

Dangerous Drugs

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Dangerous Drugs

*The Self-Presentation of
the Merchant-Poet Joannes Six
van Chandelier (1620–1695)*

Ronny Spaans

Translated by Ciarán Ó Faoláin

Amsterdam University Press



Amsterdam
University
Press

The publication of this book has been made possible by: Programredaktør Andor Birkeland og hustru Halinas legat, Dr. C. Louise Thijssen-Schoute Stichting, and Nord University.

The translation of the book has been possible by a grant from the Norwegian Research Council.

Cover illustration: Egbert van Heemskerck, *An Alchemist in His Study*, 17th century. Oil on canvas.
(© Science History Institute, Philadelphia).

Cover design: Kok Korpershoek

Lay-out: Crius Group, Hulshout

ISBN 978 94 6298 254 3

DOI 10.5117/9789462983543

e-ISBN 9789048532582

NUR 694

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Knowing oneself is a reason,
That fell down from Heaven.
Blessed is the one, that in his mind
Knows what he is, and what he does.
– Joannes Six van Chandelier¹

The terrifying sight of sword hanging
from the gilt panelled ceiling over purpled necks beneath.
– Persius²

1 'Sich self te kennen is een reên, / Die, van den Heemel viel beneên. / Wel saaligh, wie in syn gemoed Kent, wat hy is, en wat hy doet', 'Myn antwoord, aan den selven' (J258), l. 1–4.

2 'Et magis auratis pendens laquearibus ensis / purpureas subter cervices terruit', Persius, Satire 3, l. 40. In *Juvenal and Persius*, trans. by Susanna Morton Braund, 2004, pp. 76–77.

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Acknowledgements

Joannes Six van Chandelier is considered one of the most difficult poets in Dutch literature. Compared to Constantijn Huygens, who is usually considered to be ‘the puzzle’ of seventeenth-century Dutch poetry, ‘Six is difficult squared; many passages in his poems can only be called sequences of riddles’, writes the critic C. Kruyskamp.¹ The poet himself even thematises the high degree of difficulty in his poems. In ‘Raad aan den Geenen, die myn rymen mishagen’ (‘Advice to the ones who dislike my rhymes’) (J393), Six describes his verses as hard nuts on which the reader will break their teeth, only to find them empty when they are cracked open. With this study, however, I want to show that the tough ‘nuts’ of Six’s poetry are not empty, but contain substantial experiences of a human being in a time rife with changes and contradictions.

My interest in Six began with a fascination for the metaphorical and playful language he used as a Dutch *metaphysical poet*, but I soon found out that there were also exciting aspects to his work that had not been explored. The key to any new understanding would be to read him not only as a poet, but also as a druggist. His so-called hard poetic nuts, then, were not so empty after all. They contained insights that could cast new light not only on early modern Dutch art and literature, but also on medicine, trade, and science. These insights also have a further relevance beyond Six’s own time. The reader will easily be able to transfer the discussions in Six’s texts to our own time – not just moral and medical arguments against drug abuse, but also discussions of ecology, and on the local food movement, as an alternative to the global food model, which often sees food travelling long distances before it reaches the consumer. We can also recognise discussions on materialism, on the artificial versus the authentic, and on the cult of personality within politics and culture. In addition, a debate in Six’s poetry about the chemical use of drugs, in which concepts such as the artist/artisan as ‘a creator’, and the human body as God’s ‘work of art’ are important, has parallels with today’s ethical discussions on genetic engineering.

But cracking open these nuts has not been easy. This study started as a PhD project at the University of Oslo in 2006. Over the years, I have been working continually, with breaks both long and short. I have consulted with a number of people along the way. Without their help, I would not have been able to crack open these nuts. First, I would like to thank Kirsti Sellevold, Knut Stene-Johansen, and Terence Cave for their excellent advice on the approach to Renaissance poetry

1 C. Kruyskamp, ‘Poësy van J. Six van Chandelier. Bloemlezing uit zijn dichtwerk met inleiding en aantekeningen door Dr. G.A. van Es’, *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde*, 1954, p. 79.

as I was starting my research. I would also like to thank the late Jan Karlsen at the Department of Pharmacy at the University of Oslo for the keen insights he offered on pharmacy in the early modern period. Henrik Keyser Pedersen of the University Library of Oslo deserves my special thanks for purchasing books of a wide variety relevant to my research. I would also like to thank a number of Dutch scholars who were of considerable assistance during my six-month residence at the University of Utrecht in 2007. Lia van Gemert provided important materials for my research and offered many keen insights into Dutch Renaissance culture, particularly medicine and the life and work of the doctor Johan van Beverwijck. Lia also put me in touch with other Dutch researchers, including Nina Geerdink and Helmer Helmers, who were also kind enough to offer their own insights and share their considerable expertise. The e-mail correspondence I had with Saskia Klerk, Marlise Rijks, and Gary Schwartz on the history of drugs, medicine, and art in the Netherlands was of considerable help to me. I thank Anne Goldgar for sharing information with me on Abraham Six and Maria de Haen. I would also like to thank Riet Schenkeveld-van der Dussen for the valuable expertise and insights she shared in our e-mail correspondence, and Vincent Buyens and Monique A.F. Peters for allowing me to read their unpublished theses. Monique also gave generously of her time to discuss her extensive knowledge of Six van Chandelier and his contact network, in sometimes lengthy conversations at the Amsterdam Stadsarchief. I would also like to mention here – and thank – another expert on the historical archives of Amsterdam, Wim Heijnen, whom I got to know accidentally, having ordered a book at his antiquarian bookshop, Antiquariaat Academia. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that Wim was a virtual mine of information on Six van Chandelier and his family and network, and I am most grateful to him both for our extensive conversations, and his for the access he gave me to his rich archive.

I would also like to thank Carmen Verhoeven and Phil Dehing for their indispensable help with my research on the Ledger of the Wisselbank. The latter has my special thanks for the clear introductions he offered to trade and financial transactions in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century – territory that is not readily understandable to a scholar of literature. Through my good friends Guido van Rijkom and Ron Wiebolt, I came into contact with Inge Fraters, whose language corrections in the original Dutch manuscript of this book were of immense help. I am also grateful to Inge for sharing with me her own study of tea in the early modern Netherlands. Jessica Allen Hansen deserves my thanks for the language corrections she made on an earlier version of Chapter 7. It gives me great pleasure to think back to my visit to the Six Collection in Amsterdam, where Jonkheer Six van Hillegom showed me treasures from his collection of books and art, and also shared a wealth of helpful and interesting information on Six van Chandelier. I would like to thank Håkan Sandell and Eirik Lodén for their stimulating comments

on the analysis of Six's poems; Giuliano D'Amico and Rune Spaans for helping me with the illustrations included in the book; Roar Kjærnsstad and Hans de Boeck for their inspiring conversations on Renaissance art; and Hilde Norrgrén, Mikael Males, and Tor Ivar Østmoe for their help with the Latin texts I have consulted for this book. In 2015, I defended my thesis at the University of Oslo. I would like to thank my opponents, Freya Sierhuis and Harold J. Cook, and the chair of the defence, Jon Haarberg, for all the further input they gave at that point, and which has only enriched this book further.

Just as the writing process has taken a long time, the path from my first contact with Amsterdam University Press to the publication of the book has also been long and sometimes tortuous. And throughout this process, several people have given generously of their time, and their assistance has been indispensable. I would like to thank Benjamin Roberts for the pleasant and informative discussions we had in Amsterdam on early modern drugs and academic publications. I am grateful, too, to Inge van der Bijl, Erika Gaffney and Chantal Nicolaes just as much for their patience as for the guidance they offered in shepherding the manuscript through to final publication. My thanks also go to Thijs Weststeijn and Nelleke Moser, members of the Editorial Board for the series *Studies in the Dutch Golden Age*, for their enlightening comments on the manuscript. And I am most grateful to the translator of this book, Ciarán Ó Faoláin, not only for producing a fine translation, but also for the many helpful comments and suggestions for improvement he offered along the way.

In closing, I would like to say a special thank you to my dear friends Gudmund Harildstad, Per Thorvald Larsen, Raf De Saeger, Klaus Johan Myrvoll, and Lars Pharo for their invaluable support, their constructive critiques and, yes, their occasional gentle nagging: 'How's that manuscript coming along?' Well, here it is! And last but by no means least, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my wife, Maria, and our son, Stefan. Without their nearly infinite patience, this book would not have been possible.

I dedicate this book to my father, Leen Spaans (1948–2010), in loving memory.

Part I

Introduction

1. Theory and reception

Abstract

In the seventeenth century, the Dutch Republic dominated global trade. Historical research has stressed the positive effects of exchanges of goods and knowledge. In literary criticism, the merchant-poet Joannes Six van Chandelier (1620–1695) is similarly presented as a poet with an interest in the material world. But Six's work includes a number of poems on exotic materials that not yet have been examined. These texts show that global trade, to a greater extent than previously understood, gave rise to a certain moral anxiety. I argue that Six's approach to exotics drugs is therefore determined by a process of self-criticism, but that it also contributed to an important shift in early modern science, from drug lore based on mythical concepts, to botany based on experience and observation.

Keywords: Global trade, early modern, poetry, exotic drugs, history of science, botany

[I]t gives me [...] pleasure to watch the ships arriving,
laden with all the produce of the Indies and all the rarities of Europe.
Where else on earth could you find, as easily as you do here,
all the conveniences of life and all the curiosities you could hope to see?
– Descartes in Amsterdam¹

'Rarities for Sale'

'Rariteiten te koop' ('Rarities for Sale') (J158) is one of the most remarkable poems of Dutch literature. I will therefore use this poem as a point of entry to the study of Six's poetry. The text was printed in the collected poems of the merchant-poet Joannes Six van Chandelier, *Poësy* (1657).² The poem was printed in red ink, and thus

¹ Descartes, letter to Balzac, 5 May 1631. René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, 1991, vol. 3, pp. 31–32.

² The number preceded by a 'J' refers to the order of Six's poems in A.E. Jacobs's annotated edition of the poetry of Six van Chandelier: Joannes Six van Chandelier, *Gedichten*, 1991. I include Jacobs's numbering

attracts the reader's attention at once (Plate 1). 'Rariteiten te koop' probably refers to more exotica than any other literary text in the early modern Dutch Republic. And that's not all: the poem introduces a new item that surpasses all these exotica: an eccentric substance that has an irresistible appeal to Dutch consumers. The text, which comprises 162 lines, is a panegyric to a new, and until then unknown, commodity that has appeared on the market. The text begins, 'Maar nu is, op Hollands stroomen, / In myn handen, stof gekomen,/Ongehoort, en ongesien' ('But now, there has come a commodity onto Dutch streams, and in my hands, /which no one has heard of or seen before') (l. 7–9).

The new article distinguishes itself from other foreign goods by its really unusual origin. This time it is not aromatic resins, beautiful precious stones, or plants from desolate regions in the East or West Indies (l. 10–19 and 25–30):

Niet als quam se, uit verre landen,
 Van de west, of oosterstranden,
 Uit een landschap sonder liên.
 Als een gomboom afgedroopen,
 Als een beekjen fyn ontloopen,
 Als een duuren bergh ontschaakt,
 Als van boomen, of van planten,
 Neevens soete waaterkanten,
 Of van seldsaam kruid gemaakt.
 Neen, se komt, van 't ryk der Britten,
 [...]
 S'is van 't bloed van Kooningh Karel
 Schynende een robyne paarel,
 Gloênden ink, en purpre verf,
 Steen, en hout, en roode roosen,
 Rooder dan het wroegend bloosen,
 Om het kooninghlyk verderf.

It did not come from distant lands,
 From the shores of the West or the East [Indies],
 From a landscape without people.
 As from a tapped rubber tree,
 As from a nicely panned brook,
 Or extracted from a hard mountain,

of the poems throughout the book. The poet spelled his name Joannes Six van Chandelier, but in the research on his poetry, the name 'Jan' has also been used. I will use the former spelling.

Or from trees, or of plants,
 By freshwater shores,
 Or made of a rare herb.
 No, it comes from the British kingdom.
 [...]
 It is the blood of King Charles,
 Shining [as] a ruby pearl,
 Glowing ink, and purple dye,
 Stone, wood, and red roses,
 Redder than the blushing outrage
 Of the ruin of the king.

Paradoxically enough, this is an exotic product that originates from within Europe itself, produced by political disturbances in a country right next door to the Netherlands. The red ink used in this poem thus suggests the blood shed by Charles I. 'The sun never saw something so precious', 'the blood is a shining ruby pearl', according to the poem.

'Rariteiten te koop' is a paean to the attractiveness of this blood. The merchant, who speaks in the poem, turns to all sorts of participants on the market, retailers and consumers alike, and boasts about the exceptionally beautiful red colour of his product. The blood is a luxurious dyestuff that, in its lustre and radiance, surpassed various rare and exotic red commercial products that were on the market, whether dyes, gemstones, red flowers or varieties of fragrant wood. Altogether, about 25 different precious exotic goods are mentioned in the text. In Appendix I to this book, I give a more detailed overview of all the exotic drugs that it mentions. One of these substances will be listed here: Tyrian purple, the legendary dye of the Roman Empire (l. 41). Purple was the most expensive and most exclusive colour in antiquity. The *toga picta*, which was worn by Roman generals in their triumphs, and by Roman consuls, was dyed purple. But the substance was therefore also associated with opulence and decadence. The embodiment of the city of the antichrist, the whore of Babylon, was, according to the Book of Revelation (Chapter 17), 'dressed in purple and scarlet'. The blood is presented as a wondrous substance that can be put to all kinds of uses. Among other things, the blood delivers social mobility. By wearing clothes dyed with this blood – 'kingly costumes', as splendid as those of the biblical Solomon – one grows in stature (l. 37–51). At the same time, the text shows the sensory and physical reactions that consumption of the new commercial product arouses. Drinking wine that is mixed with this blood tastes like the 'blood of saints' (l. 61–66). The seductive praises speak to the most secret dreams of consumers. The blood produces an ecstasy, a collective daze, among consumers in the Dutch marketplace for exotica.

An interesting moment in the text comes when the merchant-poet Six includes himself among the avid consumers. Six presents himself in the poem as a merchant,

as a poet and as someone in love: he says he feels 'his heart opens / At the sight of the bouquet / Of early flowers from that precious martyr's blood' (l. 121–123). The blood would be a lovely rosary for a certain Roselle – the recipient of Six's love poems – and in the form of ink, the blood could do wonders for his career as a poet – it would give life force to his verses – and also for other poets who write only 'rhymes'. In the lines that immediately follow, he advises his fellow rhymesters to follow his example. By using wonderful human blood as ink, Dutch rhymesters could bring the ideal of a Golden Age to fulfilment (l. 141–146).

All these ambivalent statements give us a clear picture of the poem. It is not, of course, a straight-up praise poem, but an ironic one – a satirical text. The blood is not a wondrous substance, but a diabolical product. When we read the following lines of poetry, this becomes quite obvious: Six tells us what must be done with their wondrous poems if no one recognises their brilliance: royally gilded poetry is worth no more than 'gilded' toilet paper (l. 147–150). The last lines of the text compare the seller of the king's blood with the one who sold Jesus: Judas. The merchant asks 'thirty stivers' for the 'wondrous blood', 'a good deal less than the amount for which Judas hanged himself' (l. 159–162). This first discussion of the poem in this chapter will be decisive for the approach I take in my research. The problems and questions that 'Rariteiten te koop' raises will determine the approach to and method of this study. 'Rariteiten te koop' is about the representation of material objects in the Netherlands of the early modern period, especially exotic drugs. At the same time, it is about the self-presentation of an early modern merchant. As we have seen, the text does not give a positive image of the trade in exotica. But as I see it, the text has not only a satirical, but also a self-critical function, given the place that the poet assigns himself within it.

