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Meijer Drees, Marijke

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Pamphlets with Satirical Book Catalogues: the Art of Political Blaming in 1672

Marijke Meijer Drees

1 Introduction

In 1672, the “Year of Disaster” in the history of the Dutch Republic, the Grand Pensionary Johan de Witt and his brother Cornelis became the targets of vehement critique and vilification that was made public through a flood of anonymous pamphlets. Printed pamphlets constituted in those days the news medium that was relatively cheap, fast and easy to produce and that could be rapidly and widely distributed. The majority of the pamphlets that were published in the Republic used Dutch as the main language. Most of the time they were politically and/or religiously charged and published anonymously, without an exact date of publication. The historian and journalist Michel Reinders has concluded that the many thousands of pamphlets that circulated in 1672, were devices of “popular” print and politics. According to Reinders, pamphlets (and, especially, the subcategory of petitions or requests) were the preferred communication tools for citizens on the one hand, while on the other hand regents used, or felt compelled to use, pamphlets in order to inform, explain and educate the citizens, and to stress obedience to the authorities.¹ Literary historians too, have explored Dutch pamphlets from 1672 (and from other years of political turmoil as well). Their insights make clear that news and information, as well as polemics, insinuation and slander that were prompted by the news, went together most of the time with different kinds of entertaining literary forms and modes, and that not only ideological, but also commercial interests (from authors, printers and book sellers) were at stake.²

The mixture of literary entertainment, incriminating contents and commerce is typical for the cluster of satirical book catalogue-pamphlets about

1 Reinders M., *Printed Pandemonium. Popular Print and Politics in the Netherlands, 1650–72* (Leiden – Boston: 2013).

2 Vrieler J., *Het poëtisch accent. Drie literaire genres in zeventiende-eeuwse pamfletten* (Hilversum: 2007); Dingemanse C., *Rap van tong, scherp van pen. Literaire discussiecultuur in Nederlandse praatjespamfletten (circa 1600–1750)* (Hilversum: 2008); Harms R., *Pamfletten en publieke opinie. Massamedia in de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: 2011).

Johan de Witt that I will discuss in this article. Up to now these pamphlets – that fit in the very productive literary traditions of imaginary libraries³ and, in a broader perspective, of literary parodies of nonfictional genres⁴ – have hardly been explored. In two overview articles about phony catalogues and imaginary libraries in the Netherlands they are briefly mentioned and rightly connected with the long list of (for the greater part) fake titles that François Rabelais' hero Pantagruel found in the Library of the Abbey of Saint Victor, in Book II, chapter 7 of *Gargantua et Pantagruel* (1532–1564).⁵ The librarian Vriesema has put forward two observations regarding the catalogue pamphlets against Johan de Witt. Firstly: that they are politically informed (without further specification); secondly: that the book titles in these pamphlets contain insulting innuendo's about De Witt's life. These observations will serve as my point of departure.

My first aim is to explain the blaming of De Witt through these anonymous catalogue pamphlets and to frame it in current rhetorical practices of *ad hominem*-satire. Secondly, I will argue that the derisively presented book titles in the catalogues interact with the radicalization of Dutch political debate on "True Freedom" (Ware Vrijheid) or stadholderless republicanism since the 1650's. These arguments will refine Reinders' general conclusion – regarding "all" the pamphlets from 1672⁶ – as a medium of "popular" political communication. The fact that the content of the anonymous catalogue pamphlets appeals to a relatively high level of knowledge and wit, as we will see, leads to the assumption that members of an elite (both conservative and anti De Witt) might have invented them. As such this cluster of pamphlets not only

3 See: <https://librarianofbabel.wordpress.com/2014/04/25/bibliographies-of-imaginary-libraries/> [last consulted: 23 December 2016]; Werle D., *Copia librorum. Problemgeschichte imaginierter Bibliotheken 1580–1630* (Tübingen: 2007).

4 Rose M., *Parody. Ancient. Modern end Postmodern* (Cambridge: 1995; second edition); Bayless M., *Parody in the Middle Ages. The Latin Tradition* (Ann Arbor: 1999). About parodies of testaments in early modern Dutch pamphlets: Meijer Drees M. – Vrieler J., "Nagelaten nieuws. Testamenten in vroegmoderne pamfletten", *Voors* 22 (2004) 4–28.

5 Vriesema P.C.A., "Imaginaire bibliotheken in Nederland. Ontstaan en verspreiding van de satirische catalogus", in: *Opstellen over de Koninklijke Bibliotheek en andere studies [...]* (Hilversum: 1986) 328–337; Van Vliet R., "Fopcatalogi en spookbibliotheken", *De Boekenwereld* 22 (2005–2006) 143–156.

6 "In total somewhere between one and two million pamphlets flooded the Dutch Republic in 1672. This study is the first analysis of all these pamphlets" (quoted from Reinders, *Printed Pandemonium*, back cover).

satirizes De Witt and his followers, but it also represents a domain of conservative political discourse in favour of the stadholder and against modern ideas of democratic reform that were equally inherent to the radicalized discussion on “True Freedom”.

But before examining the pamphlets more closely in order to build up my arguments, I will add a contextual amendment to the observation of their formal relation with Rabelais’ famous book list.

