' either figure.

In visual culture, Bram Dijkstra (1988) unravelled different strands in this spectrum of stereotypical representations during the nineteenth century, and Carol Duncan (1973, 1993b) has discussed manifestations of female monstrosity in the twentieth-century visual art production of artists like Picasso, De Kooning, Kirchner and others.

However, if the stereotypical representation of female monstrosity is a product of patriarchal culture, the prevalence of motifs related to female monstrosity in feminist art needs to be explained.

In feminist research the phenomenon of the recurrence of female-related images of monstrosity has largely been theorized within the context of psychoanalytic theory. Barbara Creed's *The monstrous-feminine. Film, feminism, psychoanalysis* (1993) is a comprehensive study in this vein. Her interpretations are based on Kristeva's definitions of abjection, with reference to which Creed presents a "sustained analysis of the different faces of the female monster or the 'monstrous-feminine'" (Creed 1993: 3). These faces are: "the archaic mother, the monstrous womb, the witch, the vampire, and the possessed woman" (Creed 1993: 7). In almost all critical writings on the horror film it is presumed, from the limited perspective of the social effects of gender ideology, that woman is represented and conceptualized only as victim. Creed challenges this point of view by arguing that the prototype of all definitions of the monstrous is the female reproductive body. In his 1922 essay, "The Medusa head", Freud (1927) connected the experience of horror associated with the feminine, to the disavowal of the traumatic sight of the 'castrated' woman, and thus to the recognition of sexual difference. Creed, however, argues that:

> Whereas Freud argued that woman terrifies because she appears to be castrated, man's fear of castration has, in my view, led him to construct another monstrous phantasy – that of woman as castrator (Creed 1993: 7).

However, within psychoanalytic theory the recurrence of motifs related to female monstrosity within feminist and ideology-critical contexts is not only difficult to account for, but also has a ring of inevitability to it. In feminist psychoanalytic theory the prevalence of motifs of monstrosity in feminist art is sometimes explained in terms of 'primary narcissism'. In Freud's essay "On narcissism" he links women, criminals and humorists, as well as children, cats and large beasts of prey, as those who seem to have maintained an original, 'primary narcissism' that the adult male has renounced! It is from this perspective that humour is emancipating:

> Humour has something liberating about it; but is also has something of grandeur and elevation [...] The grandeur in it clearly lies in the triumph of narcissism, the victorious assertion of the ego's invulnerability. The ego refuses to be distressed by provocations of reality, to let itself be compelled to suffer. It insists that it cannot be affected by the traumas of the external world; it shows, in fact, that such traumas are no more than the occasions for it to gain pleasure (Freud 1927: 162).

A number of feminist theoreticians and artists have seen narcissism, along with hysteria, as a potential site of resistance, especially to the persisting specular appropriation of women (Isaak 1996: 11-13, Betterton 1996: 132- 133). However, it seems that such a position serves to reinforce patriarchal and essentialist views that woman, *by nature*, is a victim.

In Luce Irigaray's terms the prevalence of motifs of monstrosity in feminist art can be related to liberation experienced by women who have passed "through the looking glass", like *Alice in Wonderland* (Irigaray 1985: 9-21), for on the other side of the mirror, behind the screen of male representations, is an underground world hidden from the surveyor's categorizing gaze, a world where women might "whirl and dance out of the glare of the sun". Here is:

> what resists infinite reflection: the mystery (hysteria) that will always remain modestly behind every mirror, and that will spark the desire to see and know more about it (Irigaray 1985: 103).

This is what Irigaray calls *la mystérique*, combining mystery, hysteria, mysticism (the "dark night of the soul"), and the feminine (Irigaray 1985: 191-202). However, Irigaray's position might serve to reinforce patriarchal and essentialist views that assigns women's social and cultural endeavours to a separate sphere, denying the complementary male and female nature of created human beings.

In my view it is more liberating to theorize many feminist representations of female monstrosity in the context of the iconoclastic and redeeming powers of the strategies of caricature and the grotesque within the broad but gendered picaresque imaginary world that has been proposed. So far in this study the emergence of themes of monstrosity, abjection, horror, madness and hysteria in the visual cultural production by female artists have been referred to in the oeuvres of Barbara Kruger,[15] Hannah Wilke,[16] Cindy Sherman,[17] and in Jana Sterbak.[18] In the discussions of the images by these artists the significance of gender experience in their use of exaggeration, caricature and the grotesque was emphasized in order to stress the variable effect of gender ideologies in the art production of male and female artists who share foci, metaphors, iconography, strategies, art media and so on, appropriated in a specifically picaresque cultural tradition.

In my discussion of Cindy Sherman's *Untitled #156* (Figure 7), I noted that her awe-inspiring clownish pose as a female hysteric exaggerates, and in many respects inverts, some aspects of the age-old and fear-inspiring *femme fatale* stereotype, interminably replicated in modern mass communication media. The co-presence of blinding horror and laughter in her role-playing as hysterically blind, groping female figure is one of the outstanding characteristics of this photograph. In my discussion of Hannah Wilke's *INTRA-VENUS* (Figure 39) I

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[15] Cf. chapter 7, section 2.
[16] Cf. chapter 8, section 1.
[17] Cf. chapter 7, section 1.
[18] Cf. chapter 8, section 2.

observed that she inverts the menacing associations of the *femme fatale* and death by posing as the dying clown. Thus the *femme fatale*'s ability to beguile, enmesh and ensnare is likened to the lures of the trickster. Although both images make the spectator wince, they also elicit wry laughter. In that we are reminded that the artists are role playing respectively as monstrous madwoman and as death-reminding clown, an occasion is presented to gain pleasure.[19] Their role playing expresses an invulnerable spirit of hope even though bondage becomes visible through grotesque exaggeration. Their clowning in the image of depravity is a *Pathosformel* in which their exaggerated miming of stereotypical conventions representing feminine beauty, breaks loose or erupts from the stereotypical formulae, refusing to be covered by it.

These disparate images of Sherman and Wilke both explore the monstrous aspects of the Fool and it could be argued that, although there are no specific or intended narrative connections between them, they are part of a monstrous meta-narrative within the picaresque imaginary world. Both images use strategies of exaggeration and inversion in order to lay bare the dark undercurrents of ideological stereotyped images of 'femininity' concealed by the glossy surfaces of the media. In their narrative contexts, the gestures and postures of both figures have the 'explosive' significance of *Pathosformeln*. It is exactly the explosive capacity of one such a foolish and monstrous bodily posture of protruded buttocks to uncover ideologies, that will be explored further in the final chapter 12 of this study.

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[19] On the connection between carnival, hysteria and feminism, see Willis (1989).

PART 3

A PICARESQUE TRADITION IN ART HISTORIOGRAPHY

In this part the feasibility of the existence of a picaresque tradition in art historiography is briefly assessed. My proposal of a 'troubled picaresque hermeneutics of suspicion' in the final chapter of this study is lent support, if traces of a picaresque tradition in analytical writing on topics related to art and visual culture can be found. The visual cultural objects and the analytic strategies by means of which they are investigated are thereby shown to be corresponding.

For the purpose of an assessment of the expectance of such a tradition, ideologically alert exemplary texts that broach topics relevant to this study, were chosen. The first text by Hélène Cixous is a critique of patriarchy, whereas the second, by Werner Hofmann, empathetically illuminates Daumier's criticism of the social consequences of capitalism. In making this choice I considered various texts: Keith Moxey's *Peasants, warriors and wives. Popular imagery in the Reformation* (1989), E. H. Gombrich's "Magic, myth and metaphor: reflections on pictorial satire" (1996),[1] and Meyer Schapiro's "Courbet and popular imagery. An essay on realism and naïvité" (1978).[2] However, although these texts treat picaresque subject matter, I did not consider them to be picaresque analytical texts. Their critical frameworks do not necessarily sympathetically match their objects of analysis. Another text that I do suspect to be picaresque and might as well have analysed, was Wilhelm Fraenger's *Der Bauern-Bruegel und das deutsche Sprichwort* (1923), in which he compares Breughel's predilection for the literalization and presentation of lists of proverbs, to that of Rabelais. I decided, however, rather to analyse Hofmann's text, because, its postmodern geneticism could be compared to that of Cixous's text.

I have argued[3] that the research on 'typiconic traditions' initiated by Seerveld is expanded by a focus on motifs and metaphors represented in visual images. Thus far in this study recurrent metaphors in visual cultural products were scrutinized for their potential in intimating ideological allegiances. Johann

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[1] Originally presented as a lecture in 1986.
[2] Originally published in 1941.
[3] Cf. chapter 6, section 2.

Visagie's (1990) "semiological hermeneutics for archival discourse", a sub-theory of his "archaeological discourse analysis", was freely and idiosyncratically adapted to lend support to such a project. In this part I move closer to the original objects of Visagie's theories in presenting a close reading of analytical texts on the subject of art, assuming the parallel existence of a picaresque tradition in art and in art historiography. It must be admitted, however, that his various theories are adapted with great licence, once again, to suit my needs.

The aim of this investigation is to search for metaphors that might divulge a picaresque orientation, i.e. that are comparable to the types of picaresque metaphors that have been discussed in this study thus far, uncovering 'geneticist' and 'monist' alliances.

The style of Cixous's text is "often intensely metaphorical, poetic and explicitly anti-theoretical" (Moi 1985: 102), locating it on the border between art and theory. The analysis of her text therefore performs a transitional function, in that it is a gradual move away from analysis of art objects, towards the analysis of the theoretical work of Werner Hofmann. Hofmann's text, an authoritative art historical analysis, could be described as an aesthetically disclosed analytical text in which the objects of discussion are treated in suitable metaphors, without thereby letting theory turn into art. In the blurb on the glove cover of *Anhaltspunkte* (1989) this aspect of his work is remarked upon:

> He proves that he is equal to his objects of analysis, by the fact that he makes them speak for themselves.[4]

Hofmann (1989: 257) himself states that: "The artistic and the critical expression cannot be separated".[5] I have ascribed this phenomenon to the ideological power

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[4] "Nicht zuletzt darin beweist sich, dass er seinen Gegenständen gewachsen ist: er bringt sie zum Sprechen".
[5] "Die künstlerische und die kritische Aussage sind nicht voneinander zu trennen".

that images have on scholars that select and analyse them.[6] Since the literary qualities of both exemplary texts have such a strong bearing on the argument, reproductions of both texts are included in the Illustration Volume.

