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PICTURING NEW NETHERLAND AND NEW YORK.
DUTCH-ANGLO TRANSFER OF
NEW WORLD INFORMATION

Frans R.E. Blom

New Netherland in the Eyes of the Beholder

The WIC settlements in America, and New Netherland in particular, remained basically *terra incognita* in its early years for most people in the home country. Over the first four decades after Hudson's discovery in 1609, only a few books would provide public information on this overseas area.¹ These limited descriptions, including the ones by Johannes de Laet in 1625 and 1630, mapped the coastlines and rivers on the basis of travelogues and journals, in order to indicate places for shipping, anchoring and trading. Obviously, they did not reach a wide circle of readers, since they addressed merchants interested in the West India Company's opportunities. Moreover, these observations on New Netherland were relatively small elements in the overall descriptions of the West which were published in large and expensive volumes and were affordable exclusively to high class readers. This all changed with the publication of Adriaen van der Donck's *Description of New Netherland* in 1655, a new type of representation in terms of its contents, readers and purpose. The book had a great impact on the information, distribution and visibility of New Netherland, in Amsterdam as well as in London after the English had taken over the colony in 1664. It is the aim of this contribution to trace and interpret the altering textual and visual information during that process in a functionalistic approach, following the text from its first edition in Amsterdam through its many-sided afterlife, both in the Dutch Republic and in England.

In its most recent 2008 translation, the *Description of New Netherland* is qualified as 'an essential first-hand account of the lives and world

¹ See Asher G.M., *A Bibliographical and Historical Essay on the Dutch Books and Pamphlets relating to New Netherland and to the Dutch West-India Company* (Amsterdam: 1854).

of Dutch colonists and northeastern Native communities in the seventeenth century'.² For however much this is true, the textual images presented in the *Description* of 1655 were part of a major emigration campaign in the city of Amsterdam. The opening pages ostensibly dedicate the *Description of New Netherland* to the powerful commercial city Amsterdam, in the persons of its four Burgomasters: Joan Huydekoper, Cornelis de Graef, Johan van de Pol Hermansz and Hendrik Dircksz. Spieghel. All four are addressed in a direct and unconcealed request to take concern of New Netherland, now that 'the West India Company is in a fallen state'.³ With this phrase, which occurs twice on the same page, it might seem as if the *Description* was challenging the Company's authority and monopoly in the colony.⁴ However, the tone is softened in the following pages, through a second dedication addressing 'The Directors of the honorable West India Company'. Clearly, Adriaen Van der Donck and his Amsterdam publisher tried to find as much support as possible for their ultimate goal, the populating of New Netherland: 'And because it is Your daily concern to bring people to that land [...] I felt the urge to give this [description] to my fellow countrymen, to the bold and skillful people in particular. Those who might otherwise not know of that good and healthy air and the potentials of New Netherland, can now be stimulated to go there.'⁵ The double dedication of the *Description* prudently avoided a

² Van der Donck A., *A Description of New Netherland*, ed. C.T. Gehring and W.A. Starna; transl. D.W. Goedhuys (Lincoln: 2008), quote from the foreword by Russell Shorto. Biographic details on Van der Donck are mainly based on Shorto R., *The Island at the Center of the World. The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony that Shaped America* (New York: 2004).

³ Van der Donck A., *Beschrijvinge van Nieuw-Nederlandt (ghelijck het tegenwoordigh in Staet is) begrijpende de Nature, Aert, gelegentheyt en vruchtbaerheyt van het selve lant [...]* (Amsterdam: Evert Nieuwenhof, 1655) fol. *2v: 'Ende al-hoewel den Staet vande ghemelde West-Indische Compagnie nu als vervallen schijnt te wesen, soo is nochtans dat Noorder gedeelte van America, genaemt Nieuw-Nederlandt (daer af dit Tractaetjen is handelende) van soodanighe waerdigheyt, dat het met groote reden in goedige achtinge genomen mach en behoort te worden, ghemerckt den grooten handel op't selve dagelijcks meer ende meer gedreven wordende.'

⁴ A direct challenge to the West India Company's authority in New Netherland had been published five years earlier, by the same author Adriaen van der Donck: *Verloogh van Nieu-Nederland, wegens de ghelegentheyt, vruchtbaerheyt, en soberen staet desselfs* (The Hague, Michiel Stael: 1650). The English translation, entitled 'Remonstrance', as published in *Narrative of New Netherland*, ed. by J.F. Jameson in 1909, is on the internet: <http://etext.teamnesbitt.com/books/etext/etext02/nwnth10.txt.html>

⁵ Van der Donck, *Beschrijvinge van Nieuw-Nederlandt* fol. *3v-4r: 'Ende also uwe E.W. dagelijcks met seer groote vlijt ende sorge, alles zijt bestellende, om dat Lantschap met bequaeme Colonien van Menschen te versien [...] daerom hebbe ick niet konnen

self-operating or even subversive tone for the book and anticipated every possible critique in that respect by the Company. At the same time, positioning the book in their service encouraged the West India Company to change their former restrictive trade-focused attitude towards the colony. Moreover, the Company's commitment to the growth of the New Netherlands' population was underscored, when Van der Donck, just before publishing the book, passed the care and copyrights of his *Description* into the hands of the West India Company in February 1655.⁶

Adriaen van der Donck's initiative to stimulate emigration to New Netherland, where he had lived for almost a decade, was now gaining *momentum*. After six years of lobbying in *patria*, he had won the three major parties involved over to his side, the States General in The Hague, the City of Amsterdam and the West India Company. But, apart from the institutions mentioned in the dedication, what kind of people were supposed to take notice of Van der Donck's *Description of New Netherland*? A bit of an answer is on the title page, as the book focuses on 'the natural disposition of the land, its situation and fertility, as well as its profitable and desirable opportunities, both indigenous and imported, which might contribute to the people's conditions there'.⁷ Thus, the *Description* represented an *exposé* of opportunities for

nalaten alle mijne Lantsluyden ten besten, ende voornementlijck veele kloekchertighe en bequame Luyden, mijne Mede-Burgeren, dit te laten toe komen, opdat sij, die andersins soo grondelijck van de goede ende gesonde lucht en vruchtbaerheyt des gemelten Lantschaps Nieuw-Nederland, niet bewust en zijn, te beth mogen opgeweckt worden om derwaerts te gaen.'