Not only because of their form (the semi-serious lists of book titles) the connection of these pamphlets with Rabelais’ catalogue is plausible, but also from a book historical point of view. In the decade before 1672 the prestigious printing house in Amsterdam, Elzevier, had published in 1663 a new French edition of Rabelais’ *Works*. As Paul Smith has convincingly argued,⁷ this new edition obviously was considered to be a lucrative business because other printers made several pirate editions, up to 1675. For instance the edition of 1669, that was accompanied by a so called “Clef de Rabelais”, a metaphorical ‘key’ that revealed which real persons – e.g. 16th-century authorities such as king Henri the Second and the Cardinal of Lorraine – were to be seen behind the actors in Rabelais’ stories about Gargantua, Pantagruel, the scoundrel Panurge, brother Jean et cetera. To sum up, Rabelais’ *Works* were still sought-after in Holland around the “Year of Disaster”, and: this state of commercial book affairs may have triggered the adaption of the “Rabelesian” mock catalogue, including its revealing ‘key’ (as we will see in the next section), in order to slander Johan de Witt and his followers in a diverting way.

2 An Overview of the Catalogue Pamphlets

In this section each of the anti De Witt catalogue pamphlets (booklets of 8 till 16 pages), will be introduced and, as far as possible, dated.

⁷ Smith P.J., “Rabelais aux Pays-Bas: l’édition Elzevier (1663) et la présence de Rabelais dans les bibliothèques privées des Hollandais”, in Smith P.J. (ed.), *Éditer et traduire Rabelais à travers les âges* (Amsterdam – Atlanta: 1997) 141–173.

FIGURE 12.1

Catalogus van Boecken in de Bybliothèque Van Mr. Jan de Wit. Door zijn Discipel Den Pensionaris Vivien (n.p., n.n.: n.d.), title page

KNUTTTEL 10343

- *Catalogue of books in the library of mr. Jan de Wit, by his disciple the pensionary Vivien*.⁸ (14 pages). Knuttel⁹ 10343. [Fig. 12.1]

According to its title this first catalogue-pamphlet has been compiled by De Witt's "disciple" Vivien – the name refers to De Witt's secretary and nephew Nicolas Vivien. It contains 70 book titles, which are, as we will see later, partly fictitious and partly existing. The titles are listed as so-called "Mescellania [sic] in Folio" (mixtures in folio). Thirteen of them are attributed to Johan's father Mr. Jacob de Witt (nrs. 1–13), the majority of the 70 titles to "Mr. Jan" or Johan de Witt himself (14–36; 44–66, 69–70), and twenty-five to Cornelis de Witt (nr. 37–70). The numbers 67 and 68 are attributed to Jacob van der Graeff, son of a member of the High Council in the Hague and one of the four men who

8 *Catalogus van Boecken in de Bybliothèque Van Mr. Jan de Wit. Door zijn Discipel Den Pensionaris Vivien*. I have transcribed and annotated the first 15 (of 70) numbers of the *Catalogue* in the *Appendix*.

9 The indication "Knuttel", followed by a number, refers to the so-called "Knuttel-collection" from the Royal Library in The Hague: the far most extensive collection of pamphlets in the Netherlands, with more than 30.000 titles (for the period 1486–1853). W.P.C. Knuttel catalogued the collection during the late 19th and early 20th centuries in ten volumes. All Knuttel-pamphlets were digitalized a few years ago as part of the project The Early Modern Pamphlets Online (TEMPO), currently known as Dutch Pamphlets Online (BrillOnline Primary Sources).

had tried to kill Johan de Witt in the night of 21 June 1672, for which Van der Graeff was beheaded eight days later (the other offenders had escaped).

Because Jacob van der Graeff is mentioned in this undated catalogue pamphlet, it should have been published after 21 June 1672. But was this pamphlet (and its continuations) published before or after the assassination of the De Witten two months later, on 20 August? In reality it was the standard practice that, after the owner of a library had died, his books and manuscripts were listed in catalogues in order to be auctioned within a short period of time, and, as we will see, some of the catalogue pamphlets explicitly refer in their titles to this current practice of auctioning. However, due to the failing foreign policy of Johan de Witt, the anti De Witten publicity campaign was already well under way before the murder in August, and the satirical catalogues fit perfectly in the increased tendency of disgracing the Grand Pensionary and his associates through anonymous pamphlets.¹⁰

- *Appendix of the catalogue of books from mr. Jan de Wit, consisting of a batch of curious and secret manuscripts, which will be sold in the hall of the Hague, Monday 5 September 1672.*¹¹ (8 pages) Knuttel 10436. [Fig. 12.2]

This *Appendix* dates the (fake¹²) auction of De Witt's books on 5 September 1672, sixteen days after the owner's violent death. It contains 38 titles of so-described "Manuscripten In folio" and "Manuscripten in Quarto en minder Formaten" (manuscripts in folio; manuscripts in quarto and smaller formats), again, as is the case in the *Catalogue*, partly fictitious and partly real, but – which makes them slightly different – only occasionally attributed to an author. The *Appendix* finishes with a separate number of "Packetten"

10 See for instance *Den grooten en Witten Duyvel* [...] (*The Great and Witten Devil* [...]), which was translated in German (two versions) and English as well (Knuttel 10317–10323). Shortly after Van der Graeff's execution appeared a pamphlet entitled *De Worstelinge Jacobs* [...] (*Jacob's struggle*) in which De Witt's attacker was movingly portrayed as a pious Calvinist martyr for a good cause: Knuttel 10455; 10456 and 457 ("tweeden Druk"/second print); 10458, 459 ("Derden Druck"/ third print); 10460 ("vierden Druck"/ fourth print); 10461 ("laetste of zeste Druck"/ last or sixth print).

