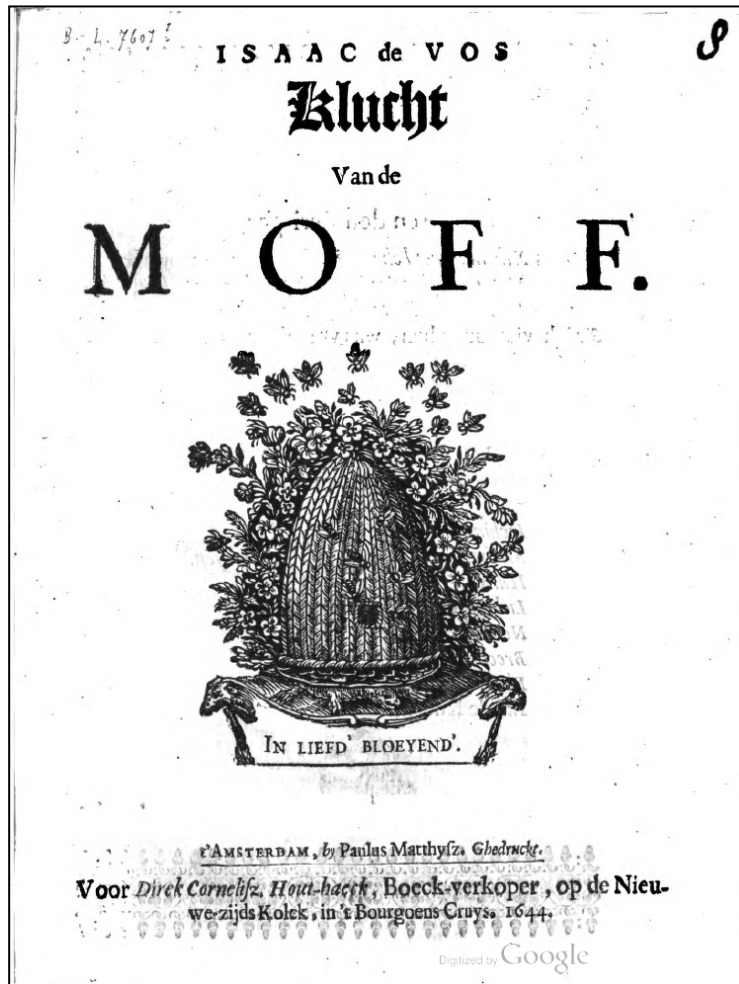


Ridiculing the Other

The Politics of Humour and Imaging in early modern Dutch *moffenkluchten*



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Introduction: innocent entertainment?

Imagine that you are going to see a performance at the theatre tonight about an immigrant in the Netherlands. It is a comic play and in it, the main character is a caricature version of an immigrant, speaking some sort of fake language and barely understanding Dutch. He thinks maybe he can find a nice Dutch girl to marry him. Stupid, of course, because why would any Dutch girl ever marry an immigrant? In fact, the lovely Dutch girl he tries to impress tricks him and the play ends with the immigrant being beaten up and sent into the streets naked. He cries and does not ever wish to return to the Netherlands ever again. All's well that ends well... right?

Now imagine this specific play being referred to by critics and even by academic researchers as 'simply innocent entertainment'. Well, what you just read is actually the plot of an existing Dutch play from the seventeenth century. Plays like these were immensely popular in the Netherlands during the early modern period, and have indeed been framed as 'innocent entertainment'.

The play that I described here is a farce titled '*Klucht van de Mof*' and as this title already suggests - at least for most Dutch people who will recognise the term *mof* -, the immigrant in question is of German origin. Short comic plays that specialised in the ridiculing of these German immigrants were not at all uncommon at the time. In fact, they were even so popular that they formed their own genre of the early modern Dutch farce, or *kluchtspel*, called *moffenkluchten*.

Though the word *mof* in the modern-day Netherlands has a connotation relating to the mocking of the German oppressor during the Second World War, the word itself and its use for name-calling Germans has a much longer history. Starting early in the seventeenth century, the word was often used to refer to German immigrants that came to the Dutch Republic. The term was possibly derived either from the German *Muff* (meaning grumpy or big-mouthed person) or the Northern Dutch region *Muffrika*. On the Dutch stage, the *mof* created a strong German stereotype.

Though the *moffenklucht* as a genre has not been treated often in historical research, there have been some before me who have researched the subject. For example, there is a published lecture from 1970 on the *mof* in early modern Dutch comedy and farce in which Willem Ornée has given a brief overview of the different plays which include the German stereotype of the *mof*.¹ Where Ornée considers rather briefly the varieties within this German stereotype, Leo Lucassen, in his contribution to a volume from the Anne Frank Stichting called *Vreemd gespuis*, shifts the research focus to the reaction of the Dutch to the arrival of these German immigrants.² He states that the stereotyping and

¹ W. A. Ornée, *De 'Mof' in de Nederlandse blij- en kluchtspelen uit de 17^e en 18^e eeuw* (Groningen, 1970).

² Leo Lucassen, 'Poepen, Knoeten, Mieren en Moffen: beeldvorming over Duitse immigranten en trekarbeiders in zeventiende- en achttiende-eeuwse kluchten' in: Anne Frank Stichting, *Vreemd gespuis* (1987).

ridicule of the German immigrants did not form an obstacle for them to assimilate in Dutch society and that the mockery of the German immigrants was of an innocent nature, meant only as entertainment.³

In a collection on 350 years of migration, H. Mertens-Westphalen wrote a similar overview of the varieties within the German stereotype in early modern Dutch farces to that of Ornée. However, he pays a little more critical attention to how these *moffenkluchten* were presumably received by audiences.⁴ Mertens-Westphalen states in his introduction that the negative connotations as portrayed in these farces lived on well into the nineteenth century, but other than referencing some examples of nineteenth-century works that make mention of these *moffen*, he does not elaborate on this any further.

Though, unlike her predecessors, literary historian Lotte Jensen only analyses two *moffenkluchten* instead of the genre as a whole, she seems to have been the first to further explore what could have caused this negative image of German immigrants, or at least where it might have come from.⁵ She argues that the Dutch represented these Germans in a negative way in order to clarify and defend their own 'threatened' identity within the rivalry between the two similar Germanic identities: 'Door in 'de ander' eigenschappen te hekelen die voor het eigen volk ook geldig waren, wordt het eigen volk als het ware tijdelijk van diezelfde negatieve reputatie gevrijwaard. Naar een alledaags niveau vertaald: ondeugden die op jezelf van toepassing zijn, veracht je des te meer bij een ander. Zelfbeeld en beeld van de ander hangen in die zin nauw met elkaar samen.'⁶ Johanna Ferket recently published an article taking this train of thought even further by looking at other reasons behind this negative imaging that Dutch playwrights could have. She concludes that the criticizing of Germans was used as a 'safe' way to criticize problems within the own Dutch society. 'Laughing at 'others',' she explains, 'created a sense of solidarity among the audience', while 'criticizing Dutch culture and populace [...] involved a risk for the author and actors. The audience could take the criticism personally and since theatre needed an audience to survive, this could be very harmful.'⁷ Ferket's point of view is particularly interesting because she has a more critical perception of the genre of farce in general, seeing it as more than just entertainment.

³ Lucassen, 'beeldvorming over Duitse immigranten', 37.

⁴ H. Mertens-Westphalen, 'De Duitser en de Hollandganger in de kluchten uit de 17e en 18e eeuw', in: Eijnck, A., et.al. (red.), *Werken over de grens. 350 jaar geld verdienen in het buitenland* (Assen, 1993).

⁵ Lotte Jensen, "Libben labben an eyn stuccken swijne vless': 'Moffen'-beeld bij de toneelschrijver Isaac Vos', *Vooys* 15 (1997), 22-27.

⁶ Jensen, 'Moffen-beeld bij de toneelschrijver Isaac Vos', 26.

⁷ Johanna Ferket, "All these things one has to endure from these Germans': Germans Stage Characters as Means to Criticize Changing Social Positions in Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam', *Dutch Crossing* 42:1 (2018), 47-61, here 47.

Peet Theeuwen, in his research on eighteenth-century hack-writer Pieter 't Hoen, notices a shift in the genre of *moffenkluchten* at the end of the eighteenth century. Like Lucassen, he states that these German immigrants indeed assimilated rather well into Dutch society, but that the economic decline and growing numbers of unemployment in the second half of the eighteenth century made many Dutchmen see German immigrants as unwanted competition on the labour market. According to Theeuwen, the farces were influenced by these developments as well: 'De kluchten, tot dan toe gevuld met platvloerse en voor de Duitsers onaangename maar geenszins bedreigende humor, verscherpten na 1750 hun toon tot een soms nationalistisch getinte rancune tegen deze buitenlanders.'⁸

It is striking that Theeuwen admits to later *moffenkluchten* containing a sometimes nationalistic hate towards these German immigrants after 1750, but that he would still refer to the humour in *moffenkluchten* before 1750 as 'in no way threatening'. With this point of view, Theeuwen seems to side with Lucassen, who sees the imaging of Germans in these farces as innocent because it did not lead to widespread government-supported discrimination.⁹ This way of thinking about the humour in these farces seems problematic to me because it does not take into account the political implications of humour in itself.

For a long time, scholars researching humour have mostly focused on its positive, liberating and critical effects.¹⁰ However, more recently, another more critical tradition of humour research has emerged that considers the negative and conservative properties of humour, without necessarily denying the positive properties. Some examples of scholars who belong to this more critical tradition of humour studies are Michael Billig, Nicholas Holm, Giseline Kuipers, Ivo Nieuwenhuis and Dick Zijp.¹¹

Using theories on the politics of humour from within this more critical tradition in combination with theories on the politics of imaging and 'othering', I wish to look at the negative and conservative properties of humour in the past through the case study of early modern Dutch *moffenkluchten* and

⁸ Peet Theeuwen, 'Een fictieve broodschijsver: Pieter 't Hoen en het vroege oeuvre van J. A. Schasz M.D', *Mededelingen van de Stichting Jacob Campo Weyerman* 24 (2001), 89-103, here 97.

⁹ Lucassen, 'beeldvorming over Duitse immigranten', 37.

¹⁰ See for example: Simon Critchley, *On Humour* (London, 2002).

¹¹ Michael Billig, *Laughter and Ridicule: Towards a Social Critique of Humour* (thousand Oaks, 2005); Nicholas Holm, *Humour as Politics: The Political Aesthetics of Contemporary Comedy* (London, 2017); Giseline Kuipers, *Goede humor, slechte smaak. Een Sociologie van de mop* (Amsterdam, 2001); Giseline Kuipers, 'The politics of humour in the Public Sphere: Cartoons, Power and Modernity in the First Transnational Humour Scandal', *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 14:1 (2011), 63-80; Ivo Nieuwenhuis, *Onder het mom van satire: Laster, spot en ironie in Nederland, 1780-1800* (Hilversum, 2014); Ivo Nieuwenhuis, 'Conformist Comedians: Political Humour in the Eighteenth-Century Dutch Republic', in: I. Mackenzie, et. al. (Eds.), *Comedy and Critical Thought: Laughter as Resistance* (London, 2018), 103-118; Dick Zijp, *Re-Thinking Dutch Cabaret: The Conservative Implications of Humour in the Dutch Cabaret Tradition* (unpublished MA thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2014).

the imaging of German immigrants through humour on the early modern Dutch stage. The main aim of this thesis is to further explore the political workings of humour through analysing the interaction between humour and (negative) imaging in this conservative genre. Though there is undoubtedly a shift at the end of the eighteenth century to a more explicitly political and more xenophobic type of humour in these farces, I will argue that the humour used in these *moffenkluchten* in relation to the German immigrants has never been 'innocent' in the first place.

Because *moffenkluchten* as a genre beautifully embody both a notion of imaging (through the pejorative stereotype of the *mof*) and a notion of humour (through the comic genre of the *klucht*), it forms an interesting case study for researching the interplay between humour and imaging. Both of these components shall also form the silver lining for this thesis. In the first two chapters, both components will be looked at in parallel, while the third chapter analyses the imaging component through an analysis of the *mof* character itself, and the fourth chapter is an analysis of the humour component as it considers what humour actually does in these farces.

My first chapter introduces the theories on humour and imaging that form the theoretical framework for this thesis. Using Tzvetan Todorov's classification of the relationship between Self and Other as a methodological framework, I will analyse a total of three dimensions of the relationship between the Dutch Self and the *mof* as Other in *moffenkluchten*. These three dimensions (axiological, epistemic and praxiological) shall also be explained in more detail in the first chapter. The second chapter, that considers the axiological dimension, is meant as a more detailed introduction to the *moffenklucht* by examining the connection between imaging and humour at play through the stereotype of the *mof* and the genre of the *klucht*. The third chapter, the epistemic dimension, offers an analysis of the varied characterizations of the *mof*, revealing the complexity of the stereotype, and the normalization of the negative image of the German immigrant throughout the seventeenth- and eighteenth century. Whereas the third part of my analysis focuses on the comic character of the *mof* itself, the fourth and final part of my analysis, the praxiological dimension, focuses on the ways humour is used in the plotlines of these farces to actively create a certain distance between the Dutch Self and the German Other in the play.

Through this multileveled analysis of the genre of *moffenkluchten*, I will argue that the negative imaging of Germans that plays such a big part within the political and social xenophobia of the second half of the eighteenth century, has its origin in the humorous representation of *moffen* in almost two centuries of *moffenkluchten*. When it comes to the interaction of humour and imaging, I do not think we can ever really speak of 'simply innocent entertainment'.

1. The politics of humour and imaging: a theoretical framework

Moffenkluchten as a subgenre of the early modern Dutch *kluchtspelen* can be broken down into two separate components: *mof* and *klucht*. Whereas *klucht*, the Dutch word for farce, is an indication of the presence of humour, the term *mof*, in turn, is a reference to the negative imaging of the German immigrant. For the duration of this thesis, these two components will be returned to regularly, because when combined, they represent quite clearly the interplay between the politics of humour and imaging in the public sphere in the early modern Dutch Republic. In this theoretical chapter, the 'humour component' (*klucht*) will be discussed first through exploring previous studies of humour and laughter in order to find an efficient framework in which to discuss this subgenre of the farce. In the same manner, the 'imaging component' (*mof*) in this chapter follows an inquiry of previous studies of imaging, 'othering' and stereotyping. Because a well-rounded analysis of *moffenkluchten* requires not only a full comprehension of both components, but also a constant awareness of how they interact, *mof* and *klucht*, like humour and imaging, shall during the remainder of this thesis repeatedly be reflected on as interconnecting phenomena.

(*Moffen*)*klucht*: the politics of humour

Though humour and laughter are two different things, 'laughter [...] is a physical, physiological action that often, but not necessarily, arises in response to humour'¹², they have mostly been studied in tandem, resulting in three major theories. Though these theories are in no way final and, as pointed out by Nicholas Holm in his book on the political aesthetics of media humour, should not be considered as 'full accounts of how humour operates, but rather as what they are: models'¹³, they do offer an insightful introduction into the complexity of laughter and humour, and their effects. Starting with the oldest of the three: the Superiority theory, in which laughter is considered as an expression of supremacy and as having origins in the ancient roar of victory. This theory of humour's aggressive side, 'offers an interpretation of the comic as a site of ridicule, rather than rejoicing, that serves to reaffirm existing structures of power and ways of being.'¹⁴ However, the Superiority Theory already fails to acknowledge the ambivalence of humour as it does not explain targetless jokes and the playfulness of joking within friendly relationships.

A more recent theory is the Incongruity Theory, which suggests that laughter ensues as a reaction to the breaking of a pattern of expectation. Initially this theory, as opposed to the more

¹² Holm, *Humour as Politics*, 19.

¹³ Ibid., 11.

¹⁴ Ibid., 10.

negative point of view taken in the Superiority Theory, is prone to invite a notion of humour as something positive and desirable because it focuses on the subversive properties of humour. However, there have already been many before me who have pointed out that incongruity only offers a limited insight into the complicated workings of humour, and there have even been others to explore the more pernicious sides of incongruous humour.¹⁵

The last theory of humour is not so much about the question of what causes laughter, but rather about laughter's ability to relieve tension. This Relief Theory is often used in connection to the Superiority and Incongruity theories, for example in the way it aims to explain how aggression can only be expressed through laughter in those (incongruous) moments when a joke causes a sudden outbreak of (repressed) feelings of superiority.¹⁶ Besides this psychological - or Freudian - Relief Theory of laughter as relieving repressed feelings, Dutch sociologist Giseline Kuipers also points out the sociological Relief theory, in which laughter is believed to relieve feelings of social tension or oppression.¹⁷

When it comes to the effects of humour, scholars have, for a long time, mostly focused on the positive connotations of humour as having liberating and critical properties. Even in the case of *moffenkluchten*, the focus always lies on the positive viewpoint of these farces as simply a form of (innocent) early modern public entertainment, a case of comic relief. Though this conception of *moffenkluchten* as simply 'innocent entertainment' denies the complexity of humour in the public sphere, it is not uncommon for instances of comedy to be dismissed as such. Kuipers discusses this phenomenon through an analysis of the Danish cartoon controversy of 2005, in which a series of twelve comics related to the Islam and the prophet Mohammed caused worldwide riots.¹⁸ She argues that in this transnational 'humour scandal', 'existing power relations were not criticized but rather reinforced, impeding open exchange.'¹⁹ She blames this on the framing of these cartoons as 'non-serious'. By referring to them as non-serious, the cartoons were excluded from the serious and rational public discourse, thus denying them any serious import and disregarding all possible offended responses.²⁰

Recently, a more critical tradition has emerged within the field of humour studies in which scholars, amongst who are Holm and Kuipers, look at the negative and conservative effects of

¹⁵ See for example: Kuipers, *Goede humor, slechte smaak*, 23-27; Billig, *Laughter and Ridicule*, 156-158, 202-207; Holm, *Humour as Politics*, 9-12.