The self-presentation of a druggist-poet

Within the research that has been done on early modern Dutch culture, a lot of attention has been paid to the trade in, and the exchange of, exotic materials. However, this attention is not consistent with the depiction of such materials in 'Rariteiten te koop'. Historical research has stressed the positive effects of global trade, and how these effects are expressed through objects of art. This tells us how Amsterdam became a centre for global exchanges of tastes, techniques and knowledge, demonstrating the curiosity and the engineering of the Dutch.³ The representation of materials in Six's poetry has been presented in similar terms. In

3 For example, recent scholarship on the introduction of Asian lacquerware, porcelain and banyan (morning gowns) into the Dutch Republic shows how these novelties were praised and even copied by

Dutch literary criticism, Six is regarded as a poet with a conspicuous interest in the material world. He represents a so-called realistic poetics. This attention includes a love for food and a curiosity about foreign things. 'Rariteiten te koop' has been treated separately from these questions; it has been interpreted as a satire on Oliver Cromwell's beheading of the English king.⁴

In this study, by contrast, I argue that Six himself is an example of the very phenomena he ridicules in his satires. The function of the poem is, in my view, self-criticism and self-examination. This applies not just to 'Rariteiten te koop', but to a large group of poems in *Poësy* (1657). The prominence Six accords himself in 'Rariteiten' can, as we shall see, also be found throughout his entire poetic *oeuvre*.

In this book, I make two arguments: first, I oppose the view that this and other poems of Six only have a satirical function, and argue that they are motivated by self-confrontation. Second, I show that this self-confrontation is followed by a process of purging, which is expressed both in religious and in medical terms. Six suffered from a spleen disease, and I argue that his perception and treatment of his illness must be understood in the light of his ambivalent perception of his merchandise. These two hypotheses share the premise that exotics in the Dutch Republic were regarded with greater ambivalence than we see in the latest historiography. This points to a secondary hypothesis: I hope to show that exotic materials – both as rhetorical figures and tropes and as physical objects – are perceived as a source of moral and medical unease. Here it is important to emphasise that this applies to the exotics in which the early modern *koopman-drogist* traded – *drogerijen*. By means of an investigation of the historical definition of 'drogerij', I argue that this moral unease is related to problems which a modern reader would associate with drug abuse: intoxication, lust and illness. In this discussion, I will take as starting point a debate on foreign versus local medicines that engaged physicians and intellectuals in the early modern Dutch Republic.

The notions 'drogist', *druggist*, 'drogerij', *drug*, and also 'droog', *dry* – the term underlying both *drogist* and *drogerij* – are therefore central to this research. As for Six's self-presentation, I argue that he uses a variety of names for his profession in order to portray himself as a reliable and honest merchant, but also as a patient under treatment and as a penitent sinner. In line with these literary self-portrayals, I will show that Six gives *dry* different meanings, from 'sober' and 'rational', through 'insipid' and 'weak' in accordance with the theory of humours, to *thirsty* ('dorst' is derived from 'dor', a synonym for 'droog'), in the religious sense, thus 'thirsty

Dutch artisans. See Karina Corrigan, Femke Diercks & Martine Gosselink, *Asia in Amsterdam: The Culture of Luxury in the Golden Age*, 2015.

4 G.A. van Es & Edward Rombauts, *De letterkunde van renaissance en barok*, 2, 1952, pp. 172–173; Riet Schenkeveld-van der Dussen & Willemien B. de Vries, *Zelfbeeld in gedichten. Brieven over de poëzie van Jan Six van Chandelier (1620–1695)*, 2007, p. 159. For other interpretations of the poem, see Chapter 9.

for God'. As I have noted, my study includes drugs both as rhetorical figures and ornaments and as physical objects. I have therefore adapted a method for my inquiry into the authorial self-presentation of Six – a method that takes into account early modern theories of emotions, the body, and the physical properties of materials on the one hand and of rhetorical and literary notions and concepts, on the other. The sections on material and literary drugs in this chapter offer an overview of the theories and concepts that are relevant here. And this book has a fourth goal: as an importer of foreign drugs, Six relates his self-presentation not only to his own body but also to that of his country. This notion of a link between Six's own body and the so-called body politic is built on the early modern concept of a micro- versus a macrocosmos. I argue that Six's process of self-criticism, following a process of medical purging and moral penance, also has to do with the bodily and spiritual 'health' of the Dutch Republic.

It is thus a matter of the literary self-portrayal of a merchant-poet, where self-criticism and self-examination are important ingredients. I will be emphasising in this connection that these terms are problematic, given that they are concepts that emanate from our own time. Even though Six van Chandelier offers no *autobiographical* texts in the modern sense of the word, the texts in *Poësy* are a unique source of information on his life: the number of literary self-portraits is high in Six's case, and he presents himself as a merchant-druggist in a surprisingly high number of them, even in occasional poems dedicated to others, such as wedding poems to close family and friends, and panegyrics to official events. Although these texts are not autobiographical in the strict sense of the word, they do allow us to reconstruct Six's self-image.⁵ This research is based on many of the insights of New Historicism: the emphasis on the historically situated social and cultural context, on history as cultural production, and on the idea that literary and non-literary texts influence each other. Even according to the father of New Historicism, *self-fashioning* is a problematic concept: Stephen Greenblatt is sceptical about the possibility of an early modern poet's creating their own identity, but he demonstrates all the same that their works offered them various opportunities to construct a public persona, among other things by identifying with classical poets.⁶ Nina Geerdink shows in her research into the authorial self-portrayal of Six's colleague, the glassmaker-poet Jan Vos (1612–1667), that he used his professional identity in his literary and social self-promotion. On the basis of theories such as 'career criticism' and of the institutional research inspired by Pierre Bourdieu, she analyses how Vos

5 See Margaret C. Jacob & Catharine Secretan (eds.), *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists*, 2008, pp. 75–97; Willem Frijhoff & Marijke Spies, *1650. Hard-Won Unity*, 2004, p. 4.

6 Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, 1980. For a recent discussion on subjectivity in Renaissance literature, see Brian Cummings & Freya Sierhuis, 'Introduction', in: Brian Cummings & Freya Sierhuis (eds.), *Passions and Subjectivity in Early Modern Culture*, 2013, pp. 1–13.

shapes his own authorship based on authors' strategies. If we go by this mode of interpretation, it is a matter, not of the identity of the author's 'self', but of the way a distinct public profile was created, both by himself and others. What is interesting in this context is the way in which Vos uses materials from his profession as design elements in his image. For instance, he has the transparency of his windows serve as a symbol for the purity and openness of everything he does as a glassmaker-poet.⁷ As noted above, I will also be looking at how Six actively uses the names of the commodities he trades in, and his profession, in his authorial self-representation. But as this book will show, creating a distinct profile of oneself in terms of one's profession is more problematic for a druggist than it is for a glassmaker, in view of the negative connotations that 'drug' and 'druggist' have. Another distinction lies in the audience for Six's poems. Whereas Vos offers his poems to the Regents of Amsterdam in order to promote his social career as a poet, theatre manager, and glassmaker, Six addresses many of his texts to doctors and pastors of the Reformed Church who are concerned for Six himself – a young, travelling trader suffering from an ailment of the spleen. Taking account of self-knowledge as an inner somatic process, these doctors and pastors were interested in how Six created a public profile of himself as a religiously and medically healthy person. This approach implies a break with New Historicism. I am basing myself here on Michael C. Schoenfeldt, who has done research on the body and the self in early modern English literature:

Where New Historicism has tended to emphasize the individual as a victim of the power that circulates through culture, I stress the empowerment that Galenic physiology and ethics bestowed upon the individual. This is a book, then, about control, but not the authoritarian state that so frequently characterizes New-Historicist descriptions of Renaissance England; I emphasize rather the self-control that authorizes individuality. It is about how to fortify a self, not police a state. Its focus is a regime of self-discipline which an earlier culture imagined as a necessary step towards any prospect of liberation.⁸

Six's process of self-analysis is characterised as much by a certain humoral self-control as by coming into contact with, and taking, exotic drugs. As mentioned above, I also suggest that this process of self-control included not only the borders of the individual body, but also those of the country it found itself in. That does not

7 Nina Geerdink, *Dichters en verdiensten. De sociale verankering van het dichterschap van Jan Vos (1610–1667)*, 2012, p. 140. Cf. also the self-portrayal of the ferryman-poet, who also uses his materials in the process of creating a public profile for himself, in: Laurie Ellinghausen, *Labor and Writing in Early Modern England, 1567–1667*, 2008, p. 109.

8 Michael Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England*, 1999, p. 11.

mean, however, that Six was invoking the power of an 'authoritarian state': that would presuppose a unanimous and homogeneous state, and there was no such thing in the Netherlands of the early modern period.

Material drugs

Before I turn to Six's poems, I would like to discuss the state of affairs regarding other concepts that this study is building on and responding to, such as 'drugs', 'drug use', 'druggist', and 'spice merchant'/'grocer' (*kruidenier* in Dutch). I will go into the development of the theory of drugs as material goods, and then of drugs as literary ornaments. This is followed by a brief discussion of Joannes Six van Chandelier and his collection of poems, *Poësy*. I conclude this section with a discussion of the reception of Six's *oeuvre*. Finally, I offer an overview of the main part of this book, specifying which literary self-profiling strategies of Six's we find in which chapters.

We usually associate drug abuse with the post-industrial age. However, in this study, I would argue that there were also discussions about the individual and social dangers of drugs in the Netherlands of the early modern period. According to Marxist and poststructuralist theory, drugs are symbols of capitalist consumption and the fragmented modern individual.⁹ This brings us to more recent research on drugs. Andrew Sherratt underlines the importance of psychoactive drugs in older cultures: he says the modern definitions of drugs and drug culture are not specific to modernity and the Industrial Revolution. He has it, however, that these definitions are 'misleading as a framework for approaching the great variety of ways in which organic substances have been used by human beings to alter their mental states'.¹⁰ Sherratt points to a 'genealogy' of substances that included an extensive knowledge of other cultures. He regards 'peculiar substances' as part of an 'anthropology of consumption', where psychoactive substances 'thus take their place alongside a variety of other meaningful consumables'. He stresses that these substances 'can therefore be considered not so much a category in themselves but as one aspect of a potentially wide range of social activities.' Sherratt argues that one also has to take into account the meaning of drugs not only under capitalism, but also in indigenous, traditional, and prehistoric economies. On the basis of an analysis of pre-modern and indigenous practices, he protests against current medical and legal definitions of drugs, which reduce them to their psychoactive

9 Cf. the concepts 'magical commodity' and 'commodity fetish' in the writings of Marx, and *la drogue* as a representation of the Western conception of 'the other' in Derrida: 'Plato's Pharmacy', in: Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, 1981, pp. 61–171.

10 Andrew Sherratt, 'Introduction: Peculiar Substances' in: Jordan Goodman, Paul E. Lovejoy & Andrew Sherratt (eds.), *Consuming Habits: Drugs in History and Anthropology*, 1995, pp. 1–10; quote on p. 1.

effect and declare their legal status legitimate or illegitimate. Sherratt defines drug use as a form of consumption whose meanings are as numerous as those who engage in it, from soft drugs to narcotics. He sees it as an act that can take place just as easily in very different settings, from taking a coffee in the morning to the abuse of opiates.

Sherratt's insights have influenced newer research into the role of drugs in early modern culture, but the work has also received some critical comments.¹¹ First, *Consuming Habits* focuses primarily on pre-modern, non-Western drug consumption. Second, it goes along with the idea of drug use as part of a 'civilising process'. In the discussion of colonial drugs in *Consuming Habits* – referred to as *excitantia* – Jordan Goodman argues that the introduction of these commodities was accompanied by the rise of bourgeois culture with its tobacco, coffee, tea, chocolate and sugar, which were 'commercial capitalistic substitutes for indigenous European drugs and alcohol', and also for European plants associated with demonological purposes. These commodities were thus regarded as embodiments of moderation and frugality, by contrast with excess, drunkenness and witchcraft. This interpretation of colonial commodities fits well with the portrayal of the Netherlands of the early modern period as a level-headed bourgeois society.¹² One would then expect foreign drugs to be welcomed by early modern medical authorities as sober alternatives to indigenous European intoxicants such as beer. Goodman admits that the process is not so simple as that. He stresses that a foreign drug as tobacco had to be adapted to pre-existing European medical concepts, and in this way be made understandable and desirable to European consumers. But instead of dwelling on early modern medical concepts and ideas, he places greater emphasis on economic mechanisms, such as supply and demand, and chemical properties of plants, revealed through empirical modern chemistry, such as the side effects of various drugs. But beer and other European products were actually highlighted as healthy substitutes to dangerous, exotic food by many physicians in the seventeenth century. The process of introducing foreign drugs into the European market was intertwined with early modern physiological, social and political concepts and ideas. That is clear from the intriguing study of the history of coffee by Brian Cowan, who asks why coffee succeeded in entering the European consumer market while other exotic drugs that were popular within the rarefied circles of early modern scientists, the so-called *virtuosi*, did not. While coffee does not have the same sort of intoxicating effect as, say, opium, the physiological discourses surrounding drugs

11 Phil Withington, Introduction: *Cultures of Intoxication*, in: Past & Present, 2014, pp. 9–33.

12 See Jordan Goodman, 'Excitantia: Or, How Enlightenment Europe Took to Soft Drugs', pp. 121–141, and see also Woodruff D. Smith, 'From Coffee-House to Parlour: the Consumption of Coffee, Tea, and Sugar in North-Western Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', pp. 142–157, in: Jordan Goodman, Paul E. Lovejoy & Andrew Sherratt (eds.), *Consuming Habits*, 1995.

in the early modern period ‘extended into areas far beyond the “natural” – that is to say, the ahistorical and the noncultural – mechanics of brain and body chemistry. Exotic drugs were often attributed mind-altering or body-affecting qualities that had no basis in biological fact’, Cowan writes. One important reason why coffee, and not betel nut or *datura*, for example, became successful, is that stories were told about them by early modern physicians and moralists: these narratives associated other drugs with ‘licentious sexuality’ and ‘drunken disorder’. In this study, I am interested in similar stories that were told by doctors and moralists in the early modern Dutch Republic.¹³

Another important critical comment on *Consuming Habits* comes from Phil Withington, and it concerns the use of concepts. To get away from the ideological connotations that ‘drugs’ can have, Withington argues instead for the use of the term ‘intoxication’, which includes the effects not only of alcohol, but of all kinds of other intoxicating substances, and at the same time also covers concepts such as ‘bewitchment’. Withington then refers to Samuel Johnson’s dictionary and says about this ‘broad meaning of intoxication’ that it:

was in almost direct contradistinction to the Old French term ‘drug’, which until the end of the nineteenth century was used primarily to describe ‘An ingredient used in physic; a medicinal simple’ and less commonly to denote ‘anything without a value’. Different medicines had different qualities – including stupefaction and stimulation – but these qualities varied according to the drug and were not inherent to the word. It is only relatively recently that ‘drug’ has acquired its presiding connotations of illegality, addiction, danger, and harm on the one hand and subversion, counter-culture, and hedonism on the other.¹⁴

However, by contrast with Withington, I suggest in this book that the concept of ‘drug’ is just as productive as ‘intoxication’ when it comes to research into drug culture in the seventeenth century. In his interesting study on drugs in the early modern Portuguese and British empires, Benjamin Breen emphasises that Samuel Johnson’s definition of ‘drugs’ was coloured by a ‘decidedly moralistic slant’ that the term had acquired in the eighteenth century. According to Breen, it is striking, given the widespread assumption that drugs played a role in modernity, to observe the relative silence on the subject from early modern historians.¹⁵

13 Brian Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse*, 2005; quote on p. 54.

14 Withington, 2014, p. 13.

15 Benjamin Breen, *The Age of Intoxication: Origins of the Global Drug Trade*, 2019, p. 48. For a survey of recent works on the history of drugs in the early modern period, see also Benjamin Breen, *Drugs and Early Modernity*, in: *History Compass*, 2017, pp. 1–9.