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[6] Cf. Michael Ann Holly's support of this, quoted in chapter 1, section 1.1.

CHAPTER 11: IDEOLOGY-CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

11.1 Hélène Cixous: A critique of patriarchy

The Algerian-French Hélène Cixous is considered a major representative of *écriture féminine* As lecturer in English at Vincennes she founded the centre for *Récherches et études féminines* where women were taught to liberate themselves from patriarchy through writing. She has written more than thirty novels and dramas in which theory and literature flow over into each other (Osinski 1998: 59). Between 1975 and 1979 she produced a whole series of such semi-theoretical writings, all of which set out to explore the relations between women, femininity, feminism and the production of texts, and in which many central ideas and images are constantly repeated. Her well-known 'manifesto' *The laugh of the Medusa* to be discussed here, was first published in *Signs* in 1975.[7] This text is not purely theoretical; in fact her work has been described as explicitly anti-theoretical:

> Her central images create a dense web of signifiers that offers no obvious edge to seize hold of for the analytically minded critic (Moi 1985: 102).

And:

> It is not easy to operate cuts into, open vistas in or draw maps of Cixous's textual jungle (Moi 1985: 102).

Given this nature of her writing, the most appropriate analytical approach to her work might well be Visagie's "conceptual semantics" which concentrates on the power of metaphors to uncover basic persuasions and biases.

To begin with, it can be very generally asserted that the uncontested subversive character of *The laugh of the Medusa* is borne out by the use of metaphors of

explosion and change. Although the humour of Cixous's 'manifesto' often goes unrecognized, I contend that it is in exactly these carnivalesque and exaggerated metaphors of explosion, outburst, laughter and wildness that the humour of the text lies. At first sight then, this subversively amusing text seems picaresque. In it Cixous represents and celebrates women as robbers, wanderers, monsters, servants and hysterics – figures that have often presented themselves in the analyses of picaresque visual cultural products in this study. The poetic style of the text attests to a picaresque anti-intellectualism and a refusal to be dominated by 'theory'. Moreover, – parallel to one of the premises of this study – it is evident that Cixous's writing is not merely occupied with the social effects of patriarchy and feminism, but more broadly addresses the effects of patriarchy and feminism on discourse and art as well.

The key idea is that of bisexuality, which Cixous embraces in an effort to abandon, in Derridian fashion, the opposition of masculine and feminine. She distances herself from the common meaning of the term bisexuality, describing it as "this self-effacing, merger-type bisexuality" (Cixous 1991: 341), and formulates an "other bisexuality" which is multiple, variable and ever-changing, and "which doesn't annul differences but stirs them up, pursues them, increases their number" (Cixous 1991: 341). She believes that "woman is bisexual" (Cixous 1991: 341) and it may be concluded that for her, conversely, bisexuality is also woman, because as we shall see below, the laudable characteristics associated with bisexuality are also those attributed to "woman". This ultimate unification in Cixous's text, of masculinity and femininity, into "woman" or "bisexuality" attests to its monist conceptualization. In Cixous's philosophy "woman's nature" or "bisexuality" is an idolized value of that which should be liberated to be expressed in the world, in culture, history, society and ultimately in textuality:

> Woman must put herself into the text – as into the world and into history – by her own movement (Cixous 1991: 334).

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[7] *Signs* 1975, 1(4): 875-893.

The governing power of "bisexuality" or of "woman" is described, accordingly, in terms that evoke royal metaphors:

> I wished that that woman [referred to in Cixous's text, ESH] would write and proclaim this unique empire [of femininity] so that other women, other unacknowledged sovereigns, might exclaim: I, too, over-flow ... (Cixous 1991: 335).

Having established the basic or foundational idea of the text, the means by which it is described can be considered. The characteristics attributed to the key idea of "woman" or "bisexuality" attest to the geneticist allegiances of the text. About woman's nature Cixous writes:

> Almost everything is yet to be written by women about femininity: about their sexuality, that is, its infinite and mobile complexity (Cixous 1991: 342).

In thus defining the central theme, what is infinite is valued above the finite, and what is complex, above the simple. In other descriptions she states:

> If there is a 'propriety of woman', it is paradoxically her capacity to depropriate unselfishly, body without end, without appendage, without principle 'parts'. If she is a whole, it's a whole composed of parts that are wholes, not simple partial objects but a moving, limitlessly changing ensemble, a cosmos tirelessly traversed by Eros, an immense astral space not organized around any one sun that's any more of a star than the others (Cixous 1991: 344, 345).

And:

> Woman un-thinks the unifying, regulating history that homogenizes and channels forces, herding contradictions into a single battlefield.

What is dynamic and changeful is valued above that which is constant. Structuralist order is answered with geneticist "chaosmos" (Cixous 1991: 344).

When Cixous goes on to describe "writing", i.e. that in which "women's nature" or "bisexuality" must find expression, metaphors of becoming, change, activity and explosion are used. This is already evident in the first line of the text: "I shall write about women's writing: about *what it will do*" (Cixous 1991: 334), and further on, in: "writing is precisely *the very possibility of change*" (Cixous 1991: 337), and elsewhere in the text, in:

> I, too, overflow [...] I, too, have felt so full of luminous torrents that I could burst – burst with forms much more beautiful than those which are put up in frames and sold for a stinking fortune (Cixous 1991: 335).

And:

> We're stormy, and that which is ours breaks loose from us without our fearing any debilitation. Our glances, our smiles, are spent; laughs exude from all our mouths; our blood flows and we extend ourselves without ever reaching and end; we never hold back our thoughts, our signs, our writings; and we're not afraid of lacking (Cixous 1991: 336).

And:

> Because she arrives, vibrant over and again, we are at the beginning of a new history, or rather of a process of becoming in which several histories intersect with one another. As subject for history, woman always occurs simultaneously in several places (Cixous 1991: 339).

Metaphors of explosion, like "the fantastic tumult of her drives" (335), "seething underneath" (335), and the following are used:

> Her appearance would necessarily bring on, if not revolution – for the bastion was supposed to be immutable – at least harrowing explosions. At times it is in the fissure caused by an earthquake, through that radical mutation of things brought on by a material upheaval when every structure is for a moment thrown off balance and an

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ephemeral wildness sweeps order away, that the poet slips something by, for a brief span, of woman (Cixous 1991: 337).

And:

> When the 'repressed' of their society returns, it's an explosive, *utterly* destructive, staggering return, with a force never yet unleashed and equal to the most forbidding of suppressions. For when the Phallic period comes to an end, women will have been either annihilated or borne up to the highest and most violent incandescence (Cixous 1991: 342, 343).

In the context of such explosions, the metaphors of monstrosity, madness and hysteria, as eruptive reactions against systematic suppression of expression, recur. The more common negative valuation of monstrosity is first given:

> Who, surprised and horrified by the fantastic tumult of her drives (for she was made to believe that a well-adjusted normal woman has a … divine composure), hasn't accused herself of being a monster? (Cixous 1991: 335).

And then madness and hysteria is exulted:

> They have furiously inhabited these sumptuous bodies: admirable hysterics who made Freud succumb to many voluptuous moments impossible to confess, bombarding his Mosaic statue with their carnal and passionate body words, haunting him with their inaudible and thundering denunciations, dazzling, more than naked underneath the seven veils of modesty (Cixous 1991: 343).

The central idea of "woman" expressed in "writing" is even identified with the "admirable" hysteric woman:

> You, Dora, you the indomitable, the poetic body, you are the true 'mistress' of the Signifier (Cixous 1991: 343).

The subversive inversion of the hierarchy of "rational" above "hysteric", and of "composure" and "calm" above "madness" (Cixous 1991: 335), are paralleled by other typically picaresque inversions of high and low. The most obvious inversion – "turning propriety upside down" (Cixous 1991: 344) – lies in Cixous's notorious injunction: "Women must write through their bodies!" (Cixous 1991: 342) and her declaration that women "write in white ink", because there is "always within her at least a little of that good mother's milk" (Cixous 1991: 339). An exulted intellectual activity associated with the mind is described in carnal terms.

An affinity for what is "normally" considered to be low, is also seen in Cixous's choice of "root metaphors".[8] "Woman" for her is the traveller returning form afar, the wanderer in exile – in the terms used in the rest of this study: the marginalized Fool or *picaro*:

> Now women return from afar, from always: from 'without', from the heath where witches
> are kept alive; from below, from beyond 'culture' (Cixous 1991: 335).

And:

> Flying is a woman's gesture – flying in language and making it fly. We have all learned
> the art of flying and its numerous techniques: for centuries we've been able to possess
> anything only by flying; we've lived in flight, stealing away, finding, when desired,
> narrow passageways, hidden crossovers. It's no accident that *voler* has a double
> meaning, that it plays on each of them and thus throws off the agents of sense. It's no
> accident: women take after birds and robbers just as robbers take after women and
> birds (Cixous 1991: 353).

Cixous's picaresque affinity for what is low is also seen in her exultation of the role of the servant or worker. On the one hand she describes the "normal" lowly status of the servant:

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[8] Cf. the metaphorical potential of bodily postures in chapter 9.

> A woman without a body, dumb, blind, can't possibly be a good fighter. She is reduced
> to being the servant of the militant male, his shadow (Cixous 1991: 338).

On the other hand she celebrates the serving, nourishing and caring functions of women:

> In women there is always more or less of the mother who makes everything all right,
> who nourishes, and who stands up against separation: a force that will not be cut off but
> will knock the wind out of the codes (Cixous 1991: 339).