⁶ Van der Donck's patent on the *Description of New Netherland* was granted by the States-General and the States of Holland already in 1653. It was passed by the author onto the West India Company in February 1655, when he left for America again; see Van der Donck A., *Beschryvinge van Nieuw-Nederland, (gelijck het tegenwoordigh in staet is) begrijpende de nature, aert, gelegentheyt en vruchtbaerheyt van het selve landt [...]* Den tweeden druck. Met een pertinent kaertje van't zelve landt verciert, en van veel druck-fouten gesuyvert (Amsterdam, Evert Nieuwenhof: 1656) back side of title page: 'also 't Octroy van 't selve boeck door hare Ho: Mo: de Heeren Staten-Generael, ende de Ed: Gr: Mo: Heeren Staten van Hollant ende West Vrieslant op den persoon vande gemelte ADRIAEN vander DONCK is gedecerneert, ende nochtans sulcx de Compagnie is rakende, aen wien de gemelte vander DONCK 't voorghedachte Octroy ende Tractaet heeft ter handen ghestelt ende sijn recht overgelaten.'

⁷ The subtitle (Amsterdam: 1655) reads: 'Begrijpende de Nature, Aert, gelegentheyt en vruchtbaerheyt van het selve Lant; mitsgaders de proffijtelijcke ende gewenste toevallen, die aldaer tot onderhout der Menschen, (soo uyt haer selven als van buyten ingebracht) gevonden worden.'

people who lived in New Netherland, or rather for those who might consider a life there.

Underscoring this persuasive character, the book also comprises a dialogue section pondering the question of emigration. The rhetorical techniques applied, were well known devices in Amsterdam opinion making publications at that time. The central issue is discussed by different fictitious, though clearly type characters, representing different viewpoints. The dialogue in the *Description* features two parties in opposition: a Dutch patriot on the one hand, and a New Netherlander on the other. Of course, the debater in favor of emigration is on the winning side, arguing that a strong population in New Netherland would eventually benefit the United Provinces, while at the same time stressing the numerous private opportunities in cultivating the colony.

The title page as well as the dialogue section reveals the *Description*'s pragmatic purpose. Both must be considered instruments to raise the interest of ordinary people. In order to reach that particular group of readers, the printing work of the *Description* was not expensive: the text had a compact layout, in gothic type, without any illustrations in the first edition. It was a low-cost popular printing production, done by one of the many anonymous printers at the time, Evert Nieuwenhof, a fairly unknown low-market oriented Amsterdam publisher [Fig. 1].⁸

As a printer and bookseller Nieuwenhof did, however, play an important role in the New Netherland population initiative. Soon after the first print of the *Description*, Nieuwenhof produced a second edition in the following year. The new print was corrected and enriched by a map of the colony's territory, which also included a view of the city of New Amsterdam on Manhattan.⁹ Furthermore, the *Description* in its second edition had a new concluding section that was of high relevance for its intended readers. It consisted of the Conditions for Emigration, which were agreed upon, most recently, by the City of Amsterdam and the West India Company.¹⁰ A list of 35 articles guar-

⁸ The Short Title Catalogue Netherlands (STCN) lists 12 publications by Evert Nieuwenhof. All are in the vernacular for common readers.

⁹ The view of New Amsterdam was based on a drawing, dated around 1650, which was made on the spot and brought to the Republic in order to underline the miserable state of the colony. See Gosselink M., *Land in zicht. Vingboons tekent de wereld van de 17^{de} eeuw* (Zwolle: 2007) 49–50.

¹⁰ The pirate edition of the Conditions was published with 'the consent of the City Burgomasters', according to the printer's impressum on the title page: '*Conditien* [etc.] t'Amsterdam, Met consent vande Ed. Hoog. Achtbare Meeren [sic], de Heeren Borgemeesteren, By Evert Nieuwenhoff Boeckverkooper op 't Ruslandt in 't jaer 1656.'

Fig. 1. Anonymous, *Map of New Netherland and view of New Amsterdam*, engraving, both added by Evert Nieuwenhof to the second edition of Adriaen van der Donck's *Beschryvinge van Nieuw-Nederlandt* (Amsterdam: Evert Nieuwenhof, 1656). Amsterdam, University Library.

anted as much help and support as possible in terms of, for example, decent transport, good lands, financial aid, temporary tax reduction, protection and freedoms in trade. For registration, the readers were directed to a special board, consisting of both City and Company representatives, which was open for registrations on Tuesdays and Thursday afternoons in the West India Company's House. For this practical information, the publisher Nieuwenhof had pirated the official City pamphlet of the Conditions as published by Jan Banning in the same year.¹¹ Evidently in a lower quality than the official one, it was an extremely useful addition to the *Description of New Netherland*, in terms of the book's agenda [Fig. 2].