11 *Appendix Van 't Catalogus van de Boecken van Mr. Jan de Wit, Bestaende in een partye van Curieuse en Secrete Manuscripten, Welcke verkocht sullen werden op de Zaal van 's Gravenhage, Maendag den 5 September 1672 en de volgende dagen.*

12 After De Witt's death his books and manuscripts became part of the library from his eldest son, also called Johan de Witt (1667–1701). His large collection (containing not only books, but also coins and other *memorabilia*) was auctioned between 20 October and 5 November 1701 (the year of his death) in Dordrecht: See Van den Bergh G.C.J.J., "What became of the library of grand pensionary Johan de Witt (1625–1672)", *Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis* 66 (1998) 151–170. See also the digital collection of *Book Sales Catalogues Online – Book Auctioning in the Dutch Republic, ca. 1500–ca. 1800* (Leiden – Boston: 2015).

FIGURE 12.2 *Appendix Van 't Catalogus van de Boecken van Mr. Jan de Wit, Bestaende in een partye van Curieuse en Secrete Manuscripten, Welcke verkocht sullen werden op de Zaal van 's Gravenhage, Maendag den 5 September 1672 en de volgende dagen* (n.p., n.n.: n.d.), title page
KNUTTEL 10436

(bundles) with five more book titles that will have been, as we will see later, extremely insinuating.

The next five catalogue pamphlets, Knuttel 10437–10441, are almost all variants of the *Appendix* (Knuttel 10436), with the same content and similar titles. However, in one of the pamphlet titles the date of the auction is changed to 5 July 1672¹³ (Knuttel 10438) and another of the appendices (Knuttel 10440) offers an augmentation with a second part ('vermeerderd met een Tweede Deel'). This *Appendix* contains six more anonymous titles, mainly in Latin, than the original.

13 5 July 1672 was a significant date: one day earlier young prince William III of Orange had been appointed as the new stadholder.

FIGURE 12.3 *Sleutel, Ontsluytende de Boecke-Kas van de Witte Bibliotheek, Met zijn Appendix. Waer in de duystere namen der Boecken klaerlijck warden vertoont en bekend gemaect. Door J.B. Bibliothecarius* (The Hague, *Nil volentibus arduum*: 1672), title page
KNUTTTEL 10442

– Key, unlocking the bookcase of the Witte library. With its appendix. In which the obscure names of the books will clearly be exposed and disclosed. By J.B. Librarianus. In The Hague [...] 1672.¹⁴ (16 pages) Knuttel 10442. [Fig. 12.3] This pamphlet starts with making clear that the *Catalogue* should be read together with the Key because the explanations as given in that former pamphlet

14 *Sleutel, Ontsluytende de Boecke-Kas van de Witte Bibliotheek, Met zijn Appendix. Waer in de duystere namen der Boecken klaerlijck warden vertoont en bekend gemaect. Door J.B. Bibliothecarius* (In 's Gravenhage [...]: 1672).

FIGURE 12.4

Appendix Van 't Catalogus van de Boecken van Mr. Jan de Wit, Bestaende in een partye van Curieuse en Secrete Manuscripten, Welcke verkocht sullen werden op de Zaal van 's Gravenhage, Maendag den 5 September 1672 en de volgende dagen (n.p., n.n.: 1672), title page
KNUTTEL 10443

have not been included in the *Key*. This recommendation is followed by the 70 *Catalogue*-titles and the 38 titles of the *Appendix*, provided with derisive clarifications of the 'obscure passages' ('duystere plaetsen') in the *Catalogue*. The *Key* dates from after the murder (20 August). This can be deduced from the first explanation, which concerns the official positions that Cornelis and Jan de Witt occupied 'during their lives' ('in haar leven', p. 3).

- *Dortish and Hagueish Wednesday and Saturday. Or additional disclosure of the library of mr. Jan de Witt, being a dialogue between an inhabitant of Dordrecht and an inhabitant of The Hague*. Printed anno 1672.¹⁵ (12 pages) Knuttel 10443. [Fig. 12.4]

Both speakers of this dialogue-pamphlet give their comments on some of the titles of the *Catalogue* (Kn.10343). The Hagenaar considers them to be accepted as "authentic" by the readers, because enough eye- and ear-witnesses, so he

15 *Dortse en Haagse Woensdag en Saturday, Of nader-opening van de Bibliotheecq van Mr. Jan de Witth, zynde een samenspraak tusschen een Hagenaar En Dortenaar*. Gedruckt Anno 1672.

says, will declare all the titles to be from original manuscripts. But firstly the Dordtenaar confesses to be surprised that the auction of De Witt's books was announced so early, because when he laid hands on the *Catalogue*-pamphlet, De Witt was, according to the Dordtenaar, either still alive ('of nog in levende lijve') or very recently buried ('eerst korts tevoren begraven'). Apparently, so explains the Dordtenaar, in The Hague one had not taken into consideration the normal period of six weeks between the time of death and the auction.¹⁶ After this allusion to the fast production of the *Catalogue*, he and his discussion partner start commenting on a few titles, but not before having established that the catalogue as a whole is badly ordered. They don't find that surprising at all, because the owner of the books himself, so they state, disrupted the order of everything that he got a grip on. The pamphlet ends with a "Register" (Index), or a list with 57 titles of 'all recently printed pamphlets' ('alle de Schriften (blauwe Boekjes) onlanghs gedrukt'). Number 20 is entitled "Catalogue of the Library of J. de Wit, with its Appendix" and other titles refer as well to existing pamphlets, mainly against the De Witt.¹⁷

3 The Rhetoric of *ad hominem* Satire

The catalogue-pamphlets about the De Witten display in their titles and explaining comments the jibing mockery of *ad hominem* satire. Johan de Witt is the main target, his brother Cornelis and other family members or close relations are included. Johan is accused of corruption, waste of money from the state, nepotism and many other severe aberrations, while Cornelis, being favoured by his brother with offices and titles, is mainly criticized of his conceit

16 'Doe ik 't [*Catalogus*-pamflet] in handen kreeg, keek ik geweldig bril toe dat'er al reets een auctie sou gehouden worden van Mr. Jans Boeken, daer de Man nog in levende lijve was, of immers eerst korts te voren begraven. 'k Kon die Haagse mode niet verstaan dat men geen 6 weken meer wagt [...] maar al soo aanstonts begon te verkopen.' (*Dortish and Hagueish Wednesday and Saturday. Or additional disclosure of the library of mr. Jan de Witt* 5–6).