The central picaresque root metaphor of play is evident in the recurrent image of laughter, in the image of the child, and of creativity and playing:

> The child is the other, but the other without violence, bypassing loss, struggle (Cixous
> 1991: 342).

And:

> The relation to the 'mother,' in terms of intense pleasure and violence, is curtailed no
> more than the relation to childhood (the child that she was, that she is, that she makes,
> remakes, undoes, there at the point where, the same, she mothers herself) (Cixous
> 1991: 339).

And:

> Our glances , our smiles, are spent; laughs exude from all our mouths; our blood flows
> and we extend ourselves without ever reaching an end; we never hold back our
> thoughts, our signs, our writing; and we're not afraid of lacking. What happiness for us
> who are omitted, brushed aside at the scene of inheritances; we inspire ourselves and
> we expire without running out of breath, we are everywhere! (Cixous 1991: 336).

Although Cixous regards her argument as a whole as an act of war – a heroic metaphor that generally recurs in theoretical writing[9] – using terms like "violence",

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[9] Cf. Lakoff & Johnson (1980) about the metaphor "argument = war".

"shattering", "break", "destroy", "plowing", and "battle" (Cixous 1991: 340-342), her representations of struggle are rendered hyperbolically and with picaresque playfulness:

> The new history is coming: it's not a dream, though it does extend beyond men's imagination, and for good reason. It's going to deprive them of their conceptual orthopedics, beginning with the destruction of their enticement machine (Cixous 1991: 340).

And:

> Such is the strength of women that, sweeping away syntax, breaking that famous thread (just a tiny little thread, they say) which acts for men as a surrogate umbilical cord, assuring them – otherwise they couldn't come – that the old lady is always right behind them, watching them make phallus, women will go right up to the impossible (Cixous 1991: 342).

And:

> A feminine text cannot fail to be more than subversive. It is volcanic; as it is written it brings about an upheaval of the old property crust, carrier of masculine investments; there's no other way. There's no room for her if she's not a he. If she's a her-she, it's in order to smash everything, to shatter the framework of institutions, to blow up the law, to break up the 'truth' with laughter (Cixous 1991: 344).

Cixous's metaphors sometimes have an heroic ring to them and this association might be founded on the underlying logic of the mutual geneticism of the heroic and the picaresque traditions.

Finally, women are enjoined to apply their energy and creativity in writing, without wanting to sell or to achieve (Cixous 1991: 343), tantamount to Hogarth's description of play as a "wanton kind of chace".[10]

Opposition, hierarchizing exchange, the struggle for mastery which can end only in at least one death (one master – one slave, or two nonmasters, not two dead) – all that comes from a period in time governed by phallocentric values. The fact that this period extends into the present doesn't prevent woman from starting the history of life somewhere else. Elsewhere, she gives. She doesn't 'know' what she's giving, she doesn't measure it; she gives, though, neither a counterfeit impression nor something she hasn't got. She gives more, with no assurance that she'll get back even some unexpected profit from what she puts out. She gives that there may be life, thought, transformation. This is an 'economy' that can no longer be put in economic terms. Wherever she loves, all the old concepts of management are left behind (Cixous 1991: 348).

It is singularly enlightening to read Cixous's text as part of an age-old and heterosexual picaresque tradition. Her work lends itself to facile dismissal by serious critics, as revolutionary, contradictory, essentialist and over the top. Yet, by acknowledging her picaresque biases and blind spots, a depth of vision is granted that is otherwise denied.

11.2 Werner Hofmann: Ideology-alert art historiography

Werner Hofmann (b. 1928), the son of a Viennese businessman, finished his schooling after the war in 1947, and commenced with his studies in art history, classical archeology and philosophy. In 1950 he graduated with a doctoral thesis on *The place of Daumier's graphic forms in history*[11] under the supervision of Otto Benesch and Karl Maria Swoboda. He followed museum career culminating in his Directorship of the Hamburger Kunsthalle. His museum activities were complemented by several guest professorships in America between 1957 and 1982. In 1983 he was awarded a research scholarship from the *Fondation de la Maison de Science de l'Homme* in Paris. In 1984 he held the Meyer-Schapiro Chair in art history at Columbia University (Sitt 1990: 103).

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[10] Cf. chapter 10, section 1.
[11] *Die geschichtliche Stellung von Daumiers graphischer Form.*

Don Quijotes Seele im Körper des Sancho: Honoré Daumier, the exemplary text chosen for closer scrutiny, was first published in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in 1979.[12] In it Hofmann examines Daumier's position as caricaturist for the press, and as producer of *Randkunst,*[13] within the environment of the "aesthetic class consciousness" (Hofmann 1989: 255) of his time. He argues that to rank him in the same league as Delacroix and Ingres, as Baudelaire provocatively did, goes against the grain of taste judgements of his time. On the other hand, such a ranking with contemporary 'high artists' suppresses the political effect of Daumier's work. By means of a celebration of Daumier's popular caricatures, Hofmann expresses his sympathy for ideologically alert 'low' art.

The article commences with a 'formalistic' description – parts of which has been quoted before[14] – of Daumier's graphic mark or *tache* (Hofmann 1989: 253). Hofmann intuitively notices a geneticist interest in the contours of Daumier's etches. He uses terms suggesting energy, change, rhythm, and process, like "energy routes", "rhythmic idiosyncrasy", "organic", "line-events", "growth processes", "power strands," and "visual equivalents of vital and spiritual oppositions"[15] to describe them (Hofmann 1989: 253, 254). Having given this description, however, he concludes that:

> Without doubt, such a formalistic concentration of vision is indispensable, but it is not enough (Hofmann 1989: 253).[16]

He then goes on to discuss Daumier as transgressor of boundaries.[17] He relates how Daumier suggested in 1850 that a statue of Robert Macaire and his accomplice, Robert Bertrand, should be erected at the façade of the Parisian

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[12] *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* 35 (10. 2. 1979).

[13] Marginalized, peripheral art.

[14] Cf. chapter 4, section 2.1.

[15]"Energiebahnen", "rhythmischem Eigensinn", "organisch", "Linienereignisse", "Wachstum-prozessen", "Kraftsträhnen", and "anschauliche Äquivalente von vitalen und geistigen Gegensätzen" (Hofmann 1989: 253, 254).

[16] "Zweifellos ist die formalistische Blickkonzentration für die Basisanalyse unerläßlich, aber sie reicht nicht aus".

[17] *Grenzöffner* and *Grenzüberschreiter.*

Stock Exchange. Robert Macaire, the unscrupulous con man and descendant of the hypocritical beggar figure in popular literature of the Middle Ages, was the main character in a popular play that was banned in 1835. For Daumier he was the best representative of the cynical speculator figure in whom the characteristic traits of the economic and social circumstances of the rule of the "bourgeoise king" of France were united. Hofmann then comes to the important conclusion that an artist who represents swindlers and frauds as often as Daumier does, becomes their accomplice, as the ever-resourceful inventor of new tricks! Hofmann is not merely describing Macaire, the *picaro*, as the main character in Daumier's Macaire-series in Philipon's *Charivari*, but is presenting Daumier as the true *picaro*!

Having moved thus closely to one of the themes of the present study, Hofmann moves even closer, to describe Daumier's fascination with the sinister side of the Fool — "the fascination with evil"[18] (Hofmann 1989: 258). He significantly attributes this attraction to Daumier's predilection for exposing folly.

Hofmann then embarks on a description of Daumier, the *persona*, projected through his works and revealing his persuasions through his choice of favourite characters for his graphic series. Hofmann's project might be described as an endeavour to penetrate Daumier's *Weltanschauung*, explaining what he "secretly admires" (Hofmann 1989: 258) and how he "understands" the role of the artist (Hofmann 1989: 260). In this recounting of the characters Daumier admires, several figures related to the Fool emerge: "the outsider", "the loner", "the rogue or swindler", "the maladjusted person", "the deceiver", "the rope walker", "the animal tamer", "an acrobat of dishonest illusions", "the con man"[19] (Hofmann 1989: 258, 259). It is in this context that Jean Adhémar's portrayal of Daumier as

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[18] "die Faszination des Bösen".
[19] "der Außenseiter", "der Alleingänger", "der Gauner", "der Nichtangepaßten", "der Betrüger", "der Seiltänzer", "der Dompteur", "ein Akrobat der lügnerischen Schaumschlägerei", "der Gaukler".

"the soul of Don Quixote in the body of Sanco Pansa"[20] is quoted (Hofmann 1989: 259). Hofmann ends his article with reference to Daumier's *Ecco Homo* in the Folkwang Museum in Essen, a depiction of the mockery of Christ, the Holy Fool.

Although Hofmann's portrayal of Daumier, the artist, corresponds with the depictions of picaresque artistry in this study, his descriptions nevertheless divulge a romantic idealization of the artist as outsider and melancholic genius, alien to the picaresque tradition:

> As outsider, so we suspect, he [Daumier] secretly admired in Robert Macaire the loner, the man with inexhaustible excesses of imagination, the genius in deception, the maladjusted person, who triumphs over well-adjusted mediocrity and who dupes the avaricious and unimaginative *petit bourgeois* with his daring castles in the air (Hofmann 1989: 258). [21]

And:

> He [Daumier] understands the artist to be an outsider, exploited in the role of the clown, by whom well-adapted people are amused. Don Quixote represents the artist, who refuses to be dominated by market requirements and who proclaims his right of self-determination (Hofmann 1989: 260). [22]

Hofmann endeavours to describe Daumier's individual *Weltanschauung* and artistry, without the presentiment of a tradition in such artistry. This leads him to present Daumier in idealistic terms. By empathetically making Daumier's picaresque works "speak for themselves", Hofmann's own prejudices which are not commensurate with the picaresque tradition, are adumbrated.

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[20] "die Seele des Don Quijote im Körper des Sancho Pansa".

[21] "Als Außenseiter, so vermuten wir, bewunderte er [Daumier] insgeheim in Robert Macaire den Alleingänger, den Mann mit dem unerschöpflichen Phantasieüberschuß, den genialen Gauner, den Nichtangepaßten, der über die angepaßte Mittelmäßigkeit triumphiert und mit sienen kühnen Luftschlössern den geldgierigen, einfallslosen Kleinbürger übertölpelt".