The reach of Van der Donck's campaign to inform readers in Amsterdam about New Netherland must have been considerable. After all, the consecutive editions of his book were published within a one year's period. Additional evidence for the impact of the *Description of New Netherland* was found in a pamphlet of 1659, entitled *'t Verheerlickte Nederland*.¹² This dialogue about the Dutch overseas expansion features three Dutchmen from the lower social strata, discussing the topic of emigration. One person is a *schipper* representing an eyewitness of the New World. The others are a peasant and a city artisan, both potential emigrants. From the start the dialogue turns to New Netherland, as both patriots wonder what life looks like out there in the northern parts of America. Both confess, they have no clue at all about New Netherland, and in reply, the *schipper* does not give his own eyewitness account, but instead suggests going to a book shop to buy 'the recently published *Description*, by a man called Verdonck who has lived in the colony for many years and learned a lot about life as it was there'. To stress the importance of the book, a footnote (the pamphlet's only one referring to a publication) assures that it means *The*

¹¹ *Conditien die door de heeren burgemeesteren der Stadt Amsterdam* [etc.] (Amsterdam: 1656); Koninklijke Bibliotheek, pamphlet nr. 7776a, with digital reproduction on internet: <http://www.geheugenvannederland.nl/?/nl/items/KONB04:8>

¹² [anon.] *'t Verheerlickte Nederland door d'herstelde zee-vaart* ([s.l.]: 1659); Koninklijke Bibliotheek, pamphlet nr. 8176, p. 13. (The pamphlet mentions the author's name Verdonck, by mistake). The *Schipper* to the Farmer: 'Wel soo wil [ick] u l. aengewesen hebben een Boecksken van nieuws uytgegeven by eenen *Verdonck* een persoon die verscheyden jaren in Nieu Nederlandt verkeert en daar van vele dinghen vernomen heeft, daar sult ghy in kunnen lesen, hoe het met vele dinghen en insonderheyt met de Boeren handel gelegen is; als ghy in Stee komt soo koopt soo een boecxken, daar sult ghy groot kennisse van dit nieu Nederlandt in ervaren / meer als ick u voor uw soude kunnen daar van seggen.'

Fig. 2. Evert Nieuwenhof's pirate edition of the *Conditions of Emigration* adopted in the 2nd ed. of *Beschryvinge van Nieuw-Nederlandt* (Amsterdam: Evert Nieuwenhof, 1656). Amsterdam, University Library.

Description of New Netherland. For the same reasons, Van der Donck and his publisher Nieuwenhof also featured in another pamphlet about emigration, *Kort Verhael van Nieuw-Nederlands gelegenheit*, published in Amsterdam in October 1662.¹³ Here, their status as the prime source of information about New Netherland is, once again, underscored, as they are qualified as the authorial displayers of New Netherland (in Dutch: ‘de N. Neerlantze Vertoonders’).

Adriaen van der Donck’s *Description*, therefore, can hardly be overestimated as a source of textual and, in the second edition, visual information on New Netherland. For the people in Amsterdam, it offered the most complete and up to date portrait of the vast and promising West India Company possession in North America. The volume of about one hundred pages written by an eyewitness, who had lived there for almost a decade, featured basically all aspects of the territory, from its short history since Hudson’s discovery to its geography, natural resources and the ethnography of the indigenous people. In its essence, however, this literary landmark of colonial representation functioned as an incentive for emigration. As a stand alone publication on just that particular part of the New World, it was a relatively small and rather cheaply executed production. For its agenda of persuasion, this low-market oriented source brought selective information and images of New Netherland to common readers. In that respect, the *Description of New Netherland* might still be called a first-hand account, although many elements suffer from manipulative fashioning.

As a potential area for emigration, New Netherland is first of all described by Van der Donck as a lawful Dutch property, since the Dutch had been, in terms of its European history, its ‘first discoverers’.¹⁴ The exploration of Manhattan in 1609 had been a Dutch

¹³ *Kort Verhael van Nieuw-Nederlands gelegenheit, Deughden, Natuerlijke Voorrechten, en bysondere bequaemheid ter bevolkingh*[etc]. ([Amsterdam]: 1662; Koninklijke Bibliotheek sign. 893 E 99. See Blom F.R.E. and Looijesteijn H., “Selling the South River” to be published in the *Halve Maen. Journal of the Holland Society of New York*, in 2009. The *Kort Verhael* has been dated in the preface on fol. *4r. The anonymous publication is generally accepted to be written by Franciscus van der Enden. *Kort Verhael* 27: ‘Ziet hierover breeder Vander Donks t’Samenspraek, of Discours over de gelegenheit van N. Nederlandt, by Nieuwen-hof gedrukt’. Also, on p. 26, the *Kort Verhael* mentions and quotes the subversive *Discours on New Netherland* of 1650 (see n. 4), without knowing Van der Donck as its author: ‘zo zeggen de Gemeenten, of Vertoonders van N. Nederlandt, in ‘t meer gemelte Vertoogh oock mede dat het zelve voor zoveel hare ervarentheit bereykt, geen Provincie in Europa behoeft te wijcken.’

¹⁴ Van der Donck, *Beschryvinge van Nieuw-Nederlant* (1656) 1–3.

exploit, with a Dutch ship, commissioned with Dutch money from the VOC. Even Henry Hudson is presented as a Dutchman, being born an Englishman, but having lived in the Netherlands for a long time and worked in the service of a Dutch Company. In order to stress the Dutch claim on New Netherland, Van der Donck added the argument that the native inhabitants he had personally spoken to, remembered that they had never before seen a ship like the *Halve Maen*, taking it for a ghost, or a giant fish, or a monster fallen from the sky, and that this was their first encounter with any hairy and bearded human beings like the Europeans aboard.¹⁵

Having depicted New Netherland as a lawful and trustworthy Dutch possession, Van der Donck starts his eulogy on the potentials of the new country. Here, his thematic argument lies in the comparison of New Netherland with the homeland, in which America wins out in all aspects of geography, flora and fauna, minerals and natural resources. In short, New Netherland is represented by its infinite opportunities. On the other hand, however, it is most telling, that in shaping his images Van der Donck predominantly talks in terms of the future and remains silent about life in the current situation there. Nothing is said about the actual Dutch social organization and the administrative structure of the colony. Likewise, a description of the city of New Amsterdam is markedly absent. Most likely, Van der Donck did not want to bring up topics of this kind, in order to conceal the bad state of affairs and serious social problems there. After all, the social policy of the West India Company in New Netherland had been utterly discouraging so far, the colony being in a miserable state until then.¹⁶