17 E.g. "9. De Grooten en Witten Duyvel [...]" (Knuttel 10317–10323, see note 12), "24. 't Secreet van de Mis [...]" (Knuttel 10350–10352), "25. Hollands Interest gestelt tegens dat van I. de Wit [...]" (Knuttel 10353), "34. Geneesmiddelen voor Hollands qualen van de Louvesteynse Factie [...]" (Knuttel 10376–10379), "37. Trits van Verstanden [...]" (Knuttel 10373–10375), "39. Brillieris Sondagh praattie [...]" (Knuttel 10490), "46. 't Leven van I. van Oldenbarnvelt, vergeleken met Mr. Ian de Wit [...]" (Knuttel 10432, 10433).

FIGURE 12.5 Jan de Baen, *The Apotheosis of Cornelis de Witt, with the Dutch Raid of the Medway (1667) in the background*. Oil-painting
© DORDRECHTS MUSEUM

and boastfulness. Moreover, since many of the titles are attributed to either Johan or Cornelis, the suggestion is that the brothers are satirizing themselves. The *Catalogue*-numbers 37–41, for instance, all ascribed to Cornelis, offer in turn the ostentatious descriptions of his own dominion Spijkenisse, his contribution to the Dutch Raid on Chatham, his honorary medallions (mockingly referred to as ‘The new Antiquity’) and, finally, ‘The Painting of Chatham’ with a depiction of ‘the Triumphant Dumb-Ass’ (‘den Triumphanten Bloedt-Beuling’), which alludes to *The Apotheosis of Cornelis de Witt with the Dutch Raid of the Medway in the background*, painted by Jan de Baen [Fig. 12.5]. Satirical attack regarding Johan De Witt is offered by (phony) titles and their explanations such as: “Political magnet-stone, by the same author [Jan de Witt]. Teaching how one should produce and maintain conspiracies and schemings in all cities and councils in order to keep persons of his maxims in all offices” (no. 22, *Catalogue*) and “Cromwell’s crocodile tears, by the same author [Jan de Witt]. Being a lamentation on all the blood-shed, the killing and injuring, the crippled and mutilated people, including widows and orphans, resulted from the three English wars. Only started in order to keep Mr. Jan in governance” (no. 31, *Catalogue*) and “The perfect financier/money-lender or profiteer without swindle, by the

same author [Jan de Witt]" (no. 54, *Catalogue*). The two titles attributed to De Witt's attacker Jacob van der Graeff (see the section above) strongly suggest that De Witt is a tyrant. For example: 'Beating to death [is] not a sin in case [it is] practised against a tyrant. Indicating [...] how many kinds of tyrants exist and how many of these are applicable to Mr. Jan' (no. 67, *Catalogue*).

Setting aside the formal presentation of the pamphlets as book catalogues, the practices of mocking, scapegoating and demonizing political authorities in pamphlets by means of *ad hominem* satire were far from exceptional. For this purpose pamphleteers could rely on standardized arguments from the classical art of rhetoric. Blaming was, of course, the counterpart of praising and the rhetoric of both praising and blaming belonged to the ceremonial genre (*genus demonstrativum*). Virtues and personal achievements – in terms of respectful origin, impeccable behaviour, altruistic actions and courageous deeds – offered the topical arguments for the rhetorical laudation of a person in ceremonial speeches, poems, plays, et cetera. However, for the counterpart of blaming someone, any personal stain, aberration, mistake or awkward situation was grubbed up and amplified in order to defame the man (or woman) in question and to expose their vices, sins, misdemeanours, et cetera.¹⁸ This practice in fact still exists until this very day as so-called "gutter journalism" and although the victims wisely try to ignore it most of the time, it undermines reputations and careers.

Considering the catalogue pamphlets from the perspective of rhetorical blame discourse makes plausible why, for instance, number 1 of the *Catalogue* starts with an origin argument in terms of the book title "Pedigree of Methusalem, the old Nero or arch-traitor and tyrant of Loevesteyn, by Mr. Jacob de Wit [...] in which the heroic deeds of this scum's fore fathers are told". This refers to the year 1650 when stadholder William II, prince of Orange, had carried out a military coup on the city of Amsterdam and De Witt's father Jacob – 'old Nero or arch-traitor and Tyrant of Loevesteyn' – with five more political opponents of the prince, all of them burgomasters or pensionaries and prominent members of the States of Holland as well, were arrested in The Hague and imprisoned in Loevesteyn, a medieval stronghold in the province of Gelderland. In the above mentioned dialogue pamphlet the "Dortenaer" adds to this first title of the *Catalogue* that De Witt sr. obviously equalled Nero because of his ruthlessness, and that his boasting on an old and honourable pedigree was unnecessary because, being a timber merchant once, his descent was

18 Meijer Drees M., "Blameren en demoniseren. Satirische pamfletliteratuur in de zeventiende-eeuwse Republiek", *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 126, 2 (2013) 220–233; Meijer Drees M. – De Leeuw S. (eds.), *The Power of Satire*. Topics in Humour Research 2 (Amsterdam: 2015).

neither old, nor honourable, especially since he dared to oppose the Prince of Orange (*Dortish and Hagueish Wednesday and Saturday. Or additional disclosure of the library of mr. Jan de Witt*, 8).