¹⁶ Kuipers, *Goede humor, slechte smaak*, 32.

¹⁷ Ibid., 33.

¹⁸ Kuipers, 'The politics of humour in the Public Sphere'.

¹⁹ Ibid., 64.

²⁰ Ibid., 64-71.

humour.²¹ Like Kuipers, Holm also points out the tendency of academics to read humour 'as an exercise opposed to serious critical or political consideration.'²² He too criticizes the way scholars often attribute an inherent progressive political power to humour and calls for scholars to reformulate their theories of humour in a more nuanced way that takes into account the 'internal variations and complexity of actual aesthetic manifestations of humour.'²³ In the third chapter of his book, 'Telling Jokes to Power: The (A)Political Work of Humour', Holm makes a useful distinction between 'political' and 'politicized' humour. He sees politicized humour as 'the category of comedy that addresses the practice of politics', politicians and their political campaigns for example, while his description of political humour revolves around the idea that humour does cultural political work in the way it can challenge or reinforce existing power structures.²⁴ Holm correctly points out humour's ability to do cultural political work, but he limits this to humour that is (directly) critical of present day cultural politics. Though Holm's distinction between politicized and political humour is a crucial one to make when researching the politics of humour, his is a train of thought that could, and should, even be taken a step further. Therefore, this thesis will consider the way in which conservative humour - humour that Holm refers to as a-political - also has a way of doing cultural political work.

Another scholar who has done important research on the negative aspects of humour is British sociologist Michael Billig. In *Laughter and Ridicule: Towards a Social Critique of Humour*, Billig questions previous theoretical assumptions about the innate goodness of humour and offers instead a critique that 'locates humour in the operations of social power.'²⁵ Through theorizing ridicule as having a central disciplinary social role in life that is often overlooked, Billig aims to draw attention to the more malicious sides of humour. In his analysis of the disciplinary functions of humour, Billig argues that incongruous behaviour, for example incorrect utterances by children, often invites a laughter that is ridiculing the behaviour and in this way disciplining the child. However, while learning the correct behaviour by being disciplined through laughter, the child is also learning how to mock others who break rules by observing his parents' laughter. Billig uses the example of parents disciplining their children through laughter to show the possible negative effects of incongruous humour.²⁶

Scholars like Billig, Holm and Kuipers, do not necessarily deny the critical and liberating aspects of humour, but they challenge the assumption that humour is in the first place a positive force of

²¹ See for example Billig, *Laughter and Ridicule*; Holm, *Humour as Politics*; Kuipers, *Goede humor, slechte smaak*; Kuipers, 'The politics of humour in the Public Sphere'; Nieuwenhuis, *Onder het mom van satire*; Nieuwenhuis, 'Conformist Comedians'; Zijp, *Rethinking Dutch Cabaret*.

²² Holm, *Humour as Politics*, 26.

²³ Ibid., 51.

²⁴ Ibid., 60-61.

²⁵ Billig, *Laughter and Ridicule*, 3.

²⁶ Ibid., 200-235.

subversion. Though their theorizations of humour create a valuable platform for a more critical view of the politics of humour, they mostly focus on contemporary instances of humour or aim to draw more general conclusions about humour in our time. There is, however, a case to be made for applying this more critical standpoint to humour of the past as well. Dutch humour scholar Ivo Nieuwenhuis has recently taken on such a critical point of view in his research on Dutch humour in the eighteenth century. In 'Conformist Comedians: Political Humour in the Eighteenth-Century Dutch Republic', for example, he states that in the eighteenth century as well, 'comedy [could] be used to defend the status quo and to silence subversive voices'.²⁷ Nieuwenhuis' research into eighteenth century comedy and satire presents an alternative and much more complex image of humour by looking at the conformist effects of political comedy in the past through the case study of the Dutch Republic.

Although my analysis, like that of Nieuwenhuis, also deals with the (conservative) politics of historical Dutch humour, it concerns a very different comic genre that exists on the complex intersection of humour and imaging rather than that of political comedy and critical thought (Nieuwenhuis's research focusses mostly on forms of journalistic satire like pamphlets and journals). Kuipers also touches upon this intersection of humour and imaging in her previously mentioned analysis of the Danish cartoon crisis. She calls attention to the exclusive aspects of humorous communication by pointing to the role of power relations and elements of control that 'can be disguised in a jocular tone or a funny picture'.²⁸ She argues that humour can form a bond between people who laugh together, but that this laughing together can exclude those who cannot (or do not wish to) share in this laughter. This conceptualization of humour is fundamental for my own research.

Moffen(klucht): the politics of imaging

The notion of humour as having both the ability to connect and include, and the ability to divide and exclude, brings to mind the same kind of power relations that are at play in ideas of identity and imaging in processes of 'othering'. In postcolonial theory, 'othering' has been described as generating a discourse of both difference and similarity in an attempt of someone, or a group, to establish a self-identity. In Alison Mountz's essay on the Other in *Key Concepts in Political Geography* she describes how in the process of 'othering', persons or groups are labelled as deviant or non-normative through the constant repetition of characteristics about that group of people who are distinguished from the norm in a certain way.²⁹ This constant repetition of characteristics forms an interesting parallel with

²⁷ Nieuwenhuis, 'Conformist Comedians', 103.

²⁸ Kuipers, 'The politics of humour in the Public Sphere', 77.

²⁹ A. Mountz, 'The Other', in: Carolyn Gallaher et. al. (Eds.), *Key Concepts in Political Geography* (London, 2009), 328-338, here 328.

early modern farces, in which the repetition of characteristics was used as a strategy to develop stock characters that were easy to recognise for an early modern audience.

Though 'othering' is most often thought of in the context of postcolonial or feminist studies,³⁰ Mountz also distinguishes immigrants and refugees as those who are othered, for example through categorization and public discourses that characterize particular groups of immigrants. Though German immigrants were not explicitly discriminated against as a group when they first came to the Dutch Republic, on which I will elaborate in the next chapter, the fact that the farcical subgenre of the *moffenklucht* arose so quickly - and playwrights tended to follow current phenomena of their time - shows that the Germans very rapidly became categorized within public discourse as a group with a specific set of characteristics that could easily be transformed into recognizable stock characters.

This categorizing of the Other in discourse is also an important aspect in sociologist Stephen Harold Riggins' *The Language and Politics of Exclusion: Others in Discourse*, in which Riggins states that in the discourse of difference and similarity, the one who wishes to create or uphold a self-identity is embracing certain identities as similar, and rejecting others on the base of being dissimilar. This can range from judging these others as a little bit different to rejecting them as extremely and incomparably different than the Self in question.³¹ According to Riggins, it is still perfectly possible for the Other to assimilate in whole or in part if at least outwardly conforming to the social norms of the society of the Self.³² The fact that the German immigrants initially assimilated quite well in the Dutch Republic thus did not necessarily exclude them from being perceived as Others.

The postcolonial concept of 'othering' is aptly linked to the idea of the stereotype in Michael Pickering's *Stereotyping: The Politics of Representation*.³³ In the third chapter of his book, Pickering connects Self and Other to a discourse of subject and object. In this light, the Self can be seen as the subject, while the Other is the object. Pickering suggests that, 'the concept of the Other is an advance on that of the stereotype. It heightens attention both to the subjugation of the stereotypical Other, and to those who produce the stereotypical object and thereby by implication define themselves as subjects.'³⁴ The stereotype thus serves the purpose of being the opposing and objectified Other to the subjects attempt in creating a self-definition. In this process of stereotyping the Other, one can find different attitudes towards this Stereotype, ranging from 'mild condescension to out-and-out hostility.'³⁵ In referring to the conceptual thinking of the Other as done by Frantz Fanon and Simone

³⁰ From which the most famous studies are by, amongst others, Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986), Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) and Edward Saïd (1935-2003).

³¹ Stephen Harold Riggins, *The language and politics of exclusion: others in discourse* (Thousand Oaks, 1997), 4.

³² Riggins, *Language and politics of exclusion*, 5.

³³ Michael Pickering, *Stereotyping: The Politics of Representation* (London, 2001).

³⁴ Pickering, *Stereotyping*, 71.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

de Beauvoir, Pickering argues that 'it is not only certain non-European peoples who have been seen as the Other of white, civilised nations in the West.' Within Europe, other groups, for example women, have also been constructed as such, showing the intersections of gender and ethnicity in this process of creating an image of Self and Other. This intersection is also shown in *moffenkluchten* through the fact that the female German immigrant is made into a separate stock character within the overarching stereotype of the German *mof*.

Pickering emphasizes the fact that the Other as object has an unequal position in relation to the subject Self. The ones doing the 'othering', taking on the role of subject in objectifying the Other, occupy 'a privileged space in which they can define themselves in contrast to the Others who are so designated as different.'³⁶ In the process of the subject defining an image of the Self, a typology is often created that connects specific characteristics to the Self and attributes other characteristics to the Other. In *Andere landen, andere mensen: De beeldvorming van Holland versus Spanje en Engeland omstreeks 1650*, Marijke Meijer Drees uses a nineteenth-century translation of Hugo de Groot's *Parallelon Rerumpublicarum* (1602) to analyse the typology that existed for the early modern Dutch.³⁷ She gives an overview of characteristics based on Hugo de Groot's *Parallelon*, that she argues were part of a common image of the Dutch Self at the time. According to Meijer Drees, the Dutch saw themselves, amongst other things, as unbound, open-hearted, brave, honest, loyal, chaste, generous, simple, honorable, unwavering, competent and - in a positive sense of course - big drinkers.³⁸ Dutch Historian Remieg Aerts also notes how the early modern Dutch emphasized characteristics like a sense of freedom, simplicity, bravery and unadorned prosperity.³⁹

In his contribution to a collection of essays on civility in the early modern period edited by Harald Hendrix and above mentioned Marijke Meijer Drees, Aerts concludes about these national self-typologies circulated by Dutch humanists in the sixteenth and seventeenth century that they relied heavily on old-established theories on climate and humours, and old Batavian and Germanic images. This is something that is also argued by Lotte Jensen in her account of early modern Dutch imaging of the Germans.⁴⁰ According to Jensen, the climate theory that entailed that people differed based on varieties in climatological circumstances in which they lived, like location, soil and weather conditions, was often used in works of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century physicians and was likely to have influenced the imaging of Germans at the time. Tacitus' *Germania* was probably equally as influential,

³⁶ Pickering, *Stereotyping*, 73.

³⁷ Marijke Meijer Drees, *Andere landen, andere mensen: De beeldvorming van Holland versus Spanje en Engeland omstreeks 1650* (Den Haag, 1997).

³⁸ Meijer Drees, *Andere landen, andere mensen*, 28-56.

³⁹ Remieg Aerts, 'De burgerlijkheid van de Gouden Eeuw', in: Harald Hendrix, & Marijke Meijer Drees (Eds.), *Beschaafde Burgers: Burgerlijkheid in de vroegmoderne tijd* (Amsterdam, 2001), 5-22, here 8.

⁴⁰ Jensen, 'Moffen-beeld bij de toneelschrijver Isaac Vos'.

if not more so, in the imaging of German immigrants in the Dutch Republic. In *Germania*, written in 98 A.D., Tacitus wrote about the habits and living circumstances of the inhabitants of Germanic territory. Germanics plentiful drinking and eating habits were amongst those admired by Tacitus. However, in early modern times, these were translated into negative habits like gluttony and drunkenness. Interestingly enough, many of the characteristics Tacitus attributed to the Germanics were also thought to be applicable to the Batavians (in whom the Dutch saw their own ancestry) because of their close affiliation to the Germanics. In early modern writings, and especially in *moffenkluchten*, most of the negative characteristics were however reserved for the German characters. By satirizing characteristics of the Other that also applied to the Self, the own people were temporarily freed from that same negative reputation, showing the interconnection between self-imaging and the image of the Other.⁴¹

In contrast with a self-typology, another set of characteristics is oftentimes made for those who do not belong to the self. These characteristics of the Other are often more negative and sometimes even a direct antonym to those attributed to the Self. In the introduction to *Vreemd volk: Beeldvorming over buitenlanders in de vroegmoderne tijd*, Harald Hendrix gives a few examples of existing stereotypes in the early modern Dutch Republic: the Spanish were seen as proud, the French as fickle and the Germans as drunks.⁴² He states that the Dutch Golden Age was pre-eminently an era in which the everyday confrontation with all sorts of strangers created a multiplicity of perspectives on foreigners and the relationship between identity of the Self and identity of these Others.⁴³ Hendrix also makes a connection between stereotypes and literature as he argues that writers often base their work on a repertoire of fixed elements, stereotypes and clichés; recognition and repetition are important elements in many forms of literature, and, especially in humorous genres, easily recognisably stereotypes are often the key to success. By using a fixed set of rules when it comes to the characterization of their characters, however, authors not only conform to common value judgements about strangers, but they also uphold these stereotypes.

In *Onbekend maakt onbemind: Negatieve karakterschetsen in de vroegmoderne tijd*, Hendrix elaborates even more on the connection between stereotyping and literature and pays specific attention to the genre of dramatic performances.⁴⁴ He states that early modern playwrights would often fall back on the aforementioned repertoire of stereotypes in their efforts to design 'a large variety of human types with clearly distinguishable and preferably oppositional traits, based on their

⁴¹ Jensen, 'Moffen-beeld bij de toneelschrijver Isaac Vos', 24-27.

⁴² Harald Hendrix, en Ton Hoenselaars (ed.), *Vreemd volk: Beeldvorming over buitenlanders in de vroegmoderne tijd* (1998), 12.

⁴³ Hendrix & Hoenselaars, *Vreemd volk*, 2.

⁴⁴ Harald Hendrix, 'Introduction. Imagining the other: on xenophobia and xenophilia in early modern Europe', *Leidschrift* 28:1 (2013), 7-20.

status, their looks and on their behaviours' in reaction to the stereotypical characterization elaborated by contemporary theories on human character.⁴⁵ Hendrix also notes in this article that the delicate balance between negative and positive assessments of otherness tended to get monopolized by feelings of hostility towards what was perceived as foreign that could easily predominate in moments of conflict, crisis or disorder.⁴⁶ Something that could just as well have been the case for immigrants in the Dutch Republic in the time the economy started to decline at the end of the eighteenth century.

Moffenklucht: the relationship between Self and Other

In the introduction of his previously mentioned analysis of the Other in discourse, Riggins points to Tzvetan Todorov's study of the Spanish conquest in Mexico, *The Conquest of America*, in which Todorov establishes a typology of the relationship between the Self and the Other.⁴⁷ Todorov distinguishes three dimensions of this relationship. First there is the axiological dimension of a value judgement about the Other: is the Other considered as good or bad, the Self's equal or inferior to the Self, etcetera. The other dimensions that Todorov identifies when it comes to the Other in relation to the Self are the epistemic and the praxeological dimension. The epistemic dimension is that of knowledge about the Other: how well does the Self know the Other, or how ignorant is the Self of the Other's identity. The praxeological dimension is the active level of identification with the Other. In this dimension there is either an action of rapprochement or distancing in relation to the Other that is somewhere within the scope of submission to the Other and submission of the Other to the Self. In this dimension there exists also a third level, that of indifference, or neutrality. Todorov argues that though relations between the three dimensions do exist, 'knowledge does not imply love [a value judgement], nor the converse; and neither of the two implies, nor is implied by, identification with the other.'⁴⁸

For my analysis of the relationship between the early modern Dutch Self and the *mof* as Other within Dutch comedy, I will be using Todorov's classification as a methodological framework. Where Todorov's method focusses on imaging and not humour, I will use it to look at the creating of an image through humour. Following Todorov's three dimensions, this thesis consists of three interconnected analyses of *moffenkluchten*. The first part, that focuses on the axiological dimension considers the *moffenklucht* as a genre, and how the emergence of the genre not only went along with sentiments of the time, but was also in itself a very telling value judgement of the German immigrants that came

⁴⁵ Hendrix, 'Imagining the other', 16.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁷ Riggins, *Language and politics of exclusion*, 5.