A third major strategic manipulation is at work in the chapter on the indigenous people. How did native inhabitants fit into this persuasive image of the promised land? They certainly could not be omitted, as they were a considerable majority in the colony. For commercial

¹⁵ Ibid., 3: 'Doen sommige van haer /ons Schip [Halve Maen] van verre eerst sagen aenkomen / al heel niet wisten wat daervan te oordelen / ende in swaer beduchten stonden / of het oock spook of diergelijcke werck was / dan of het uyt den Hemel of uyt de hel mochte komen / andere meenden of het wel een seltsame Vis ofte Zee-monster soude moghen wesen / ende of diegene die daer op waeren / beeter nae Duyvels of nae Menschen geleecken [...] gelijk my dickwils verscheyden Indianen getuyght hebben/dies wy het oock voor een seker bewijs houden / dat de Neerlanders de eerste vindere en besitters van Nieuw Nederlant zijn.'

¹⁶ The WIC's poor social policy and the bad state of the country had been key themes in the earlier part of Van der Donck's campaign. See his *Vertoogh van Nieuw Nederlant*, as mentioned in n. 4.

interests, too, they were an important factor. But on the other hand, the colony had recently suffered serious losses in the Dutch-Indian wars that had killed quite a number of colonists. Nonetheless, Van der Donck chose to make a systematic ethnography, based on his personal observations and daily contacts. As a result, the *Description of New Netherland* comprises a section of 37 pages, presenting fresh, detailed and many-sided textual images of 'The way of life and the peculiar customs of the indigenous people'.¹⁷ Starting with their physical appearance, food, clothes and houses, the focus turns towards the more intimate aspects of matrimony, birth giving, breast feeding and sexual behavior. The following categories describe formal features of burying rituals, ceremonies, languages and money. Next come their daily occupations, work and leisure time, health care, agriculture and hunting. And for the last part, Van der Donck focuses on their social stratifications, warfare, justice, political structure and finally, religion.

Within this portrait, however, some motives of persuasion are evident. In the first place, the *Description* fashions the Indians with quite an attractive appearance. As for the color of their skin, the author carefully anticipates standard European readers' reactions: 'Their yellowness, however, is not so bad, and quite a lot of them, both men and women, are in fact well proportioned and attractive people'. Moreover, he underlines the commonness and similarity to the Europeans. The similarity is mentioned for both sexes, although there is a significant bias with regard to the indigenous women:

It is true that they appear singular and strange to our nation, because their complexion, speech and dress are so different, but this, on acquaintance, is disregarded. Their women are said to be well favored and fascinating. Several of our Netherlanders fell in love with them (before our women came over). Their faces and countenances are just like theirs and as various as they are in Holland, seldom very handsome, and rarely very ugly, and if they were instructed as our women are, there would be little or no difference in their qualifications.¹⁸

¹⁷ Van der Donck, *Beschryvinge van Nieuw-Nederland* (1656) 52–89: 'Vande seeden en ongemeene eygenschappen der oorspronkelijke Ingeboorne in Nieuw Nederlandt'.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 53–54: 'Evenwel dese gheelheyt daer sy de eene meer als de andere / doch alle aen vast zijn / is sodanigh niet ofte men vindt onder haer veele soo wel Mans als Vrouwen / fraye bevallighe personen / en aengesichen / 't is waer / in 't eerste aensien komen sy onse natie wat vreemt te vooren / door dien dat het Couleur / de spraeck en Kleedinghe soo veel verschillende zijn / maer by die daer wat veel mede ommegeen is dat haest over / en het schijnt dat hare Vrouwen mede eenige aentreckende bevalligheydt over haer hebben / door dien verscheyde *Neerlanders* (cer

Moreover, the *Description* continues to stress the seductiveness of the indigenous women in the paragraph on marriage. As the promiscuity of the native people is mentioned here, special attention is given to girls of marriageable age. They are said to be extremely liberal in their sexual relations: their unlimited lasciviousness is characterized as a socially accepted phenomenon, as long as the girls are paid for service. According to Van der Donck, they would be ready to share their body under any circumstances, without resisting: 'most of the time men are welcome, the girls are utterly free in this respect, and they won't refuse, and all of them will act as prostitutes'.¹⁹ In this respect, the text even anticipates the uncomfortable effects of this representation, in the topical category of physical health care. Among the Indians, Van der Donck writes, venereal diseases like Gonorrhea or Syphilis are easily and successfully cured by the use of indigenous herbs: 'Sometimes they do this so readily that Italian doctors could learn from them'.²⁰

Finally, the indigenous women feature favorably in the most threatening of all ethnographic categories, Indian warfare and weaponry. With the recent bloody Kieft-wars and the horrible tactics of nightly assaults and guerrilla wars, the *Description* could not deny nor omit the facts here, even though the images were a nightmare for people considering emigration. However, in order to temper any frightened reactions, Van der Donck assures the reader that the Indians were

de meenichte van *Neerlantsche* Vrouwen daer te bekomen waren) daer seer op verslingerde / haer aengesichten en tronien / zijn als hare en verscheyden als hier te Lande / selden uytsteekende schoon ende noch minder uytmunten leelijck/ doch als sy geoefent werden als die van onse Vrouwen/ zouden sonder twijffel weygh ofte niet van hier verschillen.'