I hope this book can go some way towards filling this gap in the history of drugs. The cultural and moral complexity of drugs becomes clear to us if we include the Dutch origin and use of the term in its 'genealogy'. This shows that the original meaning of 'drugs' – 'dried goods' (in Dutch, *drogerijen*) – that is, products that were preserved so they could be shipped over longer distances – evokes associations with a number of concepts and phenomena such as strangeness, craving, and disease. The fact that drugs were transnational commodities means that we must also take into account concepts such as 'spices' (*kruiden, specerijen*) and 'exotica' in our research into the early modern trade in drugs. I will return to the semantic relationship between 'drugs' and these latter terms in Chapter 2.

The plethora of meanings that 'drugs' has also applies to terms derived from it, such as 'druggist'. And in Dutch, 'grocer'/'spice merchant' (*kruidenier*) and 'druggist' (*drogist*) also have pejorative meanings, even if these are not as common. *Kruidenier* also means 'a narrow-minded or bigoted person', while *drogist*, with its etymology in *droog* – 'dry' – also means 'a bore'.¹⁶ Eduard Douwes Dekker plays on the latter meaning in his caricature of the straitlaced Dutch businessman in *Max Havelaar, Batavus Droogstoppel*. These negative traits also have concepts in common with 'merchant', a word that Six also uses in naming his profession.¹⁷ The figure of the merchant has been viewed with ambivalence since the days of antiquity: Aristotle argues in his *Politics* that trade for the sake of accumulating wealth is 'unnatural', and this view finds echoes in Cicero's condemnation of the 'vulgarity' of trade. The biblical condemnation of usury and worldly riches contributes to this anti-commercial ethics. Thinkers of the Renaissance repeat these arguments: Erasmus pointed to the meanness of the methods that merchants used: 'their lying, bearing false witness, thievery, and treachery'. But just as old is the view of the merchant as a positive figure, as long as they – as Cicero put it – emulate positive qualities, especially *honestum* and *utile*. If they do that, they will be honest in their trade and work towards the common weal. In the early modern Dutch Republic, this position was defended from a Christian standpoint by Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert in *De Coopman (The Merchant)* (1580), and from a humanistic viewpoint by Caspar Barlaeus in *Mercator sapiens (The Wise Merchant)* (1632).¹⁸ This ambivalent perception of a merchant's traits – a selfish miserliness versus a thriftiness that was positive for society – colours research into the social conception of the early modern merchant. On the other hand, we know Max Weber's views on the Protestant work ethic as an

16 See these terms in *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* (WNT).

17 Judit Gera, 'The grocer as a stereotype in Dutch culture', *Praagse perspectieven*, 2005, pp. 33–43.

18 Caspar Barlaeus, *The Wise Merchant*, ed. by Anna-Luna Post & Corinna Vermeulen, 2019; D.V. Coornhert, *De Coopman*, [1580] 1969. See also Arthur Weststeijn, *Commercial Republicanism in the Dutch Golden Age: The Political Thought of Johan & Pieter de la Court*, pp. 141–204; Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England*, 1994, p. 94.

ideal type on the one hand and, and on the other, the image of the Dutch, Protestant merchant as a phlegmatic, petty trader.¹⁹ An intellectual-historical examination of these words will help us avoid falling into old social prejudices. In this study I will, therefore, draw attention to how Six uses the concepts not only of 'druggist', but also of *koopman* ('merchant') and *kruidenier* ('grocer', 'spice merchant').

Even though little research has been done on drugs in early modern Dutch culture, studies have been done on assertions of the moral dangers of amassing material goods. The iconological method has been central to research on luxury and opulence in Dutch society. One well-known study is Simon Schama's *Embarrassment of Riches* (1987).²⁰ I will build on the findings of these works. But my methodological approach will also include medical and scientific, as well as iconological, discussions.

This book is about the merchant as a trader in exotic drugs, and in this connection I would mention three books in particular: in *Matters of Exchange*, Harold J. Cook shows how the interests of merchants and of university-educated physicians overlapped in the early modern period, and how natural history contributed to the scientific revolution as much as natural philosophy did: merchants were particularly interested in collecting, transporting and exchanging both things and ideas. They were thus interested, not primarily in the economic value of the materials, but just as much in how material goods were interpreted by the senses. This insistence on objectivity is understood as an ambition to acquire 'the knowledge of objects

19 Cf. Immanuel Kant's view: 'Der Holländer ist von einer ordentlichen und emsigen Gemüthsart [...] so hat er wenig Gefühl für dasjenige, was im feineren Verstande schön oder erhaben ist' ('The Dutchman is of an orderly and diligent disposition [...] He has little feeling for what, to a more refined mind, is beautiful or sublime'). Roland Barthes argues that intellectual life in the Netherlands in the early modern period was limited to material and commercial matters, to the 'patient weighing of property or of merchandise'. The quotes come from Dorothee Sturkenboom, 'Staging the Merchant: Commercial Vices and the Politics of Stereotyping in Early Modern Dutch Theatre', *Dutch Crossing*, 2006, p. 212; Anne Goldgar, *Tulipmania: Money, Honor, and Knowledge in the Dutch Golden Age*, 2007, pp. 11 and 12. As these scholars emphasise, such characteristics should be seen in light of the Anglo-Dutch wars. The negative view of the Dutch merchant was coloured by English war propaganda. An extreme case is John Milton's comparison of a Dutch fleet of Indies vessels with Satan: 'close sailing from Bengala, or the isles / of Ternate and Tidor, whence merchants bring/their spicy drugs', John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 2007, p. 141.

20 In his research Simon Schama emphasises the symbolism and iconology of painting, but the sometimes liberal iconographic analyses in his research have met with criticism. One of Schama's main hypotheses is that trade was a source of moral unease with Dutch, merchants included. This claim is contested by other historians. For instance, C.M. Lesger writes: 'Their self-assurance in the economics, political, and social realm seems not to have been undermined by doubts about the salvation or by embarrassment over their riches', C.M. Lesger, 'Merchants in charge: The self-perception of Amsterdam merchants, c. 1550–1700', in: Margaret C. Jacob & Catharine Secretan (eds.), *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists*, 2008, pp. 75–99, quote on p. 91. Cf. also Mariët Westerman, *A Worldly Art: The Dutch Republic, 1585–1718*, 1996. A more recent study on luxury goods in the Netherlands: Rengenier C. Rittersma (ed.), *Luxury in the Low Countries: Miscellaneous Reflections on Netherlandish Material Culture, 1500 to present*, 2010.

without reference to intuition or innate knowledge, the corporeal knowledge of things that can be experienced by the bodily senses, information which can be exchanged'. This new objectivity was indispensable when it came to gathering knowledge from abroad, especially as regards exotica and marvels. I also include Cook's methodological approach in this book. The main weakness of his approach is that the role of religion and the knowledge of antiquity in the rise of empirical research are not treated in any depth. Reflections on epistemology, on the conditions for, and the scope of, knowledge, by the ancient philosophers Plato and the Stoics, and by the Church fathers, especially Augustine, are treated superficially.²¹

One researcher who does take the moral implications of global trade into account is Julie Berger Hochstrasser. Taking Marxist and post-colonial theory as a starting point, she defines still-life paintings featuring exotica as 'pictorial capitalism', and breathes new life into the myth of the unscrupulous Dutch merchant. Admittedly, she includes in her discussion the polemic *Inleydinge tot de Hollandtsche Geneesmiddelen* (*Introduction to Dutch Medicines*) (1642) by Johan van Beverwijck – a book that criticises the use of exotic medicines. Her argument also stresses, on the other hand, that Van Beverwijck's other books praise exotica as medicines: 'Judging from this conflicting evidence, questions of morality could not have weighed all that heavily on the matter of foreign luxuries being imported and consumed in Dutch households.'²² In Chapter 4, I delve further into Johan van Beverwijck's polemic. Here I argue that, on the contrary, the *Inleydinge tot de Hollandtsche Geneesmiddelen* had considerable influence on Dutch society.

In this connection it should be emphasised that Dutch merchants brought back to Europe from 'exotic lands' not only novelties such as porcelain or Maldivian coconuts, popular in recent research on exotica in the Dutch Republic, but also spices, incense and gems – products with a long history of reception in Europe. A product like incense was so closely interwoven with Asia that it had become an epithet of the continent (Fig. 1.1). Since ancient times, these categories of exotica have had a variety of meanings. The large distance between the producing countries meant that exotica were subject to illusory and mystifying processes. It was not so much the spices themselves that were appealing, but the mythical knowledge they were connected with. Even in the age of discovery, herbals were still full of marvellous classical fables, religious myths and Bible stories.²³ The process of mystification introduces us to concepts related to *exotica* such as *curiosity*,

21 Harold J. Cook, *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age*, 2007, quote on p. 19. Also, compare Pamela H. Smith & Paula Findlen (eds.), *Merchants and Marvels: Commerce, Science, and Art in Early Modern Europe*, 2002.

22 Julie Berger Hochstrasser, *Still Life and Trade in the Dutch Golden Age*, 2007 – quote taken from p. 241.

23 See Paul Freedman, *Out of the East: Spices and the Medieval Imagination*, 2008, and Stefan Halikowski Smith, 'The Mystification of Spices in the Western Tradition', *European Review of History*, 2001, pp. 119–136.

mirabilia and *wonder*.²⁴ Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park emphasise that these last two terms blur the boundary between the marvellous on the one hand and the miraculous on the other – between the earthly and sacred connotations of ‘wondrous substance’. They also emphasise that ‘wonder’ was also a cognitive passion. It had as much to do with ‘knowing’ as with ‘feeling’. Thus ‘being amazed’ can be seen as a process of acquiring knowledge. It is thus important to investigate how theologians and scientists maintained the distinction between these spheres – that of the Wunderkammer, or cabinet of curiosities, and that of the Church. Similarly, the concept of ‘curiosity’, especially with regard to occult and magical philosophy, was intertwined with ‘enthusiasm’. In Greek, *enthousiasmos* originally meant ‘possession by a god’. In the early modern period, it was connected to a radical form of Protestantism and also with the concept of the inspired poet.²⁵

Drugs as exotica and wondrous substances served as markers of social status and aspirations. They were exchanged among kings and statesmen as ‘political gifts’.²⁶ And they served as offerings in the religions of antiquity. In addition to discussions that certain authorities held on therapeutic properties, we find warnings against exotica as substances that lead to temptation, lust and decadence. The satirical poets Persius, Juvenal and Horace, whom Six imitates, were critical of the influence of the ‘decadent East’ on ‘the simple and honest character’ of the Romans. Here, the extensive *Naturalis Historia* by the Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder, who is one of the most important sources in Six’s poetry, serves as a paradox. The work exhibits a strong fascination with *mirabilia*, exotic animals and plants, and natural phenomena. But he also warns against importing luxury goods into the Roman Empire. These thoughts were later taken up by the Church Fathers Jerome, Augustine and Tertullian. Moralists in the seventeenth century drew from both

24 In addition, the mystification of drugs is linked to the concept ‘orientalism’. Since the publication of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), orientalism has become a commonplace to discuss western attitudes toward Asian culture and people. For a discussion of early modern drug culture versus Said’s interpretation of orientalism, see Brian Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee*, 2005. Cowan uses the term ‘consumer orientalism’, and argues that this ‘orientalism’ of the seventeenth century ‘was not the hegemonic imperialist discourse that is the subject of [Said’s] *Orientalism*’ (p. 116).

25 The meaning of exotica comes originally from the Latin *exōticus*, from Greek *exōtikos*, ‘foreign’, from *exō* ‘outside’ (Oxford English Dictionary), while concepts such as marvels, *mirabilia* and *miracula* are etymologically related and can be traced back to the Latin *miror* (be amazed, wonder) and *mirus* (marvellous, extraordinary); see Eric Jorink, *Reading the book of Nature in the Dutch Golden Age, 1575–1715*, 2010, p. 7. For further analyses of these the semantic development of these concepts, Lorraine Daston & Katherine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750*, 1998; R.J.W. Evans & Alexander Marr (eds.), *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, especially the Introduction by Alexander Marr, pp. 1–20; and Michael Heyd, *‘Be Sober and Reasonable’: The Critique of Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries*, 1995.

26 Cf. Claudia Swan, ‘Birds of Paradise for the Sultan: Early Seventeenth-Century Dutch-Turkish Encounters and the Uses of Wonder’, *The Seventeenth Century*, 2013, pp. 49–63.



Fig. 1.1: Pieter Schenk, *Asia*, c. 1670–c. 1713. Engraving.
(© Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).

the classical and Christian knowledge traditions. And when Six uses Pliny both as a moral and a scientific counsellor, he follows the advice that Caspar Barlaeus gives to merchants in his aforementioned *Mercator sapiens* (Fig. 1.2).²⁷ The classical resonance of the concept of *exotica* clashes with the formation of the idea that the discovery of strange parts of the world entailed a total re-evaluation of the European culture of knowledge, as well as with the idea that a new, modern world image was accepted only when Europeans took a dislike to an unproductive passion for the past – the humanistic dependence of the ancient world – and adopted an open, objective approach to the perception of the cultural ‘other’. Revisionist analyses of the Renaissance, especially the work of Anthony Grafton, however,

²⁷ Freedman, 2008; Barlaeus, 2019, p. 105.

have undermined this image of humanistic culture as an intellectual limitation. The discoveries produced no shock of the new and no displacement of old methods, but led to the beginning of a slow process of adaptation; the humanistic culture of knowledge was vital well into the seventeenth century.²⁸ Thus, the physical effects of both tobacco and heavier drugs such as opium were understood in light of long-established concepts such as drunkenness.²⁹ This is the message from Christine R. Johnson's research. She studied the discussion on moral versus immoral trade in German-speaking countries in the sixteenth century, and showed that German authorities based themselves on classical moralists in making their case for economic independence and against the consumption of tropical spices, and that an aversion to foreign plants was based on domestic manifestations of greed and wealth.³⁰ Moralists regarded the trader in exotic drugs and spices as a carrier of disease. They believed that the trade in drugs created a direct physical connection between the strange substance that was ingested and the body itself. But Johnson also showed that some New World plants were interpreted as having an enriching effect rather than constituting an invasion, once they had become acclimated to German soil and included in the humoral system of the classical authorities, such as Dioscorides and Galen. That is because these novelties were not found on the lists of ancient moralists on foreign commodities.