⁴⁸ Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (New York, 1982), 185-186.

to the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. To be able to say anything about the imagined value judgements of Germans on the Dutch stage, it is important to get a clear grasp on what *moffenkluchten* were exactly.

The second part focuses on the epistemic dimension of the relationship between the early modern Dutch theatregoer and the *mof*. It explores the knowledge that is taught to the early modern audience through the image of the *mof* that became normalised in these farces throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century. This part of the analysis is based on the concepts of 'schemata' and 'activity types' as theorized for characterisation in dramatic discourse by Jonathan Culpeper and Dan McIntyre on the basis of Stephen Levinson's *Talk at work: Interaction in institutional settings*.⁴⁹ The *mof* on the Dutch stage was a very complex stereotype, consisting of a multitude of stock characters, for example 'the bragger', 'the dim-witted servant', and the female version of the *mof*: the '*moffin*'. For an early modern audience, each of these stock characters came with a different set of expectations as they became more frequent on the Dutch stage. By analysing the variety of stock characters based on the German immigrant and their development through time into a cultural repertoire, it will become clear what knowledge, but more importantly what normalised image the early modern Dutch came to have about the German stereotype over the course of these two centuries.

As this second part of the analysis is about the characterization of the *mof*, it will be focused mostly on the 'imaging component' of *moffenkluchten*, whereas the last part is much more an analysis of the 'humour component' as it considers what exactly humour does in *moffenkluchten*. This third and last part of my analysis is focused on the praxeological dimension of the relationship between Self and Other as it considers the ranging levels of distance or rapprochement that are created between the Dutch Self and the staged German Other through the uses of various humour forms and - strategies. Using recent theories on the politics of humour, I will consider how humour generated social boundaries between the Dutch and the Germans in *moffenkluchten* over the course of the early modern period, divided into 'early seventeenth century', 'late seventeenth century', 'early eighteenth century' and 'late eighteenth century'. For each of these time periods, the plotlines and ruses of two *moffenkluchten* that are representational for that specific period will be discussed in more detail.

By considering both the humour- and the imaging component of *moffenkluchten* in these three dimensions of the relationship between the Self and the Other, this thesis not only aims to give a more critical view of the early modern genre of *moffenkluchten*, but it also means to give new

⁴⁹ Stephen Levinson, 'Activity types and language', in: Paul Drew & John Heritage, *Talk at Work: Interaction in Institutional Settings* (Cambridge, 1992), 66-100; J. Culpeper & D. McIntyre, 'Activity types and characterization in dramatic discourse', in: Jens Eder et. A. (Eds.), *Characters in Fictional Worlds: Understanding Imaginary Beings in Literature, Film, and Other Media* (Berlin, 2010), 176-207.

insights into the negative politics of humour and the conservative role of humour in the imaging of others in public entertainment.

2. Value judgements: an introduction to the *Moffenklucht*

In order to get a full understanding of the interaction between humour and imaging in the portrayal of German immigrants on the early modern Dutch stage, it is first and foremost a necessity to understand what these *moffenkluchten* were, what they meant for early modern people, and where they came from. In order to get a better understanding of the genre, the two key components of the *moffenklucht* will be addressed here as follows: the 'humour component' is looked at through the overarching question 'what is a *klucht*?', and the 'imaging component' through the question 'who were these *moffen*?'.

Moffen(klucht): introducing the German immigrant

The Dutch Republic, and Amsterdam in particular, attracted a huge variety of migrants. Not only was the Dutch Republic economically prosperous, but it was also attractive because of its relative (religious) tolerance.⁵⁰ To keep the economy flowing, the demand for labor force in the sixteenth- and seventeenth century was great both in cities and in rural areas and strangers were more than welcome to fulfill this need. Though the term 'stranger' in those times did not necessarily refer to people from outside of the Republic - it often referred to people from outside of the city in question as well -, after the proclamation of the Republic at the end of the sixteenth century, the definition of 'stranger' became more and more connected to the notion of 'those from outside of the Dutch Republic'.⁵¹ The daily interactions with all sorts of strangers resulted in a multiplicity of conceptions about these newcomers and the relationship between the Dutch identity and those of others.

A substantial amount of the immigrants that came to the Dutch Republic were Germans. Many of them were men, but there was also a significant amount of German women that came to the Netherlands to work for rich Dutch merchant families as handmaidens for some time. Many of the men were seasonal or guest workers that came to the Netherlands to work the fields or to find work in the cities in service positions. A great lot of Germans came to the Republic as soldiers or sailors as well and an even greater amount ended up staying permanently in the Republic.⁵² Some permanent immigrants were the effect of the chaos in Germany caused by the Thirty Years War, however, many probably did not initially plan to stay but stayed after meeting their future spouses. According to Jan Lucassen, roughly one of twenty seasonal workers eventually stayed in the Republic because of this

⁵⁰ Herman Obdeijn & Marlou Schrover, *Komen en gaan: Immigratie en emigratie in Nederland vanaf 1550* (Amsterdam, 2008), 25-27.

⁵¹ Obdeijn & Schrover, *Komen en gaan*, 29.

⁵² Jan Lucassen, *Dutch Long Distance Migration: a Concise History 1600-1900* (Amsterdam, 1991), 56-67; Obdeijn & Schrover, *Komen en gaan*, 29-30.

reason.⁵³ This was, however, more often the case for German men than it was for German women, as the Republic had a surplus in women at the time.⁵⁴

The steady influx of German immigrants not only influenced daily life in the Republic, but it also had its impact on the (public) entertainment of the time. This was especially the case after 1580, when the number of German immigrants increased both absolutely and proportionately and the region of origin expanded.⁵⁵ This was also the period in which, as far as we know, the first *moffenkluchten* made their appearance. Particularly in these first phases of the growing German immigration to the Dutch Republic, the voluminous group of German newcomers evoked quite a bit of resistance with the Dutch, and the *moffenkluchten* became a very popular way of ridiculing these Germans. In these farces, the German immigrants were mockingly called *mof*, *poep*, *mier* or *knoet* and they were repeatedly accused of being price cutters (Dutch: *onderkruipers*) - because of their willingness to do work for a lower than average income -, of bad hygiene, and of boasting and pretending to be of higher ancestry than they were.⁵⁶

It is argued that the Germans that came to Holland and stayed there quickly assimilated into Dutch society because many of them found a Dutch wife. This idea has greatly influenced the current conception of *moffenkluchten* as innocent entertainment, at least until the second half of the eighteenth century, when a declining economy and growing patriotic movement led to anti-immigrant, and specifically anti-German sentiments, as the immigrants became unwanted competition on the labour market.⁵⁷ Pieter van Wissing notices a similar development in the Dutch sentiments towards immigrants in the second half of the eighteenth century in his recently published book *In Louche Gezelschap*.⁵⁸ Though Van Wissing's book focuses specifically on the work and life of writer Philippus Verbrugge (1750-1806), he places Verbrugge in the tradition of contemporary writers who also criticized the quickly improved social position of the German immigrants at the cost of their countrymen. Van Wissing too notes the fact that *moffenkluchten* played an important role in the negative imaging of the Germans in the Dutch Republic that became so prominent at the end of the eighteenth century.⁵⁹ However, he does not actually elaborate on what that role entails.

As the Dutch sentiments towards Germans change over time from the initial reaction to the first big and ever growing stream of German immigrants to a seemingly improved cohabitation as a result to the German's quick assimilation, to xenophobic sentiments caused by a declining economy

⁵³ Lucassen, *Dutch Long Distance Migration*, 56-67.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 59.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 57.

⁵⁶ Obdeijn & Schrover, *Komen en gaan*, 64.

⁵⁷ Theeuwen, 'Een fictieve broodschrijver', 97.

⁵⁸ Pieter van Wissing, *In louche gezelschap. Leven en werk van de broodschrijver Philippus Verbrugge (1750-1806)* (Hilversum, 2018).

⁵⁹ Wissing, *In louche gezelschap*, 54.

and growing patriotic movement, the value judgements towards the Germans that are portrayed in *moffenkluchten* also change in accordance to the context of the time. *Moffenkluchten* do not only become more hateful and xenophobic, they also become more explicitly political in their message. Many of the prejudices about Germans in the second half of the eighteenth century find new life in the figure of the duke of Brunswijk, who embodied many a cliché about *moffen*.⁶⁰ The anti-German sentiments in eighteenth-century farces were more often from a nationalistic point of view connected to anti-British thinking, seeing the Germans as collaborating with the enemy.⁶¹ To better comprehend these developments in the staged value judgements of the *mof* in *moffenkluchten*, it is important to gain a better understanding of the early modern farce and its place in early modern Dutch society.

(*Moffen*)klucht: introducing the early modern Dutch farce

In the early modern Dutch Republic, three main types of plays could be found: tragedies (Dutch: *tragedie*), comedies (Dutch: *blijspel*) and *kluchtspelen*. Tragedies were longer, serious plays that were deemed a high class form of cultural entertainment. In the case of comedies and farces, the distinction between genres was less clearly made in the early modern period. This immediately becomes apparent by the definitions given by Cornelis van der Plasse, publisher of the works of Bredero, in 1638:

‘Tragedies gave priority to dignity and stateliness, as was fitting for significant personages: kings, royalty, priests, magistrates, nobles, military commanders and such like; in castles, cities, palaces, town halls, armies and churches; and the language, like the characters, was also full of majesty and high-flown, the outcome bloody, terrible, and important. Comedies sprang lustily onto the stage, with lighthearted battles amongst the scum of the folk: shepherds, farmers, labourers, innkeepers, landladies, procuresses, prostitutes, midwives, sailors, spendthrifts, beggars and toadies; in fields, forests, huts, shops, inns, pubs, on the street, in alleys and slums, in the meat hall and at the fish market; the chatter that goes around there is true to life, and the outcome farcical and pleasant.’⁶²

⁶⁰ Wissing, *In louche gezelschap*, 54.

⁶¹ Theeuwen, ‘Een fictieve broodschrijver’, 97.

⁶² Quoted in E. K. Grootes, *Het Literaire Leven in de Zeventiende Eeuw* (Leiden, 1984), 64, translation in: Angela Vanhaelen, *Comic Print and Theatre in Early Modern Amsterdam: Gender, Childhood and the City* (Hampshire, 2003), 4.

Contemporary descriptions of the farce genre are usually not so different from that of Van der Plasse, except a more clear distinction is nowadays made between farce and comedy. The genres might not be so different in content, but they do differ in form: *blijspelen* were usually much longer than *kluchtspelen*.

One of the leading specialists on the topic of farce on an international level is humour scholar Jessica Milner Davis. Her 1978 study *Farce*, for which she has recently written an extensive new introduction, can be seen as canonical within humour studies. In this study, Jessica Milner Davis offers a broad but detailed overview of the history of Farce from its origins in the Italian *commedia dell'arte* to modern usage of farce techniques in film and other media.⁶³ Amongst other national farce traditions, Davis focuses on Italian, French, German and British and even non-European farce traditions. Dutch farce traditions, however, are nowhere to be found in her work. Davis refers to Eric Bentley's definition of farce as 'practical joking turned theatrical', but continues to strengthen our understanding of farce by attributing the following characteristics to the genre: a farce is short, it delights in taboo-violation, it tends to debar empathy for its victims, it is peopled by simplified comic types, it favours direct, visual, and violent physical jokes, it is open to aggression, self-indulgence and just plain rudeness, its guiding rule is to tread a fine line between offence and entertainment and lastly, it is essentially conservative.⁶⁴

Another attribute of farce Davis mentions is that it avoids implied moral comment or social criticism. This, however, contradicts the aforementioned characteristic of farces as essentially conservative. Therefore, I disagree with Milner Davis' definition when it comes to this point. As shall be explored further in this thesis, even when humour is not criticizing the established order, it does not mean that there is no underlying (subconscious) moralization or latent social communication in such a conservative humour form, for example the establishing of a normative negative image of these German immigrants through the creation of a cultural repertoire of stock characters.

Davis distinguishes four categories within the genre of farce: the Humiliation or Deception Farce, the Reversal Farce, the Equilibrium or Quarrel Farce and the Snowball Farce. She describes Humiliation or Deception Farces as plays 'in which an unpleasant victim is exposed to their fate, without opportunity of retaliation.'⁶⁵ These farces exist mainly of unidirectional jokes. Reversal Farces are plays in which the tables are turned on the initial jester, allowing for retaliation for the original victim. In the case of an Equilibrium or Quarrel Farce, the plot focuses on 'a narrow perpetual-motion kind of movement, in which two opposing forces wrestle each other literally or metaphorically, in a

⁶³ Jessica Milner Davis, *Farce* (1978/New Introduction 2017).

⁶⁴ Milner Davis, *Farce*, 2.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

tug-of-war without resolution, remaining in permanent balance'.⁶⁶ Lastly, in the Snowball Farce, the characters are all equal in the way they are all caught up as victims in an elaborate series of misunderstandings and mistakes, often caused by powers beyond human interference, like natural forces and inanimate objects. When it comes to *moffenkluchten*, they often take on the form of a Humiliation or Deception Farce, but in some cases also a Reversal Farce. In all cases, it is the *mof* character that is, in the end, duped by the joke in the farce, whether he is duped by a trickster or whether he is himself the original trickster on whom the tables are turned.

Other than defining farce and its different forms, Davis also points out the paradox of farce as the genre continues to be held in low repute, even though history shows that farces were proven crowd pleasers. Within Dutch history, the farce as dramatic art form has also long been on the sidelines of research, despite the popularity of the genre during the early modern period and particularly the seventeenth century. The seventeenth century can overall be seen as a golden age for the Amsterdam theatre life. Not only because of the professionalization of the theatre through the founding of the first official theatres (*schouwburg* in Dutch): first the *Nederduytsche Academie* in 1617 and later the *Amsterdamsche Schouwburg* in 1637, but also because of a significant increase in the number of published plays. Femke Kramer, in her account of *Rederijerskluchten* (farces by the Dutch *Rederijers*, or rhetoricians) in the sixteenth century gives an extensive overview of farcical theatre in the period before the professionalization of the Dutch theatre.⁶⁷

When it comes to the interpretation of the genre, there have been a lot of misunderstandings about farce. For example, it was long thought that farces were meant as entertainment only for the lower classes as they often dealt with lower class characters and situations. However, using information on play consumption and profiling strategies by regents, Angela Vanhaelen argues that 'these types of plays were embedded in a mercantile middle-class context, where they certainly were directed at an audience beyond the lower classes.'⁶⁸ In his study on the influence of Boccaccio's *Decamerone* on three seventeenth-century Dutch farces, literary historian René van Stipriaan has also delved deeper into the topic of appreciation of the farce genre during this century. According to him, farces were often performed on the Amsterdam stage at the end of serious and tragic plays, as a way of taking away the melancholic feelings a tragedy could cause for the audiences. This would indeed mean that farces were meant as entertainment for the same audiences that attended more complex plays like tragedies.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Milner Davis, *Farce*, 7.

⁶⁷ Femke Kramer, *Mooi vies, knap lelijk: Grotesk realisme in rederijerskluchten* (Hilversum, 2009).

⁶⁸ Vanhaelen, *Comic Print and Theatre in Early Modern Amsterdam*, 5.

⁶⁹ René van Stipriaan, *Leugens en vermaak. Boccaccio's novellen in de kluchtcultuur van de Nederlandse renaissance* (Amsterdam, 1996), 34.

In *Comic print and theatre in early modern Amsterdam*, Vanhaelen pays special attention to the influences of French Classicism on vernacular farce performances during the second half of the seventeenth century. In the 1670s and 1680s, new Schouwburg regents, influenced by the newly founded society *Nil Volentibus Arduum*, thought the traditional public farces to be too inappropriate for their children and hoped instead to stage a new type of comic play in which the ‘stock comic characters (...) were no longer from the ‘scum of the folk’; instead, these new plays featured the adultery, fraud and deception of immoral *burgher* characters in dissolute middle-class households.’⁷⁰ As my analysis of humour forms and -strategies throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century *moffenkluchten* traditions will show, alterations to comic plays like those of *Nil Volentibus Arduum* are likely to have influenced the humour in the (sub)genre of *Moffenkluchten* as well.

Another lack of consensus surrounding farces is focused on the question of the genre’s purpose. *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre*’s entry on farce touches on the debate between scholars on whether farces were meant as entertainment or as edification. This debate is worked out in more detail by Ferket in her recent dissertation on social criticism in seventeenth-century comic theatre in the Netherlands.⁷¹ She also differentiates two scholarly traditions within this debate: those who deem the most prominent qualities of farce to be humour and entertainment,⁷² and those who claim that farces, influenced strongly by classical rhetoric, were first and foremost meant for teaching a moral lesson, often concealed by the humorous facade.⁷³ Ferket places herself within this debate on the functions of farce by combining a more critical view on the genre of farce as a way of criticizing societal problems with the idea of ‘laughing at others’ as a means to create solidarity within the audience.