¹⁹ Ibid., 61: 'Maer als zy Vrijsters ofte andersins ongebondene zijn/ is daer niet aen ghelegen/ sy mogen dan doen soo het haer ghelieft/ als sy haer daer voor maer laten betalen/ voor niet houden sy het schandaleus en Hoerachtigh te zijn/ de reste wort niet qualijck genomen als het haer gebeuren magh. [...] Het gebeurt oock wel dat een vrye Vrouws-persoon wel een tijdt by yemant sal slapen en de Hoere daer van zijn/ soo lang hy haer te vreden stelt/ en ghenoech geeft/ daer sy nochtans niet mede zoude willen Trouwen.' This notion was repeated by Van der Donck in *ibid.*, p. 63: 'Als alles wel is/ en sy aen niemandt verbonden zijn/ spelen zy meest alle van de lichten aen/ en zijn geweldigh liberael over dat werck/ by tijden ende wijlen sullen sy geen tocht weygeren/ en meest alle soo meenigh alser zijn/ van kant aen de Hoer spelen.'

²⁰ Ibid., 69: '[Sij] ghenesen oock dickwijls Clap-ooren en alle andere diergelijcke Venus-vruchten/ somtijds wel soo ghemackelijck/ datse meenigh/ *Italiaens Meester*, daer in souden beschamen/ in dit alles doense met Kruyden Wortelen/ Bladen en diergelijcke dat het Landt haer gheeft.'

no match in open warfare, through lack of any military structures or hierarchy on their side.²¹ As for the unexpected attacks, Europeans did not have to fear either, he writes, because they would be warned by the Indian girls: 'The native men will not easily reveal their secret assaults to us, but they will to their women. And as soon as the women know, they will tell the Europeans (whom they love in general), fearing an assault will be to their own disadvantage'.²² This creative addition, which again activates the image of New Netherland's indigenous women and Dutch men in a peculiar relationship, was a cheap trick. But, then again, the *Description of New Netherland* was a cheap persuasive book.

Amsterdam's Comfortable Taste of Exoticism

The Amsterdam emigration program for New Netherland, enhanced by Van der Donck's convincing images of a land of opportunities, did have its effects. From 1655 onward, during the final decade of New Netherland, significantly more people settled in the colony. However, the emigration came to a halt at the dawn of the second Dutch-Anglo War in 1664, when New Amsterdam was taken by the English, renam-

²¹ Ibid., 72: "Van hare oorlogen en wapen". This is repeated in the Dialogue section of the same book, 95: 'Wat de naturellen ofte Indianen aengaet daer is niet veel aen vast/ zij sien nu selfs wel dat haer dingen niet veel te beduyden hebben en anders niet zijn als om een Branthout of een nieuw aenkomer die niet beter weet verbaest te maecken/ leest inde Beschrijvinge van Nieuw Nederlandt, onder den tijtel van hare Oorlogen/ ghy sult sien datse geen Regimenten/Compagnien of Geleederen formeeren kunnen/ endatse den eenen over den andren te weynigh ghesagh hebben/ soo dat sij niet kunnen uytrecten/ ten anderen den Oorlogh laetstleden met haer gevoert/ doen wij niet half soo sterck van Menschen waren als nu/ heucht haer noch soo wel datse niet licht yet sullen beginnen.' (As for the Naturels or Indians, they are not a great danger. They know by now that they are no serious factor, even if they might frighten a Coward or an inexperienced newcomer. Read about this in the chapter about their Warfare, where you will find that they do not fight in well ordered regiments, and they know not of any military hierarchy either, thus being quite harmless. We have had recent wars, when we were much fewer people then, and the memory thereof will stop them from starting any fight.)

²² Ibid., 72: 'Sy zijn furieus genoeg in het eerste aenvallen/ en onghenadighe overwinners/ listigh om hare aenslagen te beleggen/ en als die ghevaerlijck zijn voeren zyse gemeenlijck ter sluyck/ seer stil en by nacht uyt: practiseren altijdt hinderlagen te leggen en haer vyandt te verschalcken/ maer voor de vuyst/ in het vlacke Veldt ofte Water zijn het sonderlinge geen Soldaten / maer wel gewoon het loopen in tijds ghebruycen/ of sy moeten beset zijn/ dan vechten zy hartneckelijck tot den laetsten man/ soo langh sy eenighsins staen kunnen. [...] De Mans sullen aen de onse niet licht eenige aenslagen openbaren/ maer wel aen hare Vrouwen/ en die weten het soo ras niet of zy sullen het den Christenen (daer zy in 't gemeen veel van houden) te kennen geven/ soo sy maer oordeelen het eenighsins tot haren naerdeel kan strecken.'

ing the city on Manhattan and its vast surrounding territories to its present name. After the Peace of Breda in 1667, when New York was definitely recognized as English territory, most of the former colonists chose to stay, but it was Britain that took up the population of the area. For that matter, representations of New York began being made for the English market, just as they had previously been produced in Amsterdam. The English, however, did not build up these images from scratch. Just as they took over New Netherland, they also appropriated Dutch descriptions of the area. As a prime source of information, Adriaen van der Donck's *Description of New Netherland* played a dominant role in that unique Dutch-Anglo interference and knowledge transfer.

The original author, however, did not live to witness his London debut. He had died in the colony, soon after his return from Amsterdam somewhere around 1655. Likewise, his publisher Nieuwenhof, who had been so active in the emigration book market, had left the stage.²³ Moreover, the patent of the *Description of New Netherland* that was about to end in 1670, did not seem to be a priority for the West India Company anymore, since it had lost the desire to assert its intellectual rights after the loss of the colony. Therefore, the text was beyond control and consequently appeared in various books and with different adaptations.

Before crossing the Channel and entering the English book market, Van der Donck's representation first went through a remarkable make over in Amsterdam. In 1671 the Dutch compiler Arnoldus Montanus adapted the *Description* for his vast volume *The New and Unknown World, or the Description of America and the South Land*.²⁴ Thus, the information on New Netherland which had functioned as a stand alone description addressing common readers in the social context of an emigration program was integrated into a full scale overview of the Transatlantic World, meant for the eyes of the lucky few. The editor involved was Jacob van Meurs (or Meursius). Renowned in the Amsterdam top market printing business and a skilful engraver, Van Meurs produced major historical and geographical works and travelogues with dazzling illustrations to visualize the distant world. So, Adriaen van der

²³ The Short Title Catalogue Netherlands does not give any Nieuwenhof publications after 1663.