The 'indigenous body' is a central notion in the writings of early modern moralists. It refers both to the individual body and to the 'body politic', one of the oldest metaphors in the history of ideas: philosophers from antiquity to the early modern period, from Plato to Thomas Hobbes, conceived of the state as a body and thus fitted out political and social discourse with anatomical and medical concepts.³¹ Historians make reference to various medical concepts to explain how spices could cause disease: Jonathan Gil Harris has it that early modern debates on the spice trade in England anticipated the modern concept of infectious, invasive diseases. Harris's interpretation of spices as *semina* is based on what was then Paracelsus's new medical doctrine, and implies a break with an important mindset within the classical tradition of knowledge: Galenic medicine. By contrast, Margaret Healy relates the sick body, both of the individual and of the state,

28 Anthony Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery*, 1992. See especially the section on medicine that he wrote with Nancy Siraisi: pp. 260–291.

29 Benjamin Roberts, *Sex and Drugs Before Rock 'n' Roll: Youth Culture and Masculinity during Holland's Golden Age*, 2012, pp. 171–184.

30 Christine R. Johnson, *The German Discovery of the World: Renaissance Encounters with the Strange and Marvelous*, 2008, pp. 123–164.

31 David Hale, *The Body Politic: A Political Metaphor in Renaissance English Literature*, 1971. Not much research has been done on this concept in early modern Dutch culture. For an introduction, see Helmer Helmers, 'Illness as Metaphor: The Sick Body Politic and Its Cures', in: J. Grave & B. Noak (eds.), *Illness and Literature in the Early Modern Low Countries*, 2015, pp. 97–120.



Fig. 1.2: Joachim von Sandrart, *Portrait of Caspar Barlaeus*, c. 1637–1643. Brush on paper.
(© Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).

to Galenic theories about excessive appetites. She speaks of an interaction between two medical concepts; an ‘exopathic’ one (disease as an external, invasive force) and an ‘endogenous’ one (disease as an inner disorder). She also introduces the idea of a ‘glutted, unvented body’, and uses it to show how the consumption of luxury goods was associated with the court and was conceived of as a threat to physical well-being.³² In this book, I want to keep in mind the notion of exotic drugs as potentially pathogenic infectious agents, and of the merchant-druggist as a potential ‘source of infection’.

No systematic study of this kind has yet been done on the critique of exotic materials in the early modern Netherlands. In this sense, then, this book can claim to be innovative. While the criticism of exotic drugs had little impact on the economic development of the Dutch Republic, it did influence the country’s cultural, social and scientific life. Benjamin Schmidt and Benjamin Roberts have shown how tobacco imported from America was a source of moral concern in the Netherlands, while Alix Cooper has looked at how Johan van Beverwijck’s polemic influenced discussions among Dutch physicians such as Lambert Bidloo and Jan Commelin, as well as those from other European countries.³³ Her main thesis is that, given the reaction against exotic imports, scholars urged their readers to

32 Jonathan Gil Harris, *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism and Disease in Shakespeare’s England*, 2004; Margaret Healy, *Fictions of Disease in Early Modern England: Bodies, Plagues and Politics*, 2001.

33 Benjamin Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad: The Dutch Imagination and the New World, 1570–1670*, 2006; Roberts, 2012. Van Beverwijck’s Latin translation, for instance, was a model for the polemic *De medicina danorum domestica*, 1666, by the Danish physician Thomas Bartholin. Cf. also the moral unease that

discover the flora in their own country. We should also not forget the cultural shock of tulip mania: this plant, imported from Turkey, gave rise to a moral crisis in the Netherlands, even though fewer people than has previously been supposed actually lost money on tulip mania, as Anne Goldgar has shown in her study.³⁴ In this study of the literary self-presentation of the merchant-druggist Joannes Six van Chandelier, I must thus take into account the moral discourse around native versus non-native plants. Merchants were constantly looking for a moral identity in the quest to win social recognition, according to Margaret C. Jacob and Catherine Secretan.³⁵ My hypothesis is, then, that Six – in addition to the traditional critique of the merchant as a representative of avarice and the pursuit of profit – is conceived of as a representative of products that moralists considered to be morally, socially and medically dangerous. I would like to show through my research that the perception of the merchant-druggist Joannes Six van Chandelier was integrated into complex medical, social and religious discussions that had their roots in the classical culture of knowledge. That does not mean, however, that ethical concerns precluded progressive scientific insights into material culture: Anthony Grafton and Nancy Siraisi show how morally intoned warnings against the use of tobacco in the early modern period anticipate medical condemnations of nicotine in our day, while Alix Cooper shows how the emergence of the first Dutch reference book on indigenous wild plants, *Catalogus plantarum indigenarum Hollandiae* by Jan Commelin (1683), was a direct result of the debate on native versus exotic plants.³⁶

To make the picture even more complicated: it is important to emphasise that the alarm to which contact with the foreign gave rise did not manifest itself in only one direction – far from it. It also gave rise to a critique that was focused on European society. And that criticism came from a quarter one would least expect – from moralists connected with the pietistic movement within the Dutch Reformed Church, the Further Reformation. In the Calvinistic literature, we find works that show not only a surprising openness to foreign peoples and ethnographic

tobacco and chocolate aroused in Spain: Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World*, 2008.

34 Alix Cooper, *Inventing the Indigenous: Local Knowledge and Natural History in Early modern Europe*, 2007; Anne Goldgar, *Tulipmania: Money, Honor, and Knowledge in the Dutch Golden Age*, 2007. Cf. Benedict Robinson's research on 'cultural anxieties' linked to the introduction of the tulip to the English market: Benedict S. Robinson, 'Green Seraglios: Tulips, Turbans, and the Global Market.' *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 2009, pp. 93–122.

35 Margaret C. Jacob & Catherine Secretan (eds.), *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists*, 2008. On the importance of honour and reputation to early modern merchants, see also L. Kooijmans, 'De koopman', in: H.M. Beliën, A.Th. van Deursen & G.J. van Setten (eds.), *Gestalten van de Gouden Eeuw. Een Hollands groepsportret*, 1995, pp. 78–83.

36 Grafton (with Nancy Siraisi) 1992; Cooper, 2007.



information, but also a globally oriented curiosity that warrants a critical re-evaluation of their European, Christian culture. This revisionist view of orthodox Protestantism is expressed in the analysis by Jos Gommans and Ineke Loots of *De conversione Indorum et Gentilium* (1669) by the pastor and theologian Johannes Hoornbeeck (1617–1666), on the conversion of pagans to Christianity. Gommans and Loots also stress ‘the long-term intellectual roots of a much wider movement of Enlightenment’ rather than radical ruptures.³⁷ Hoornbeeck is an important name in this context, because he was one of the recipients of Six’s poems. According to ‘Rariteiten te koop’, it is not an exotic luxury article that constituted a considerable danger, but ‘exotica’ from a European country. I want to take into account in this book the insights offered by Gommans and Loots.

Literary drugs

In the research on exotic materials in the early modern Netherlands, literature has received less attention than the visual arts. But a look at ‘Ontrouwe vrienden: Op de wyse van den 88 psalm’ (‘Unfaithful Friends: in the manner of Psalm 88’) (J461) by Joannes Six van Chandelier presents another view of the matter. The title gives us a hint of what the poem contains: Six wants to take his revenge on friends who have left him in the lurch. The poem is thus a satire. This form apparently requires a particular kind of ink, l. 1–4:

Myn heil, myn trooster, wat voor ink
Myn klaaghsche pen nu zal ontvallen,
Dat die van koperrood, en gallen,
Wel swarter, dan de steenkool blink [...]

My salvation, my consolation, what other sort of ink
Would fall from my complaining pen
Than vitriol and gall [or: bile]
Blacker than the shine of coal [...]

Six’s ‘complaining pen’ contains vitriol and bile, a mix that is apparently of quite a spiteful nature. The negative connotations of these concepts are well known to us. ‘Copper red’, better known as vitriol, indicates ‘violently caustic sharp words or expressions’, while Dutch ‘gal’, which means both ‘bile’ and ‘gall’ in English, connotes

37 J. Gommans and I. Loots, ‘Arguing with the Heathens: The Further Reformation and the Ethnohistory of Johannes Hoornbeeck (1617–1666)’, *Itinerario*, 2015, pp. 45–68, quote on p. 46.

'seething rage, malice' – cf. expressions such as 'baptise his words in bile'.³⁸ These figurative meanings determine our understanding of the passage cited. But what a modern reader would fail to notice is the extent to which Six also bases himself on the literal reality behind these concepts. *Kooperrood*, a kind of 'mineral salt', is an older name for a sulphate (sulphuric acid) of heavy metals – and a gall nut is a nut-shaped growth on oak leaves that have been infected by the sting of a gall wasp. For the early modern poet, rather than being exclusively frivolous images, both were directly observable materials, because they formed the ingredients of so-called gall-nut ink, the most common writing ink in Six's day, which was sold at druggists such as Six's. The bitterness of these substances should thus be understood literally. Just like other early modern goods found at a druggist's, they were suitable for many purposes, especially as medicines. That makes it likely that people living in the seventeenth century also had a sensory perception of the 'caustic' and 'corrosive' effects of ink, and thus of writing. The Dutch botanist Dodonaeus describes the gall nut as 'pungent and sour when taken' and therefore effective against a slew of complaints.³⁹ This materiality apparently concerns not only the target of the mockery, but also the one doing the mocking. Before Six writes out his lethal satire, he reflects, according to the sequel to the text: he realises the danger his revenge entails, and prays to the Holy Spirit – the one to whom the poem is dedicated ('My salvation, my consolation') – for help in resisting the temptation, because Six 'salf, en troost / Des heilgen geest verhoop t'ontfangen, / Op prikkels, die myn boesem prangen, / Met meenigh sucht, om lucht, geloost [...]' ('hopes to receive salve and consolation from the Holy Spirit, against thorns that press into my bosom, which heaves many a sigh for air [...]') (l. 7–10). Six hopes that the salve from the Holy Spirit will calm the desire for revenge in his heart. He ascribes to the redemptive salve of the Holy Spirit, just as to the ingredients of the ink, not just a spiritual but also a somatic function.

According to some literary historians, the large number of medical references is one of the features of early modern literature, especially in satire.⁴⁰ This is the subject of the study done by Tanya Pollard on the chemical vocabulary used in the early modern English theatre.⁴¹ She discusses the physiological powers that

38 Six borrowed the figurative meaning of bile from the yellow or black bile in the human body: *cholē* in Greek. The literal meaning of the word is based, however, on the nut-shaped growth on the leaves of an oak tree, the oak tree. Cf. also the metaphorical meaning of vitriol in English.

39 Rembertus Dodonaeus, *Cruydt-boeck (The Book of Herbs and Spices)*, 1644, pp. 1292–1294, quote on p. 1293; Nicolas Lemery, *Woordenboek of algemeene verhandeling der enkele droogeryen*, 1743, pp. 76, 299, 751–753, 'Writing ink is made from gallnuts and vitriol, to which a little arabic gum is added' (p. 76).

40 See for example Mary Claire Randolph, 'The Medical Concept in English Renaissance Satiric Theory: Its Possible Relationships and Implications', *Studies in Philology*, 1941, pp. 125–157.

41 Tanya Pollard, *Drugs and Theater in Early Modern England*, 2005, especially pp. 1–22.

early modern writers attributed to language. Central to her study is the dominant medical paradigm of the early modern period: the Galenic theory of humours. Literary works were thought to exert as much influence on the body as on the mind of the reader, Pollard argues, because humoral physiology made no clear distinction between mental and physical processes: thoughts, emotions and the imagination were perceived as parts of the human body. A change to one's state of mind, she tells us, was thought to cause a corresponding change in one's body. Psychological processes were understood in corporeal terms, as a 'physiology of inner emotion', in the words of Michael Schoenfeldt.⁴² The emotional impact of literature on the human mind, then, also had consequences for the human body. Whether it was material or literary drugs were involved, Pollard shows how pigments and aromatics were perceived as powerful transformative substances. Etymologically, the concept of the pharmacy was intrinsically ambiguous, she tells us: the Greek word *pharmakon* itself means poison, remedy *and* love potion.⁴³ Pollard's emphasis on the senses, the body and emotions is of a piece with a wider interest in emotions in the study of early modern culture, the so-called emotional turn.⁴⁴ I follow this research tradition in this book. But, as Brian Cummings and Freya Sierhuis have shown in their studies, the passions were understood not only in the light of the Galenic ideas of restraint and physical balance, but were also defined by social, literary and religious concepts. As we will see, in his poems *Six* speaks positively about 'Christian excesses', namely a Christian enthusiasm and even a Christian cannibalism.⁴⁵

Not only the vitriol in ink, but drugs that were more closely linked with foreignness and luxury, such as ambergris, ivory, incense and gems, were popular as metaphors in poetry in the early modern period. These materials bring us closer to the exotic materials portrayed in 'Rariteiten te koop' and to the aforementioned discourse of local as opposed to foreign drugs. This is the subject of Farah Karim-Cooper's study of cosmetics in English Renaissance drama. She writes that 'the fear of a diminishing Englishness in an ingredient culture that thrived upon foreign commerce is quite central to the anti-cosmetic case.'⁴⁶ The transformative power ascribed to foreign drugs gave rise not only to a medical anxiety, but also to an

42 In this theory of a 'humoral self', Pollard builds on Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England*, 1993, and Schoenfeldt, 1999.

43 Pollard, 2005, p. 4.

44 See for example Susan Broomhall, *Early Modern Emotions: An Introduction*, 2017; H.W. Roodenburg, *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Renaissance, 1450–1650*, 2014; and Gary Schwartz (ed.), *Emotions: Pain and Pleasure in the Dutch Golden Age*, 2015.

45 For a critical review on body, passion and emotion in the early modern period, see Cummings & Sierhuis, 2013, pp. 1–13.

46 Farah Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama*, 2006, p. 41.

ethnocentric fear and to religious unease. Here, the concept of *ethnicity* needs to be understood in the light of the early modern discourse surrounding the term. The physicality of emotions indicates that ethnicity was defined more by emotional differences than by external characteristics such as skin colour. Mary Floyd-Wilson has coined the term *geohumoralism* to talk about how ethnicity was defined through humoral-climatic theories, in accordance with what she calls a 'regionally framed humoralism'. In the early modern period, 'race' was a flexible concept: a change in diet and lifestyle could lead to a radical change in identity.⁴⁷ Just like human bodies, materials had humoral qualities ascribed to them. For example, tropical dyes and fragrances were generally considered to be hot and dry. For a person with the opposite humoral constitution, however, consuming these drugs could cause an unhealthy change in the balance of the humours, thus causing the arousal of immoral appetites and desires, and even a change in their identity. 'Hot' foreign products were thus held to exert a negative impact on the 'cold' bodies of Northern Europeans. In the same way, then, I will show how the exotic substances in Six's pharmacy were perceived as a threat to his Dutchness.