Titles with defaming allusions on Johan de Witt's past also fit into the general pattern of rhetorical blaming. For instance, "Mr. Jan with his 'klopscheentje' (little violin) [...] representing the nightly amusement of the Raemstreet, with comments by miss Coljer [...]" (no. 12, *Catalogue*). This diverting title is explained in the *Key*-pamphlet as:

the treatment on the liberties and correspondences by Mr Jan with Miss Coljer, a cousin of the lawyer Van Andel, who was lodged in de Raemstraat together with De Witt, who was also still a lawyer in those days. The whole world thought that he would marry the girl, but when he unexpectedly became a pensionary, he sacked the sweet maiden. Because she was already pregnant he had to convince a gentleman from Dordrecht to marry her by promising him great favours. The 'klopscheentje' was a certain manner of playing during the many nights they spent together, mixed with some other sweet movements (*Key*, 4).

'We have also heard from the child', confirms the "Dortenaar" in the dialogue pamphlet, adding that De Witt '*pro ratione status* after all was allowed to play, like all other rulers' (*Dortish and Hagueish Wednesday and Saturday. Or additional disclosure of the library of mr. Jan de Witt*, 9).

However, there is more at stake with the satirizing of the De Witten. My final point is that these catalogue-pamphlets also intervened in the contemporary political debate on republicanism. De Witt and his followers are made totally responsible for the radicalization of this debate on account of the several controversial titles of radical republican publicists in his library. In order to build a persuasive case for this claim, the next paragraph will start with briefly sketched outlines of the growing antagonisms in Dutch politics since the 1650's.

4 Political Radicalism and Its Repercussion on the Catalogue Pamphlets

The never uncomplicated relationship between the States of Holland and the stadholder – prince William II of Orange, grandson of the *pater patriae* William the Silent – had dramatically changed since 1650.¹⁹ The immediate

19 Prak M., *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: 2009) 193–198; Israel J.I., *De Republiek 1477–1806* (Franeker: 1996) 669–676.

cause of this was the reduction in the number of army troops, which William in his function of Captain-General considered as undermining the strength of the army and, by extension, his princely authority. In order to bring the States and the most powerful city of Amsterdam on his line, he took the precedent of a former stadholder as an example: the *coup d'état* by Maurits of Orange in 1618/19 that ended with the execution of Grand Pensionary Johan van Oldenbarnevelt. William ordered six prominent members of the States to be arrested (among them, as already mentioned above, Johan's father Jacob the Witt), and he planned the city of Amsterdam to be taken in. This surprise attack failed because the army troops, coming from the North-East, near Hilversum lost their way in the fog and they were seen by a passing postman on horse who informed the city council. However, the attempted attack on Amsterdam together with the temporary imprisonment of De Witt and the other members of the States at Loevesteijn, inflicted deep wounds and were regarded by many as a monarchical seizure of power directed against the States of Holland.

Hardly surprising that immediately after William's unexpected death a few months later, in November 1650, a public debate on the preferred kind of republicanism burst out. A nearly endless stream of pamphlets argued for or against the recent actions of the Prince of Orange and the stadholderate as a political institution. In this polarizing debate the former republican model – the middle way between provincial sovereignty and princely dignity as earlier designed by Hugo Grotius – lost its persuasiveness and started to collapse. Arguments on the country's general "interest", that had already entered the Dutch debate during the peace negotiations of 1648 (Munster/Westphalia), merged with the debate on sovereignty. Both sides claimed that they were defending the interest of the Republic and its liberty. Orangists argued that a stadholder was necessary to protect this liberty against the slavery of foreign domination. Their opponents argued that internal domination by a stadholder, which could not serve but monarchist interest, was comparable with foreign domination and thus meant slavery or the loss of True Liberty ("Ware Vrijheid"), as they mentioned it. In 1654 – meanwhile Johan de Witt had become Grand Pensionary, while the son of William II, born a few weeks after his father's death, still was an infant – when the sea war against the English ended detrimentally to the Dutch Republic, a secret appendix to the Peace Treaty of Westminster added more fuel to the discussion on republicanism. This "Act of Seclusion" officially excluded the members of the House of Orange from any high political office. The States of Holland theoretically justified this action by means of the *Deduction or declaration by the States of Holland and West-Friesland*, written by Johan de Witt (Knuttel 7543).

The *Deduction* is also presented to be one of the titles in De Witt's library. It is attributed to "Mr. Jan" as no. 24 in the *Catalogue* ("Deductie van de Heeren Staten van Hollandt, by the same author [Mr. Jan]") and immediately followed by the titles "Act of Seclusion" ("Acte van Seclusen, by the same author", no. 25) and "Perpetual Edict" ("Perpetueel Edict en eeuwigduerende Wet, by the same author", no. 26) or the resolution enacted by the States of Holland in 1667 in order to abolish the stadholderate in Holland for ever. The implication of mentioning these writings by "the same author [Mr. Jan]" is, of course, that nobody else than De Witt was claiming all political power in the Republic for himself.

Far more incriminating for De Witt, however, is the mentioning in the *Appendix* of titles that refer to radical republican publications from the 1660's. In explicit comments these titles from utterly controversial books are closely linked with, again, "Mr. Jan".