11.3   A picaresque tradition in ideology critique?

By means of the analysis of two sample texts, I have endeavoured to suggest that it is worthwhile to investigate how typiconic traditions are manifest not only in art, but also in theoretical discourse on art historiography and ideology critique. Such a project has been an ideal of Calvin Seerveld, but to my knowledge no research has been published on it.[23] I have suggested that Johann Visagie's research on metaphors in his "archaeological discourse analysis" could be a key instrument in expanding the applicability of the theory of typiconic traditions to have relevance as a paradigm in theoretical discourse.

One of the major contributions of Calvin Seerveld's 'cartographic methodology' is – an importation from philosophy into the discipline of art history – the distinction of time streams and systematic types. Thus Hélène Cixous's text should be read in the context of post-structuralism. I have shown that there are connections and interactions between the pervasive postmodern or post-structuralist geneticism in her text, and its picaresque typological allegiances. Connections between period and typological distinctions are thereby revealed.

On the other hand I have also noted a strong picaresque strand in postmodern feminist art. The conjunction of feminism and postmodernism creates fertile soil for the picaresque tradition to flourish in.[24] This demonstrates the inter-

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[22] "Er [Daumier] begreift den Künstler als Außenseiter, Mißbraucht in der Rolle des Clowns, von dem die Angepaßten sich zerstreuen lassen. Don Quijote steht für den Künstler, der sich den Marktbedürfnissen verweigert und das Recht auf Selbstbestimmung proklamiert".

[23] In a presentation called "Which Antiquities transmuted, how and why? Art historical methods in question", given at an interdisciplinary conference "Antiquity and antiquity transmuted", held by the University of Toronto Graduate Department of History of Art and The Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, Seerveld discussed his research on the work of the art historiographers Kurt Badt and Lorenz Dittmann. He also presented a seminar on the art historical writings of these two figures at the Universät des Saarlandes: "Art historiographic testing of Heidegger's aesthetics".

[24] Cf. chapter 5.

connectedness of philosophical and art historiographical period-and-typological-distinctions.

One of the major premises of this study is that ideology should be defined more broadly to include the fields of theoretical discourse, and art, as well as socio-cultural relations, in stead of focusing on the social effects of ideology alone. It is therefore important to stress the inter-ideological dynamics that have been shown to exist among the fields of art, theoretical discourse and the social movement of feminism.[25]

The idea that images exert ideological power over scholars that select and analyse them is further explored and expanded upon in the next section. It should be assessed in which way a deliberate and conscious assumption of a commensurate picaresque stance in the analysis of picaresque visual material is possible. Furthermore, the value that such an intentional positioning might have for ideology-critical visual analysis should be estimated. Such a self-conscious immersion into an ideological tradition might also entail a confrontation with and exposure of its underlying blind spots. A self-critical engagement with the compelling powers of such blindnesses in some measure comprises their rehabilitation. Yet, in so far as such powers remain overwhelming, such self-confrontation and critical scrutiny of the analyst's own entanglement might serve to raise the level of sophistication and refinement of a given ideology-critical analysis.

Another fascinating possibility which presents itself, is that in an ideology-critical analysis, non-picaresque visual material might be subjected to a picaresque visual critique, by its juxtaposition with picaresque images. Images from the picaresque tradition with their proclivity for ideology-sensitivity lend themselves to such an endeavour. Some favourite picaresque metaphors that have emerged in

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[25] Such interconnections have been shown to exist between the social movement of multi-culturalism, and the philosophical theories of Marxism and post-foundationalism (Visagie 1994: 108-117).

the course of this study might serve as a guideline in the selection of visual material to be subjected to such a picaresque ideology-critical visual analysis. In the next section the ideological implications of an emphasis on motifs related to the lower body, as well as of the various meanings suggested by the metaphor of the Fool are explored in a non-picaresque *Maidenform* advertisement representing a beautiful youthful female model.

It might also be speculated in which way images from other typiconic traditions might be used to expose patterned metaphoric references in other visual cultural products, e. g how mystic or heroic images might highlight mystic or heroic strands in contemporary mass cultural products. The picaresque tradition, however, might be singled out for its special alertness to ideology.

PART 4

AN IDEOLOGY-CRITICAL METHOD FOR VISUAL

CULTURE ANALYSIS

Ideology-critical visual analysis entails the design of and experimentation with 'new' methods of interpreting visual culture, inspired by the theory of ideology outlined by Johann Visagie and discussed in the Introduction, combined with experience in teaching art students who 'think visually'.[1] By juxtaposing seemingly disparate images, their visual links based on shared motifs and metaphoric references, sometimes over centuries, are demonstrated. Comparisons are made between 'high art' visual representations sensitive to gender ideology, picaresque or ideology-critical visual material, advertisements often brashly revealing contemporary ideologies, and popular cultural representations from the domains of kitsch and pornography.

Although this method of analytic comparison and critical contrast is based on and presupposes knowledge of art history as a discipline its aim is to appeal to a broad range of cultural analysts who may not have specialized visual cultural knowledge, but are nevertheless and inevitably exposed to mass visual culture to a much larger extent than people have been in other periods of history. I would like to promote the viability of this method of analysis and its critical potential to enrich art historical methodologies, in the light of progress in visual technology that facilitates the easy visual reproduction of art. In the age of the global reproducibility of the image, of the radicalization of the concept of the *simulacrum* and of the rapid development in the visual technologies of the mass communication media, post-modern visual culture is premised on such allusions and often lends itself to inter-textual and inter-pictorial comparison. However, it is

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[1] The idea of arguing visually, by means of visual links between images has evolved into a means of lecturing to and testing art history students, as well as of aiding students in formulating problems for assignments and reports. My classes consist mostly of fine art students who are often described as academically 'inarticulate' or 'dislexic'. The methods are also used in teaching architectural students, who, although they are often more articulate, express appreciation for such development of their visual skills.

exactly in this context that the ideological power of images can easily be regarded as anodyne, pulverized and ineffectual.[2]

In my ideology-critical method of arguing by means of the visual association of motifs and their metaphorical meanings within specific contexts, like many mirrors reflecting in one another, such motifs are interpreted as communicators of ideological 'motives' as in the rest of the study. The metaphor of many reflecting mirrors is exactly the 'hyper-iconic'[3] image singled out by Kearney (1988) as the epitome of the post-modern imagination. However, from the perspective of a 'troubled picaresque' hermeneutics of suspicion, the manner in which motifs are juxtaposed here, is perverse, self-willed and mischievous, and involve the wilful production of picaresque anamorphoses, in the manner of Erhard Schön's *Vexierbild* or anamorphic image *Aus, du alter Tor* (Figure 93).[4] Inter-textual referencing in this context is not a validation of the post-modern textualization of reality in the radicalized idea of the *simulacrum*, but rather it is in suspicious pursuit of intimations of embedded ideologies, sometimes enduring over centuries.

In Schön's engraving (Figure 93) an 'unsuitable pair'[5] is exhibited to us by a fool who gesticulates[6] to the viewer that the young lady's elderly husband is being 'horned' or cuckolded by the young lover behind the curtain. The picture of an eye in the middle of the window on the left, indicates the point from which the anamorphic image on the right, representing the united young lovers, is projected. It literally indicates the place where the spectator should position

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[2] Note my statement in chapter 6, section 3 about the post-modern textualization of reality. A picaresque emphasis on the material qualities of images is an antidote to this notion, as much as feminism is an antidote to the idea of the 'death of the author'.

[3] Cf. chapter 1, section 1.2.

[4] Get out, you old fool.

[5] Cf. chapter 8, section 1 above, in connection with Steen's renditions of this *topos* in his *The doctor's visit* and *The merry threesome*.

[6] His hand shapes two horns, very much like the two cow's horns behind the head of the cuckold in Hogarth's *Evening* (1738, etching, 48,6 x 40, 3) (Hinz 191988: 117).

his/her eye sideways, with his/her head against the engraving, in order to peep and decode what the anamorphic image represents. In this peeking position, the spectator, somewhat foolishly, is attributed the role of peeping Tom, snooping into a private bedroom, rather like the spectator of a 'peepshow'. In the anamorphic image the lovers are undressed – narrativizing the emblematic image to its left and proleptically predicting its conclusion. The disturbing[7] perspectives of the distorted *Vexierbild*, the fool, and the snooping spectator, bring home the witness capacity[8] of the spectator, and have the function of uncovering latent nuances of meaning of this *topos*.

In the following analysis I shall introduce a number of images related by their (explicit or implicit) application of clownish bodily postures. This alertness to bodily postures and gestures builds upon the Aby Warburg's *kulturwissenschaftliche* legacy, as discussed in the introductory chapter of this study. My reading of these clownish postures is enriched by of a spectrum of nuances or layers of meaning (of what Vandenbroeck (1987: 149) calls a 'boodschapperwaaier' or 'denotatie- en connotatie spektrum'[9]) ensconced in the history of the representation of this type, and that has been discussed in the course of this study. Vandenbroeck argues that grotesque representations of the figure of the marginalized Fool often uncovers the dark and unfathomable underside of civilized societies in which Knowledge and Reason are overvalued.[10] The recurring clownish posture of protruded buttocks in the following analysis, albeit ludicrously, has the explosive power ('innere

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[7] Note that the German term *Vexierbild* stems from the Latin *vexare* which means disturb or shake.

[8] Cf. chapter 7, section 3.

[9] A fan of meaning; a denotation and connotation spectrum.

[10] Vandenbroeck (1987: 148), whose *métier* is seventeenth century Dutch art, sets out on a "speurtocht" in order to bring to light "historische zingevingsstructuren [...] die 'onderhuids' de cultuurproductie sturen." He demonstrates the close relationships among four recurring types (the clown, the peasant, the wild man/wild woman, and the beggar) as represented in the art of the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries. He concludes that in a specific culture the amount of attention given to foolishness and folly is relative to the value attributed to its inversion, Reason.