The theological opposition to ornaments was based on a central concept in the anti-cosmetic argument: of the human body as God's 'work of art'. Moralists argued that substances such as face paint, pigments and perfumes, which altered the body, jeopardised God's handiwork. And since there were no clear distinctions between the mental and the physical, this fear also entailed an anxiety about the effects on that handiwork at a spiritual level. Cosmetics, it was held, thus undermined God's work and distracted from spiritual meditation and reflection. In this context, it is useful to look at Karim-Cooper's definition of 'cosmetic'. She offers a broad reading of the term: 'it is material and symbolic; it is that which beautifies. It refers not only to make-up, but also to perfumes, herbs, and even aesthetic commodities such as tapestries, which "beautify" a room'.⁴⁸ I will use the same definition here: as we shall soon see, this broad field of application was also typical for exotic drugs in the early modern period. And as I will show, even explosives were perceived as 'cosmetics' in early modern Europe.

The juxtaposition of exotic smells and colours with literary composition is not new: it has been used in rhetoric since antiquity. Classical writers define *ornatus* (adornment) as the culmination of the skills of the speaker: Cicero writes that speakers should adorn their texts with *colores rhetorici* (rhetorical colours – that is,

47 According to Floyd-Wilson, 'Ethnicity in the early modern period is defined more by emotional differences than by appearance: distinctions rest on how easily one is stirred or calmed – on one's degree of emotional vulnerability or resistance – or one's capacity to move others', see 'English Mettle', in: Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe & Mary Floyd-Wilson (eds.), *Reading the Early Modern Passions in the Cultural History of Emotion*, 2003, pp. 130–146, quote on p. 133.

48 Karim-Cooper, 2006, pp. 41 and 42.

tropes and figures) to win their listeners' attention. These linguistic 'pigments' can help bring the text to life for the audience. In poetry, this ability has been linked to terms such as *ut pictura poesis*, 'as is painting so is poetry' – a statement from Horace's *Ars Poetica* – and *energeia*, the liveliness or force necessary to engage and involve the reader. The view of rhetorical metaphors and tropes as pigments reappears in Renaissance literary theory. In his influential book on poetics, *The Art of English Poetry* (1589), George Puttenham echoes Cicero in defining rhetorical devices as 'coulours in our arte of Poesie'. He compares writing poems to applying paint: 'a Poet setteth [...] upon his language by arts [...] as th'excellent painter bestoweth the rich Orient coulours upon his table of pourtraire'. The prominent position Puttenham accords to 'rhetorical colours' gives a sense of the power he felt they had to bring lines of verse to life. According to Elizabeth D. Harvey, implicit in these arguments is the idea that colours are not simply ornamental trappings in, but constitutive elements of, poetry.⁴⁹ Thijs Weststeijn shows that the same ideas were promoted by art theorists in the Dutch Republic – scholars who also took the rhetoric of the antiquity as a starting point for their discussions. In his *De Schilder-konst der Oude (On the Painting of the Ancients)* – in his Dutch translation of the Latin original from 1641 – Franciscus Junius links the Greek term *kosmos* with the Latin *ornamentum* – 'cosmos' literally means *ornament* – and points to the important role colours are given in the act of creation: the creator 'embellished' his creation with colour, light and other ornaments. When Junius refers to 'veruw-cieraeten' ('coloristic ornaments'), he thus means not only outer ornamentation but colours with a life-giving, 'bewitching' force. In this context, other terms that occur in Renaissance art treatises have to be understood, such as *incarnazione* – incarnadine or flesh colour – a term that was accorded a special position within Italian art theory. According to Weststeijn, this concept of an incarnating, or even transubstantiating, power of colour forms a basis for the thoughts of other Dutch art theorists as well: he tells us that Samuel van Hoogstraten's comparison of colour to the 'divine fire' that gave life to the first man is in line with this idea.⁵⁰

49 George Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, 1589, p. 115; Elizabeth D. Harvey, 'Flesh Color and Shakespeare's Sonnets', in: Michael Schoenfeldt (ed.), *A Companion to Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 2007, pp. 314–329, quote on p. 322. Other have also written, of course, of the meaning of ornaments in Renaissance literature – for instance, Mary E. Hazard, 'An Essay to Amplify "Ornament": Some Renaissance Theory and Practice', *SEL*, 1976, pp. 15–32; Frances E. Dolan, 'Taking the Pencil out of God's Hand: Art, Nature, and the Face-painting Debate in Early Modern England', *PMLA*, 1993, pp. 224–239.

50 See Thijs Weststeijn, *The Visible World: Samuel van Hoogstraten's Art Theory and the Legitimation of Painting in the Dutch Golden Age*, 2008, pp. 219–265, especially pp. 220–226. For further discussion of rhetorical colours in Dutch literature, see also Nelleke Moser, *De strijd voor rhetorica: poëtica en positie van rederijkers in Vlaanderen, Brabant, Zeeland en Holland tussen 1450 en 1620*, 2001, pp. 38–43.

However, as Pollard and Karim-Cooper have shown, just as old as the link between language and cosmetic materials are the linguistic, medical and religious warnings against the ‘narcotic power’ of literature. Cicero warns against an extensive use of *flores*, saying that this is typical of a sophistic style. Quintilian likewise warns against an abuse of artistic ornament, saying that it will have the effect of deception. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a classical teacher of rhetoric, depicts a style abundant in ornaments as a prostitute who is installed in the house of language after having ousted the legitimate bride, a simple and virtuous Attic muse. In a passage in his famous *An Apology for Poetry* (1595), where Philip Sidney talks about an excessive use of *energeia*, he compares a ‘honey-flowing’ eloquence with dishes covered with ‘sugar and spice’, and with Indians wearing too many jewels.⁵¹ These warnings are based on an older critical attitude to literary composition. One commonplace is the rejection of rhetoric in Plato’s *Gorgias*, where rhetoric is included in the same category as cosmetics, cooking, and sophistry. Plato’s criticism also concerns poetry, given that the poetic forms mentioned in *Gorgias*, the dithyramb and the tragedy, are considered subcategories of rhetoric – and the opposite of philosophy, the means of knowledge chosen by Socrates. The purpose of rhetoric is merely to please and satisfy the listener – it is nothing but flattery. The dithyramb is important here. It was a hymn to Bacchus, the god of wine, whose praises were sung during the Bacchanalian festivals. The hymn was thus associated with categories that are important for this research: intoxication and ecstasy. In his notorious attack on poetry in *The Republic*, Plato refers to the falsehood of literature as a *pharmakon*: a dangerous blend of poison and remedy, which only the rulers of the city are able to control. Michael A. Rinella tells us that Plato was in fact one of the first to address the problem of drug-induced ecstasy as dangerous to the society. An important assumption in his study is that the Greeks included mind-altering substances in their wine. This has been confirmed by recent archaeological research.⁵²

In order to understand Six’s ambivalent writing strategy, we need to study the Dutch parallels to this discourse. Like the English moralists whom Pollard discusses in her inquiry, Dutch moralists attached great importance to the senses and bodily organs in warning of the dangers of theatre. For example, the Calvinist preacher Petrus Wittewrongel labelled the theatre as a ‘schadelijk vergift’ (‘harmful poison’). The pernicious words of plays, he wrote, corrupted the senses and bodies of ‘beyde de Speelers ende de aenschouwers (‘actors and audience alike’):

51 See Jacqueline Lichtenstein, ‘Making up Representation: The Risks of Femininity’, *Representations*, 1987, pp. 77–87; quote on p. 79; Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry*, [1595] 1965, p. 138.

52 *Gorgias*, 502a–c12. Michael A. Rinella, *Pharmakon: Plato, Drug Culture, and Identity in Ancient Athens*, 2011. See also Pollard, 2005, pp. 13–14.

What could such a bitter root produce, but gall and the wormwood of sins. Such a tree, such a fruit. People are infected inside and out: their eyes and their ears are polluted by it, their hearts and their deeds are drawn to unchaste lusts, when they behold all these new spectacles of sin, and are amused by them.⁵³

The discourse of the deceptive power of poetry can also be found in the poetic works of humanist poets in early modern Dutch literature, especially in discussions of mythological decoration in poetry. Marijke Spies tells us that Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert (1522–1590) and later Joachim Oudaen (1628–1692) were fiercely opposed to the use of religious ornaments in Renaissance poetry, and that they labelled this adornment a vicious attempt at persuasion (Fig.1.3). Coornhert, she argues, promoted an ‘argumentative-rhetorical’ poetics in opposition to the ‘musical-fictional’ poetics of contemporary writers, which, she says, was affiliated with a mythological repertoire. In the opening poem of *Comedie van lief en leedt* (*Comedy of Love and Suffering*) (1582), ‘Coornherts rymerien aenden rymlievenden leser’ (‘Coornhert’s Rhymes to the Rhyme-Loving Reader’), Coornhert distances himself from the ‘hoge Parnasser spraken’ (‘the language of the high Parnassus’), full of ‘gonst-zuchtige pluymstruykeryen’ (‘flattering toadyism’), and references to ‘onreine’ (‘unclean’) Roman gods such as Bacchus and Venus – a ‘pronckelyc’ (‘flaunting’) style that serves ‘yemandt te behagen met logens soet’ (‘to please people with lies so sweet’). He made a distinction between ‘Poeetsche fabriekken’ (‘poetic products’), which contain no truth, and artistic writing that is shorn of mythological fiction, written in good Dutch and about things that are true.⁵⁴ This criticism includes references not only to gods and religious myths, but also to material aspects of pagan religion, as is apparent from ‘Godsdienst- en het Godendom ontdekt: aan de Hedendaagsche Dichters’ (‘Religion and the Idolatry of Gods Disclosed: to the Poets of the Present Day’) by

53 ‘Wat soude sulcken bitteren wortel, anders als een galle ende alsem der sonde kunnen voort-dringhen. Sulcken boom, sulck een vrucht. De mensche werdt uytwendigh ende inwendigh besmet, de ooghen, de ooren werden daer door verontreynight, het herte tot onkuysche lusten, en de daden afghetrocken, wanneer hy alle dese nieuwe vertooninghen der sonde aenschouwt, / ende sich daer in vermaect’, Petrus Wittewrongel, *Oeconomia christiana ofte Christelicke huys-houdinge*, 1661, vol. II, p. 1168.

54 D.V. Coornhert, *Het roerspel en de comedies van Coornhert*, 1955, pp. 156–159. For a discussion of Coornhert’s poetics and of ‘argumentative/rhetorical’ versus ‘mythological-fictional’ poetics, see Marijke Spies, ‘Between Ornament and Argumentation: Developments in 16th-Century Dutch Poetics’, in: Jelle Koopmans, Mark A. Meadow, Kees Meerhoff & Marijke Spies (eds.), *Rhetoric-Rhetoriciens-Rederijkers*, 1995; Marijke Spies, ‘“Helicon and Hills of Sand”: Pagan Gods in Early Modern Dutch and European Poetry’, in: Helen Wilcox, Richard Todd & Alasdair MacDonald (eds.), *Sacred and Profane: Secular and Devotional Interplay in Early modern British Literature*, Amsterdam, 1996, pp. 225–236; see also Johan Koppenol, ‘Een tegendraadse poëtica. De literaire ideeën van Jan van Hout’, in: K.J.S. Bostoen *et al.* (eds.), *Jan van Hout, Voorrede tot het gezelschap. Voorrede bij zijn vertaling van Buchanans Franciscanus*, 1993, pp. 3–25.

the poet Joachim Oudaen.⁵⁵ The poem attacks the representation of ‘Wierook, Ooster-kruideryen, Oliën, en dierb’re geuren’ (‘Incense, Eastern Spices, Oils and Expensive Fragrances’) (l. 10–11) in early modern poetry. Oudaen held that, with ‘het zoet vergift der woorden’ (‘the sweet poison of words’) (l. 22), the Renaissance poet kept ancient paganism alive. It is here that Six’s rhymester-poetics, so to speak, becomes relevant. M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen has already pointed to Six’s critical comments on Joost van den Vondel’s notion of universal poetry – though we can also see Six’s poetics as following on from Coornhert’s ‘rymerien’ and the discourse of ornamental poetry. A comparison between Six’s poetics and the literary programme of Coornhert and Oudaen has not yet been undertaken, but it could be fruitful. In fact, there are many parallels between ‘Coornherts rymerien aenden rymlievenden leser’ (‘Coornhert’s rhymes to the rhyme-loving reader’) and one of Six’s poetic texts, ‘Het boek, aan den leeser’ (‘The Book, to the Reader’) (J119).

An analysis of Six’s rhymester-poetics in the light of the ornamental-cosmetic vocabulary of Dutch Renaissance poetry might help shed light on his relationship to Vondel’s poetics and show that Six’s own position is more ambivalent than has been assumed. Taking the definition of Marijke Spies as a starting point, I argue that the contrast between Six and Vondel perpetuates the opposition between the ‘argumentative-rhetorical’ and the ‘musical-fictional’ poetics of sixteenth-century Dutch literature. I have therefore opted to use the notion of ‘the language of the high Parnassus’ in reference to Vondel’s poetics, in accordance with the terminology promulgated by Karel Porteman and Mieke B. Smits-Veldt. They define Parnassian language as a literary mode written in an epic register and suffused with references to the sacraments and the sacrifices found in classical mythology. This mode also characterises the writings of poets who were influenced by Vondel’s aesthetics, such as Jan Vos and Reyer Anslo. The view of poetry as an elevated form can also be found in theoretical writings from the period. In his *Aenleidinge ter Nederduitsche dichtkunste* (1650) (*Introduction to Dutch Poetry*), Vondel makes a distinction between, on the one hand, the practice of rhymesters, who study classical writers in antiquity, and, on the other, ‘heavenly poetry’. I will come back to this in Chapter 8.⁵⁶

The implications for cosmetics of this Parnassian language become clear if we look at Vondel’s poem ‘Wieroock voor Cornelis en Elizabeth le Blon’ (‘Incense for Cornelis and Elizabeth le Blon’).⁵⁷ The theme of this short poem is simple: Vondel showers Cornelis and Elizabeth le Blon with a poetic ‘wieroockgeur van danckbaerheit’ (‘scent of the incense of gratitude’) because they brought him a

55 Joachim Oudaen, *Poëzy*, I, 1712, p. 32.

56 Karel Porteman & Mieke B. Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuw vaderland voor de muzen: Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Literatuur 1560–1700*, 2008, pp. 401–403.