Moffenklucht: staged value judgements

I have already discussed the specifics of the farce genre through the work of Milner Davis, but what exactly makes a *klucht* a *moffenklucht*? Keeping in mind that the distinction between comedy and farce was not always as clear in the early modern period, I consider a play a *moffenklucht* when it is a comic play in which a *mof* either has a prominent role, or the mocking of a *mof* is a central issue in the

⁷⁰ Vanhaelen, *Comic Print and Theatre in Early Modern Amsterdam*, 10.

⁷¹ Johanna Ferket, ‘*Hy dwong het volk door klucht te luistren naar hun plichten*’: *Maatschappijkritiek in het zeventiende-eeuwse komische toneel in de Nederlanden* (unpublished dissertation, 2019), 15.

⁷² Some who see farce as mainly meant for humour and entertainment are Willem Ornée and Arjan van Leuvensteijn: Willem Ornée, ‘Het kluchtspel in de Nederlanden’, *Scenarium* 5 (1981), 107-121; J.A. van Leuvensteijn, I Groetegoed and M. Rebel, *J. Nooseman, Beroyde Student en J. Noozeman Bedrooge Dronkkaart of Dronkke-Mans HEL* (Amsterdam, 2004), 24-25.

⁷³ For those who consider farce as purveying a moral lesson, see for example Mieke B. Smits-Veldt and Jan Henk Meter: Mieke B. Smits-Veldt, ‘Samuel Costers Teeuwis de Boer: “vol soeticheyte van sin en woorden”’, *Spektator* 5 (1975-1976), 668-711; Jan Henk Meter, ‘Amplificatietechnieken in Bredero’s ‘Moortje’’, *Spektator* 14 (1984-1985), 270-279.

plot. By using a combination of information offered by the databases ONSTAGE⁷⁴ and Ceneton⁷⁵ and by looking at play descriptions, character lists and the use of words like *mof*, *poep*, *knoet*, I found a total of forty-seven early modern Dutch *moffenkluchten* (for a list of all *moffenkluchten* that I have found in chronological order, see the table below. I do not claim this list to be definite or even undisputable, however, it might function as a valuable starting point for further research into the topic of *moffenkluchten*). I have chosen to focus my research mostly on *moffenkluchten* in Amsterdam, not only because of the flourishing theatre life that the city saw during the early modern period, but also because Amsterdam was the main urban receiver of German immigrants. Early modern middle class *Amsterdammers* were not only frequent theatregoers, but they are also likely to have been familiar with German immigrants and their workings in the city, making the Amsterdam stage an almost natural platform for these comic plays about *moffen*. This does, of course, not exclude the chance of *moffenkluchten* having been performed in other Dutch cities as well, creating an opportunity for future research.

Chronological list of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century *moffenkluchten*

Year	Title	Author	notes
1615	<i>Klucht van Meyster Berendt</i>	Unknown author	this farce is attached to Samuel Coster's <i>Rycke-man: ghemaackt op het misbruyk van tydelijcke have ende op het onbehoorlijck onderhoud van den armen</i> , which Pieter van Wissing claims as the very first <i>moffenklucht</i> in <i>In Louche Gezelschap</i> (2018), but which I do not consider a <i>moffenklucht</i> because other than one specific passage on Germans immigrating to the Republic, the play is not necessarily focused on German immigrants
1619	<i>Klucht van den Hoochduytschen Quacksalver</i>	G. A. Bredero	
1640	<i>Boertighe clucht van Claes Klick</i>	Jan van Arp	the original was published in 1632, but that version did not contain a German character. The <i>mof</i> was added in this later version by adding a whole new ninth scene
16??	<i>Kluchtigh tijdtverdrif by de worste-ketel, ofte vermaakelyke 't samen-koutingen, waar in verhandeld word het leven en wandel der Westfaalsche dienstmaagden</i>	Unknown author	
1642	<i>Klucht van de Moffin</i>	Isaac Vos	originally published as <i>Klucht van Looime Lammert</i>
1644	<i>Klucht van de Mof</i>	Isaac Vos	
1644	<i>Klucht van Robbert Leverworst</i>	Isaac Vos	

⁷⁴ ONSTAGE : Online Datasystem of Theatre in Amsterdam from the Golden Age to Today (University of Amsterdam) [<http://www.vondel.humanities.uva.nl/onstage/>].

⁷⁵ Ceneton: Census Nederlands Toneel (Leiden University) [<http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/Dutch/Ceneton/>].

1654	<i>Klucht van de moffe-trouw</i>	Anthony Hendrickx	
1661	<i>Die Historie van Slennerhinke Lanlaup, Hellenvaert, un Juffren-Hijlk</i>	Unknown author	The original was probably written around 1630 but the oldest known print is from 1661 in a collection of four farces in Low German under the title <i>Den Wesvaelschen Speelthuyn</i>
1664	<i>De gestoorde vreugd</i>	P. E.	
1665	<i>Klught van Hans Keyenvresser, zijnde een Hoogduytschen quacksalver</i>	Willem Godschalck van Focquenbroch	
1670	<i>Iemant en Niemant</i>	Isaac Vos	
1678	<i>De Wanhébbelycke Liefde</i>	Lodewijk Meijer	
1684	<i>De Stiefmoer</i>	Thomas Asselijn	
1684	<i>De Stiefvaer</i>	Thomas Asselijn	
1684	<i>De Belachelyke Jonker</i>	Pieter Bernagie	though some of the characters in this farce say mean things about Germans, I am not sure if this could be seen as a true <i>moffenklucht</i> considering the fact that the only character in this farce who frequently visits Germany to trade his goods (Karel) is actually the one to win Johanna's hand in marriage after a fight with the French Eduard
1684	<i>De Romanzieke Juffer</i>	Samuel Coster	
1685	<i>De ontrouwe kantoorknecht en lichvaerdige dienstmaagd</i>	Pieter Bernagie	
1689	<i>De gelukte list of bedroge Mof</i>	Lodewijk Meijer	Newly written farce, attached to a translation of a French play by De Subigny by <i>Nil Volentibus Arduum</i>
1691	<i>Melchior, baron de Ossekop</i>	Thomas Asselijn	
1691	<i>De Hoogduitsche Kwakzalver</i>	Ysbrand Vincent	musical farce/farcical opera piece
1692	<i>Klucht van de Kwakzalver</i>	Thomas Asselijn	
1692	<i>De besteedster van meisjes en minnemoers of school voor de dienstmeiden</i>	Jac de Rijk	
1699	<i>De Mansmoer</i>	P. W. van Haps	
1701	<i>Historie van Slenner-Hincke</i>	Van Bevervoorde	
1703	<i>Het bedurven huishouwen</i>	Enoch Krook & Daniel Kroon	
1712	<i>De Zwetser</i>	Pieter Langendijk	
1712	<i>Hans Koekop, of de gemaakte waterzucht</i>	J. Pook	
1713	<i>De Hedendaagse bankroetier achterhaalt</i>	Frans Ryk	
1717	<i>De Schoonste</i>	Diederik Buisero	published after the author's death (1707) by Gijsbrecht Gazinet, presumably written around 1685
Ca. 1750	<i>Vermakelijke-klught van de hoogmoedige Mof in zijn levry-pak, ondekt door zijn lands-meisjes</i>	J. W.	
Ca. 1750	<i>Bedrogen mof</i>	Unknown author	
1778	<i>Jurjen Lankbein, of de mof commis</i>	J. A. Schasz	provoked a polemic about German immigrants, including an anonymous reaction in the form of a written dialogue titled <i>De kantoer-subodinatie, of de mof meer gewild als Hollander</i> , written in the same year
1779	<i>Holdwich, of de mof, commis door bedrog</i>	J. A. Schasz	

1779	<i>De door Patricius verlichte vaderlanders, of het rijk der moffen uit</i>	Isaac van Campen	
178?	<i>Jaloursen Joseph of aankomst van Dikke Louis</i>	Joseph Keizer	
1781	<i>De bedrooge Mof</i>	Johannes Nicolaas Esgers	
1781	<i>De Mof meesterknecht of de vader met zijn zeeven dochters</i>	A. Contraduc	
1781	<i>Antimoffiana of de president en de pensionaris, gezwoeren vyanden van den Mof meesterknecht</i>	Unknown author	direct reaction to <i>De Mof meesterknecht</i>
1782	<i>De Mof meesterknecht of de vader met zijn zeeven dochters</i>	A. Contraduc	sequel to <i>De Mof meesterknecht</i>
1782	<i>Madretsma of de zegepraal van den braven vaderlander</i>	A. Contraduc	second sequel to <i>De Mof meesterknecht</i>
178?	<i>De Hertog van Wolfenbuttelt</i>	Unknown author	
1782	<i>Pluto, mof en vluchteling</i>	Unknown author	
1782	<i>Pluto in het bosch</i>	Unknown author	Sequel to <i>Pluto, mof en vluchteling</i>
1784	<i>Het politiq en staatkundig marionetten spel, in de tent de oranje-boom</i>	Unknown author	a play with puppets rather than a <i>moffenklucht</i> with actors portraying <i>moffen</i>
1785	<i>De Aristocraten</i>	Unknown author	
Ca. 1800	<i>De duyvelbanders, of de bedroogen officier, en de doorsleepen Mof te Muyden</i>	Unknown author	

Because a huge chunk of source material got destroyed when the Amsterdam Schouwburg and its archives burned down in 1772, it is almost impossible to recreate the way these plays were actually performed. The farces used for this research are thus all printed text versions of plays and, with a few small exceptions, the main focus shall thus lie on the humour in the plot and the textual imaging of the *mof* rather than ways in which the *mof* could have been portrayed by an actor or possible other forms of performed humour like slapstick (unless this physical humour is also expressed in the text itself).

As the German characters in the farces are created by a Dutch playwright, *moffenkluchten* are of course not reliable sources for realistic representations of German immigrants in the seventeenth century. I shall thus not use *moffenkluchten* for an attempt to say anything about actual Germans in the time, rather I wish to use them as a case study to look at the workings and interplay of humour and imaging in the public sphere.

The fact that these *moffenkluchten* were so very popular amongst early modern audiences in the Netherlands, is in itself already an expression of a negative value judgement with respect to these German immigrants as it shows that the image sold in these farces was one that was very enthusiastically received, at least by the Dutch middle class. This was probably the case because this

humorous mocking of Germans was a way of giving voice to certain feelings of concern and discontent caused by the increase in German immigration to the Republic after 1580. In the same way, it gave voice to xenophobic tendencies in the second half of the eighteenth century. Between 1580 and 1780, however, *moffenkluchten* retained their popularity, continuously spreading a negative image and emphasizing the otherness of these German *moffen*, *poepen* and *knoeten*.

3. Knowledge: stereotypes and stock characters

The early modern *mof* was not just one unambiguous stereotype. In the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, Dutch playwrights created a significant number of stage types based on the phenomenon of the German immigrant that soon became frequent faces on the Amsterdam stage and thus became a cultural repertoire for frequent theatregoers. Analysing some stock characters of *moffenkluchten* and their characteristics might bring us a step closer to understanding what normalised image of the *mof* became established for the Dutch audiences throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century. This part of my analysis, focusing on the epistemic dimension of the relationship between the early modern audience and the *mof*, is meant to explore the knowledge that early modern theatregoers were given about these German immigrants through the humorous stereotyping in these *moffenkluchten*. For each of the three stock characters that are discussed below, the bragger, the dim-witted (Westphalian) servant, and the *moffin*, a specific stage type within this stock character category is worked out in more detail in order to get a more detailed view of what such a characterisation could entail.

Characterisation as knowledge

As is the case for real life persons, when it comes to characters, for example in plays, it is important to keep in mind the social role a certain character is imbued with. In *moffenkluchten* the social context of the *moffen* was often a prominent element of the farce's storyline. As previously mentioned, for my analysis of the image of the German immigrant that became normalised through the (social) characterisation of the *mof* in these farces, I have been inspired by Culpeper and McIntyre's concepts of 'schemata' and 'activity type'.⁷⁶ Culpeper and McIntyre base their theorization primarily on Levinson's notion of activity types, which he explains as follows: 'I take the notion of an activity type to refer to a fuzzy category whose focal members are goal-defined, socially constituted, bounded, events with constraints on participants, setting, and so on, but above all on the kinds of allowable contributions. Paradigm examples would be teaching, a job interview, a jural interrogation, a football game, a task in a workshop, a dinner party, and so on.'⁷⁷

Culpeper and McIntyre take Levinson's notion of the activity type and apply it in a cognitive stylistic approach to characterisation in dramatic discourse that combines linguistic analysis with insights and models from cognitive science.⁷⁸ They explain the concept of 'activity type' as 'a collection of particular speech acts (such as requests, questions and offers) that stand in particular pragmatic

⁷⁶ Culpeper & McIntyre 'Activity types and characterization in dramatic discourse'.

⁷⁷ Levinson, 'Activity types and language', 69.

⁷⁸ Culpeper & McIntyre 'Activity types and characterization in dramatic discourse', 177.

relationships to each other and have become a relatively conventionalised whole.⁷⁹ Activity types can thus be understood as collectively known (social) situations that bring forth certain expectations - what Culpeper and McIntyre refer to as 'inferential schemata' - and in that way influence the way in which actions and reactions from a certain character are interpreted by the audience. For example, an audience going to a tragedy is more likely to take a character who is a doctor seriously, while an audience of farce, a play type that often contains humorous forms of deceit, is more likely to expect a doctor character to be a quack and would thus be more sceptical of the intentions behind this character's actions or words. 'Activity types have a cognitive dimension and thus play a role in the knowledge based inferencing that is so important in 'fleshing out' our conceptions of characters.'⁸⁰

Another concept that Culpeper and McIntyre use in their theory of dramatic characterisation is 'schemata'. They interpret 'schema' as it is used in cognitive psychology to refer to well integrated bits of knowledge about the world, events, people and their actions. We humans are enabled to construct an interpretation that contains more than the information we initially received by inferring extra bits of information from our schematic knowledge.⁸¹ In some social contexts, our schematic knowledge is a collective knowledge as people from certain groups, cultures, countries, etc. gain the same chunks of knowledge. From these collective bits of knowledge, a cultural repertoire can originate. According to Stipriaan, farces were not only meant as entertainment, but also to train the audience's ability of interpretation.⁸² In the case of *moffenkluchten*, audience members going to a farce would all have been fed the same information about *moffen*, and would thus learn how to interpret the *mof*. For those who went to see plays like this more often - regular theatre visits by the same people were probably quite common as a lot of plays contain references to earlier plays that had been performed - a certain cultural repertoire about *moffen* would have been created over time. The audience of a *moffenklucht* (activity type), with the farce as a collectively known social situation, or play-frame,⁸³ in which people were expected to laugh at the expense of certain characters (inferential schemata), would thus also have certain expectations of the German characters, their behaviour and their fate, in such a farce. Even when the German character would humorously break certain patterns of (social) expectations, in order to create a moment of incongruity for comic purposes, the breaking of these social norms by the *mof*, would eventually become the new expected pattern for a *moffenklucht*. Each of the German stock characters came with a different set of expectations as they became more frequent on the Dutch stage and together these stock characters

⁷⁹ Culpeper & McIntyre 'Activity types and characterization in dramatic discourse', 177.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 177-179.

⁸¹ Ibid., 177-179.

⁸² Stipriaan, *Leugens en vermaak*, 53.

⁸³ Milner Davis, *Farce*, 47.

and their associated characteristics and behaviours normalised a certain image of the *mof* for the early modern audience.

The bragger

One of the most prominent conceptions about Germans that comes to the forefront in these *moffenkluchten* is that they were braggers who came from a poor background but pretended to be much more than they were in actuality. This idea became so common that German braggers even received their own passage in the spectatorial *Zinrijk en Schertzend woordenboek* under the term *pochhanzen* (Hans the bragger). This idea took shape in *moffenkluchten* either through the creation of the stock character of the bragging *mof*, or in the way that other characters in a play would refer to *moffen* as 'good-for-nothing braggers'. In Pieter Bernagie's *Belachelijke Jonker* (1684) for example, the character Neeltje states that many a *Poep* or *Knoet* that came to the Dutch Republic with nothing but the clothes on their backs, gave themselves imposing names and coats of arms.⁸⁴ Interestingly enough, the passage in the *Zinrijk en Schertzend woordenboek*, though written almost a century later, contains a very similar description about these *pochhanzen* coming to the Dutch Republic with next to nothing but using trickery and deceit to switch their rags for riches. This was thus a very persistent image of the German immigrants throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

The changing of their names, as described by Neeltje, is a prominent part of the *Vermakelijke-klucht van de hoogmoedige mof in zijn Levry-pak, ondekt door zijn lands-meisjes*, presumably a mid-eighteenth-century *moffenklucht*.⁸⁵ This *moffenklucht* is a very short one and contains only four characters, which are all German. It tells the story of Hans who used to be a poor swineherd but quickly gained more money and status when he moved to Amsterdam and changed his name from the common German Hans to a more Dutch sounding Christiaan. His fellow German immigrants, however, do not understand why Hans, now Christiaan, changed his appearance and name and seems to have severed all ties with his region of origin and they mock him for it. Through their mockery, the audience understands that it is a ridiculous thing to pretend to be above your class.