²⁴ Montanus A., *De nieuwe en onbekende weerd: of Beschryving van America en 't Zuidland: vervaetende d'oorprong der Americaenen en Zuidlanders, gedenkwaardige togten derwaerds* [etc.] (Amsterdam, J. Meurs: 1671).

Donck's sober *Description of New Netherland* made its appearance in a luxury folio volume, in two-color printing with fine engravings.

As for the textual images of New Netherland, the Montanus-Meurs production epitomizes the *Description* by following the topical categories set out by Van der Donck. Thus, readers find all the animal species, plants and minerals as featured in the earlier work. Additions are few, but significant. First of all, the history of the colony, as it had been written by Van der Donck, has been updated for the last decade. The insertion focuses, however, on Amsterdam rather than New Amsterdam, as it describes the City's involvement in the recent New Netherland emigration program.²⁵ For that matter, also, the exact number is given for the first wave of City emigrants that boarded the December fleet of 1656: 'seventy households and also three hundred *Waldensen* [exiled protestant refugees] from Piemonte'. This first fleet was followed, according to the historical update, by a prosperous growth in New Netherland's population in the years after. The most recent information reported in the book, however, is that the colony had gone over to the English and that for the colonists under their new masters, life in New York was hard, since trade to the home country had come to a stop.

Just as this historical update was formulated at the working desk in Amsterdam rather than based on an overseas eyewitness account, so too was the newly added paragraph picturing the city of New Amsterdam or New York.²⁶ Again, the insertion does not adopt any fresh transatlantic information at all and is rather a complementary textual interpretation or *legenda* of the city's view which was taken from the map in Van der Donck's second edition [Fig. 3].

²⁵ Ibid., 134, left and right column: 'De goede gronde en gelegendheid van *Nieuw-Nederland* maeckte d'Amsterdamsche Burgemeesteren gaende, om derwaerds een volksplanting af te vaerdigen. Weshalven [sij] verdraegen met de West-Indische Maetschappy, onder goedvinden der Algemeine Staeten in 's-Graeven-Hage. Op 't jaer sestien honderd ses en vijftig scheepten dieshalven seventig huisgesinnen, waer by sich voegden drie honderd verdrevene Waldensen uit Piemont, na Nieuw Nederland over. Den vijftienden van Wintermaend staptenze by trommelslag binnen scheepsboord. De volkplanting sette gelukkig voort: als ondertusschen d'oorlog tusschen d'Engelsche Kroon en 't Vereenigde Nederland opstond: sulx na een tien-jaerig besit, onmagtig tegen d'Engelsche, haer aen die landaerd over gaf. Zedert kreeg Nieuw-Amsterdam de benaming Nieuw Jork. De verheerde ingezetenen vervielen tot groote ongelegendheid, alsoo de koophandel t'eenemael stil stond.'

²⁶ Ibid., 123, right column.

Fig. 3. Anonymous, *View on Nieuw Amsterdam*, engraving published by Jacob van Meurs in the luxury volume *De nieuwe en onbekende weereld: of Beschryving van America en 't Zuid-land* (Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1671), 124. Amsterdam, University Library.

Although this addition in itself does not give any new information, the visual image of New Amsterdam as copied from the *Description*, is slightly adapted. Remarkably, palm trees are depicted in New York.²⁷ With that visual element, Arnoldus Montanus, or rather his engraver-publisher Jacob van Meurs, was perhaps trying to meet the exotic expectations of his comfortable readers in Amsterdam. In any case, the manipulative strategy is also at work in the catalogue of animals. In addition to all the creatures mentioned by Van der Donck, Montanus inserts an animal which the eyewitness source had failed to notice during his nine year's stay in the colony: the unicorn.²⁸ Montanus and Meurs thus brought the exotic animal *par excellence* before their readers' eyes, both in text and in an engraving.

²⁷ Ibid., 124.

²⁸ Ibid., 125, with illustration on 126.

In a more subtle way, the indigenous people of New Netherland, too, are transformed into this exotic mode of stereotyping. In this respect, Van der Donck's focus on the Indian's attractiveness is structurally stripped off. In their appearance, for example, Montanus closely copies Van der Donck, but he leaves out a positive evaluation like 'they all, both men and women, have beautiful faces'.²⁹ Likewise, the indigenous women and their liberal attitude towards sex, which Van der Donck had used as a selling point, are castigated. When describing their ways of face painting, Montanus uses his source very selectively: he copies the phrase that the painted faces looked very noble (in Dutch 'staedig'), but he leaves out the fact that Van der Donck had characterized those distinguished looks as false to their moral behavior: 'they then may look very honorable, decent and noble. In fact, all lasciviousness seems to be completely absent now, more than it is, as a matter of fact.' Also, Montanus is significantly selective in copying the passages about the native women in times of breast feeding or monthly periods.³⁰ Both authors, in this respect, remark that the women did not have sex during these periods. But Montanus cuts the additional remark, that for all other occasions they were extremely liberal, having mostly, as Van der Donck writes, 'the lights on'.

Thus, the Montanus-Meurs production revived Van der Donck's persuasive eyewitness account only to a certain extent. At their working desks in Amsterdam, they re-created this distant world with its exotic stereotypes. In accordance, some fantasy elements were inserted, like palm trees and unicorns. Also, the Native Americans were remodeled. Van der Donck's positive attitude was replaced by a rather flat typecast description in which a common European disapproval of primitive people prevailed. After all, that was the 'exotic taste' of well-to-do readers in Amsterdam, who preferred traveling imaginatively, and thus stereotypically, to the other side of the ocean.