57 J.F.M. Sterck et al. (eds.), *De werken van Vondel*, vol. 5, 1931, p. 472.

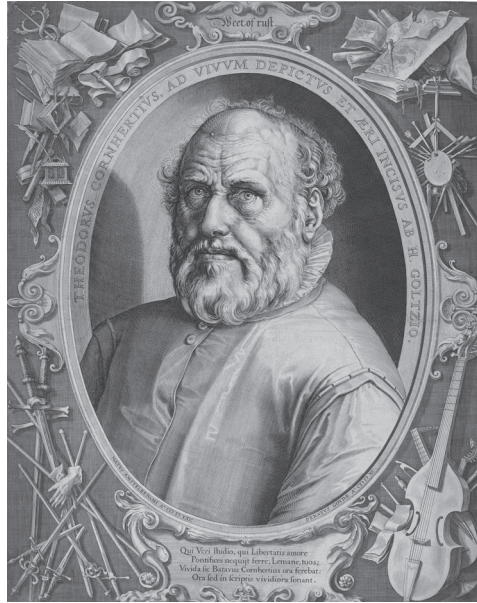


Fig. 1.3: Hendrick Goltzius, *Portrait of Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert*, c. 1591–1592. Engraving. (© Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).

medal that he had been awarded by Queen Christine of Sweden. Naturally, Vondel means this showering with incense to be understood figuratively. In modern Dutch, this figurative meaning still lingers on in the verb ‘bewieroken’, from ‘wierook’, incense – meaning ‘praise to the skies’ or ‘fawn over’. The spiritual connections that exotic aromatics awaken with religious rituals form the basis of the argument. ‘Wierook’ comes from ‘gewijde rook’ – ‘holy smoke’ – and refers to resins that release fragrant smoke when burned, especially frankincense (also known as olibanum) and myrrh, which is a resin found in trees native to the Arabian Peninsula.⁵⁸ These references give Vondel’s text a certain feeling of solemnity and exoticism. At the same time, I would suggest that we must also take into account in this poem the physical perception of incense. A prominent feature of the literary representation of exotic ornaments is the emphasis on the senses and sense impressions, as is apparent from such phrases as ‘wieroockgeur van danckbaerheit’ and ‘het zoet vergift der woorden’ (‘the *sweet* poison of words’). This makes it clear that aromatic materials were used more widely in the early modern period. For example, incense was used not only in religious sacraments, but also as a perfume and for therapeutic

58 See the entry in the WNT. See Carolus Clusius’s description of exotic plants in *Dodonaeus*, 1644, pp. 1366–1367.

purposes. Even a staunch Calvinist such as Gisbertus Voetius used this ‘holy smoke’ to fumigate his room in Utrecht when the city was swept by the plague.⁵⁹ More than people do today, early modern individuals thus had a strong sense of the physical characteristics of many of the items – whether dyes or fragrances – that featured as literary adornments in literature. Voetius knew the smell of incense just as well as his Catholic countrymen, such as Vondel. Given Six’s work as a druggist, it makes even more sense to include early modern medical and physical theories of exotic drugs in discussions of his poems. We get a sense of the latter if we compare the literary representation of amber in his ‘Dankdicht aan Jakob Breine te Dantsich, voor een paar barnsteene hechten’ (‘Poem of Thanks to Jacob Breyne of Dantzic for a Couple of Amber Handles’) (J165) with that offered by a contemporary poet, Jan Vos, ‘Barnsteene koffertje door Haare Keurvorstelyke Doorluchtigheid van Brandenburg, aan Mejoffrouw Leonora Huidekoopers van Maarseveen, gemaalin van den E. Heer scheepen Joan Hinloopen, vereert’ (‘Amber Chest Offered by Her Princely Serenity of Brandenburg, to Mademoiselle Leonora Huidekoopers van Maarseveen, Consort of the Alderman Joan Hinloopen’). Six’s treatment includes references to theories about the origin of amber (see l. 15–24). But the Calvinist also plays, more or less ironically, on the emotional and religious connotations of the exotic: ‘Ik neem het aan, als soete lucht / Van wierook, uit geneegen sucht, / My opgeoffert, sonder schulden’ (‘I accept it as the sweet smell of incense, which you have offered out of affection though you owe me nothing’) (l. 35–37). The gift smells so heavenly that the Protestant businessman imagines himself as a deity to whom a fragrance has been brought as a sacrifice! By contrast, Jan Vos contents himself with a play on words around ‘barnsteen’ (‘amber’) and ‘brandsteen’ (‘burning stone’).⁶⁰

This emphasis on emotions and the physical perception of materials legitimates a broader approach in our analysis of how exotic materials are represented in Six’s poetry. At the same time, it makes his position as a satirist more ambiguous. In taking account of the physical and religious theories connected to the early modern discourse on foreign drugs, I argue that Six’s self-criticism derives from his involvement with exotic materials.⁶¹

59 M.J. van Lieburg, ‘Voetius en de geneeskunde’, in: J. van Oort *et al.* (eds.), *De onbekende Voetius: Voordrachten Wetenschappelijk Symposium*, 1989, pp. 168–180, quote on p. 178.

60 The olfactory impression amber made was based on both its wide use in early modern Europe and on its being fossilised resin, which releases fragrant smoke when heated. Among other things, Catholic rosary beads were often made of amber, and the scent that they gave off when touched was regarded as holy. See Rachel King, ‘“The beads with which we pray are made from it”: Devotional Ambers in Early Modern Italy’, in: Wietse de Boer & Christine Göttler, *Religion and the Senses in Early Modern Europe*, 2013, pp. 153–175. Rosaries were among the commodities Dutch merchants traded in – see Hermann Wätjen, *Die Niederländer Im Mittelmeergebiet Zur Zeit Ihrer Höchsten Machtstellung*, 1909, p. 254.

61 I will be looking in the early going here at the reference books on natural history that Six himself used. As I noted, *Naturalis Historia* by Pliny the Elder seems to have been a major source for Six, if one

A merchant-poet

Before I discuss the reception of Six's poetry, I would like to offer a brief overview of his life and of the contents of his book of poetry. Joannes Six van Chandelier was born on 19 February 1620 in Amsterdam, the eldest of 10 children. His father, Jacob Six van Chandelier, was a trader in spices and drugs who had a drugstore in Amsterdam, 'De Vergulde Eenhoorn' ('The Gilded Unicorn') on the Kalverstraat (Fig. 1.4). His mother's name was Sara Juliens. She was descended from a wealthy family: her mother, Catharina Jehu, to whom Six addresses a number of poems, had a country house built in 1643 on the Middenweg, in the Diemermeerpolder, southeast of Amsterdam. Six inherited the country house and spent a lot of time there in his later years. Both sides of Six's family had moved from the Spanish Netherlands. His maternal grandparents, Joost Juliens and Catharina Jehu, came from Ninove and Brussels, respectively, while Wesel is listed as the city in which Jacob Six's father lived before the family settled in Haarlem and Amsterdam. The quasi-aristocratic name 'Van Chandelier' dates from a later period. Jacob Six was able to add this name to 'Six' thanks to an aristocratic diploma that was granted to him and his brothers in 1617 in Prague by the Emperor Matthias.⁶²

From what we know of Six's education, it seems possible that he and his brothers were originally destined for careers other than as merchants. Like his five brothers, Six attended the Latin school in the Oudezijds neighbourhood near the centre of Amsterdam. This career path was in any case interrupted by the early death of his

looks at all the references that Six made to it, as traced by A.E. Jacobs. Indeed, Six cites Pliny as a reliable informer in 'Ter eere van de fonteine Pouhon' ('In Honour of the Spring at Pouhon') (J104), l. 8–20. The medical works that I have consulted are as follows: Rembertus Dodonaeus (1517–1585) *Cruydt-boeck* (*The Book of Herbs and Spices*) (1644), which discusses only substances of vegetable origin; Johan van Beverwijck (1594–1647), *Alle de wercken, zo in de medicynen als chirurgie* (*Complete works, on Both Medicine and Surgery*), 1656, in particular the description of medicines in *Schat der ongesontheyt* (*Treasure of Ill-Health*); Pierre Pommet (1658–1699), *Histoire générale des drogues* (1694) (I use the English translations, *A Compleat History of Druggs*, 1737); and Nicolas Lémery (1645–1715), *Dictionnaire universel des drogues simples*, 1698 (I use the Dutch translation, *Woordenboek of algemeene verhandeling der enkele droogeryen*, 1743). It may be that these last two works were not available to Six, but the early modern approach they took to drugs does represent the state of pharmacological knowledge in *Poësy*. I also refer a number of times to Carolus Clusius (1526–1609) *Exoticorum libri decem*, 1605), and to the Dutch translation of the works of Ambroise Paré (1510–1590), *De chirurgie, ende alle de opera, ofte wercken* (*Surgery, and Complete Works*, 1636). Six discusses both Clusius and Paré.

62 Jacobs, 1991 II, p. 232; Joh. C. Breen, 'Geschiedenis van het huis keizersgracht 676', *Jaarboek van het genootschap Amstelodamum*, 1915, p. 88. See also Appendix II. Unfortunately there is no portrait of Joannes Six van Chandelier. There is a drawing of him made by Jan Stolker, but this image is not authentic, see Gerdien Wuestman, 'Een portret van Jan Six van Chandelier?', *Maandblad Amstelodamum*, 2011, pp. 147–154.



Fig. 1.4: *Kalverstraat 2–4, with 'De Vergulde Eenhoorn'.* 'De Vergulde Eenhoorn' was demolished at the beginning of the 20th century, 1900. Photograph. (© Amsterdam Stadsarchief).

father in 1639, when Six was 19. As the eldest son, he was given responsibility for the drugstore together with his mother. On the one hand, he took business trips in Europe and, on the other, he corresponded with trading partners such as the above-mentioned business contact, and the family of Jacob Breyne, who originally came from Brabant and was located in Danzig.⁶³ Many of Six's poems were thus addressed to merchants. The drugstore stayed under his mother's name, 'Widow of Jacob Six', in the registers at the Exchange Bank until her death in 1666. From 1668 on, the family business was listed under the name 'Joannes Six van Chandelier'. In addition to his activities as a merchant, Six was involved in investments outside the trade. Thus, in 1647 he sold a 'huys ende seeperie' ('a soap factory'), while in 1671 he was working as a moneylender. This is in line with the activities of many

63 Alette Fleischer, 'Breyne's Botany: (Re-)locating Nature and Knowledge in Danzig (circa 1660–1730)', in: Fokko Jan Dijksterhuis, Andreas Weber & Huib J. Zuidervaart, *Locations of Knowledge in Dutch Contexts*, 2019, pp. 107–135.

early modern merchants; they engaged in these kinds of activities to ensure their families' future.⁶⁴

Six's family business traded in drugs – that is, exotic medicines, dyes, perfumes and so on – and had trading interests both in Europe and farther afield. The registers of the family firm at the Exchange Bank in Amsterdam list a wide range of trade contacts in both the Dutch East and West India Companies, family names such as De Smeth and Kemp, the names of wealthy Amsterdam businessmen such as Peter Trip and Jan de Neuville, of the Amsterdam ruling elite such as Jacob Bicker and Frans Banning Cocq, and of Sephardic Jews living in Amsterdam such as Bento Osorio and Antonio Lopes Suasso. Although the family firm was not one of the richest merchant families in Amsterdam, it did carry out trades involving considerable sums, sometimes amounting to more than 10,000 guilders. Unfortunately, the Exchange bank does not specify which spices Six traded in (Fig. 1.5). The same goes for other sources, which list items only generically – 'spices', 'drugs' and so on.⁶⁵ But one poem tells us the origin of the commodities he was trading in: here Six refers to 'Spices from the Ganges' ('Aan Raimond de Smeth') (J70, l. 10). And in a trade contract, a commodity of Six's firm is explicitly named, opium, which Six's father probably got from Bengal, and sold to Morocco.⁶⁶ Joannes's brother, Joost Six, who worked as an assistant with the Dutch East India Company, was stationed near the Ganges in Bengal.⁶⁷ In addition, Six had family members stationed in other Dutch trading outposts, such as the Dutch East Indies, and Isfahan, Iran. Moreover, Six's company was listed as one of the major Amsterdam trading firms in the Mediterranean region.⁶⁸

64 Jacobs, 1991 II, p. 232; Joh. C. Breen, 'Geschiedenis van het huis keizersgracht 676', *Jaarboek van het genootschap Amstelodamum*, 1915, p. 88; L. Kooijmans, 'De koopman', in: H.M. Beliën, A.Th. van Deursen & G.J. van Setten (eds.), *Gestalten van de Gouden Eeuw. Een Hollands groepsportret*, 1995, pp. 86–92. For the Exchange Bank in Amsterdam, see Pit Dehing, *Geld in Amsterdam. Wisselbank en wisselkoersen, 1650–1725*, 2012. Six also wrote a poem to the Exchange bank: 'Wisselbank' (J216).

65 The registers of 'Jaquis Six wed.' and 'Joannes Six van Chandelier' in the Exchange bank in Amsterdam, Amsterdam City Archives, see Appendix II. Not all the bank's transactions were linked to trade. Some also involved loans and converting cash into bank funds and vice versa.

66 See Appendix II.

67 Abraham and Johannes Six van Chandelier – the first a brother of the poet, the latter a nephew and namesake, worked in the Dutch East Indies – see Appendix II. One of Joannes's nieces, Sara Jacoba Six van Chandelier, was married to the head of the Dutch East India Company in Isfahan, Iran – see Jacobs, 1991 II, p. XXXVI. Another relative, Cornelis van der Loeff, travelled in 1668 with the poet Willem Godschalck van Focquenbroch to Fort Elmina on the Dutch Gold Coast as an assistant ('ondercommis'). He died there in 1671 – see 'Zijn er nog vragen? Een speurtocht in de archieven van de Oude Westindische Compagnie', *Fumus*, 2017, pp. 23–32.

68 Wätjen, 1909. Wätjen also lists other Dutch traders who were active in the Mediterranean region and whom I discuss in this book, such as Hendrik Spiegel, Joost de Smeth, Jonas Abeels, and Isaak Fokquier. See also the list of products that Dutch merchants bought and sold in Southern Europe: Wätjen, pp. 242–329 and 333–346.

Fig. 1.5: *The ledger of the Exchange Bank in Amsterdam, 1670, nr. 71, p. 457.* Photograph.
(© Amsterdam Stadsarchief).

Six himself travelled around Europe. From 1649 to 1651 he made a long journey through Southern Europe, travelling through France to Spain before crossing to Sardinia and visiting various cities in Italy. The peace with Spain had opened up new trading opportunities, both in Spain and in Italy, and that is probably why Six made this journey.⁶⁹ In 1651 he visited Italy again, this time travelling along the Rhine to Innsbruck and then on to Venice. Between 1652 and 1657, he made further trips – one to Germany and two to England (1654 and 1655). He also combined business trips with humanistic activities. For instance, he did a study of a Horace's codex, probably in a library in Paris, where he compared the variants he found there with his own copy of his favourite poet.⁷⁰ The company name also turns up in archives in Sweden.⁷¹ In this context, it is worth mentioning that the poet's uncle, Abraham Six van Chandelier, was commissioned in 1630 by the Swedish King Gustav II Adolf to establish a Swedish colony in Ingria, an area along the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland. Abraham became a member of the Swedish nobility, named Abraham Six von Sandelier, and received the permission to build a manor, Sixenburg, in the area where St. Petersburg is today. However, the plans for a Swedish colony ruled by enterprising Dutchmen failed after a few years.⁷²

Six's father died of an ailment. Six's anxiety that he would suffer the same fate is reflected in his poems. As we have seen, he himself was sick: he had an ailment

69 The peace with Spain opened up the possibilities for both the import of American drugs to the Netherlands and the export of Eastern specimens to Spain. See Jonathan Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade 1585–1740*, 1989, pp. 202 and 232–33.

70 Jacobs, 1991 II, p. 49–50. On Six's travels to Italy, see also Maartje van Gelder, *Trading Places: Netherlandish Merchants in Early Modern Venice*, 2009, p. 106.