In the morality play *Spel van de Rijcke-Man* by Samuel Coster - to which one of the first known *moffenkluchten*, *Klucht van Meyster Berendt*, is attached -, one of the characters even points out that he believes all beggars to be Germans who sweet talked themselves into the army and eventually got fired after it turned out they were not qualified at all, rendering them jobless and homeless: 'Als ment

⁸⁴ 'Zo menige Poep, en Knoet, die hier op strowissen zijn komen gedreeven, Hebben er zelf wijtze namen en Wapens gegeven.' Pieter Bernagie, *De belachelyke jonker* (Amsterdam, 1684), 13, lines 240-241.

⁸⁵ J.W., *Vermakelijke-klucht van de hoogmoedige mof in zijn Levry-pak, ondekt door zijn lands-meisjes* (Amsterdam, 1750?).

Volck bezieet, zijnt maer een hoope Knoeten, Wt Eyderste van daen,⁸⁶ en Burghers die te met Voor vond'ling aen de Camper Steygher zijn gheset.⁸⁷ Die t'Amsterdam maer op een stroo-wis komen dryven, Of die niet langher in haer Lant en mochten blyven'⁸⁸ A similar judgement of Germans can be found in a seventeenth-century pamphlet in which a dialogue between a Dutchmen and some foreign mercenaries is portrayed:

'Holl: En ghy, mijn Duytschen Broer, kunt ghy u niet generen?

Want die geen Ambacht kan, moet dickwils Broot ontberen.

Duyts: Sacht das der Herr zu mir, du redest al te nars.

Aber ich gedenck, 't is nour aufs lauter schar.

Ich die vom adel bin, von grossen haufs geboren,

Mein Vatter eyn Baron, bey em Keyser aufs erkorn.

Holl: Ja Vriendt dat wist ick niet, maer eet daer nu eens van;

'k Waer liefst een rijcken Boer, als armen Edelman,

Duyts: Ein Bauwrist ein Bauwr, ich bin un bleib von Adel.

Holl: Ja, dat en straf ick niet, 'k wil daer niet tegen loopen,

Maer kunt met sulcken naem geen Pekelharingh koopen,

Daer op en borght de Waert u niet een Pintjen Bier.

't Is hier een ander Landt, 't Geldt maeckt den Adel hier.'⁸⁹

In this pamphlet, when the German soldier is asked by the Dutchmen what he will do now that the war is over since he was never taught any trade or craft, he answers that he will get by on his nobility alone. In his explanation of his noble heritage, he claims that his father was a baron, chosen by the emperor himself. Referring to a king, pope or emperor was a universally known strategy in farces or farcical dialogue for showing that someone was bragging and not speaking the truth, as we shall also see below for the German quack.

The stock character of the *mof* as bragger claiming heroic military deeds is a theme we see much more often in *moffenkluchten* throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century. The

⁸⁶ Eyderste: region in North-Germany, close to the Danish border, north of where the Eider river flows into the sea, around Tönning. This would also explain why *moffen* were sometimes also mockingly called Danish *Knoeten*.

⁸⁷ The *Kampersteiger* in Amsterdam was the place where most German seasonal workers would first arrive in the Republic.

⁸⁸ Samuel Coster, *Spel van de Rijcke-Man* (Amsterdam, 1615), in: R. A. Kollewijn, *Samuel Coster's Werken* (Haarlem, 1883), 145-213, here 177, lines 821-825.

⁸⁹ *Afgedanckte soldaten-praet of Kluchtige t'Samenspraeck Tusschen een Hollander, Wael, Hoogduytscher, en Engelsman Behelsende Een misnoegen over de gemaakte vrede* (Amsterdam, 1678), A3.

Boertighe clucht van Claes Klick (1632)⁹⁰ forms a particularly interesting example of this, as the original play was not a *moffenklucht* at all, but it was made purposely into one for the second edition in 1640 by adding a whole new scene, prior to the end scene, that focused solely on the *mof* as bragger.⁹¹ The original play is about Slimme Piet who tricks the old geezer Claes Klick by painting himself as a demon in black in order to sleep with his sweet wife Trijn Snoeps, and to make the old man promise never to abuse his wife again. In the newly added scene from the 1640 edition, the audience is suddenly introduced to two new characters: two rattle guards, one Dutch, and one German.⁹² The German rattle guard spends almost the whole scene bragging about his bravery and his noble heritage until he is unmasked by the Dutch rattle guard as being a bastard *mof* from Westphalia.⁹³ The scene ends with the German rattle guard being fully unmasked as a coward as well when he gets very scared of a ghost that is of course Slimme Piet in demonic apparel fleeing the house of Claes Klick, and tying the seemingly random scene of the two rattle guards to the rest of the play. The *mof* as cowardly bragger is thus in the end duped as a side effect of the practical joke of the original version of the farce. This whole extra scene is particularly interesting because it does not add anything important to the storyline of the original farce but is simply there to mock a *mof*. The character of the German rattle guard does exactly what Germans are accused of doing in Coster's *Rijcke-Man*: getting a job as a soldier by bragging while not actually being suited for the job because of his cowardice.

Throughout the early modern period, a standard template came to exist for the bragging *mof* in which this stock character would try to woo a Dutch girl. The girl, or her father (or another family member) would at first fall for the nobility of the *mof*. A servant or maid would often see right through the *mof*'s facade because they were not so easily taken in by titles of nobility as many Dutch merchant families, though they were rich, were not of noble heritage.⁹⁴ This theme can, for example, again be found in Bernagie's *Romanzieke Juffer* from 1685: the character Hans, the *mof* in this farce, tries to deceive the romance-obsessed Izabelle by pretending to be much braver and higher-born than he actually is.⁹⁵ He turns out to be just another poor boy from Westphalia trying to find a Dutch bride by bragging and lying: 'Wy vertrokken na Holland, daar wy ons uit zouden geeven voor heeren | Van grooten adel, want wij hoorden, dat veele die in er land | De dagelikse kost hadden gewonnen met de hand, | Zich hier voor Edelluiden, of Graaven uit hadden gegeven. | Ja zelfs, zo Juffrouwen bedroogen.'⁹⁶ In 1712 another similar character is visible in J. Pook's *Hans Koekop, of de gemaakte*

⁹⁰ Jan van Arp, *Boertighe Clucht van Claes Klick* (Amsterdam, 1632).

⁹¹ Jan van Arp, *Boertige Clucht van Claes Klick* (Amsterdam, anno 1640).

⁹² rattle guards, *ratelwachten* in Dutch, were watchmen who carried a type of rattles on their patrols at night which they could use to sound alarm.

⁹³ Arp, *Boertige Clucht van Claes Klick* (1640), 9e Uitkomst.

⁹⁴ Ornée, *De 'Mof' in de Nederlandse blij-en kluchtspelen*, 9.

⁹⁵ Samuel Coster, *De Romanzieke Juffer* (Amsterdam, 1685).

⁹⁶ Coster, *De Romanzieke Juffer*, 32.

waterzucht,⁹⁷ in which the title character brags about all his heroic deeds to impress the Amsterdam merchants' daughter Geertrui, again, of course, to no avail.

Stage type: the German quack

A more specific type of German bragger originated in the form of the German quack. Jan te Winkel, in an overview of quacks in drama, already stated in 1914 that it was not uncommon for a quack to be a bragger as the Dutch word for quack, *kwakzalver*, quite literally means healing (*zalven*) by sweet talking (*kwakken/zwetsen*).⁹⁸ The word *kwakkerd* still means bragger in some Dutch dialects. From the very first moment he displays his goods, a quack has to start boasting about his skills as a healer, often by claiming to have attained his title as doctor from the king or pope himself.⁹⁹ It is striking that the quack in Dutch drama is older than the specifically German quack: the German speaking fake doctors only came to the stage around 1600. Starting with a supporting character of a German quack in Coster's tragedy *Isabella*, quacks in seventeenth-century Dutch farces became predominantly German speaking charlatans as well. Even Pieter Langendijk's Hans de Zwetser, probably the most well-known of German bragger characters in Dutch theatre, turns out not just to have been a bragger, but a quack. Though Te Winkel explains the German quack type on the basis of the closest university to study medicine at the time being in Keulen, hence the quacks' German accents,¹⁰⁰ Ornée states that the on-stage distinguishing of the German quacks from Dutch doctors was caused by a growing feeling of the Self in the Renaissance. This caused a more ironic attitude towards everything that was not part of this definition of the Self.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ J. Pook, *Hans Koekop, of de gemaakte waterzicht* (Amsterdam, 1712).

⁹⁸ Winkel, Jan te, 'De kwakzalver op ons toneel in de zestiende en zeventiende eeuw', *Nederlands Tijdschrift voor Geneeskunde* 58 (1914), 1915-1923, here 1916.

⁹⁹ Ornée, *De 'Mof' in de Nederlandse blij-en kluchtspelen*, 6.

¹⁰⁰ Winkel, 'De kwakzalver op ons toneel', 1916-1918.

¹⁰¹ Ornée, *De 'Mof' in de Nederlandse blij-en kluchtspelen*, 7.



In an essay on quacks in earlier farces, Dutch literary scholar Femke Kramer distinguishes two types of quacks as stage types, or comic masks: the quack who promotes himself as a charlatan to the audience from the get-go, and the quack who tries to convince not only the other characters in the play, but also the audience, of his honesty and his reputation as a trustworthy doctor.¹⁰² In both cases, the quack is the embodiment of deception as he stands for character traits like greed, self-interest and fraud.¹⁰³ By normalising the quack as a German character, these negative characteristics almost automatically became equivalent to the stereotype of the *mof* on stage. These negative German character traits were often in stark contrast with the social norms and morals that the Dutch valued in themselves, and satirizing them on stage in the German Other thus formed a clear moral warning for early modern audiences as for how to behave.

The quack was often very obviously made German by the authors of these farces, for example by giving him a common German name like Hans and/or giving this character a very strong German accent. Most often, however, it would already be clear from the title of the play that it would be about

¹⁰² Femke Kramer, 'De kwakzalver: een element uit het register van de rederijdersklucht', in: Berndsen, Frank and Hans van Dijk (ed.), *Poëtica-onderzoek in de praktijk* (Groningen, 1993), 39-52, here 43.

¹⁰³ Kramer, 'De kwakzalver', 42.

a quack, and specifically a German quack. Take Bredero's *Klucht van den Hoochduytschen Quacksalver* for example.¹⁰⁴ In this farce, the name of the quack, Dokter Rijckhart, does not necessarily give away that he is German, it is more a speaking-name that refers to his greed: Rijckhart means that riches (*Rijck*) are close to his heart (*hart*). Without Rijckhart even having to have said a word, however, the reader or audience knows from the title that Rijckhart is not a real doctor but a fraud, and that he is German. Even though Rijckhart is a bragger, he is not consciously a fraud when he mixes up the medicines for his two patients, with all its hilarious consequences. His ignorance as a doctor is rather caused, as his name suggests, by greed, and by negligence and a lack of empathy for his patients. Rijckhart's greed does not only apply to money: he is also a greedy drinker, and his drunkenness too is in the way of him being a trustworthy doctor. Rijckhart's greed, and its consequences for the other characters in the play, did not simply make people laugh, but at the same time functioned as a warning for the audience about putting a person's riches above virtue and skill.

A similar moral warning can be found more explicitly in Willem Godschalck van Focquenbroch's *moffenklucht* titled *Klught van Hans Keyenvresser, zijnde een Hoogduytschen quacksalver* (1665).¹⁰⁵ This title also immediately gives away that the play is about a German quack, and here too, he is called Hans. In Focquenbroch's farce, the warning is given through the quack's accomplice, Jan de Landloper, who is the real trickster of the play as he swindles the dim-witted farmer out of his money and pokes fun at the German quack. Though Hans, as opposed to the quack in Bredero's farce, is not scolded by his patients, he is comically ridiculed by Jan. While Jan ridicules Hans in both the introduction and the ending of the play, he also criticizes people like Theeuwus, the farmer in this farce, who value money and clothes of a person above that person's character and that way get duped by strangers like Hans Keyenvresser, whom Jan refers to as 'dat volck'.¹⁰⁶

Focquenbroch's quacksalver farce was probably quite well known, at least for some decades, since it formed the inspiration for a *moffenklucht* by Thomas Asselijn almost thirty years later.¹⁰⁷ Asselijn's *Klucht van de Kwakzalver* (1692) also follows the story of Hans Keyenvresser, but includes some new features. In this farce, Hans has two daughters for example, and the dimwitted farmer is replaced with one of their suitors. Though Asselijn's farce is based quite closely on that of Focquenbroch, there are some striking differences between the two farces when it comes to their treatment of Hans. For example, though Hans is criticized for being untrustworthy and unable to control his (violent) emotions in this version too, the 1692 farce does not contain the word '*moef*' or

¹⁰⁴ G. A. Bredero, *Klucht van den Hoochduytschen Quacksalver* (Amsterdam, 1619).

¹⁰⁵ Willem godschalck van Focquenbroch, *Klught van Hans Keyenvresser, zijnde een Hoogduytschen quacksalver* (Amsterdam, 1665).

¹⁰⁶ Focquenbroch, *Klught van Hans Keyenvresser*, line 422.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas Asselijn, *Klucht van de Kwakzalver* (Amsterdam, 1692).

any other form of ridiculing specifically focussed on Hans's Germanness. Even Jan's end speech about 'dat volck' is left out in this later play. Instead, Asselijn's *moffenklucht* seems to establish some sort of mutual respect between the characters as they trick each other and the quack in this case considers being able to trick someone as a positive characteristic. This dissimilarity is in line with the general development of quack types in seventeenth century Dutch farces as detected by Dutch literary scholar Ton Harmsen.¹⁰⁸ Harmsen detects a development during the seventeenth century from quacks as simple braggers who are easily exposed as they are, to much smarter and more cunning quack types. The German quack stage type too seems to have benefited from this change in the stereotype of the quack in general.

By the time that Langendijk's *De Zwetser* came to the stage in 1712, the German quack was already established as a fully rounded stage type on the Amsterdam stage.¹⁰⁹ The early modern audiences had seen their fair share of these German quacks, making the revelation of the German Hans not being a highborn captain extra meaningful when it turns out he had not only been lying about his heritage and position. The realisation that he was also a quack, make his lies and deceit not just part of this particular circumstance, but actually part of his nature as he suddenly falls into the well-known category of German quacks. This revelation of an easily recognisable German stage type like the quack turns out to have been a great success in later years as well, when more anti-German sentiments started to rise, as *De Zwetser* would be performed almost annually in the years between 1760 and 1820.¹¹⁰

The dim-witted servant

Another German stock character that could be found in early modern Dutch farces is one that follows an imaging of the German that we still know as a stereotype today: the exaggerated meat-eating, binge-drinking Germans that people often imagine when thinking about the yearly *Oktoberfest*, for example. Originally these character traits were mostly reserved for the stock character of the dim-witted German seasonal worker or servant from Westphalia, and this is precisely the German stereotyping Lotte Jensen writes about in her article on the imaging of *moffen* in plays by Isaac Vos.¹¹¹ One of the earliest and most popular *moffenkluchten* was written by Vos and it tells the story of such

¹⁰⁸ Ton Harmsen, 'Is er een dokter in de zaal? Asselijn verziekt Focquenbroch', *Fumus: mededelingen van de stichting Willem Godschalck van Focquenbroch* 10 (2012), 2-11.

¹⁰⁹ W. A. Ornée & M. A. Streng, *De Zwetser, kluchtspel door P. Langendijk* (Zutphen, 1971), 7.