The first one, catalogued as no. 33, is "Tractatus Theologico Politicus". 'Invented', as is added to the title, 'by the apostate Jew together with the Devil in hell, and published with the knowledge of Mr Jan and his mates'. This addition is somewhat further explicated in the *Key*-pamphlet where it says: 'by the apostate Jew *Spinoza*, produced from hell, in which is proven in an unheard atheistic way that the word of God has to be explained by philosophers; printed publicly with the knowledge of Mr. Jan' (*Key*, 15). The title refers to the treatise that Spinoza anonymously had published in 1670, in which he had claimed that total freedom of philosophizing – and by implication of speech – was necessary for the well being of citizens, that God's Word (the Bible) contained contradictions and thus could be contested, and that democracy was the only form of government that provided in individual freedom. Although written in Latin, the enormous controversial impact started promptly after its publication (in 1674 the book was officially forbidden) and linking Johan de Witt's name to Spinoza's treatise was another act of blaming the Grand Pensionary for his pernicious politics.

Finally, another five incriminating book titles are added to the *Appendix*, as numbered "bundles" ("Packetten") and accompanied by the explanation 'All [written] by la Court and improved with comments in the margin by M. Jan':²⁰

1. The Interest of Holland ("Het Interest van Hollandt")
2. Stadholders Gouvernement ("Stadthouderlijke Regeeringh")
3. Considerations of State ("Consideratien van Staet")
4. Political Discourses ("Politieke Discoursen")
5. Maxims of Hollandt with Privilege ("Maximen van Hollandt met Privelegie")

20 "Alles door la Court en door Mr. Jan met Commentarien op de kant verbeterd."

These titles refer to books that were written by radical republican theorists and published during the 1660's. The Leiden businessman (textile merchant) Pieter de la Court is the author of the numbers 1, 3, 4 and 5.²¹ He became, after the early death of his brother Johan in 1660, a very productive publicist who cleverly used his brother's body of thought. His works were reprinted several times and intensively discussed in a flood of pamphlets far into the 18th century. De la Court considered the stadholderate as a fundamental threat to Holland's True Liberty, however, being no regent himself and thus unimpeded by the limits of official responsibilities, he criticized the ruling class of regents as well.²² Other radical theorists, such as the lawyer Johan Uytenhage de Mist, a friend of Pieter de la Court's, supported De la Court's claims with historical arguments. Number 2 is nowadays considered to be written by Uytenhage de Mist,²³ whose name also turns up explicitly in title 51 of the *Catalogue*: "Mr. Jan Pasquil-maker, by the same author [= Mr Jan himself, again], With the matching paraphrase by De Mist."²⁴ De Witt is blamed for having made comments on all the mentioned works of De la Court – a blow-up of the fact that he had commented on just one of his books: *Interest van Holland*. He had removed one paragraph and replaced it by two chapters from his own hand, considering the original text as too critical towards the existing oligarchy in power – in fact, his own regime.²⁵

5 Conclusion

In this case study about the satirical catalogue pamphlets from 1672 against Johan de Wit I have argued that the fake library-catalogue of Mr. Jan and its

21 Wildenberg I.W., *Johan & Pieter de la Court (1622–1660 & 1618–1685). Bibliografie en receptiegeschiedenis. Gids tot de studie van een oeuvre* (Amsterdam – Maarssen: 1986) 93–101 (*Interest van Holland* [...]), 82–92 (*Consideratien van Staat* [...]), 106–109 (*Politieke Discoursen* [...]), 121–122 (*Aanwysing der heilsame politieke gronden en maximen van de republike van Holland en Wet-Vriesland*).

22 Van de Klashorst G.O., "De 'ware vrijheid'. 1650–1672", in Haitsma Mulier E.O.G. – Velema W.R.E. (ed.), *Vrijheid. Een geschiedenis van de vijftiende tot de twintigste eeuw*. Reeks Nederlandse Begripsgeschiedenis, deel II (Amsterdam: 1999) 157–186; Kossmann E.H., *Political Thought in the Dutch Republic. Three Studies*. Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, deel 179 (Amsterdam: 2000); Weststeijn A., *De radicale Republiek. Johan en Pieter de la Court – dwarse denkers uit de Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam: 2013).

23 Wildenberg, *Johan & Pieter de la Court* 112–116.

24 'Mr. Jan zijn Pasquil-maker, door den selven autheur, Met de Paraphrasis van dien, door de Mist.'

25 Weststeijn, *De radicale Republiek* 146, 147; Wildenberg, *Johan & Pieter de la Court* 19–22.

continuations were manifestations of entertainingly designed *ad hominem* satire by which the Grand Pensionary was made responsible for the radicalised republicanism of his time. However, this does not imply that the research on these pamphlets should finish here. Or, as the Hageenaar says in the last catalogue-pamphlet to his discussion-partner: 'I [...] promiss you to come back later in the afternoon after six o'clock [...], because we have to discover and reveal the secret of this catalogue further properly [...] there is still more in it than one thinks.'²⁶

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26 'ik [...] beloof UE. dat ik tot na de middag ten 6 uren wederom [...] sal komen, aldoo wy nogh ordentlijken het secrete van dese Cataloge moeten on[t]dekken, en aen den dagh brengen [...] daer schuylt nogh mer als men wel meent.' (*Dortish and Hagueish Wednesday and Saturday. Or additional disclosure of the library of mr. Jan de Witt*, 10).

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Appendix

Transcription, translation and annotation of a fragment of Knuttel 10343, *Catalogus* [...]: the 'book'-numbers 1–15.