71 Jacobs, 1991 II, p. XXXVI.

72 Bertel von Bonsdorff, *Abraham Six van Chandelier & consortes: en kolonisationsplan i Ingermanland 1629/30*, 1997.

of the spleen – an ‘obstructed spleen’, as he himself put it. The ailment also posed a problem both for the social reputation of the poet and for the family business. This will become clear from many of the poems I will be discussing in this book.⁷³ Six wrote many amorous poems to a loved one he calls Roselle, but he never married, and he blames his ailment for this, saying it made it impossible for him to live with a woman. He went to see the doctor Simon Dilman (or Dilleman), a good friend and a relative of Six. The poet addressed a series of occasional poems to him and his family. One of the doctor’s sons, Jacob Dilman, did his apprenticeship in Six’s family business. But the friendship was not without its conflicts. In some of his writings, Six expresses disappointment at Dilman’s medical methods. In 1656, Six started on another course of treatment, taking a nine-week-long cure in Spa, in what was then the Spanish Netherlands. In a series of poems that he wrote there, he praised the positive effects that the mineral water was having on him. But those effects were apparently not strong enough to return him to full health. Years later, in 1659 and 1669, he went through what he called a ‘spa season’ – a summer cure with bottles of spring water imported from Spa in the Ardennes.⁷⁴ He also kept in touch with others who had a medical background: botanists and surgeons. The Six van Chandelier family were Reformed Protestants. In addition to commercial and medical connections, it appears from Six’s poems that Reformed pastors belonged to his circle of friends. In addition to names such as Petrus Wittewrongel and Jacobus Hollebeek, Johannes Hoornbeek, a preacher and professor at the University of Utrecht, seems to have played an important role in Six’s life. He was also a relative of Six’s. Six sent poems to Hoornbeek, and the theologian responded with religious writings.

Six van Chandelier’s collection, *Poësy*, appeared in 1657. Biographical information on the druggist-poet for the years after its publication becomes harder to come by. Apart from individual pamphlets and poems, he produced no more literary texts of his own. Having retreated to Ceulen, his country house, he devoted himself to a literary work of a more serious character: a newly rhymed version of the Psalms of David, which he undertook in the hope that they would replace the older version by Petrus Datheen. Six was ‘oover de twintig jaaren swanger, en ontrent de tien jaaren in swaaren arbeid’ (‘was pregnant for twenty years, and about ten years in heavy labour’) with the translation, according to the foreword to this work, which

73 In addition, the relationship with the family of Jan Willemsz Bogaert caused problems for Six. This fierce contra-remonstrant was banned in 1629 from Amsterdam because of his agitation. Bogaert’s son was married to an aunt of Six’s, and the two families were in conflict because of inheritance issues – see Appendix II. But where Six’s medical reputation is treated in several poems, he mentions the Bogaert in just two poems. One of these is ‘Wensch des Eenhoorns’ (‘Wish of the Unicorn’) (J182).

74 See ‘Prinsselijk inhaal, t’Amsterdam’ (‘Princely Reception in Amsterdam’) (J612), and a letter from Six to the theologian Johannes Coccejus, reproduced in Schenkeveld-van der Dussen & De Vries, 2007, p. 387.

appeared in 1674.⁷⁵ In 1690, a second, revised edition of the Psalms appeared. Six van Chandelier died in 1695, and was buried in the family grave in the Zuiderkerk in his hometown, Amsterdam.

Corpus

Poësy by Joannes Six van Chandelier appeared, according to the title page of the book, in 1657 ‘in Amsterdam. Published by Joost Pluimert, on the Dam, in Seneca’. Pluimert (or Pluymer) is the name of the publisher and seller of the book. He was just 23 years old at the time, and this was the first book he had published. Pluymer’s bookshop was called ‘Seneca’ and would have specialised mainly in classical literature, which is interesting when we think of the many classical allusions in Six’s poetry and, as we shall see, his self-presentation as a *poeta doctus* or learned poet. No indication is given of who the printer was.⁷⁶ As is clear from the full title, *Poësy verdeelt in ses boeken en eenige opschriften* (*Poetry Divided into Six Books and a Number of Inscriptions*), *Poësy* is in fact a collection.⁷⁷

The subtitles indicate that the division of *Poësy* is somewhat formal. Genre and length are the determining factors for the first two sections, and for the last part, which is added on: ‘Sonnets’ and ‘Inscriptions’ contain sonnets and epigrams, respectively, while the section ‘Five poems’ includes the five longest poems in the collection. The title of the third book, ‘Poems from Spa’, shows that an organising principle is at work here, too: Six wrote the poems in it while he was staying in Spa. It seems that these are the last poems that Six wrote for this collection, because their contents show that it was in 1656 that he took the treatment in Spa. A certain chronological sequence can also be found in the first section – the collection of sonnets – and in the three largest books in the collection, those with ‘Dichtbosch’ (‘Forest of Poems’) in their titles. It seems from that term that the reader should see these sections as ‘bundles of poems’, a mix of texts that pay scant regard to chronology and genre.⁷⁸ And this is indeed the primary impression we get from

75 Joannes Six van Chandelier, *Dauids Psalmen*, 1674, p. VI.

76 Monique A. F. Peters, *Van miskend tot geprezen: Het beeld van de koopman-dichter Jan Six van Chandelier (1620-1695) in de Nederlandse literatuurgeschiedschrijving*, 2012, pp. 23–24.

77 These books are: ‘Klinkdichten’, ‘Het tweede boek / Vyfgedichten’, ‘Het derde boek / waar in Spadichten’, ‘Het vierde boek / genaamt Dichtbosch / Het eerste deel’, ‘Het vyfde boek / genaamt bos/ Het tweede deel’ and ‘Het seste boek / genaamt Dichtbosch / Het derde deel’. (‘Sonnets’, ‘The Second Book/Five Poems’, ‘The Third Book/including Poems from Spa’, ‘The Fourth Book/Entitled Forest of Poems /Part I’, ‘The Fifth Book/Entitled Forest of Poems/Part II’, and ‘The Sixth Book/Entitled Forest of Poems/Part III’.) The book concludes with an appendix, entitled ‘Opschriften’ (‘Inscriptions’/‘epigrams’).

78 For ‘bos’ (‘forest’) as a genre determination, see the definition of ‘de sylvis’ in Vossius, *Poeticarum institutionum libri tres / Institutes of Poetics in Three Books* [1647] (2010), p. 1214.

reading *Poësy*. Thus in earlier literary research, scant attention was paid to the way in which *Poësy* was put together. And in interpreting *Poësy*, I will also be looking primarily at other principles according to which its parts have been arranged.⁷⁹

The subtitles of the six parts of the collection give us no indication about the themes of Six's poems, except in the case of the Spa poems in the third part, which are as thematically varied as they are formally rich. Certain themes and motifs do come up more often than others. Thus, on the one hand, there are a large number of erotic poems in the collection, while on the other it also contains impressions of travel in other countries. The first category includes both love poems that Six wrote to Roselle, and wedding poems to family members and fellow merchants. There are also numerous texts in the second category. One of the longest poems in the collection is devoted to Venice, 'Schetse van Venecie' ('Sketch of Venice') (J97). This poem is also interesting in light of Six's business as a druggist. In it, he argues that Amsterdam has taken over Venice's role as the leading European centre for the trade in perfumes, drugs and spices. In Rome, Six found himself in the company of the Dutch painters the *Bentvogels* (*Birds of a Feather*) and also met with the Amsterdam poet Reyer Anslo, among others. He devotes a number of poems to these individuals. A series of poems is dedicated to the Joyous Entry into Madrid of Queen Mariana of Austria, second wife of Philip IV, on 15 November 1649. Six was there on a business trip, and was probably at the procession. A large number of texts were

79 For the transmission of Six's texts, see Jacobs, 1991 II, pp. XI–XX. Of the vast majority of poems, just one version has come down to us – that in *Poësy* (1657). Six involved himself personally in the printing of the collection, because he made author's corrections to the edition (Jacobs, 1991 II, p. XIV). A small number of texts had previously been published as a pamphlet. Changes were made to them before they were included in *Poësy*. We do not know whether Six edited them when he was preparing the book. Another interesting question is whether he had a particular goal in mind in organising *Poësy* in the somewhat chaotic way we have seen. Thus a number of long poems have been included in 'Het tweede boek/Vyf gedichten' ('The Second Book/Five Poems'), J96 and J97, while the introduction poems to these long texts appear in the collected-poems sections, J308 and J289. The inclusion of the poems Six wrote on the occasion of the Peace of Münster, and that had previously appeared in the pamphlet *Vreughde-Zangen* (*Songs of Joy*) (1648), is more radical. Not only are some of these heavily edited, but Six also had them included in really different spots in *Poësy*: J215, J327, J219, J220, J218, J227, J213, J270 and J223. This list follows the original order of the *Vreughde-Zangen* (*Songs of Joy*). Parts of the pamphlet that were not printed in *Poësy* were included in the edition put out by A.E. Jacobs: J608, J609 and J610. I will return in Chapter 7 to Six's adaptation of the *Vreughde-Zangen* (*Songs of Joy*). In addition to *Poësy*, we know of 22 individual poems by Six, which he wrote after 1657 and that appeared as pamphlets or were published in seventeenth-century anthologies. Nineteen of these were included in the study published by Jacobs. Two texts were printed, with commentary, in: Schenkeveld-van der Dussen & De Vries, 2007, pp. 189–191 and P.E.L. Verkuyl, 'Een dichterlijk pamflet naar aanleiding van de komeet van 1664', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsche taal- en letterkunde*, 1996, pp. 30–43. The last text, an epigram entitled 'Schijnheiligheit' ('Hypocrisy'), with calligraphy by L.W. Coppenol, was sold at a Dutch auction in November 2013. It is quite possible that more poems by Six will be found. Some of these poems are discussed in this book.

written to Abraham Grenier, a lawyer from Zeeland and a close friend of Six's, who accompanied him on two of his trips. There are also a large number of anti-English poems, written after the execution of Charles I and as the First Anglo-Dutch War was being fought. The longest poem in the collection, 's Amsterdammers winter' ('Winter in Amsterdam') (J96), a literary winter scene that is set in the poet's hometown and that emphasises in particular the fun that skaters in Amsterdam are having, also stands out.⁸⁰ Finally, what stands out on the one hand are the number of poems devoted to the poet's illness and its treatment, and, on the other, the large number of texts about meals and culinary delicacies, including exotic medicines such as bezoar stone. The latter theme is seen as a hallmark of *Poësy*. Compared with the contents of other seventeenth-century Dutch poetry, the contents of Six's poems are remarkable for the absence of tributes to one or another luminary – possible patrons or benefactors. M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen regards this as a particular feature of the collection: Six dissociates himself from any kind of patronage.⁸¹

As far as language and form are concerned, given Six's aforementioned affinity for a scholarly, mannered style of writing, *Poësy* differs from the poetry of many of his peers, especially those who called themselves adherents of Vondelian language – but even in this regard Six is not an exception in early modern Dutch literature. In this respect he was heavily influenced by Constantijn Huygens. In many texts, he expresses his admiration for Huygens's poetic language.⁸²

Reception

We have now named the main features of *Poësy*, and have also, in fact, addressed in outline its literary-theoretical reception before the twentieth century. The only critical response to Six's poetry that we know of from his own time is found in correspondence from 1671 between two pastor-poets, Joannes Vollenhove and Geeraerd Brandt. A letter from the former to the latter contains a list of the names of poets who recognised the greatness of P.C. Hooft; Vollenhove counts Joannes Six among these. Brandt misunderstands Vollenhove: he assumes that Vollenhove means the Amsterdam regent Jan Six, Rembrandt's patron and the author of *Medea*. Brandt's response is surprising, because not only did he himself exchange a series of sonnets with Six van Chandelier, but when Brandt was accused of plagiarism the druggist had even

80 This text is in an edition that comes with commentaries: M. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen & Hans Luijten (ed.), *'s Amsterdammers winter*, 1988.

81 M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 'De anti-idealistische poëtica van een christen-burger, Joannes Six van Chandelier', *De nieuwe taalgids*, 1983, pp. 291–316.

82 For example, 'Op de leedige uren, van C. Huygens, ridder & c.' ('In the Idle Hours, by C. Huygens, Ridder et al') (J408) and 'Op K. Huygens Oogenblikken' ('On C. Huygens's *Momenta desultoria*') (J439).

defended him. Vollenhove's aesthetic judgment is also odd, because, as we shall see, in his poems Six expresses his opposition to the poetics of P.C. Hooft. Evidently, Brandt let Vollenhove know this, but for Vollenhove those traits of P.C. Hooft's style that can be discerned in Six outweigh the signs of an individual, distinctive poetics: 'If he is not such a great lover of the Bailiff [P.C. Hooft], he ought to be at least, and could not, I think, have written so much great poetry, which I believe I have read in his book'.⁸³

Vollenhove's and Brandt's assessments are indicative of Six's reception: over the centuries, Six van Chandelier has always been seen as one of the important names of seventeenth-century poetry, but without attracting the same level of interest as many of his contemporaries. For example, only one edition of *Poësy* has appeared. It is true that Six was rediscovered in the nineteenth century.⁸⁴ But it is only in the second half of the last century that he acquired the elevated status we accord him these days. The credit for this goes to G.A. van Es, and especially to M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen. My observations about the study of material culture in the early modern Republic also apply to the perception of Six van Chandelier in the history of literature: Six's poetry takes a particular interest in everyday life and shows an openness to material objects. 'Realism' is the keyword in studies on Six.

G.A. van Es was the first literary researcher to write several articles on Six. In the literary-historical standard *Geschiedenis van de letterkunde der Nederlanden* (1952), Van Es describes the poet as 'simple in spirit, loyal, open, and sincere to the point of being naïve' and as representing a kind of harmonic and realistic poetry: 'He barely runs into or raises problems [...]. Six has a rarely poignant lyricism. The dominant feature of his poetry is a healthy realism.' Van Es later nuances his description of Six. His introduction to an anthology of Six's poetry in 1953 conveys a gloomy tone. He now discerns in Six's texts an inner development that contains a swing from joy to grief, and that results, in a sense, in religious reflection. They lead 'finally to the suspected turn in his life's path, which unfortunately made him stop writing poetry.' He reads the book that followed *Poësy*, Six's rhyming psalms, in the light of this religious turning point, which according to him resulted in the silence of Six van Chandelier as a poet. He proposes, therefore, that the publication of the psalms was a 'reckoning with the past'. This thesis is interesting when it comes to the hypothesis of this book: does 'Rariteiten te koop' have such a self-critical function?⁸⁵

83 'Is hy [Six] zoo groot een liefhebber van den Drost niet, hy behoort ten minste te zijn, en kon, mijns dunks, zonder dat zoo veel goets, als ik 'er meen van gelezen te hebben, niet schryven', J. de Haes, *Het Leven Van Geeraert Brandt, Beschreven Door Joan De Haes [...]* (*The life of Geeraert Brandt, as Recounted by Joan De Haes ...*) 1740, p. 150. I have the reference from Jacobs, 1991 II, pp. 17–18.

84 Thanks to favourable articles on his writings by Jeronimo de Vries and Dirk Groebe (1823) and by Johannes Godefridus Frederiks (1883), see Peters, 2012.

85 G.A. van Es & Edward Rombauts, *De letterkunde van renaissance en barok*, 2, 1952, pp. 161 and 175; G.A. van Es, 'Introduction', *Poësy van J. Six van Chandelier: bloemlezing uit zijn dichtwerk*, 1953, pp. 10–12.