¹¹⁰ Between 1712 and 1760 the play also saw an estimate of 24 performances; <http://www.vondel.humanities.uva.nl/onstage/plays/509> [accessed on 18-06-2019]

¹¹¹ Jensen, 'Moffen-beeld bij de toneelschrijver Isaac Vos'.

a Westphalian servant. It is simply titled *Klucht van de Mof* (1644) and for the first forty years it would roughly be performed two to three times per season.¹¹² In it, we are introduced to Jochim Bueleke and his countrymen who came to Amsterdam by ferry-boat. Jochim opens the play with a monologue about how scared he was on the ferry-boat and about getting seasick after eating a large amount of pig meat, or bacon. He even describes his regret of not being able to eat the whole thing again:

'Dat wolde Godt, ont nimmer keen olt wijf,
Tom suke noch toe, woo seer deyt mick et lijf
Als wen ick geroodert weer, mijn doogen kaam ick nicht wedder too scheepe,
I tommelde sick, eft et dol weer, ont hat soo ein seltzeme greepe,
Im maarse, dat ihm de hoore te barge stonden, ick reep tom suke,
Schipman, schipman holt stille, wat let dick too vlueke,
Doe blinde humlingh seed he, kan stu et moel nicht holden,
Ick sweegh ydel stil, man ick dacht wy scholden
Al ons doogen nicht wedder too lande kaamen,
Den vorwoor de scheepkneghten hedden al de seegels ingenamen,
Soo greslijck saaghet door oet, on dat mick opt meyst brude,
Ick hed soo eyn hechtken speck gevreeten, ont al de lude
Dit lachede oft se roosende dol weeren, ick vroochde en woorom
Dat weerste wol wijs worden seden se, kom
Man eyn luttick wyder in see, dat speck motter wedder oet,
On eyn stunde er twey dar noo kreegh ick soo eyn gril aver de hoet
Dat ick swart om gen kop wert, ick spuegh al wat ick int lijf hat,
Man tis mick wol hondertmool leet dat ickt nicht wedder op vrat,
Aber twas nicht mochlijck eft ickt schoon doen wolt,
I twas too moole hubsch swijne vleesch, soo geel as eyn dukoten golt,
tWas verwoor to euvel¹¹³, soo as die besuckede wint weyde
Soo ongestuym, ont soo heslijck¹¹⁴, dat ihm de oogen im kop verdreyde.'¹¹⁵

As will be discussed later, the terrors of the boat trip to Amsterdam as described by the German immigrant character is a narrative that can be found more often in *moffenkluchten*.

¹¹² Isaac Vos, *Klucht van de Mof* (Amsterdam, 1644).

¹¹³ 'tWas verwoor to euvel': *het was voorwaar te verschrikkelijk* = it was indeed too horrible.

¹¹⁴ 'heslijck': *lelijk* = ugly

¹¹⁵ Vos, *Klucht van de Mof*, lines 1-23.

Almost immediately after arriving in the Republic, Jochim is bullied by some boys in the street: 'Hee, hee, heruyt, mof, mof. [...] Hee, hee hanneke de meyer, honichlicker, mof, mof.'¹¹⁶ When Jochim meets up with his fellow countrymen, they talk about drinking beer and they tell Jochim about *brandewijn*, or brandy, for which he later mistakenly drinks oil because he does not know what brandy should taste like. The entire first act of this play thus introduces the German immigrant solely as someone who eats a lot, drinks a lot and has a very low level of intelligence.

Jochim's countrymen are equally obsessed with drinking and they seem to be making it a sport to gain the biggest amount of brandy for the least amount of money. This does not always happen in fair ways and they even brag about the unfair manner in which they achieved their excessive drunkenness. Like the German bragger character, they are portrayed as very obviously untrustworthy. They mention two more of their fellow countrymen who even got caught and arrested, quite possibly for the same type of swindling.¹¹⁷ Jochim is also a bit of a bragger in his search for a job and in his advances towards Brechje, his boss's daughter, but he is first and foremost portrayed as a stupid, blunt and rude servant who has nothing on his mind but eating pork and drinking beer (or brandy), and in some cases getting a job or marrying a Dutch girl, mostly with the intentions of gaining more money for drinking and eating.

According to Jensen, the literary tradition of the image of gluttonous and drinking Germans can be traced all the way back to Tacitus' *Germania* (98 AD), which had a great influence in the early modern period. Starting in the late fifteenth-century, *Germania* was spread all over Europe and the work saw many editions and translations, including a Dutch translation by P. C. Hooft in the seventeenth century. Though Tacitus, who wrote about the nature, habits and living conditions of the Germanic peoples, wrote about them in admiration - he considered their eating and drinking habits to be signs of prosperity and hospitality -, these same characteristics were later used to create a negative image of the Germans. Though the Dutch and German Germanic heritage was quite similar, the Dutch distinguished themselves from the Germans by referring to themselves as who Tacitus described as the bravest of the Germanic peoples: the Batavians, setting themselves apart from the negative imagery of the Germanics by claiming for themselves a more polished history.¹¹⁸

The imaging of Germans in these *moffenkluchten* about 'Westphalian fools' was not only influenced by Tacitus' writing about the Germanic peoples, but as Jensen suggests, it was also influenced by scientific ideas about peoples that circulated at the time. The Germans as a peoples, for example, featured in various works that followed the 'climate theory' that suggested that differences between peoples were caused by the climatological circumstances in which they lived. According to

¹¹⁶ Vos, *Klucht van de Mof*, lines 43 and 45.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., lines 73-80

¹¹⁸ Jensen, 'Moffen-beeld bij de toneelschrijver Isaac Vos', 24-26.

this theory, northern peoples maintained a different set of drinking and eating habits than southern peoples, and it was thought that the thick and turbid air in the north made the people who lived there less intelligent than the people who breathed clearer air in the south. Where in actuality both the Germans and the Dutch were thought to be northern people, and so were the French and the English, sixteenth and seventeenth century medics in the Republic made a real effort to free the own Dutch people from unfavourable characteristics, just like authors of *moffenkluchten* reserved the worst traits for their German characters.¹¹⁹

Stage type: Slender-Hincke

The Westphalian Jochim in *Klucht van de Mof* seems to have only been the start of a long line of farces in which the Westphalian seasonal workers or servants make an appearance, either as a main character or as a comic support to the story. In another of Asselijn's *moffenkluchten* for example, the main character, the German Machteld who got married to a Dutchman, is visited by some male members of the family, all of which are portrayed as the same type of Westphalian 'visitor'.¹²⁰ When Machteld's father, brother and brother-in-law first come to the door, they are initially refused entrance by the maid simply on account of them being Westphalian seasonal workers. The maid refers to the men at the door as *Hannekes*, derived from the pejorative Dutch term for the Westphalian seasonal workers who mowed the fields, *hannekemaaiers*: 'Juffrouw daer zijn drie Hannekes, ofze komen beedelen dat weet ik niet, | zy blyven al staan, | Ik heb al drie maal ga voorby gezeid, en ze willen noch niet voort gaen, | Ze willen de vrouw spreken.'¹²¹ Since the maid barely has to explain her refusal to let them in, other than explaining that they are *hannekes*, it must not have been too uncommon for the seventeenth-century audiences that characters in plays like this were not very welcoming towards these Westphalian newcomers.

Once Machteld's family members are inside, it quickly becomes clear why they would not be welcomed by the Dutch family, with the exception of Machteld herself: they bluntly ask for food, drink, clothes and money without offering anything in return and Machteld's Dutch husband explains that even she was ashamed of her family as they looked like vagabonds without shirts and shoes. Machteld was even so ashamed of them that she gave them each a shirt and went with them to buy them all shoes with her husband's money. 'puure schurken', he calls them, 'landloopers, beedelaars' and he refuses to every spare them any meat or firewood in the future.¹²² All three of Machteld's family

¹¹⁹ Jensen, 'Moffen-beeld bij de toneelschrijver Isaac Vos', 26-27.

¹²⁰ Thomas Asselijn, *De Stiefmoer* (Amsterdam, 1684).

¹²¹ Asselijn, *De Stiefmoer*, lines 166-169.

¹²² Ibid., lines 260-269.

members are portrayed as unintelligent begging wanderers, unwilling to work for what they are given and leeching off other peoples' food and wine. Machteld's brother is not even only greedy when it comes to food and drink, but also when it comes to money. He exclaims that he does not ever want to marry because that would mean that he would have to share the little money he has with his future wife. 'Hi wol von di doolders nigt scheide, door scheldt et him an, Hi stoopelt den al up den anderen.'¹²³

Often, the dim-witted servants in *moffenkluchten* were meant to represent the many *hannekemaaiers* that came to the Dutch Republic each year to work the fields and the stock character became continuously reused through the easily recognisable stage type of *Slender-Hincke*. A central theme in *moffenkluchten* containing a dim-witted servant as stock character is the entertaining story of his seafaring journey to the Republic. The report of his travels by ship or ferryboat is told in a faulty mix of low German and Dutch and it is often coloured by his obsession with food and drink. The most famous of the *Slender-Hinckes* is most likely the one from *De Zwetser*. Langendijk's *moffenklucht* does not only contain a German bragger who turns out to be a quack, but also a German servant of this quack named Slenderhinke. This Slenderhinke is a rough and crude figure who, though he means well, lacks intelligence and thus manages to greatly screw things up for his master. He does this, on the one hand, by accidentally outing Hans as a quack. On the other hand, he gives away Hans de Zwetser's low heritage by introducing everyone to a bunch of poor *moffen*, all named Wessel, one of which is Hans's very own brother, proving his poor background.



¹²³ Dolders = *daalders*, or thalers, early modern Dutch currency; Asselijn, *De Stiefmoer*, lines 196-198.

There has been some debate on where Langendijk got his inspiration for the character of Slenderhinke because there had already been many very similar characters before Langendijk's *De Zwetser* came out. The two most often mentioned are *De Historie van Slenner-Hincken Landlaup, Hellenvaert un Juffrenhijk*¹²⁴ and the figure of Jochim in Vos's *Klucht van de Mof*. The *Historie van Slenner-Hincken* is part of a collection of low German plays, probably written for a Dutch audience, under the name *Den Westvaelschen Speelthuyn* (1661). The play itself probably stems from around 1630 and it is one of the earliest known works containing a Slenner-Hincke type.¹²⁵ As it was republished multiple times, we can assume that the play was quite popular with early modern Dutch readers despite the fact that the work was written in German, not Dutch. It tells the story of Hincke, who goes to Holland, or the *Grösländ* as he calls it, to work the fields because the situation of war in his own country scares him. Once returned from Holland after nine weeks, he is now named Slenner-Hincke, and it seems that the dim-witted and rigid farmer's boy has learned some real gentlemanly manners in the Netherlands. Though Slenner-Hincke does not wish to marry, an overload of beer breaks his will and he is eventually sent off to his future bride by his mother and neighbour.

Similar to the Slenderhinke in Langendijk's *moffenklucht*, the story of his seafaring travels across the *Zuiderzee* to the Republic form an important aspect of the character's identity in the play, which Slenner-Hincke refers to as a journey into hell (*Hellenvaert*) due to fear and seasickness. The reason why *Klucht van de Mof* is also suggested as Langendijk's inspiration for Slenderhinke is that Jochim's account of his travels over sea to Holland, as discussed earlier, contains many similarities with both Langendijk's Slenderhinke and the Slenner-Hincke from *Den Westvaelschen Speelthuyn*. The *hellevaart* speech in Langendijk's play contains phrases that seems to have been taken almost directly from Vos's *Klucht van de Mof*.¹²⁶ Slenderhinke calling the singing boatman a sorcerer ('In al den angste stond de teuvener en zonck'), however, seems to have been taken directly from Slenner-Hincke's story in *Den Westvaelschen Speelthuyn* ('de Vourman was ne Touvenaer | dat weiss ich encke | im al dem anghste stont dessen dey so un zonck | dat em de hals krackede'¹²⁷). As *Klucht van de Mof* was presumably written later, it can be argued that Vos might have also been inspired by the same story of the Slenner-Hincke from *Den Westvaelschen Speelthuyn* as Langendijk, and that Langendijk in turn was inspired by both works. Either way, the *hannekemaier's hellevaart* narrative must have circulated at the time and was probably not unknown to early modern audiences. Slenner-Hincke, or

¹²⁴ Unknown author, 'De Historie van Slenner-Hincken Landlaup, Hellenvaert un Juffrenhijk', *Den Westvaelschen Speelthuyn* (gebruikte versie: Amsterdam, 1687).

¹²⁵ Mertens-Westphalen, 'De Duitser en de Hollandganger', 54.

¹²⁶ A. Postma, 'In hoeverre het type 'slenderhinke' in P. Langendijks 'Zwetser' oorspronkelijk is', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde* 12 (1893), 268-278, here 270.

¹²⁷ 'De Historie van Slenner-Hincken Landlaup', 26.

Slenderhinke, derivative of the Dutch word for wandering around: *slenteren*, formed a popular stage type of the poor, simple, and uncivilised Westphalian farm worker.

The moffin

As mentioned before, not all German immigrants that came to the Dutch Republic in the early modern period were men, and neither were all the *moffen* in these farces. The stereotypical German woman as a stock character, referred to in these farces as *moffin*, developed in the form of several recognisable stage types, of which the most common were the stepmother, the old woman and the maid. Often contrasted directly with some form of ‘correct’ Dutch femininity in these farces, the *moffin* became a normalised, and almost exclusively negative, image of the female German immigrant. Whereas Dutch women in the seventeenth century were thought to be independent, calculative in choosing a husband, and above everything else proper,¹²⁸ *moffinnen* were often portrayed as anything but proper and willing to ‘associate’ with any Dutchman they meet in the hope that he will marry her.

Prior to his *Klucht van de Mof*, Vos had already written another evenly cleverly titled *moffenklucht: Klucht van de Moffin*.¹²⁹ This play was even more popular than Vos’s other *moffenklucht*: originally published and performed in 1642 with the title *Klucht van Looime Lammert*, the play was reprinted under its new title multiple times and performed at least a hundred and thirty times, well into the eighteenth century. The title character of the *Klucht van de Moffin* is an older German woman named Tryn (or Trijn), whose poor background immediately becomes apparent from the character list in which she is described as an ‘oudt Vodde wyf’.¹³⁰ A rag lady, or *voddenvrouw*, is the female equivalent of the rag-and-bone men who scavenged unwanted materials like rags in order to fix them up and sell them again. Tryn tries to play matchmaker for her son (another lazy and dim-witted *mof*) and the Dutch Grietje, who wants nothing to do with this Looime (= dull) Lammert. When Lammert comes to woo her, Grietje offers to clean something off his nose but instead makes his whole face black. When Lammert returns to his mother, defeated, the old Tryn is furious and begins a screaming match with Grietjes mother. When she becomes physically aggressive towards a neighbour, she eventually gets removed by the authorities.

¹²⁸ Els Kloek, *Vrouw des huizes: Een cultuurgeschiedenis van de Hollandse huisvrouw* (Amsterdam, 2009), 81-84.

¹²⁹ Isaac Vos, *Klucht van de Moffin* (Amsterdam, 1644).

¹³⁰ Vos, *Klucht van de Moffin*, IV.



Though we know fairly little about the way plays like these were actually performed during the early modern period, we do know that, at least during the theatre season of 1658-59 but probably many of its other performances as well, the role of Tryn was played by a man, despite the fact that by that time women were already allowed on stage.¹³¹ Male actors playing female roles still happened rather often in the seventeenth century, especially when a character asked for a grotesque, burlesque or other form of humoristic performance.¹³² It is my assumption that the role of *moffin* was played by a male actor in other *moffenkluchten* too but there is no way to say this with any certainty without further research and additional source material.

The fact that Tryn was played by a man gave way for a very rude performance of this specific *moffin*. Though Grietje's mother and neighbour too are far from well-behaved, the emphasis in the play is on Tryn's misbehaviour and only she gets punished for it in the end. The *schout* who comes to collect Tryn even accuses the old *moffin* from being drunk as an explanation for her aggressive behaviour: "k Loof seker, jou ouwe varcken, je hebt je gat vol."¹³³

¹³¹ *Parsonageboek Anno 1658/59*, in: C. N. Wybrands, 'De Amsterdamsche Schouwburg gedurende het seizoen 1658-59', *Het Nederlandsch toneel* 2 (1873), 246-322.

¹³² Louis Peter Grijp, 'Boys and Female Impersonators in the Amsterdam Theatre of the Seventeenth Century', *Medieval English Theatre* 28 (2006), 131-170.

¹³³ Vos, *Klucht van de Moffin*, 30.

Stage type: the German maid

As mentioned before, many of the German women who came to the Republic went on to work as handmaidens for rich Dutch merchant families. Many of them hoped not only to find work, but also a Dutch husband.¹³⁴ This version of the German maid also keeps returning as a stage type in *moffenkluchten*, for example in a seventeenth century farce from an unknown author titled *Kluchtigh tijdverdrijf by de worste-ketel, ofte vermaakelyke 't samen-koutingen, waar in verhandeld word het leven en wandel der Westfaalse dienstmaagden*.¹³⁵ The title already gives away that it concerns a dialogue (*samen-koutingen* means something along the lines of 'a friendly conversation') in which the lives of some Westphalian maids are discussed, and this is exactly what happens in this farce. It consists of a dialogue between five Westphalian men who discuss the women they knew who went to Amsterdam to work as maids.



title page *Kluchtigh tijdverdrijf by de worste-ketel, ofte vermaakelyke 't samen-koutingen, waar in verhandeld word het leven en wandel der Westfaalse dienstmaagden* (Amsterdam, 16??)

¹³⁴ Obdeijn & Schrover, *Komen en gaan*, 59.