<i>Catalogus van Boecken in de Bybliothèque Van Mr Jan de Wit. Door zijn Discipel Den Pensionaris Vivien.^a</i>	<i>Catalogue of Books in the Library Of Mr Jan de Wit. By his Disciple The Pensionary Vivien.</i>
<p>Mescellania in Folio^b</p> <p>1. Geslacht-register van Mathusalem den ouden Nero, of Aerts-verrader en Tyran van Loevesteyn, door Mr. Jacob de Wit Rekelmr. van Hollandt, midtsgaders zijn Stamboek, Wapenen en Devis, Waer in verhaelt werden de Heötique^c Voorvaders van dat gespuys.</p> <p>2. Scurra of Schurck in Folio door den selven Auteur, Zijnde een klare aenwysinge van zijn Bosch-wandeling, Buycksnijdinge, en Buyckstekingen.</p> <p>3. Memento Mori, door den selven Auteur, Wezende een heldere vertooninge van de naeckte Waerheyt.</p> <p>4. Het Bosch heeft oogen, en 't Velt heeft ooren, door den selven Auteur, Een uytsteekende Puyck-juweel van de ghetuygenissen der stomme, levende, en doodde Blocken, Boomen en Bancken in 't Haeghse Bosch.</p>	<p>Mescellania in Folio</p> <p>Genealogy of Methusalem the old Nero, or Arch-traitor and Tyrant of Loevesteyn,^d by Mr. Jacob de Wit Rascalmr.^e of Hollandt, including his Pedigree, Weapons and Device. Wherein the Heroical Ancestors of that rabble are mentioned.</p> <p>Scurra^f or Scoundrel in Folio by the same Author. Being a clear indication of his Forest-walks,^g cutting bellyaches and twitches in the belly.</p> <p>Memento Mori, by the same Author, Being a Clear display of the naked Truth.</p> <p>The Forest has eyes, and the Field has ears, by the same Author. An excellent Jewel of the testimonies of the silent, living and dead trunks, trees and seats in the Haguish Forest.</p>

^a *Vivien*: Johan de Witt's secretary and nephew Nicolas Vivien.

^b *Mescellania in Folio*: mixture in folio size.

^c *Heotique*: misprint for 'Heroique' – another, compressed edition of the *Catalogue* (Knuttel 10345) gives 'Heroique'.

^d *Loevesteyn*: explained in the article, section "Political radicalism and its repercussion on the catalogue pamphlets".

^e 'Rekenmeester' (financial expert) is garbled into the malapropism 'Reke/meester': *Rascalmaster*.

^f *Scurra* (Latin): loafer.

^g *Forest-walk*: after the murder of his sons in 1672, Jacob de Witt resigned as master of accounts and made walks in the Haguish Forest (Haagse Bos). Panhuysen, *De Ware Vrijheid* 464.

<i>Catalogus van Boecken in de Bybliothèque Van Mr Jan de Wit. Door sijn Discipel Den Pensionaris Vivien.</i>	<i>Catalogue of Books in the Library Of Mr Jan de Wit. By his Disciple The Pensionary Vivien.</i>
<p>5. De Grimlach van de Duyvel tegen Morgendauw, door den selven Autheur, Behelzende een nette explicatie en ontcijfferinge van de serieuze groetenisse van Jacob en zijn beyde Sonen, Cornelis en Mr. Jan.</p> <p>6. Den afgerichten^h Ontfanger sonder verantwoordinge, of reeckeninge, of uytgeeft, door den selven autheur, Demonstrerende de Methode van 't Verkeert Italiaens Boeckhouden door den Regel Falsi, met Instructie, hoemen Weduwen, Weezen en Dienstboden kan bedrieghen met Recepissen in plaets van Obligatien.</p> <p>7. Tweede deel daer van, door den selven Autheur, Leerende hoemen zijn Ontfangers Comptoir aens zijn Commijs Hoogeveen moet overgeven, om in zijn plaets (zonder procuratie) Banckeroet te spelen.</p> <p>8. Een gebanckeroet Coopman is een goet Makelaer, of een gebanckeroet Ontfanger is een goet Rekenmeester door den selven Autheur, Zijnde het oprechte Model van den deurslepen Bedrieger.</p>	<p>The Sneer of the Devil against Morning-dew, by the same Author, Containing a neat explanation and deciphering of the serious greetings of Jacob and both his sons, Cornelis and Mr. Jan.</p> <p>The sly Collector without responsibility, nor invoice, nor expenditure, by the same Author. Demonstrating the Method of Wicked Italian accountancy through the Regula Falsi method, with the Instruction how to deceive Widows, Orphans and Servants with Receipts instead of Obligations.</p> <p>Second part of this, by the same Author, Teaching how one should pass on the Collector's accounts book to his Collector Hoogeveen,ⁱ in order to play Bankruptcy in his place (without procuration).</p> <p>A bankrupt Merchant is a good Broker, or a bankrupt Collector is a good bookkeeper by the same Author. Being the true Model of the sly Swindler.</p>

^h *afgerichten*: (ambiguous) being competent but also sly due to expert knowledge and experience.

ⁱ *Hoogeveen*: Cornelius van Hoogeveen, collector of provincial taxes in Dordrecht until 1650, when he went bankrupt (see also numbers 8 and 9). His uncle Jacob de Witt had appointed him. Van Hoogeveen's bankruptcy became a lingering "affair" that was considered to be harmful to the De Witt's family honor and caused Johan de Witt a lot of trouble (Rowen H.H., *John de Witt, Grand Pensionary of Holland, 1625–1672* [Princeton: 1978] 60–61; 343).