²⁹ Ibid., 125, 129, left column: "Gestalte der Nieuw Nederlanders". Omitted is the Van der Donck phrase 'Sij hebben alle so Mans als Vrouwen schoon gesicht'.

³⁰ Ibid., 125, 131, right column, leaving out the Van der Donck phrases: 'Als alles wel is, en sij aen niemandt verbonden zijn, spelen zij meest alle van de lichten aen, en zijn (soo wel vrouwen als mannen) geweldigh liberael over dat werck, zonder eenighe schaamte te hebben [...] Maer by tijden ende wijlen sullen sij geen tocht weygeren, en meest alle soo meenigh alser zijn, van kant aen de Hoer spelen.'

The London Transfer

Almost simultaneously to the modified Amsterdam publication, the Dutch textual and visual images of New Netherland made their way to England, where public information about the New York territory was highly wanting since the seizure of the colony in 1664 and the official recognition three years later. It was the British writer John Ogilby who translated Montanus's work in his famous overall description of the New World, *America* (1671).³¹ Ogilby was a prolific translator, editor and publisher of illustrated geographical works, just as the Montanus-Meurs company was in Amsterdam. So, again, the English description of New York was not a traveler's account. *America* was compiled from 'most authentick authors' as the title page mentions, 'augmented with later observations, and adorned with maps and sculptures'.

The geographical map that opens the New York section is the unmodified copy from Montanus; even the former names of 'Nova Belgica' and 'Nieuw Nederlandt', which England's appropriation program had deliberately changed, were left in tact in the engraving, just like the Dutch spelling of the neighboring territory of 'Nieuw Engelandt'. The other engravings in the chapter, too, are copied, as is the whole of the Montanus-Meurs text on flora and fauna and the indigenous inhabitants. People in England, too, could see and read that there were palm trees in Manhattan and unicorns in New Yorkshire. Likewise, London readers were provided with the same stereotypes of the indigenous people that had met with reader's expectations in Amsterdam before. After all, Ogilby, too, was a top market book entrepreneur, styling himself as His Majesty's Cosmographer and Geographic Printer.

But this was only true in part. Ogilby's description of New York shows a remarkable imbalance compared to its Dutch source. Preceding the translated part, the text inserts a second, less comfortable voice. The chapter opens with a history of the colony, which denies all West India Company claims ever made there. The traditional Dutch argument, that the land was discovered during an exploration commissioned by a Dutch Company, is neutralized in the statement that Henry Hudson was an Englishman, 'acting all that he did by

³¹ Ogilby J., *America: being the latest, and most accurate Description of the New World* [etc.] (London, John Ogilby: 1671).

commission of the King of England'.³² The 1664 seizure, therefore, was 'an undoubted right', according to the King's 'just pretences to all that usurped territory called New Netherland'. Consequently, it was thought fit not only to change the Dutch place names, but also to alter the magisterial structure of the territory, so that 'all civil policy is conformable to the methods and practice of England'. Thus, the insertion rewrites the traditional history, clearing the area of any Dutch claims and names, and presents a safe, fully recognizable English framework.

Next to the historiography, the description of New York city also takes on an English coloring.³³ It is described as a considerable town, with 'fair streets and several good houses'; whereas 'the rest are built much after the manner of Holland, to the number of about four hundred houses'. Obviously, this representation places the Dutch and their former house building on a secondary level, even the store houses of the West India Company. Likewise, two major New York landmarks dating from the Dutch period, the Reformed Church and the wind mill, are ignored in the description. In stead, full focus is on the fortress, now called St. James's and portrayed as an invincible stronghold and a guarantee of safety, with its capacity of three hundred soldiers and officers, furnished with arms and ammunition, its four bastions, walls of stone lined with a thick rampart of earth and its fresh water well. Security is also the theme in the final lines about the city's position in the bay, affording 'a safe entrance, even to unskillful pilots', where in lee of the town side 'ships of any burthen may ride secure against any storms'.

This new voice, which stresses Englishness and security, is also heard in the concluding part of the chapter on New York. Here, following the descriptive part on flora, fauna and indigenous people, Ogilby's text continues with a geographical survey of New Yorkshire.³⁴ All over the territory, tracks of land are indicated and qualified in terms of 'excellent good land, and good conveniences for the settling of several towns'. The borders of the Hudson River stretching over a hundred miles towards Albany, offer 'as good Corn land as the World affords, enough to entertain hundreds of families'. Likewise, to the west

³² Ibid., 168.

³³ Ibid., 169.

³⁴ Ibid., 180–81.

another river would offer spacious meadows on both sides, ‘enough to feed thousands of cattel’ as well as ‘capable for the erecting of several towns’. In fact, this areal survey did not meet the expectations of well-to-do home readers, but offered instead detailed settling information in a catalogue for colonists.

A Second Opinion: New York in the Eyes of the Beholder

The newly inserted elements in Ogilby’s description of New York have perceptibly nothing in common with the themes and tone of the main body based on Montanus. The opening paragraph with the historiography and description of New York City focuses on the Englishness of the territory, and the theme of security and reliability. Likewise, the final survey of the land is written for the sake of emigration. The explanation for this two-sided voice in Ogilby’s description of New York, is that the compiler used a second current text. Contemporary to the Montanus publication in Amsterdam, London had witnessed the publication of *A brief Description of New York, formerly called New Netherland* (London: 1670). Its author was Daniel Denton, who had gone to America in 1640, and served as a Justice of the Peace in New York since the beginning of the English administration. Denton, therefore, was an eyewitness of New York (like Adriaen van der Donck had been fifteen years before) who went back to England in 1670 to set up settlement enterprises. His book, too, was a stand alone representation and, also similar to Van der Donck, the text was a low-market oriented publication addressing common people, in low-cost printing work without engravings. The *Brief description of New York* mentions these social pragmatics on its title page. It focuses on New York’s ‘situation, fertility of the soyle, healthfulness of the climate and the commodities thence produced’, a phrase resembling the way in which Van der Donck introduces his *Description of New Netherland*. Moreover, Denton’s book offers ‘some directions and advice to such as shall go thither’, as well as ‘an account of what commodities they shall take with them’. In this respect too, Denton echoes his Dutch counterpart, whose second edition had incorporated the *Conditions* with practical information, rules and guidelines for emigration [fig. 4].