Sprengkraft') of a pathos formula which expresses the "limits of rationality" where ideology is palpable.

CHAPTER 12: A 'TROUBLED PICARESQUE' HERMENEUTICS OF SUSPICION

In the manner of Panurge and Thaumast's gestural disputation,[11] my argument is sustained visually, and in the mischievous and disturbing manner of Erhard Schön's *Vexierbild*, my ideologically biased presentation of visual images anamorphically distorts them. In this way, it is hoped, that some veiled nuances of ideological meaning will be teased out.[12]

The crucial pictures around which the analysis revolves are:

- *Symphony Concertante II* (1987) by David Salle (Figure 96).[13] This postmodern painting with its ample inter-pictorial references, introduces a few motifs and female bodily postures related to the image of the Fool, the metaphoric significance of which is adumbrated with reference to a picaresque imaginary world.

- A seventeenth century oil painting of the Bolognese School in which two clownish male *commedia dell'arte* characters are acting out a gestural altercation, reminiscent of Rabelais's description quoted above (Figure 94). In juxtaposition with the Salle painting, it highlights the picaresque meanings of the latter work. It displays a central masculine Fool's posture in which various picaresque traits are summarized.

- A *Maidenform* magazine advertisement of 1987 (Figure 95). In juxtaposition with the two picaresque works, the Foolish connotations of the female posture is accentuated. It is revealed which ideological meanings are veiled in this stereotypical and age-old flattering female bodily posture, and to what the effectiveness of this image might be ascribed.

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[11] Cf. chapter 9.

[12] Cf. Preziosi's "The panoptic gaze and the anamorphic archive" (1989). In anamorphic images the centre of projection is oblique to the picture plane, rather than perpendicular to it as in strict linear perspective. They displace the viewer to a position not directly opposite the vanishing point of perspectival images. It provides a manipulated oblique point of entry to images.

[13] See chapter 7, section 4.

What connects these images over centuries is the endeavour to foreground and move corporeal subjects, or at least subjects in whom the contemplative faculty is not privileged or disembodied.

Composed of representations of the female body in the nude, David Salle's post-modern paintings serve to simultaneously arouse and to initiate an intellectual response. On the one hand, it is true that his images are often culled and developed from soft porn magazine photographs, and on the other hand, his work has been described as hyper-literate (Whitney 1994: 40). The remoteness, coldness and greyness of his nudes are often cited in defence against allegations of his pornographic objectification of women. His work refers overtly and even oppressively to pornography, but is simultaneously a renewed and post-modern confrontation with the 'high art' subject of the female nude in Western art. The representation of the female body in the nude has been problematic ever since feminism and Salle knows that "his hand is right in the fuse" (Whitney 1994: 48).

By arousing erotic desire, Salle's paintings reveal the spectator's capability to be moved and touched by visual images – they uncover our bodily repressed unconscious reactions, as well as our overt committed and interested stance in the interpretation of visual representations. Salle's exploitations of the female nude affects, moves or addresses the conscience of the male or female spectator, albeit in different ways. Spectators are made to realize that they are implicated in judgements and pleasures. It is in this embarrassingly vulgar provocation that the ideological character of art is revealed. I have discussed first-person narration as a strategy to address 'actual readers', and to concretely affect the 'real' world,[14] but Salle employs another strategy – the strategy of shock – to pique viewers into a similar 'ethical' response to his art; to awaken

viewers to their 'witness function' (Van den Berg 1996, Bordo 1996) and the function of 'solicitude' (Ricoeur 1992). Like the feminist artists that I have shown to have contributed to fostering a sensitivity for the gendered body and its situatedness in patriarchal culture, Salle's paintings alert the viewer to the significance of gender difference in interested responses to art.

On the other hand, by thwarting erotic desire Salle's work is reminiscent of the self-contained remoteness of most female nudes in Western art. The legitimization of the genre of the female nude and its differentiation from pornography is often seen to rest on exactly this distinction between contemplation and arousal in its respective modes of address. In this definition of pornography there is an obvious similarity between pornography and 'ideological' art. Kenneth Clark associates pornography and communist political art on exactly these grounds.[15] The historical prominence attained by the aesthetic attitude of disinterested contemplation is due, not only to the institutionalization of the Kantian foundation of modernist aesthetics. It also reveals the dominant position of the paradigmatic or schematicist tradition in the history of western art since Greek antiquity, through the middle ages and early modernity.

In the specific work by Salle that introduces my argument, *Symphony Concertante II* (Figure 96) two of his characteristic *grisaille* nude dancers are posed, one in leg warmers and T-shirt, provocatively baring a view of her buttocks, the other half-clothed in a ballet skirt. Both hold strenuous poses, reminiscent of the muscle aching toil of artists' models working for 'great masters' who have been painting apparently relaxed and passive female nudes since the Renaissance.

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[14] In chapter 7, section 3.
[15] In 1972 Sir Kenneth Clark, author of *The Nude* (1958) was invited to give expert testimony to the Longford committee on pornography. There he distinguished art from porn on the following grounds: "To my mind art exists in the realm of contemplation, and is bound by some sort of imaginative transposition. The moment art becomes and incentive to action it loses its true character. This is my objection to painting with a communist program" (Bennett 1996:245).

Each youthful woman holds a violin behind her back. The association of music and eroticism is common in 'high art', but also in the spheres of kitsch and soft porn, as in two photographs (Figures 97 and 98) from Gillo Dorfles's *Kitsch. The world of bad taste* (1968/9: 221, 248). The violin lying 'on the back' of one of Salle's female models, might very well be a direct reference to Man Ray's well known photograph (Figure 99) which is a homage to Ingres's *Le bain Turc* (1859-63) (Figure 100). In it the resemblance between the back of his female model and a violin is highlighted by means of the painted sound holes of a violin on his model's back. It combines the back of Ingres's famous lute playing Turkish bather with a reference to Ingres's favourite hobby – violin playing – punning upon the French expression for a hobby (a *violin d'Ingres*) – something a man does in his leisure time (Isaac 1996: 53). Foregrounding the ideological character of art, Salle succeeds in unsettling this cosy association of the sensuous pleasures of music, art, leisure and eroticism, in high art, kitsch and popular culture, by means of various picaresque strategies to be discussed.

Superimposed on this *grisaille* section of Salle's work, is a black and white photographic print of a female in a clownish pose, reminiscent of some photographs of female hysterics taken by Jean Martin Charcot (Figure 101). Charcot was Freud's mentor and the discoverer/inventor of the female psychic affliction of 'hysteria', at the Salpêtrière asylum in Paris. He endeavoured to lay bare the underlying pathology of hysteria, which afflicted an extraordinary number of women in the nineteenth century, by photographically "recording the stages" of various women's hysterical fits, and constructing 'a typical fit' from all these photographs. The "grande attaque hystérique, complète et régulière" (one stage of which is called "clownism") is a masterful conjecture, consisting of several images of different women with 'incomplete' hysterical attacks, assembled to complete the 'clinical picture' and provide an image of completion (Isaak 1996: 165). Moreover, these hysteric females are staged in Charcot's

'documentary' photographs, in a manner reminiscent of Gericault's depictions of insane people. From a comparison between Gericault's *Insane woman (Envy),* (1822-23) (Figure 102), and a photograph, provided with the caption *Attitudes Passionnelles: Menacé* (Figure 101), from Charcot's full series published in *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière* in 1877-80, the indebtedness of the compositions of Charcot's photograph to Gericault's painting is apparent: The undefined dark background, the luminosity of the figure, the lack of distinguishing clothing (also similar to the Salle print), all drawing attention to the facial expression, bear evidence of the manipulative hand of Charcot, who also considered himself an artist.

There are striking visual resemblances between the clownish female in Salle's painting and some images of amusingly silly female models in a series of advertisements selected by Irving Goffman under the rubric 'The ritualization of subordination' in his *Gender advertisements* (1976). In e.g. the *New Freedom* advertisement (Figure 103) from this series the likeness is remarkable. Goffman, a sociologist, assembled and systematized contemporary advertising images in which charming and enviable male and (more numerous) female models are displayed to attract the attention of potential consumers of a variety of goods. His aim in his book is to exhibit how human bodily postures and gestures of self-presentation, represented in isolation, as well as in various social and gendered relationships, unwittingly reflect social hierarchies and women's social domination by men in patriarchal culture. He argues that the clownish postures under the above rubric display the female character's childlike manageability and self-effacement. Seen in this context, the similarity between Salle's *grisaille* nude exhibiting her bare behind, and the posture of the female in another Goffman advertisement under the same rubric (Figure 104), is also striking. The clownish protrusion of the lower rear in this advertisement can be read, in line with Goffman, as a defiant, but playful gesture, ingratiating in purpose. These

comparisons highlight the similarity in ambience of the posture of the Salle model in *grisalle* and the clownish antics of the female in the superimposed photograph.

Two more images are painted over the *grisaille* nudes. One is a small brightly coloured portrait painting of a military officer with a distinctly smug facial expression, maybe a representation of a voyeur, and the other is of a familiar gaudily decorated vessel floating in the air, a recurrent motif in paintings by Salle.

On the thinly painted surface of the canvas, representations are seemingly superimposed on one another in the manner of a palimpsest. Sanford Schwarz (Whitney 1994: 51) wrote in the *New Yorker* in 1984:

> Perhaps only in movies have we seen something of the gentle and diaphanous effect he gets, of different images simultaneously drifting back into and rising up from other images

Representations are revealed and concealed and this dimension of his work is augmented by his fascination with the ambivalence of remoteness and familiarity, distance and earthy sensuousness, coldness and warmth, contemplation and arousal, melancholy and humour, blandness and eroticism, reverie and action, *grisaille* and warm colours, sardonic and scabrous humour.