¹³⁵ Unknown author, *Kluchtigh tijdverdrijf by de worste-ketel, ofte vermaakelyke 't samen-koutingen, waar in verhandeld word het leven en wandel der Westfaalse dienstmaagden* (Amsterdam, 16??).

Most of the Westphalian maids they discuss have, according to the men who speak about them, started sleeping with their masters in the hope that their master would marry them if they got pregnant, or at least pay them for the children they bear. Evert, a Westphalian peddler, tells them the story of how he went to Amsterdam and talked to a Grietje he once knew in an establishment he describes in a way one can only assume he is speaking of some sort of brothel. Grietje tells him how she ended up there:

‘doe ‘k hier eirst in Amsterdam kam (seddese) woonde ik bey’n Knockenhower, dy hadde drey knechten, dy mik sums wat oysden? sedde dan einen hy wol mik Hijlken¹³⁶ da hrumme¹³⁷ kraup ick by hun unner¹³⁸; doe sedde den anner¹³⁹ auk hy wol mich Hijlken, dahr kroup ick auk bey unner; den dreyde wol mick auch Hijlken dy brude mick altomit in ‘t Heuy un dede mick nen vrunt-schap: da haddense ein dagelicksen slenter van, un ‘t stun mik lyen wil an; Entlich must ‘k baaren,¹⁴⁰ doe wasser nich einde von alle drey die mich Hijlken wol, so schendich¹⁴¹ hadden dy Hunsvotten¹⁴² my bedrogen, un ick hadze alle drey so smechtige lief.’¹⁴³

Three of her master’s servants promised they would marry her, so she slept with all of them. When she got pregnant, however, none of them wanted her as a wife and as a result, she ended up in prostitution. Though maybe not exactly in the way that it happened to this Grietje, German handmaidens ending up in prostitution was not an uncommon phenomenon at the time. Because of the Republic’s surplus in women, it was much harder for foreign women to find a Dutch husband as it was for foreign man to find a Dutch wife. A number of women who came to the Republic to work as a handmaiden in the hopes of finding a husband ended up in prostitution: between 1650 and 1700, almost thirty percent of the Amsterdam prostitutes were of foreign descent.¹⁴⁴

In the *Vermakelijke-klught van de hoogmoedige mof in zijn Levry-pak, ondekt door zijn lands-meisjes* the German characters also talk about the behavior of these German maids. The obscuring of money or wine from their masters by German handmaidens, to give an example, is a recurring theme in both farces. However, the most striking example of negative imaging of both the chasteness and

¹³⁶ ‘Hijlken’: *huwelijken* = to marry.

¹³⁷ ‘da hrumme’: *daarom* = therefore.

¹³⁸ ‘kraup ick by hun unner’: *kruip ik bij hem onder* = I go to bed with him.

¹³⁹ ‘anner’: *ander* = other.

¹⁴⁰ ‘Entlich must ‘k baaren’: *eindelijk moest ik baren* = finally I had to give birth.

¹⁴¹ ‘schendich’: *schandelijk* = shameful.

¹⁴² ‘Hunsvotten’: *hondsvotten* = Dutch swear word meaning something like scoundrels.

¹⁴³ *Kluchtigh tijdverdrijf by de worste-ketel*, B.

¹⁴⁴ Obdeijn & Schrover, *Komen en gaan*, 59.

the trustworthiness of these German handmaidens is their discussion of the maid Griet who, after becoming pregnant in Amsterdam returns to her homeland to have the baby. She then discards the child in order to return to her work in Amsterdam as ‘weder een maagd’, or once again a virgin.¹⁴⁵

Another theme that is often used for German handmaidens in *moffenkluchten* is that, very much like the bragger, they pretend to be better than they are. Ferket aptly discusses the example of Bernagie’s above mentioned *Belachelijke Jonker*, in which not only the German bragger in general is discussed, but also very specifically the case of German handmaidens’ pretensions through the criticizing voice of the character Johanna¹⁴⁶:

‘Ik bidje, let eens op de Meiden,
Zoud gy ze kunnen onderscheiden
Van Burgers Dochters, draagen zy
Niet van fyn goud, zo wel als wy,
De Strikken aan het Hoofd, en Ringen,
En Kettingen, en alle dingen?
Zelfs Groentjes, die eerst voor een Jaar
Uit Mofland kwamen, en toen maar
Een schraal groen Rokje hadden, draagen
Nou witte Kapers alle dagen.
Als dan haar Landslui hier in stad
Eens komen, weeten zy niet, dat
Het Meiden zyn, ô neen, zy vraagen
Haar, Juffrouw zou ’t u Man behaagen
Dat ik hem spreek?’¹⁴⁷

According to Johanna, these maids, who came to the Republic without any money, now wear clothes and accessories that are far above their class standards. It worries her that this makes it much

¹⁴⁵ J.W., *Vermakelijke-klught van de hoogmoedige mof*.

¹⁴⁶ Ferket, ‘German Stage Characters’, 54.

¹⁴⁷ Pieter Bernagie, *De belachelyke jonker* (Amsterdam, 1684), 5, lines 89-103; translation by Ferket: Take a good look at these maids | Could you distinguish them | From the daughters of burghers? | Do they not wear fine gold like we do | Bowties and rings | And necklaces and all things? | Even rookies, less than a year after arriving | From Germany, with only | A meagre green skirt | Now wear white caps all day | And when farmers come into the city | They do not know they are maidens | O no, they ask them | Miss, would it please your husband | That I speak to him?; Ferket, ‘German Stage Characters’, 54-55.

harder to recognise them as 'outsiders' and she is annoyed by the fact that these German women dare to look down on others.¹⁴⁸

A good example of what Johanna describes here can be found in the character of Machteld from Asselijn's farce. Machteld once was such a maid but she managed to work her way out of poverty by marrying her former master. This sounds, of course, like a success story, but the other characters do not see it that way. They find her an arrogant pretender:

'ze lijkt de malle Princes wel, of zo een Vastelavonds¹⁴⁹ koningin;

Schud de Juffrouw iens uit, wat zelze wezen? een vuile stinkende Westfaalse Moffin.

Jou turkin alsje bent, die hier op een stroowisch is koomen dryven, noch voor zoo weinig jaaren.

[...]

En deese nieuwbacke Madam beeld'er noch wel in dat s'et puikje is van Amsterdam:

Maar ofze wel een hemd aan 'er gat had, die schooibrok¹⁵⁰, toen z'er in kwam?

't Zyn noch al mijn susters kleeren die ze daar draagt.¹⁵¹

It does not help Machteld's case that her character seems indeed to be a dishonest and just plain mean one. Though she feeds and clothes her begging family from Westphalia and pampers her own daughter, she mistreats her husband and even refuses to feed her stepdaughter. When her poor background is revealed by the merry Westphalian bunch at their dinner table, it turns out that she had also been stealing her husband's silverware and his deceased wife's clothes and ring. A similar theme can be found in a play published a year later than that of Asselijn: *De ontrouwe kantoorknecht en lichtvaerdige dienstmaagd* by Bernagie. This time the stock character of a German maid that has to be put back in her place is Fytje.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Ferket, 'German Stage Characters', 55.

¹⁴⁹ 'Vastelavonds koningin': *carnavalskoningin* = queen carnival.

¹⁵⁰ 'schooibrok': *schooier* = beggar

¹⁵¹ Asselijn, *De Stiefmoer*, lines 134-140

¹⁵² Pieter Bernagie, *De ontrouwe kantoorknecht en lichtvaerdige dienstmaagd* (Amsterdam, 1685).

Moffen(klucht): knowledge of the Other

Over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the characterizations of these various stock characters together formed a normalized image of the stereotype of the *mof* including a typology of character traits. The above discussed stock characters and stage types seem at first to be very different from one another: they could for example differ in origin, in class, but also in gender, evoking different sets of associations and expectations with the audience. In spite of their differences, there is one character trait that forms a theme in all of these *moffen*, whether they be quacks, servants or maids, and that is their deceitfulness. Over time, this recurring theme establishes an image that all German immigrants are untrustworthy that becomes part of a cultural repertoire, for example by turning a simple pretender into a German who's very nature is deceit. Other recurring traits in all of the *moffen* types are drunkenness and pretension. As farces were meant not only as entertainment, but also to train an audience's ability of interpretation, they depended on the audience's collective knowledge, in this case a collection of stock characters and stage types coming together in the negative normalized image of the *mof* that was established over the course of two centuries of *moffenkluchten*.

4. Distance: humour- and farce strategies

This final part of my analysis of *moffenkluchten* will look at the way humour can have a distancing effect and thus considers the praxeological dimension of the relation between Self and Other as described by Todorov. By using recent theories on farce and humour, I hope to gain better insight into the interconnectedness between humour and (imagined) social boundaries.

Empathic distance

The negative characteristics attributed to *moffen* by the authors of these *moffenkluchten* could in part be explained by the fact that these plays were all farces.¹⁵³ The stupidity and rudeness of these German characters fit perfectly into this genre of plays that were known to take place amongst the lower classes and to concern characters distinguishable by their bad manners and low intelligence.¹⁵⁴ It is, however, already curious that in the creation of a certain image of these German immigrants on stage, authors at the time chose the genre of farce; the German immigrant is seldom a prominent character in more serious plays like tragedies. Not only did they choose farces for their representation of Germans, but they specifically used the farce form of Humiliation or Deception Farces, and sometimes, but far less often, the form of a Reversal Farce. These types of farces, and especially Humiliation or Deception Farces indeed ask for an unpleasant main character, which is something that is not the case for all types of farces.¹⁵⁵

As mentioned in my earlier discussion of farce as a genre, Milner Davis explains the Humiliation Farce as a type of farce in which an unpleasant character is exposed to his or her fate without room for retaliation. The unpleasant character's fate was meant to be a funny thing as it was done through jokes and tricks, and it is highly unlikely that the victims of these jokes evoked any sympathy in the audience. Milner Davis gives various reasons for the lack of sympathy from the audience when the sorrow from a character in such a farce causes laughter.¹⁵⁶ She mentions, for example, the way the closed form of the play encourages detachment or comic estrangement from the events on stage. The audience takes on a superior position compared to the characters in the play because they as omniscient observers know and understand more than these characters who do not yet know what is coming for them.¹⁵⁷ For example, while the audience probably easily recognised a

¹⁵³ Jensen, 'Moffen-beeld bij de toneelschrijver Isaac Vos', 22-27.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 24.

¹⁵⁵ In a snowball farce, for example, an unpleasant main character is not a necessity because in this farce form, characters, and the audience, are often all dragged into the same comic whirlwind of humankind losing control over their own destiny; Milner Davis, Farce, 7-9.

¹⁵⁶ Milner Davis, Farce, 10-12.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 10.

German doctor in a farce as a quack, especially when the German quack, and his associated characteristics, had already been established as a stock character on the early modern stage, the character in the farce who gets tricked by this quack has no clue.

The lack of real life consequences is another reason for the audience to laugh at a character's discomfort instead of being sympathetic. The audience of a farce is aware of the fact that they are looking at actors and that humiliating or violent acts on stage are only make-believe.¹⁵⁸ The opening scenes of a farce, in which the characters are introduced, are often also meant to convince the audience that these farcical types are so clueless that they barely have any idea of what is going on around them and that they are not capable of learning from their own mistakes. Despite the events in the play, these characters will not adjust their behaviour or motivations and, though their behaviour is punished, they will definitely continue their life in the same manner as before. This way of introducing them 'dehumanizes', as it were, the comic stereotype because of its lack of human feelings of shame and remorse and its inability to change or learn from mistakes. It is not needed for an audience to sympathize with 'inhuman' victims; they can thus laugh at these victims' suffering without consequence.¹⁵⁹

Another way in which finding joy in others' suffering could be morally justified for the audience of a Humiliation, Deception or Reversal Farce is the idea that the victims brought their misfortune upon themselves.¹⁶⁰ Inappropriate advances or violent behaviour or frankly any kind of negative behaviour that does not match the norms and values of the audience makes it feel like such a character brought it on him- or herself, making it not only harder, but also unnecessary, to feel sorry for them. Lastly, Milner Davis mentions an interesting quality of laughter as a reason for the lack of sympathy from the audience of such farces: laughter's infectiousness. Because laughter in a group setting is contagious, the moral responsibility of a group, in this case an audience, is spread over all those who laugh. This way any possible guilt towards the victim in a farce is diluted.¹⁶¹

The internal workings of farces like *moffenkluchten* are thus reinforced by the external factors: when a play is labeled as a farce, thus a collectively known and understood situation, or activity type, the audience has certain expectations, and the way the play is performed only confirms these expectations. Individual reactions from the audience assemble into a collective explosion of joy through laughter, especially in the case of an early modern audience already used to getting to see a farce after a tragedy as comic relief and would thus expect to laugh.¹⁶² Milner Davis also connects the

¹⁵⁸ Milner Davis, *Farce*, 10-11.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

¹⁶² Karlijn Luk, "Waerom hebje men swart emaeckt?": Humor en de beeldvorming van de Duitser in de Klucht van de Moffin (1642)', *Ex Tempore* 38:1 (2019), 118-131.

audience's willingness to laugh about the farce characters' pain to Canadian psychologist Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory that considers the 'strange ability of human beings to consent under some conditions to acts which under other conditions would be disbarred by their own value systems.'¹⁶³

Although Bandura's model is initially meant for more serious forms of human misdemeanor like false testimonies or torture, Milner Davis argues that the same principle is visible with an audience of these types of farces. The behaviour of a farce audience, that in other social situations would be deemed troubling, namely laughing at the suffering of others, is here dismissed because "it's just a farce".¹⁶⁴ This way, an emphatic distance between the audience and the inferior, unpleasant and/or dehumanised victim in *moffenkluchten* is reinforced, and because of the framing of this humorous genre as 'non-serious' because it is simply a farce, a worrisome collective reaction of spectators is disregarded.

Humour strategies and distance

Besides this empathic distance between the audience and a character in a farce that makes the choice for the genre in the representation of Germans in itself already very telling, there were other ways in which authors of *moffenkluchten* created a certain distance between the Dutch Self and the German Other in their plays. This next part is an analysis of what exactly humour does in these *moffenkluchten* to create a lesser or greater distance between Dutch and *mof*. In reaction to the idea that late eighteenth-century *moffenkluchten* were indeed xenophobic whilst the same type of farces before that time were of an innocent (non-xenophobic) nature, I have decided to look at some farces from four half-century time periods in order to work out how humour influenced the imagined relationship between the Dutch Self and the German Other in these *moffenkluchten* through time. The following is an analysis of two farces per time period, divided into early and late seventeenth century and early and late eighteenth century. However, because it has already been established that *moffenkluchten* were indeed political and not at all innocent during the second half of the eighteenth century, the focus here will be on the farces from the periods before 1750.

Early seventeenth century: the *mof* excluded

As discussed earlier in this thesis, the first known *moffenkluchten* were written in the beginning of the seventeenth century, probably as a reaction to the absolute and proportional increase in German

¹⁶³ Milner Davis, *Farce*, 12.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 11-13.

immigration to the Republic after 1580. Two of these early seventeenth century *moffenkluchten* were Vos's *Klucht van de Mof* and *Klucht van de Moffin*. Both of these plays tell the story of a German immigrant's attempt to get a Dutch girl gone wrong. In *Klucht van de Mof* Jochim is trying to woo Brechje, his boss's daughter. She deems him a very unworthy suitor however and thinks of a ruse where she invites Jochim to her bed, but secretly puts him in her father's bed. When Jochim gets caught lying naked in his boss's bed, he gets flogged and sent into the streets without his clothes. Jochim warns his countrymen not to trust the Dutch and rather wishes never to return to Holland ever again:

'O y vraame Lants-luy al to hoop, su toch wol toe dat y soo licht
 Dusse hase-koppen¹⁶⁵ nicht geloovet, man neemt eyn exempel an mijn,
 Steeck eerst doe vinger in de eerde, ont ruyckt in wat lant y sijn,
 Ick mach altoos seggen dat ick too Amsterdam weese bin,
 't Wert eerst ont lest wol blijven, keen duvel krijghter my wedder hin.'¹⁶⁶

In *Klucht van de Moffin*, Lammert's face is blackened by Grietje who then makes fun of him and calls him a Moor: 'Jy, de jongste uyt Moorenlant, om drie Keuninckje mee te speulen, / Loop geck, loop, je hebt een slagh van de meulen.'¹⁶⁷ Tryn, after getting physical with Grietje's neighbour, gets dragged off the stage by the authorities.

It is clear that, in both cases, the joke or punch line of the farce is focused on the Dutch characters getting rid of these *moffen*. The humour in these early seventeenth century farces is thus a way of excluding the *mof* in the play. Besides pointing out the problematics of framing humorous communication as 'non-serious', Kuipers, in her article on the Danish cartoon crisis, also elaborates on these exclusive properties of humour: 'While humour forms a bond between those who laugh together, at the same time it shuts out those who do not share that laughter. [...] Being an object of laughter often causes an acute sense of exclusion and humiliation, almost akin to social paralysis.'¹⁶⁸ It is this exclusive humour that we also see in these two early *moffenkluchten* by Vos: the *moffen* are the victims of tricks and jokes that the Dutch characters and the audience laugh about, but they themselves are not in on these jokes. They are angered and feel humiliated ('Waerom hebje men swart

¹⁶⁵ 'hase-koppen': pejorative German name for the Dutch.