<p>9. 36000 guldens quijschelt om 't vuyl kraem te verschoonen, door den selven Autheur,
Dienende tot onderrichtinge van de nootzakelijckheyt van dien, om geen tweemaal in een Jaer Banckeroet te spelen.</p> <p>10. Loosheyt geen Loosheyt als 't de Boeren mercken, door den selven Autheur. Daer in men kan sien de Guyt in zijn Hart.</p> <p>11. De Pytagoog^j van (Mr. Jan) den navolger van Arminius,^k door den Advocaet van Andel;^l
Het werck van een oprechten Compeer.</p> <p>12. Mr. Jan met zijn Clopscheentje, door den selven Autheur,
Uytbeeldende het Nacht-vermaeck van de Raemstraet, met Commentarien van Juffr. Coljer, alias Paludanus, of Mariage de Conscience.</p>	36000 guilders remission in order to clean the lot, by the same Author, Serving the instruction of the necessity not to go bankrupt twice a year. Slyness [is] no slyness if noticed by the farmers, by the same Author, In which one can see the rogue in his heart. The Pytagoge of (Mr. Jan) the follower of Arminius, by the lawyer Van Andel; The work of a true Comrade. Mr. Jan with his 'Clopscheentje',^m by the same Author, Representing the the nightly amusement of the Raemstreet, with comments by Miss Coljer, alias Paludanus, or Mariage of Conscience.

^j *Pytagoog*: nonce word. Possibly derived from Pytho/Pythus, the oldest name for Delphi, the famous seat of the oracle in Greece.

^k *Armin[i]us*: Jacobus Arminius (1560–1609), who served from 1603 as professor in theology at the University of Leiden. His views became the basis of Arminianism or (Dutch) Remonstrantism, which was vehemently opposed by the Calvinists.

^l *Den Advocaet van Andel*: Johan van Andel, lawyer and friend of Jacob de Witt. Johan de Witt started his professional career as a lawyer with an apprenticeship under Van Andel's guidance and also lived with the Van Andels in their home in the Nieuwstraat in The Hague (Rowen, *John de Witt* 21). Rowen adds that 'Years later a hostile pamphleteer [i.e. the unknown author of the *Key*-pamphlet to which he refers – mmd] asserted that he [Johan] had given his troth to a niece of Van Andel, a member of the Coljer-family, who also lived under the same roof; he broke off with the "sweet creature" (*het zoete dier*) when he became pensionary of Dordrecht in December 1650, but made good his falseness by arranging her marriage to another Dordrechtter.' (Rowen, *John de Witt* 21).

^m *Clopscheentje*: little violin, here with the double meaning of musical instrument and sex organ. The *Key*-pamphlet heaps the numbers 10 and 12 together by explaining: 'Is a treatment on the liberties and correspondences by Mr. Jan with Miss Coljer, a cousin of the lawyer Van Andel [...]' See the article-section 'The rhetoric of *ad hominem* satire'.

<i>Catalogus van Boecken in de Bybliothèque Van Mr Jan de Wit. Door sijn Discipel Den Pensionaris Vivien.</i>	<i>Catalogue of Books in the Library Of Mr Jan de Wit. By his Disciple The Pensionary Vivien.</i>
13. Den tweeden Gamaliel of Judas, door den selve Autheur, Vervattende het geringh onderscheyt van Wit en Swart.	The second Gamaliel or Judas, by the same Author. Containing the minor difference between White and Black.
14. Den getanden Gaper buyten de Speuystraet, ⁿ of Baviaen ^o in een kackstoel; door Mr. Jan: Heeft geen explicatie noodigh.	The toothed Gaper outside the Spuistreet, or Baboon in a potty-chair; by Mr. Jan: Does not need explanation. ^p
15. Cicero van de Officien, door den selven auteur, Deduceerende op wat manier de Geest van de Griffier Musch verhuysde, in wiens Huys Mr. Jan diergelijcken uytgangh verhoopt, uyt vrees van zonder Rouw-mantel luchtigh begraven te werden. Mitsgaders de Dordrechtsche beqaemheyd tot alle Ampten, Griffier. Secretaris, Raeptzeer oft Raetsheeren, &c.	Cicero on Duties [De Officiis], by the same author. Inferring in what manner the Ghost of the Chief Clerk Musch ^q moved, in whose House Mr. Jan expects a similar end of his life, from fear of being buried lightly without mourning cloak. Together with the Dortish capability of all Offices, Chief Clerk, Secretary, 'Raeptzeer' ^r or Counsellors, etc.

ⁿ *Speuystraet*: Spuistraat, street in The Hague (center). Since 1669 until his death in 1672 Johan de Witt lived nearby, at the Kneuterdijk number 6.

^o *Baviaen* (*Baboon*): 'Bavianen' was since the 1610's the nickname for Arminians or Remonstrants (see annotation k. Van Deursen A. Th., *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen. Kerk en kerkvolk ten tijde van Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt* [Franeker: 1998] 320–321).

^p The *Key*-pamphlet (p. 4) offers this (still puzzling) explanation: 'Being the resemblance between *Mr. Jan* and the Pok-meester [i.e. a quack who was supposed to cure venereal diseases – mmd] in the Spuy-street, where the toothed Baboon hanged out. (Sijnde de gelijkenis tusschen *Mr. Jan* en de Pok-meester in de Spuy-st[r]aet, daer de getaende Baviaen uythanght.

^q *Musch*: Cornelis Musch (1593–1650), Chief Clark of the States General (appointed in 1628) and (in)famous for his corruption. The exact circumstances of his death on 15 December 1650 are unclear. According to contemporary rumours Musch, being hunted by agony of conscience, took his own life. However, the funeral ceremony in The Hague (23 December) was an official mark of honour to Musch (Knevel P., *Het Haagse Bureau. 17de-eeuwse ambtenaren tussen staatsbelang en eigenbelang* [Amsterdam: 2001] 123–144).

^r 'Raeptzeer': malapropism of 'Raetsheer' (Counsellor) meaning a greedy person.