Salle's growing interest in veiling and revealing, concealing and uncovering, is evident from later works like *Untitled* (1992) (Figure 105), a large piece of photosensitized linen coloured in ink, draped and mounted on canvas, and from *Hamlet mind* (1990-1991) (Figure 106), upon which a reproduction of a Clerambault photograph of a draped human figure is inserted (Figure 106). Although Clerambault's photographs (Figure 107) were not intended to be

humorous,[16] its humour in the context of Salle's oeuvre lies in the total disguise of bodily contours and recognizable features or anatomy so that only the presence of a human being under the drapery can be fairly securely assumed. As in William Wegman's *Guise* (1981) (Figure 108) the typical erotic and delicate 'high art' balance between concealment and exposure is disturbed. In the same way Salle (Figure 96) upsets the distinction between the obscenity of pornography and the containment of the 'high art' nude genre by posing his model to revealingly thrust her lower rear in the direction of the spectator, and simultaneously suggesting the remoteness of the female form by means of the monochrome grey tones and the polished, non-tactile application of paint.

It could be argued that the so-called *Venus pudica* or *Aphrodite of Modesty*, e.g. the marble *Medici Venus* in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence (Figures 109, 110), represented as covering her genitals and breasts with draped fabric, is the epitome of the female nude in Western culture. In her the significance of the representation of acts of concealing and revealing is made evident. The act of modestly covering her body from a frontal viewer is at the same time a charming exposure of the view of her naked body from the back – in particular since this exemplary model of the female nude in western art was made for exhibition in a circular temple, exposed to viewers from all sides. The effectiveness of her pose, considered to be worthy of imitation over many centuries, may be attributed to her strategic concealment of the 'truth' of the body, leaving something to the imagination, and confirming the spectator as knowing. The 'knowing subject' could be considered to be the basic ideological unit of humanist culture, and

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[16] G. G. de Clérambault was a French psychiatrist who, while recuperating from a war wound in Marocco between 1914 and 1918, learned Arabic and began a study of Arab dress. A series of more or less 4, 000 photographs that he took of draped mannequins and humans still exits. In 1923 Clerambault began a series of courses in drapery at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. It has been argued (Copjec 1989) that the interest at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in classical architecture, sculpture and other cultural aspects of Antiquity, sprang, in part, from the conviction that Greece and Rome represented the imperial origins of France's high degree of civilization. This myth of origins helped propel France's imperialist and civilizing mission in the colonial era, and Clerambault's lectures and photographs assisted this process (Copjec 1989: 65).

since the early Renaissance, which produced the nude genre in painting, that subject has been central to art and theory (Bennett 1996: 248). According to Bennett pornography undermines the knowing, contemplative, controlling subject, by exposing 'everything', and leaving nothing to the imagination.

However, over many centuries the knowledge of the 'knowing subject' has been reduced to conceptual knowledge. Yet in the picaresque tradition, as an alternative to mainstream culture, knowledge had been broadened to include a corporeal subject in whom the contemplative faculty is included. We have seen how Panurge – in the Rabelais passage about bodily postures and gestures quoted above – [17] compromised the mental purity of the intellectual gaze. A more recent example is the imposition on the privacy of the gazing gallery spectator in an installation by Abigail Lane called *Blue print* (1992) (Figure 111) which has been discussed before in connection with focalization.[18] The spectator's presence completes the process of the work of art and the importance of the nude lower body in this process is brought to the attention in an intimate and carnal way. The spectator is caught in a foolish role, comparable to that allocated to him/her by Schön's *Vexierbild*.

In a related manner Salle subverts the pretexts of containment and passivity in the 'high art' nude genre and its contemplative reception. The flaunting gesture of the female nude with the obtrusive buttocks, is transgressively humorous and can be related in picaresque vein to a tradition of political insult and the rhetoric of invective in the art of political caricature, exemplified by George Bickham's *Idol-worship or The way to preferment* (1740) (Figure 112). This is a political caricature of the grotesque socialized body. The pose of Salle's represented nude is grotesque too in the context of the 'high art' female nude genre. Social and aesthetic conventions are criticized through social and aesthetic aberrations.

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[17] Chapter 9.
[18] Cf. chapter 7.3.

Tense contortions of the naked body of Salle's depicted nude suggest disrupting action instead of passivity, wholeness and containment upon which the aesthetic ideals of the nude genre is premised. In the Salle painting her disrupting stance contrasts with her anonymous, cropped and effaced representation in *grisaille*, within the painting itself.

The picaresque juxtaposition (similar to a humourous exchange of jokes) of Salle's *Symphony Concertante II* and Bickham's *Idol-worship or The way to preferment* brings the significance of gender to the fore. Eroticism is not suggested by the exposed male behind. The exposure and protrusion of buttocks are clearly subversive in these works, but there is a world of difference in effect between the male and the female gestures!

Earthy sexuality is suggested, however, by the protruded male buttocks in the picaresque seventeenth-century Bolognese painting (Figure 94) in which, as described above, two male *commedia dell'arte* characters are acting out their gestural altercation. Not only their prancing stances and attenuated noses, but also their lifted and lowered swords, respectively implying momentary victory and defeat, are exaggerated low mode pointers to the erotic undertones of macho masculine competition.

To compare the clownish stance of Cucuba on the right in this painting, with the stance of the youthful female model in the *Maidenform* advertisement of 1987 (Figure 95) is admittedly picaresque in intention, but not too far-fetched. Both figures strain their backsides for rhetorical effect. The *Maidenform* advertisement derives from the famous photograph of Marilyn Monroe (Figure 113) posing over the subway grill and coquettishly pushing down the front of her gust blown dress to reveal her backside, her ineffectual concealing gesture reminiscent of that of the *Venus of Modesty* (Figure 110). It is exactly this ineffectuality of the idyllic Venus that is picaresquely parodied by Hogarth in his *Taste à la Mode* (1798)

(Figures 114 and 115), although he also refers to it in his art theory to explain the 'line of grace' (cf. Plate II of the *Analysis of Beauty* (Figure 50)).

The association of female erotic attraction and clownish antics has been referred to above in the context of the Salpêtriere photographs, the two 'clownish' Salle characters, as well as in the advertisements selected by Goffman, all suggesting the 'ritualization of subordination'. Evident here is the clownish female role of amorous trickster, or of the erotic *ingénue*, ironically at once aware of her exposure, and modest, like the *Venus Pudica*. Salle's monochrome grey treatment of his provocative model reminds of black and white photography, the cheapest form of mass image reproduction, in which an array of variations on this stereotype of erotic female attraction is circulated – evidently through the image of Marilyn Monroe – on postcards and almanacs to this day.

It is important to note at this stage in the argument, that the ideological power of the *Maidenform* advertisement is not exhausted with reference to its function of sustaining female subordination in society. This would not only replicate Goffman's findings, but also confirm that the feminist perspective is relevant only to the more obviously ideology-critical approaches in art history, like the tradition of contextual social history of art. One of the implications of a broader definition of ideology, is that products of visual culture are not simply deprecated at face value for exhibiting a supposed form of gender ideology that perpetuates the social subordination of women, but rather, that it can be scrutinized for various nuances of meaning revealing the layered forms in which various enmeshed ideologies have an effect on viewers.

It is therefore not only social subservience that is suggested by the Fool metaphor. The 'trickster connection' of the Fool and his/her association with

magic and sinister forces have been referred to.[19] It has been discussed how Hannah Wilke,[20] having been condemned for exhibitionism and narcissistic indulgence, exploited the common ability of the trickster and the *femme fatale* to beguile, enmesh and ensnare in *January 30, 1992: #1* (Figure 39), one of the thirteen photographs of her final exhibition, *INTRA-VENUS* (1992-1993).

The unfathomable charms of the *femme fatale* which are easily transformed into a sinister threat, is evident not only in the clownish protrusion of female buttocks, but also in their inadvertent exposure. This is uncovered in a Guerrilla Girls publicity photograph of 1990 (Figure 116). The female back view in which buttocks are variously revealed and concealed has functioned very effectively through centuries in numerous works of art in the nude genre, to invite the presence and stimulate the participation of the (male) voyeur. Enticingly draped female backsides, the *kallipygos* motif, is a venerable one in art – so effective that it was perpetuated in early photography, as in the well-known photograph by Delacroix of *Model in studio* (1850) (Figure 117). Many a twentieth-century parody or variation has been based on this established motif, like Edward Weston's *Anita nude* (1926) (Figure 118) or Jeff Koons's *Pink Panther* (1988) (Figure 119). Man Ray based his above mentioned photograph of Kiki of Montparnasse (Figure 99) on it and Kathy Grove (*The other series: after Man Ray*, 1989) (Figure 120), exposes the significance of thousands of representations of this motif of the anonymous female back, by erasing Kiki's back, and collapsing the *topos*. The Guerrilla Girls photograph (Figure 116) makes visible by shock, the absence, concealment, anonymity and disappearance of women in the nude genre by referring to this motif. In contrast to Grove's photograph the guerrilla mask uncovers in a deliberately political act of feminist subversion, the suppressed image of the threatening *femme fatale*, disguised in this commonplace of the seductive anonymous back view.

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[19] Cf. chapter 8.
[20] Chapter 8, section 1.

It is interesting to see what other female artists who favour the humorous side of the grotesque do with the sinister side of the Fool. Cindy Sherman is a female picaresque artist from whose oeuvre additional images of female buttocks may be introduced into the argument. In the oeuvre of Cindy Sherman the gendered artist herself usually plays various roles, as the ironic interpreter of the male gaze, drawing attention to the ways in which women are "spoken"/"shown" in various stereotyped poses, reflecting male experiences of sexuality. Besides being the photographer, Sherman is also the model, the garderobe artist, the make-up artist and the director of her photographs. The active female artist as subject humorously and subversively re-plays the roles granted her as depicted object in patriarchal culture.