In spite of a similar agenda, the main difference between the two authors lies with the way in which Denton models the indigenous people to suit the purpose of his book. The Indians, in his view, are

Fig. 4. Daniel Denton, *A Brief Description of New York, Formerly called New Netherlands* [etc.] (London: John Hancock, 1670). San Marino CA, The Huntington Library.

‘but few, and those few no ways hurtful but rather serviceable to the English’.³⁵ It is telling, in this respect, that Denton does not give the people a face in his description. Readers do not get any clue about their physical appearance. Moreover, in Denton’s account of their customs, the Indians play football or cards for recreation, ‘at which they will play away all they have’.³⁶ Likewise, they are, in his words, great lovers of strong drink, killing each other in drunken matches. Also, they are portrayed as utterly corrupted in their religious affairs, in social matters like matrimony and even in their healthcare.

In particular, Denton focuses on their relation to the colonists, describing them as peaceful Indians, who ‘have not resisted or disturb’d any Christians there in the settling or peaceable possessing of any lands’.³⁷ As part of this argument, they are made virtually harmless as a threat to the settlers: ‘Here one may lodge in the fields and woods, travel from one end of the countrey to another, with as much security as if he were lock’d within his own Chamber: and if one chance to meet with an Indian town, they shall give him the best entertainment they have, and upon his desire direct him on his way.’³⁸

In Denton’s representation, the Indians, for the first time in the tradition of describing the colony, were marginalized. Van der Donck had portrayed them at large as a people of flesh and blood, an autonomous and significant factor in the colony, both in numbers and in physical presence and in economic importance. After him, Arnoldus Montanus had adapted the portrait to meet Amsterdam’s stereotypical taste for exotic people. And now, in London, they were finally stripped of their dignity and depicted at the edge of extinction. The overall message of Denton’s representation intimated that security was guaranteed for settlers and that the indigenous people had already lost the game, as his description of the Natives opens with this horrifying belief in manifest destiny: ‘it is to be admired, how strangely the Natives have decreast by the Hand of God, since the English first settling of those parts. [...] It has been generally observed, that where the English come to settle, a Divine Hand makes way for them, by

³⁵ All quotations in this paragraph taken from Denton D., *A Brief Description of New York, Formerly called New Netherlands* [etc.] (London, John Hancock and William Bradley: 1670) 6–8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

removing or cutting of the Indians, either by wars one with the other, or by some raging mortal disease.³⁹

Having espoused this tragic idea, it may be clear why John Ogilby in his compilation volume *America* did not solely rely on either Denton or Montanus as his source for the description of New York. Montanus after all was a Dutch description meant for a Dutch audience. It surely needed to be adapted to the new state in the colony, and most of all to its new readers. Therefore, his fellow countryman's recent description was useful for its 'Anglicized' historiography, as well as for the most recent eyewitness state and survey of the colony. On the other hand, however, Denton did not offer the elements needed for a full survey of living nature and ethnography meeting the top market standards of well to do readers. Those elements, as well as the imaginative illustrations, were gathered from the Dutch tradition as formulated in the recent publication by Montanus.

Epilogue

The history of representations of New Netherland and New York shows that a widespread public image of this part of the new world was generated only when the WIC's position was weakening and its restrictive policy on trade and population in New Netherland challenged by other players, such as the City of Amsterdam and the States-General in The Hague. Adriaen van der Donck's eyewitness *Description of New Netherland* (1655) may be regarded as the main source of information, both for its timing, its popularity and its many-sided afterlife. As it was emigration in the first place that urged the need for descriptions, maps and pictures of the colony, this particular agenda ruled the exposé by Van der Donck, both for its historiography, the display of its natural resources and potential, and the portrayal of the native people.

For Amsterdam, the interest of emigration ended in 1664. Consequently, descriptions of New Netherland for lower class readers dried up, while the cheap Van der Donck original was converted into luxury editions meeting the standards of stereotypical exoticism. Meanwhile, the English administration over New York urged the need for information on the other side of the Canal. But different from the earlier

³⁹ Ibid., 6–7.

Amsterdam situation, the London images and texts were created both from new data and a recycling of the Dutch tradition. The import of Dutch information on the New World, however, was a very discriminating process. Dutch elements in the image of the colony would not survive, neither in historiography nor in the textual picture of New York City.

Simultaneously, a new eyewitness account for lower class London praised the colony for its peace and comfort under English administration, and, therefore, as an excellent place for emigration. Again, human, European aspects of the new world proved to be one of the most fashionable categories, since the Dutchness was marginalized in its history, social structures and cityscape. However, another striking contrast to Van der Donck's composition was the reshaping of the indigenous people for the purpose of the picture, as a virtually non-existent entity.

The ultimate representation of New York in John Ogilby's *America* of 1671 staged all different shapes of the Van der Donck text since its first publication 15 years before. Elements closest to the original were the observations on landscape, flora and fauna. They offered apolitical information for any kind of reader, be it high or low class, Dutch or English. Major re-fashioning, on the other hand, resulted from the change in functionality. In its afterlife the rhetoric of representation was adapted for new social groups of intended readers, in a new political environment. In the long process, passing through the hands of various authors with different agenda's, the remainders of Adriaen van der Donck's *Description* ended up in a peculiar amalgam of eyewitness observations, persuasive emigration propaganda, armchair exotism, and English-Dutch antagonism: a most hybrid composition and, at points, an uncomfortable mix of images.

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