The next generation of researchers will go by Van Es's first impression: that of Six as a realist. M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen has made the main contribution to research on Six; her most important article on him, 'De anti-idealistische poëtica van een christen-burger, Joannes Six van Chandelier' (1983), provides a theoretical foundation for the many articles on Six she has since written.⁸⁶ We can see two different but mutually related approaches in Schenkeveld to Six's poetry. On the one hand, she speaks of Six as a distinctly realistic poet: he pays great attention to reality. The other approach has to do with what she calls Six's 'anti-idealistic' poetics. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen was the first to note, and study, the large number of metapoems Six wrote – that is, poems about writing poetry. She has also pointed to Six's particular use of irony, and notwithstanding the many intellectual references in his poems, to his role as a *poeta doctus*. Based on these two points, she shows us what an exceptional position Six occupies in the literary landscape of the Dutch Golden Age: his was a powerful dissenting voice against the pretentious poetic ideal his contemporaries strove for. As Schenkeveld-van der Dussen sees it, Six speaks the naked truth. And if he is not doing that, that is so he can poke fun at others' grandiose words and pretensions. He positions himself as a sceptic, an anti-idealist.⁸⁷

In her article, Schenkeveld-van der Dussen makes an interesting argument that culminates in her vision of Six's writing. In her research into the rationale behind Six's particular poetics, she takes as her starting point three central poems in *Poësy*.⁸⁸ Here she discusses several poetic standpoints that Six presents, and two of which address poetry as a vocation. The first relativises the value and status of poetry from both a social and a religious perspective: poetry is no more important than 'neeringe in de droogen' ('trading in drugs') – 'Begin met God' ('Beginning

86 Here I follow Schenkeveld's most important works: M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 'Joannes Six van Chandelier: Realist Jaarrede door de voorzitter, mevrouw Dr. M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen', *Jaarboek van de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde*, 1981, pp. 3–15; M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 'De anti-idealistische poëtica van een christen-burger, Joannes Six van Chandelier'; M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 'Ut pictura poesis: de paragone tussen dicht- en schilderkunst bij Jan Vos en Jan Six van Chandelier', *Nederlandse letterkunde*, 2001, pp. 101–112; Riet Schenkeveld-van der Dussen & Willemien de Vries, *Zelfbeeld in gedichten. Brieven over de poëzie van Jan Six van Chandelier*, 2007. For the image of Six in more recent literary-historical retrospectives and guides: M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 'Najaar 1649, Jan Six van Chandelier overnacht in Toulouse – Drie anti-idealistische dichters', in: M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, *Nederlandse Literatuur, een geschiedenis*, 1993, pp. 255–260; Theo Hermans (ed.), *A Literary History of the Low Countries* 2009. The section on Six, pp. 277–279, was written by E.K. Grooten & M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen.

87 M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 'De anti-idealistische poëtica van een christen-burger, Joannes Six van Chandelier'.

88 'Het boek, aan den leeser' ('The book, to the Reader') (J119), 'Afscheid aan myn rymen' ('Farewell to My Rhymes') (J120), and 'Begin met God' ('Beginning with God') (J121). See the following chapter for my interpretation of the poems.

with God') (J121) (l. 33) – and, like any other occupation, the writing of poems needs God's blessing. The second point concerns 'an apparent incompatibility between being a druggist and being a poet'. The contrast between druggist and poet could lead to an interesting contextualisation of *Poësy*, but instead Schenkeveld-van der Dussen points to 'a deeper reason why Six did not expect a better reception for his poems', to be found in an opposition between rhyming and writing poetry.⁸⁹ Six's particular views on poetry can, according to her argument, be explained in the first instance by literariness itself and not so much by the socio-historical context in which the poetry was written. Six's social identity comes up again at other points in the article, but here Schenkeveld-van der Dussen interprets the profession of druggist not as something problematic, but as a mundane, everyday job through which Six learned what really mattered in life.⁹⁰ The rest of the article is about Six's poetics in relation to the literary-aesthetic hierarchies to be found in influential Renaissance poetics, especially that of Joost van den Vondel. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen finds it noteworthy that these hierarchies also contain extratextual references to a social ranking, and that they are even rooted in social divisions in the medical world – but she does not find this important enough to study in the context of Six's own social background. Both the famous distinction offered by Pierre de Ronsard between the 'venerable Prophete', the true poet, and 'un Charlatan vendeur de triacles', and Vondel's repetition of this in his influential statement, 'Rijmers die eerst hun AB opzeggen, vallen verwaendelijck aen 't zwetsen, gelijk de quackzalvers, om hun zalfpotten' ('Rhymesters who have just left finished learning their ABCs, grow presumptuously prolix, like quacks peddling their jars of ointment') – principles of 'universalist' poetics to which Six was opposed and which Schenkeveld-van der Dussen discusses in her article – can be seen against the backdrop of a medical-social reality.⁹¹

Schenkeveld-van der Dussen also discusses the receipt of materials in Six's poetry. An older article of hers contains an interpretation of 'Dank, voor een gerookten salm, aan Pieter Loones' ('Thanks for a Smoked Salmon – to Pieter Loones') (J357). She calls the piece of Russian smoked salmon in the text 'a trivial gift from a poetic perspective'.⁹² The question, however, is whether the goods that come up for discussion in Six really were so trivial: smoked salmon – or other products such as olive oil and dates – are now ordinary items that we come across every day. But was that the case yet in the early modern period? Asking such questions offers new points

89 Ibid., p. 298.

90 Ibid. p. 299 and 311.

91 Ibid., p. 305; Pierre de Ronsard, *La Franciade*, ed. by Paul Laumonier, 1983, p. 335; Joost van den Vondel, *Aenleidinge ter Nederduitsche dichtkunste (Introduction to Dutch poetry)*, 1977, p. 44. I will return to this point in Chapter 10.

92 Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 1982, p. 311.

of entry into Six's poetry. I will argue that the large number of exotic products that Six describes transcends the paradigm of realism.⁹³

The more serious sides of Six, his illness and his religious musings, have also come in for attention in scholarly research. An article from before Van Es discussed this theme is particularly enlightening: 'Johan Six van Chandelier' by J. Koopmans, from 1915.⁹⁴ All the elements of *Poësy* that I find important are discussed in this book: Six's 'culinary interests' and his 'knowledge [...] of all kinds of strange products from East and West'; his anti-Vondelian poetics and warnings of the temptations encountered on his journey through Southern Europe; the ailment he had in his spleen and the break with his regular doctor Simon Dilman in favour of a Spa cure; his Calvinist sympathies and his identification with biblical figures; and his correspondence with Calvinist preachers who are concerned about the state of his soul, especially the theologian Johannes Hoornbeeck. Even if the textual analyses done by subsequent researchers on Six who are familiar with new methods of literary analysis such as close reading are more thorough, the overall picture they give of Six as a writer is not as good as the picture we get from Koopman.

These factors are also raised in the first monograph on Six, *Zelfbeeld in gedichten. Brieven over de poëzie van Jan Six van Chandelier* (2007). The book consists of an exchange of letters between Schenkeveld-van der Dussen and her fellow literary historian, Willemien B. de Vries. In one chapter, the ailment Six had in his spleen is discussed in the light of early modern medical theories. With reference to his profession as 'druggist', Six calls himself a 'dry' person in several texts. This prompts Schenkeveld-van der Dussen to wonder whether 'dryness' is also a reference to the theory of the humours. According to Galen's teachings, melancholics possess the qualities 'dry' and 'cold'. Did Six, then, regard himself as a melancholic? Schenkeveld-van der Dussen's answer is no. She does not detect any great inner struggle in him.⁹⁵ I will argue for a different vision: I intend to show, on the one hand, that Six refers directly, and several times, to the doctrine of the humours, and on the other, that melancholy was a fairly elastic concept in the early modern period: thanks to the rediscovery of Aristotle's idea that all great intellectuals and artists were inspired by the qualities of black bile, melancholy lost many of its negative connotations. But at the same time, Protestant theologians and doctors associated a morbid form of melancholy with inappropriate religious behaviour, ranging from

93 Compare also Vincent Buyens, 'Joannes Six van Chandeliers "Schetse van Venecie". Meer dan een reisindruk'. In *Spiegel der Letteren*, 2005, pp. 21–51. Buyens argues that we should not take terms like 'sketch' and 'rhymes' too literally, he also shows that Six in his poetry connects with national-mythological traditions within the Dutch culture which undermines the view of Six as an anti-idealist.

94 *De nieuwe taalgids*, 1915, pp. 25–49.

95 Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 2007, p. 117.

ecstatic 'frenzy' to introverted pondering.⁹⁶ For a good sense of the profile of Six's ailment, we would therefore do well to avoid the stereotypes in the doctrine of the humours. The paradigm of realism has thus made a deeper understanding of Six's poetry more difficult.

In connection with the discussion of *melancholia*, I would also like to discuss another example. In the comments on Six's 'Horatius Liersangen, in Hollands vertaalt door J. v. Vondel. Aan den selven' ('The Odes of Horace, Translated into Dutch by J.v. Vondel. To the same person') (J363), A.E. Jacobs asks, for example, whether Six's concept of 'sinloos' ('without the senses') (l. 11) with respect to Vondel's poetic style refers to the old doctrine of enthusiasm. In my methodological approach, in which I pay attention to humanistic concepts, I want to look more closely at this interesting suggestion. I will return to this point in Chapter 8, on drugs as a source of inspiration.⁹⁷ But *Zelfbeeld in Gedichten* also contains observations that shed new light on Six. As we have seen, in several texts Six presents himself as a sinner. He writes religious meditations on vices such as greed and hubris. Many of these poems are addressed to Calvinist preachers. Willemien B. de Vries places the strikingly self-critical attitude of Six in a broader context: 'In Reformed belief, self-examination falls under the question of sin and grace in one's own life. In the Republic in the course of the seventeenth century, this was manifest in the movement of the pietistic Further Reformation'.⁹⁸ According to De Vries, this self-examination can be found in Six's poetry. De Vries touches on an interesting point that I will go into more fully in this book. In addition to the issues of morality and illness, I will focus on morality and material in *Poësy*.

How this book is organised

The main part of this book is organised by theme. I follow the same structure as other historical studies on *materia medica* whose starting point is the multi-faceted use of

96 Dorothee Sturkenboom, 'Understanding Emotional Identities. The Dutch Phlegmatic Temperament as Historical Case Study', *BMGN*, 2014, pp. 163–191; see, in particular, p. 179; M.J. van Lieburg, *De ziekte der geleerden. Een hoofdstuk uit de geschiedenis van de melancholie en hypochondrie*, 1989; Michael Heyd, *Be Sober and Reasonable: The Critique of Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries*, 1995.

97 Jacobs, 1991 II, p. 642. More problematic is Jacobs's use of a concept such as popular belief – see, for instance, his commentary on 'Op de reedenstryd, oover de kooninghlyke siekte' ('On the disputation on the King's Evil') (J423). Jacobs has clearly been influenced here by natural-scientific and historical works that have appeared in the centuries since Six, such as that by Noel Chomel, *Algemeen Huishoudelijk-, Natuur-, Zedekundig- En Konstwoordenboek*, 1778, and M.A. van Andel, *Klassieke wondermiddelen*, 1928. The magical ideas that Jacobs links to popular belief were, however, scholarly concepts in Six's day.

98 Schenkeveld-van der Dussen & De Vries, 2007, pp. 131 and 132.

drugs in the early modern period.⁹⁹ This schema reflects the various roles that Six adopts in 'Rariteiten te koop': as a merchant, a poet of love, an inspired poet, a city poet, as the harbinger of a Golden Age, and indirectly as a patient. In Chapter 2, I discuss the meaning of 'druggist' and 'drugs' in Six's day, with a view to locating Six within a particular socio-medical landscape. Six's ambivalent relationship to his own trade in drugs constitutes a common thread in the remaining chapters, each of which covers a different way in which drugs, spices and perfumes were used. Chapter 3 is devoted to a non-medicinal use of drugs: drugs as collector's items and objects of research in the Wunderkammer, which was popular in the early modern period. Here I discuss *curiositas*, an eagerness for knowledge about exotic drugs as rarities in the cabinet of curiosities. In both of these chapters, I argue that Six's self-portrayal as a modest druggist cannot be traced back to the presentation of the druggist as engaging in a simple, run-of-the-mill activity, but that it involves a rewriting of the negative connotations associated with 'druggist'.

Chapter 4 discusses the use of exotic plants and spices as medicines and foods in Six's poetry. I will explain the close relationship between these two domains at the beginning of that chapter. The discourse on native versus exotic drugs plays a large role in this section. Chapter 5 covers how drugs were used outside the kitchen and the pharmacy: drugs as cosmetics, as both material and literary ornaments. This part deals with drugs as substances that have a transformative effect and thus as threats to the human body, in both the medical and the religious senses. Chapter 6 builds on the argument in Chapter 5 on drugs as cosmetics, but focuses on gunpowder and fireworks as material and as literary ornamentation. The last two chapters discuss religious and ceremonial uses of goods from the early modern drugstore. Thus in Chapter 7 I discuss incense and perfumes as holy offerings – both in the literal and figurative senses – in Joyous Entries by political leaders into cities. Here I show how Six associates the alleged apotheosising power of drugs with idolatry and pride. In Chapter 8 I discuss the use of drugs for artistic inspiration – uses that are alluded to in Renaissance poetry. These chapters present us once again with the self-image of the sober, self-critical druggist, but I also show that Six uses another literary strategy that yields yet other redefinitions of identity: he presents himself as a weak and fragile rhymester, but in a positive sense, to distance himself from associations that drugs give rise to with divinity and perfection. But at the same time, we get to know Six as a pragmatic poet. By using exaggeration, irony and the

99 Compare, for instance, how the chapters are arranged in Alfred Schmidt, *Drogen und Drogenhandel im Altertum*, 1924; A.M.G. Rutten, *Blue Ships: Dutch Ocean Crossing with Multifunctional Drugs and Spices in the Eighteenth Century*, 2008; and Holly Dugan, *The Ephemeral History of Perfume. Scent and Sense in Early Modern England*, 2011.

figure of speech *praeteritio*, Six still manages to make use of material and literary ornaments without actually being identified with them.

In the main part of the book, drugs from all 'three kingdoms of nature' are discussed: plant substances such as cachou (*terra japonica*), gum resin and olive oil; animal substances such as bezoar stone, musk, horn, civet and ambergris; and minerals such as saltpetre, gems and gold. I also discuss a number of *composita* – what Van Beverwijck would call 'mengelmiddelen' or 'mixed materials'. In addition to gunpowder, I will also discuss the classic cure-all theriac.

In the third and final part of this book, I will look at another category of drugs, classified not according to how they are used but by their origin: drugs with a fourth origin or, more precisely, a subcategory of *animalia*. These substances come from the 'animal endowed with reason': the human body. We will look at a number of poems by Six in which three types of human 'drugs' play a role: the so-called *mumia* (ground Egyptian mummies), Catholic relics, and human blood. This last substance takes us back to the 'miracle medicine' from 'Rariteiten te koop', the blood of King Charles I. I offer a new reading of this poem, based both on the knowledge we now have of early modern pharmaceuticals and on discussions related to it from the main part of the book. Also in this section, I will shift my attention from the sick bodies of individuals to the sick body of the state, and I will look at a new interpretation of the name Six gives his profession: 'thirsting', in the sense of longing for God.