Sherman never explicitly portrays the role of the Fool. However, one is reminded of the spastic 'clownism' to which Charcot refers in his 'reconstruction' of the stages of hysteria (Figure 101), when looking again at *Untitled #156* (1985) from her *Disasters and fairy tales* phase (Figure 121), which has already been discussed.[21] Her role-playing as crouching female with blackened face and animal-like teeth, grotesquely depicting the hysteric body in disintegration, is in resistance to and subversion of the specular appropriation of the female form in visual and social culture. Her role-playing as hysteric is the inversion of the artificial simulation of orgasmic ecstacy by Cicciolina in *Made in heaven* (1989) by Jeff Koons (Figure 122). There are overtones of fear and horror which are even more explicit in Sherman's *Untitled #155* (Figure 123), a photograph just preceding *Untitled #156* in her oeuvre. This time the buttocks belong to a glistening plastic doll, a substitute for the familiar presence of Sherman herself in her work. The doll not only replaces the female model, but suggests overtones of rape, violence and perverse sexual exploitation, enhanced by the dark, wet and desolate features of the background scene. Imbued with horror and fear, these

images are sharply differentiated from the sardonic irony of a David Salle. They also differ from the perverse and abundant growth of many legs by Bellmer's dolls (Figure 124) (Lichtenstein 1991). In contrast to his dolls, Sherman's strategy to introduce the grotesque in such an artificial way, induces laughter. As in the Guerrilla Girls photograph, although anger is evident, the occasion is exploited to gain sensuous pleasure through humour.

In both *Untitled #156* (Figure 121) and *Untitled #155* (Figure 123) the socialized clownish and puerile female body discussed above is staged as a grotesque and fearful female body, the victim of violence. Similar suggestions of clownism, violence and the grotesque aspects of female socialization underlies Jana Sterback's *Flesh dress for an albino anorectic* (Figure 125) in which the flank steaks from which the fashionable dress is sewn, are nipped in cusps around the bottom edge, suggesting a clown's costume.[22] Conventional female socialization is transgressed through aesthetic aberrations.

There clearly is a propensity among female artists to portray monstrous and grotesque female characters. It might be concluded that the anger and pleasure that the representation of monstrous women by female artists induces – and is induced by – is rooted in a deeply felt gendered experience. Vandenbroeck (1987: 38) concludes that "the more our culture defines itself as rational, reflexive, scientifically minded, enlightened and individualistic, the more it emphasizes the inversion of these (real and supposed) characteristics with the Other".[23]

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[21] Cf. chapter 7, section 1, and chapter 10, section 4.

[22] Cf. chapter 8, section 2.

[23] "hoe meer onze cultuur sichself definieerde als rationeel, reflexief, wetenschappelijk denkend, verlicht en individualistisch, des te meer beklemtoonde ze de omkering van deze (reële en vermeende) eigenschappen bij de Anderen".

The protrusion and exposure of behinds are sometimes depicted with idealizing (in the high art nude genre) and sometimes (in caricatures and in grotesque forms) with subversive intentions. However, such gestures of protrusion and exposure usually foreground ideology. It seems to have the 'explosive' significance of *Pathosformeln* in its uncovering of dark and obscure undercurrents of fear, anxiety, anger, disgust and horror.

According to Wolfgang Kayser (1963) and Philip Thompson (1972) the identification of the grotesque is most evident in the unresolved mixture of the comic and the terrifying. The tension of mirth and horror has equally strong emotional and intellectual effects. Thompson (1972: 42) emphasizes that grotesque cultural products do not analyse and instruct in terms of right and wrong, or true or false. They do not even attempt to distinguish between these. On the contrary, such products demonstrate their inseparability. The grotesque produces a confusion of reaction:

> The grotesque writer would present ludicrous smallness and gross evil as being one, indistinguishable, and strive for a reaction in which laughter and anger figure simultaneously and with equal force. The grotesque is in this sense anti-rational ... (Thompson 1972:42).

The grotesque is nonplussing, disorienting and generally overwhelming. The capacity of motifs related to monstrosity to bring the devastating power of what is indistinct, blurred, dense and undifferentiated to the fore, is related to the basic picaresque ideological biases of geneticism and monism, and its privileging of Nature. Yet from a 'troubled picaresque' perspective the liberating laughter accompanying such dark, obscure and oppressive forces is redeeming (Berger 1997). Van Ruler (1974: 94-97) has demonstrated how the absolute hollowness, depravity, and despair of Abraham's laughter in the face of God's promise of a child to his ninety-year-old wife, makes him the father of all believers. In the tension of ambiguous postures of suffering and of hope (cf. Visagie 1995: 49-

55), like the postures presented by Brueghel in the *Parable of the blind* (Figure 6), and by Sherman in *Untitled #156* (Figure 7 or 121),[24] the fullness of the spectrum of human postures required by life is reflected, so that not only fear and suffering, but also humour, ecstasy and joy, and sympathy, are suggested. From a 'troubled picaresque' perspective, brokenness and the struggle between darkness and light seem to be internalized in the ambiguity of even such clownish and monstrous motifs as protruded buttocks. Whereas for Aby Warburg the bi-polar or 'explosive' character of pathos formulae give a glimpse of residues of magic and superstition as opposed to the enlightenment of reason, in our interpretation, its ambiguity foregrounds the permeation of ideological forces through all cultural products and endeavours.

In the picaresque tradition humility, rather than triumphalism,[25] stands central. This is not only manifest in the low mode humour and the choice of "low", often banal subject matter, like lower bodily functions and parts, but is most evident in the picaresque realization that an ideologized, sinful world is worth changing. The idea of the aspiration to a 'troubled picaresque' analytical stance in analysing picaresque material, is an endeavour to acknowledge the ideological entanglement of the "unhoused 'I'".[26]

In conclusion, as an addendum to the analysis, the methodological procedure that was followed is made more explicit.

The central comparison in the analysis is that between the stance of the Fool in the anonymous seventeenth century Bolognese painting (Figure 94), and the bodily posture of the charming model in the *Maidenform* advertisement (Figure 95). The juxtaposition of this picaresque painting with an effective contemporary

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[24] Discussed in chapter 7, section 1.
[25] "Righteous pride and self-congratulation in the defeat of perceived evil" (Schwarz, Davidson *et al.* 1988: 1572).
[26] Cf. Michael Edwards (1990), quoted in Chapter 6, section 1.

advertisement produced for the mass print media, brings veiled undercurrents of meaning in the *Maidenform* advertisement to the fore. Such picaresque scrutiny for visually present ideological clues reveals metaphoric allusions that not only adumbrate social domination relations of men over women, but also highlight one patterned tradition of idolization of certain cultural values in contemporary society – and the way in which gender complicates it.

The power of images to transcend the conscious intentions of those who use and choose them is stressed in the analysis of the *Maidenform* image. This also highlights the fact that the above analysis suggests more blindspots and insights than can be explicitly conceded to. Yet it is useful to set out the following implications of the act of the central comparison of the Fool's postures:

- The juxtaposition of these disparate images is wilful and mischievous – a deliberately picaresque hermeneutic act, because it is humourously subversive and aims at exposing various ideological prejudices. The typically picaresque strategy of inversion is used in that the enviable image of female beauty and happiness is shown to be related to the marginalized cultural role of the Fool in society and to the history of its representation. One advantage of deliberately using picaresque strategies in analysing visual material is that the typical blindspots of such a hermeneutic performance is consciously confronted, opening the possibility to reassess rehabilitate them.

- This dislodgement of the visually embedded association of the Fool's role within the pleasing bodily stance of the female model in the *Maidenform* advertisement highlights the measure in which the "ritualization of female subordination" (Goffman)[27] is accepted uncritically by audiences of advertising images that are meant to be soothing and persuasive, conforming to widely held beliefs. However, feminist critiques of gender ideologies often

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[27] See above.

stop at the identification of such representational subordination and at an account of its marginalizing social effects for women.

o If it is accepted – as has been done in this study – that ideology-critique is not only relevant to social domination relations, but also to culture-dominating values that might not necessarily have socially subordinating effects, the ideological power of the *Maidenform* advertisement could be investigated further. A disclosure of unintended picaresque allegiances, might aid in identifying a "geneticist" and "interactionary monist" strand in contemporary visual culture. The identification of a Fool's posture in it points to a possible typiconically patterned picaresque directive. The metaphoric significance that the Fool has attained in our description of the picaresque imaginary world is perversely transferred to the seemingly idealized female in the comparison of the Fool's stance and the *Maidenform* model's bodily posture. This highlights the advertisement's emphasis on the attractions of the lower body by means of which rejuvenation through consumerism is made perpetually luring. The ever youthful sensuous body becomes the site of personal power, prestige and happiness, with no disjunction between the spiritual and the vitally natural. The association of women and Nature is common in contemporary advertisements and in this one the model's sensuousness seems a natural feminine attribute – her careful attention to her physical appeal seems to naturally issue forth from her femininity.

The simultaneous presence of anxiety and pleasure is another picaresque metaphoric attribute brought to the fore by the Fool's posture. The obliging model who reveals her protruded behind while she is ineffectually pushing down her dress is intentionally coy. In the female version of the Fool the trickster connection is apparent in the deception and deceitfulness of the *femme fatale* stereotype.[28] The fear-inspiring qualities of the *Maidenform* model is veiled, but subtly suggested in tricking the audience into believing that she is unaware of the revealing effects of the gust of wind behind her.

o This reference to the luring and sinister undercurrent of meaning in the Fool's posture suggests the presence of compelling ideologies in the most seemingly anodyne images of everyday happiness; on the level of 'pastoral havens'[29] – a level upon which advertisements operate. The sinister "magic" of ideologies and directive frameworks are manifest in the banal and everyday spectacle of this image of an unengaged, youthful, bashful, but self-assured model in a specular society. Ideologies infiltrate our most intimate lives, where our personal happiness, behaviour and even our bodily comportment are influenced by 'motives' that are often described by philosophers in remote and grandiloquent terms.

• The feminization of the exhibitionist Fool's posture in our comparison of the carnivalesque male and the unabashedly sensuous female postures, highlight the fact that bodily postures are always gendered and that cultural values are variously imprinted on the bodies of men and women. Whereas the phallic prowess of the prancing Bolognese Fools points to the erotic undertones of macho masculine competition and conflict, the feminine model's complaisance and deceitfulness is highlighted.

• The skipping, entertaining, seductive and flirtatious *Maidenform* model suggests the root metaphor[30] of playing – of playing hide-and-seek. Playing as a central picaresque metaphor lends itself to be interpreted in a picaresque way, emphasizing the sensuous clownish body. In a cultural studies context Aby Warburg investigated similarities in bodily postures over many centuries.[31] He stressed the idea of the "Nachleben der Antike" in his comparisons. If, however, Johann Visagie's research on the 'root metaphoric' potential of bodily postures in revealing ideological blindspots is heeded, Warburg's method is developed into a useful tool in ideology-critique. Irving Goffmann's sociological investigations of the visualization of social

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[28] Cf. the discussion of Hannah Wilke's photographs in chapter 8, section 1.
[29] Cf. chapter 1, section 2.
[30] Cf. chapter 9.
[31] Cf. chapter 1, section 1.

domination relations is augmented by such an investigation of (sometimes concomitant) culture dominating values.

o The method of shaping and argument by intuitively associating images, rather than commencing with theoretical debate, aids in confronting the power of images over the scholar of visual culture. Such problem oriented visual thinking aids in analysing the scholar's own intuitive predilections for certain images. Knowledge of typiconic traditions aids in identifying patterned directives, blindspots and insights behind one's own passionate embracing of certain images.

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ENGLISH SUMMARY

Calvin Seerveld evocatively uses the literary term 'picaresque' in his transposition into visual and imaginary terms, of the philosopher D. H. Th. Vollenhoven's typology of philosophical conceptions. In this study the more limited use of the term 'picaresque novel' and 'picaresque fictional world' in literary criticism is expanded against the background of Seerveld's categories, in order to arrive at the outlines of a broader 'picaresque imaginary world'. The proposition of such an 'imaginary world' not only aids in accounting for the recurrence of similar metaphors, themes and strategies in cultural products, spanning centuries, but also counters the remnants of a subjectivist 'world-view' philosophy in the idea of the 'typiconic traditions'.

'Motifs' in both visual culture and art historical texts are considered to be dynamic 'motives' within the context of the directive imaginary framework of a 'picaresque imaginary world', generating and divulging its ideological orientations. The metaphoric significance in picaresque visual art, of motifs related to vision, the Fool, foolish bodily postures, and playful narrative emplotments, is scrutinized. The prevalence of the metaphoric association of knowledge and vision in 'ocularcentric' mainstream Western culture at least since Greco-Roman antiquity, make metaphors related to vision important barometers of ideological directive frameworks. Themes and motifs associated with the character of the Fool, are unravelled in order to explore his/her metaphoric role as the epitome of picaresque artistry, performing various functions with and in picaresque texts. After having systematized the types of metaphoric bodily postures and gestures that are related to the playfully subversive nature of the Fool, a few pictorial narratives are considered in order to assess how playful metaphors of actions and events divulge underlying picaresque orientations in narrative contexts.

The advantages of viewing feminist art from the perspective of 'typiconic traditions' are considered. In feminist searches for trans-generational links

among women – a main concern in feminist scholarship, particularly in literary criticism (*l'écriture féminine*) but also in art history – female cultural production is often relegated to separate or 'alternative' female traditions, that thus have no relevance for, and can have no enduring impact on patriarchal culture. The proposition of such traditions obscures the analysis of the ways in which women have negotiated and disrupted, and still are negotiating and disrupting, artistic, social and other cultural conventions in order to open up a gender sensitive cultural space. Seerveld's 'cartographic methodology' is the basis upon which the field of a feminist search for commonalities is typologically differentiated. Abandoning the search for monolithic female traditions, attention is redirected to the links and gendered contributions of female art to various age-old cultural traditions in visual culture. This approach aids in removing the spectre of biological and cultural essentialism. A study of picaresque art by female artists, moreover, has the potential of enriching our idea of a picaresque tradition. There are subtle nuances and accents in the use, by recent female artists, of motifs and metaphors related to the gendered body, that have not been exploited by male artists; which have not yet been incorporated into our cultural heritage and assimilated into the idea of a picaresque tradition.

Finally 'new' methods of ideology-critical visual analysis are designed and experimented with. Such methods of interpreting visual culture are inspired by the theory of ideology outlined by Johann Visagie and combined with experience in teaching art students who 'think visually'. It entails arguing by means of the visual association and juxtaposition of motifs and their metaphorical meanings within specific contexts. The viability of this method of analysis and its potential to enrich art historical methodologies, are promoted in the light of progress in visual technology that facilitates easy visual reproduction of art. However, it is exactly in the context of the global reproducibility of the image and of the radicalization of the concept of the *simulacrum* that the ideological power of images can easily be regarded as anodyne, pulverized and ineffectual. In the proposed ideology-

critical visual analysis, however, visual motifs are interpreted as communicators of ideological 'motives' as in the rest of the study.

AFRIKAANS SUMMARY

In sy omsetting van die filosoof D. H. Th. Vollenhoven se tipologie van filosofiese konsepsies in beeldende terme, gebruik Calvin Seerveld die literêre term 'pikaresk' op 'n evokatiewe manier. In hierdie studie word die meer beperkte literatuurwetenskaplike betekenis van die term 'pikareske roman' en 'pikareske fiktiewe wêreld' uitgebrei teen die agtergrond van Seerveld se kategorieë, met die doel om die kontoere van 'n meer omvattende 'pikareske verbeeldingwêreld' te skets. Die hipotese van so 'n 'verbeeldingswêreld' dien om rekenskap te gee van die herhaalde voorkoms van ooreenstemmende metafore, temas en strategieë in kulturele voorwerpe oor die bestek van eeue. Die hipotese dien ook as kritiek of kommentaar op die oorblyfsels van 'n subjektivistiese filosofie van 'wêreldbeskouing' in die idee van tipikoniese tradisies.

'Motiewe' in visuele voorstellings, sowel as in kunshistoriese tekste, word beskou as dinamiese 'motiverings' in die konteks van die rigtinggewende verbeeldingsraamwerk van 'n pikareske tradisie. Dit onthul die ideologiese oriëntasies van voorstellings en tekste. Die metaforiese betekenis van motiewe wat verband hou met visie, die Dwaas, geklike liggaamsposture, en spel-agtige narratiewe *emplotments* word ondersoek in pikareske beeldende kuns. Metafore wat met visie in verband staan, is belangrike barometers van rigtinggewende ideologiese verbeeldingsraamwerke, omdat die metaforiese assosiasie van kennis en visie algemeen voorkom, ten minste sedert die Grieks-Romeinse Antieke. Temas en motiewe wat geassosieer word met die Dwaas word ontrafel met die doel om sy/haar metaforiese rol, as verpersonifiëring van pikareske kunstenaarskap, te ondersoek. Nadat verskillende tipes metaforiese liggaamsposture en gebare wat verband hou met die spelerige, ondermynende

aard van die Dwaas, gesistematiseer is, word 'n aantal beeldverhale oorweeg om bloot te lê hoe spelmetafore onderliggende pikareske oriëntasies in verhaalsamehange onthul.

Die voordele daarin om feministiese kuns uit die perspektief van 'tipikoniese tradisies' te beskou, word oorweeg. In die feministiese soeke na tradisies wat vroue van verskillende generasies en periodes verenig – 'n belangrike opgaaf van die feministiese navorsing, veral in die literatuurwetenskap (*l'écriture féminine*), maar ook in die kunsgeskiedenis – word vroulike kulturele voorwerpe dikwels gerelegeer tot aparte of 'alternatiewe' vroulike tradisies, wat sodoende geen betekenis het vir, of blywende impak het op die patriargie het nie. Insig in die maniere waarop vroue artistieke, sosiale en ander kulturele konvensies oorgeneem ondermyn het, en steeds dit doen, word daardeur belemmer.

Seerveld se 'kartografiese metodologie' is die basis waarop die veld van die feministiese soeke na ooreenkomste tipologies gedifferensieer word. Die soeke na monolitiese vroulike tradisies word verwerp en die aandag word gevestig op geslagtelik-gedifferensieerde bydraes van die kuns deur vroue en die verbande daarvan met verskillende eeu-oue kulturele tradisies in visuele kultuur. Hierdie benadering dien om die sweem van biologiese en kulturele essensialisme te verwyder. Boonop het die studie van pikareske kuns deur vroulike kunstenaars die potensiaal om die idee van 'n pikareske tradisie te verryk. Daar is subtiele nuanses en aksente in die gebruik van motiewe en metafore, wat verband hou met die geslagtelik-gedifferensieerde liggaam en wat nie tevore uitgebuit is deur manlike kunstenaars nie; wat nog nie geïnkorporeer is in ons kulturele erfenis en geassimileer is in die idee van 'n pikareske tradisie nie.

Ten slotte word 'n 'nuwe' metode van ideologie-kritiese visuele analise ontwerp en getoets. Sulke metodes om visuele kultuur te interpreteer is geïnspireer deur die ideologieteorie wat deur Johann Visagie geskets word, en gekombineer met ervaring in die onderrig van beeldende kunsstudente wat 'visueel dink'. Dit

behels om deur middel van visuele assosiasies en jukstaponerings van motiewe en hul metaforiese betekenisse in spesifieke kontekste te redeneer. Die lewensvatbaarheid van hierdie ontledingsmetode en die potensiaal daarvan om kunshistoriese metodes te verryk, word ondersteun deur ontwikkelinge in die visuele tegnologie wat die reproduksie van visuele voorstellings vergemaklik. Dit is egter juis in die konteks van die wêreldwye reproduseerbaarheid van voorstellings en van die radikalisering van die begrip van die *simulacrum* dat die ideologiese mag van voorstellings maklik afgemaak kan word as skadeloos en oneffektief. In die voorgestelde ideologie-kritiese visuele analise word motiewe egter geïnterpreteer as draers van ideologiese 'motiverings', soos in die res van die studie.

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