¹⁶⁶ Vos, *Klucht van de Mof*, lines 566-570.

¹⁶⁷ Vos, *Klucht van de Moffin*, 22.

¹⁶⁸ Kuipers, 'The politics of humour in the Public Sphere', 70, 73.

emaeckt?’¹⁶⁹) and some even declare that they feel excluded: ‘Y Hollanders slachten de Duyvel, fremde luy meuchy niet lyen, | dat sietmen wol an men seun, die dijn dochter wat wol vrijen.’¹⁷⁰

In both of these farces, the plot eventually develops into the ultimate exclusion of the German characters from Dutch society as it is portrayed on the stage. In the case of Jochim, this exclusion is the result of abuse, leading him to the decision to never return to Amsterdam. In *Klucht van de Moffin*, however, the female German character not only gets physically removed from the stage by the authorities, but the male German character is turned into a Moor, and thus for early modern standards pictured as fundamentally different and incompatible with Dutch society. Lammert is, in this way, not only differentiated as ‘not-Dutch’, like the other *moffen* in Vos’s farces, but also as ‘not-white’, creating an even greater imagined distance between Dutch and German.

It is clear that in Vos’s farces, the *moffen* are not exactly well-behaved characters. Their behaviour is not in line with what the other characters and the audience know to be correct social behaviour and thus, they get what is coming to them when they get tricked or kicked out. When looking at *moffenkluchten* from the second half of the seventeenth century, a very different strategy can be found in the way that humour is used in relation to the *moffen* in these plays.

Late seventeenth century: the *mof* disciplined

When comparing the German stereotypes of *Klucht van de Mof* and *Klucht van de Moffin* to the German stereotypes in two plays written 40 years later by Thomas Asselijn, there is a distinct difference between both the place of the German characters in the play and in their behaviour. In close reading these two late-seventeenth-century *moffenkluchten*, there is a shift in focus from exclusion to the importance of conforming to certain social norms.

These social norms also form the base of Billig’s theory of the disciplinary functions of humour. Billig states that ‘everyday codes of behaviour are protected by the practice of embarrassment. If one infringes expected codes of interaction, particularly if one does so unwittingly, one might expect to be embarrassed.’¹⁷¹ This embarrassment is often comic to onlookers. In the case of comedies, the audience finds enjoyment in the discomfort of the character,¹⁷² and in the case of *moffenkluchten*, the audience supposedly found enjoyment in the embarrassment of the German character being ridiculed for breaking certain moral or social codes of behaviour. According to Billig, this funny embarrassment possesses a universal role in supporting the moral order of everyday life because, in order not to be

¹⁶⁹ Vos, *Klucht van de Moffin*, 22-24.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 27.

¹⁷¹ Billig, *Laughter and Ridicule*, 201.

¹⁷² Ibid., 222.

embarrassed, someone who might be a stranger to certain social norms must quickly adapt to them. The laughter and ridicule that is invited by embarrassment thus has a disciplining function.¹⁷³

Disciplinary humour is said to mock those who break the social rules and can thus be seen as helping to maintain these rules. However, Billig points out that there is an ambiguity to this disciplinary laughter, because by laughing at the disruption of serious social or moral norms, the audience enjoys the license to do exactly that what is forbidden.¹⁷⁴ 'In this enjoyment can be detected,' states Billig, 'not just the mockery that ensures the reproduction of the social order, but a rebellious delight in seeing the order disrupted.'¹⁷⁵ For a split second, the audience is relieved of the constraints that have been imposed on them and that they impose on others.

The titles of Asselijn's *moffenkluchten*, from which I have already discussed *De Stiefmoer* in more detail before, can be translated literally to The Stepmom and The Stepdad. *De Stiefmoer* and *De Stiefvaer*, both published in 1684, tell the story of a proud and domineering German stepparent who treats his or her own children as royalty while mistreating his or her stepchildren. In *De Stiefmoer*, for example, the stepmother puts her stepdaughter in rags and makes her work while she dresses her own daughter as a princess: 'Wel is 't mogelyk, ze laatje ook wel schandelijk loopen! | En heur Katrijntje is altijd even kostelijk, fiertjes en net.'¹⁷⁶ In *De Stiefvaer*, the German stepfather very hypocritically judges his stepson for parading around in fancy clothes instead of working at their warehouse whilst he hires expensive teachers for his own son to be taught rhetorics and dancing.¹⁷⁷ It is interesting to note that dolling up your children to make them look above their status was in that time deemed a bad way of raising children. A parenting advice by an anonymous author from 1690, for example, criticizes people who do not conform to God's unwavering and good hierarchy. He describes sons of merchants in Amsterdam who parade around as *jonckertjes* with 'deegentjes op de zyde, en een pluim op de hoedt' and daughters who are dolled up in similar ways 'zo dat zy by die van de hoogste rang niet en zyn te onderscheiden.'¹⁷⁸ This is exactly what the *moffen* in Asselijn's farces are accused of: the German stepparents obviously do not understand the proper Dutch way of bringing up children.

The stepparents in both of these plays are married into a Dutch family for which they used to work as servants, and now that they have gained a certain amount of status, they misuse their position of power. The fact that the German characters in these farces are already married to Dutch characters

¹⁷³ Billig, *Laughter and Ridicule*, 202.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 231.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 231.

¹⁷⁶ Asselijn, *De Stiefmoer*, lines 31-32.

¹⁷⁷ Asselijn, *De Stiefvaer*.

¹⁷⁸ Marijke Meijer Drees, 'Zeventiende-eeuwse literatuur in de Republiek: burgerlijk?', in: in: Harald Hendrix and Marijke Meijer Drees (ed.), *Beschaafde Burgers. Burgerlijkheid in de vroegmoderne tijd* (Amsterdam, 2001), 63-79, here 69.

seems to insinuate a lesser imagined distance between Dutch and German that seems to correspond with the fact that Germans had assimilated quite well and that many of them had in fact intermarried by the second half of the seventeenth century. The fact that Asselijn's *moffen* are portrayed as part of a middle-class household instead of the lowest of the low is however probably also a result of the previously discussed influences of French Classicism and *Nil Volentibus Arduum* as this was a trend in all farces, not just *moffenkluchten*.

The ruse in Asselijn's *moffenkluchten* is not so much a mockery but more a threat, using deception rather than humiliation as comic intention. In both cases, the German character is tricked by their significant other to believe that a divorce is inevitable, which would result in these German immigrants losing the status they gained by marrying into a Dutch family and having to start all over again. In both plays, however, the stepparent shows remorse for his or her misbehaving and, after the importance of marriage is emphasized, is given a second chance by his or her spouse. Though the remorseful behaviour of the unpleasant victim makes these *moffen* somewhat less dehumanized, it is still emphasized that they are inferior to the Dutch characters as the two plays take on the form of reversal farces: the victims of the *moffen* are allowed retaliation when the tables are turned on the Germans rebelling against the Dutch social order in which they, as original outsiders, should never claim a place above their Dutch spouses and stepchildren.

The humour in these two *moffenkluchten* is thus less exclusive and more focused on disciplining the German characters, who have already been married to a Dutch character. Though this seems to be some form of imagined rapprochement between the Dutch Self and the German Other, this is not without once again underscoring the inferiority of the *moffen*: the German immigrants in the plays are offered a chance to become a part of Dutch society, but only as long as they conform to the social rules and do not overstate their obviously inferior place in the household. So even when the *moffen* in these plays are portrayed as married into a Dutch family, they are not imagined as equal within this family. Marten Kroes in *De Stiefvaer* does not even get to claim his place as head of the household, as was the custom in Dutch families, as he too is told to obey his Dutch wife.

So, instead of being excluded from Dutch society and being denied every chance of marrying into a Dutch family as we see in the mid-seventeenth-century *moffenkluchten*, we see that, forty years later, the German characters in *moffenkluchten* are already married into a Dutch family but need to learn to conform to the Dutch social norms and to their 'right place' within this family. In this half of a century, the comical representation of the Mof has, through a development from an exclusive to a disciplining form of humour, thus shifted from a stereotypical Other, fundamentally different from the Dutch Self and inherently incompatible with Dutch society, to a stranger that can be taught to conform to the social norms and needs simply to accept their inferior place in Dutch society.

Early eighteenth century: the *mof* effeminized

In the first half of the eighteenth century, many German immigrants had indeed already assimilated quite well into Dutch society. In fact, their assimilation, and with it possibilities for some of them to approve their social status, had been so successful that some Dutchmen must have seen this as a threat. In *moffenkluchten*, the quickly approved social status of German immigrants becomes more and more criticized through the portrayal of *moffen* who indeed improved their social status, but did not do so in fair and honest ways. A good example of this is the earlier mentioned *Vermakelijke-klught van de hoogmoedige mof in zijn Levry-pak*. Though it is not known exactly when this play was first published, it is presumed that this was somewhere at the end of the first half of the eighteenth century.

As mentioned before, the *Vermakelijke-klught van de hoogmoedige mof in zijn Levry-pak* tells the story of Hans, the *mof*, who changed his name to the more Dutch sounding Christiaan when he gained some money and status in Amsterdam and went from being a poor swineherd to being the servant of a rich Dutch family who wears very fancy clothes. The German characters in this play openly discuss their dual loyalty and the immoral practices that helped them climb the social ladder as quickly as they did. Practices like stealing expensive wine from their master, pretending to be Dutch instead of German and of course the already discussed example of Griet, who accidentally got pregnant whilst in Amsterdam, returned home, discarded her baby and then returned to Holland as a “virgin”. Like the late seventeenth-century farces by Asselijn, this farce criticizes the quickly improved social position of the German immigrant but it uses a comic dialogue to show this phenomenon from the imagined standpoint of the Germans themselves.

In this *moffenklucht*, like in *De Stiefvaer*, the male character parading around in fancy dress is something that is ridiculed. The reason for this could possibly be found in ideas on masculinity at the time. In a book on early modern manhood, gender historian Alexandra Shephard explains that there were two types of masculinity in the early modern period.¹⁷⁹ The normative, hegemonic masculinity in the early modern period was a patriarchal form of masculinity that was reserved only for the men at the head of the household: the patriarch, or father, that was restrained, orderly and above all, authoritarian.¹⁸⁰

The masculinity opposite this hegemonic masculinity is what sociologist Raewyn Connell calls the ‘subordinate masculinity’: a form of masculinity that consisted mainly of men who did not have the age or the means for gaining the hegemonic masculinity and thus gained little to no cultural

¹⁷⁹ Alexandra Shepard, Alexandra, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003).

¹⁸⁰ Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England*, 25.

prestige.¹⁸¹ These were mainly the young men, the sons of the authoritarian patriarch, and they followed codes of conduct that were often conflicting with the normative codes. For example, they were often known for their licentiousness, lust and vanity.¹⁸² Because of this, some young men were even considered to be more female than male: they were deemed to be going down some sort of hierarchical ladder from male, to beast, to female, and with it a decline in ratio.¹⁸³ The character of Hans seems to personify this subordinate masculinity: by making him dress so very fancy (there is even mention of him wearing a hat with a golden brim¹⁸⁴), he is portrayed as vain and superficial, and thus, in a way, as less manly.

Hans from the *Vermakelijke-klught van de hoogmoedige mof* is not the only German character in early eighteenth-century *moffenkluchten* whose masculinity is a prominent element in the farce's humorous plot. In Langendijk's Reversal Farce *De Zwetser*, the title character (the German bragger Hans who used to be a quack) is even actively made less of a man as a form of punishment for his betrayal: Hans has to shave off his big moustache, a symbol of his (false) pride and manhood, and he has to work the spinning wheel, which was deemed a woman's job at the time.¹⁸⁵ In both cases, the *mof* is thus effeminized in these farces and thus a distance is created between them and what was deemed Dutch hegemonic masculinity.

Late eighteenth century: the *mof* unwelcome

As I have already mentioned a few times before now, the second half of the eighteenth century was seen by Theeuwen as a turning point for *moffenkluchten*. The declining economy and the growing competition on the labour market made the Dutch more suspicious of these Germans and their social climbing and these feelings of discontent were shared by many playwrights, including writers of the farce genre. Van Wissing for example notes in his account on the life and work of Philippus Verbrugge that Verbrugge and his contemporaries felt annoyed by the quickly improved social position of German immigrants because he thought this happened only at the expense of the Dutch.¹⁸⁶ Verbrugge and his contemporaries used the existing feelings of annoyance and the already established popularity of *moffenkluchten* to their own financial advantage by writing their own pieces about German immigrants in which the prejudices about Germans found new sustenance in the figure of the duke of Brunswijk, who embodied many a cliché about *moffen*.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸¹ Raewyn Connell, *Masculinities* (Oxford, 1995), 76-86.

¹⁸² Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England*, 6.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 26.

¹⁸⁴ J.W., *Vermakelijke-klught van de hoogmoedige mof*.

¹⁸⁵ Ornée & Streng, *De Zwetser*, 86-96.

¹⁸⁶ Wissing, *In louche gezelschap*, 54.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 54.

This was true not only for the pieces by Verbrugge, but also for pieces written by the anonymous writer who went by the name of A. Contraduc who wrote a *moffenklucht* in 1781 titled *De mof meesterknecht of De vader met zyn zeeven dochters* and almost immediately following a sequel.¹⁸⁸ Contraduc's farce is quite obviously political: it contains characters with speaking names representing figures like Willem V and Van Brunswijk and places like England, Holland and Friesland. In it, Henrietta (Holland) asks her father, Pieter Overal (Willem V), to send the untrustworthy Lodewyk (Van Brunswijk) away. She complains that her whole house is full of *moffen* because of him.

In a direct political sense, Contraduc's farces about the *mof meesterknecht* (the character of Van Brunswijk) were very much anti-English, while the stereotype of the *mof* (both in the form of Lodewyk and in expressions like 'zwijgen als een mof', which translates as keeping silent like a *mof*) seems to be more an underlying way of pointing out some sort of German betrayal within this particular political situation.

Another *moffenklucht* from the second half of the eighteenth century is much more obviously xenophobic as it is a criticism of Germans as a group rather than just the political figure of the German duke. This was the *moffenklucht* by J. A. Schasz (pseudonym from Pieter 't Hoen and later Gerrit Paape) titled *Jurjen Lankbein*.¹⁸⁹ In this *moffenklucht* the anti-German sentiments become apparent immediately through the preface by the author in which he criticizes directly the German's social climbing. Authors during this time became much more outspoken about their concerns and discontent considering these German immigrants, as is shown in the dialogue pamphlet that appeared as a direct reaction to Schasz's *Jurjen Lankbein*. The pamphlet, very perspicuously titled *de Kantoort-subordinatie of de Mof meer gewild als de Hollander*, claims to agree with Schasz as it offers a rather harsh critique on Germans and states that there is a bad case of xenophilia and favouritism of immigrants, especially Germans, in the Dutch Republic.¹⁹⁰

These last two works have even been compared to each other in an entry in the oldest and at the time leading Dutch literary review journal *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen* that was founded in 1761.¹⁹¹ In this literary comparison, it is argued that whilst both discuss an important issue, the farce does this successfully in a comic way and the pamphlet completely misses the mark ('doet niets ter zaake') due to its seriousness. This not only shows that a *moffenklucht* could very well be used for social criticism by using humour, but also that this did not even go unnoticed in its own time. The author of the comparison does, however, agree with both authors that it is a bad thing that less skilled

¹⁸⁸ A. Contraduc, *De Mof meesterknecht of de vader met zyn zeeven dochters* (Amsterdam 1781).

¹⁸⁹ J. A. Schasz, *Jurjen Lankbein, of de mof commis* (Amsterdam, 1778).

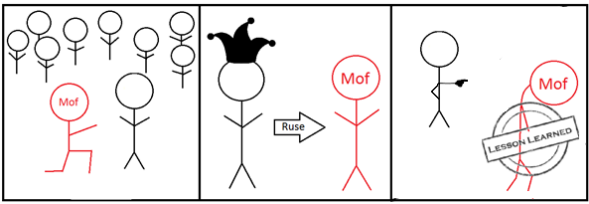

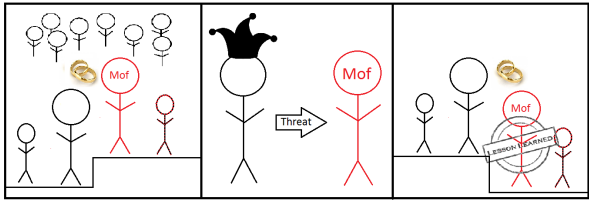

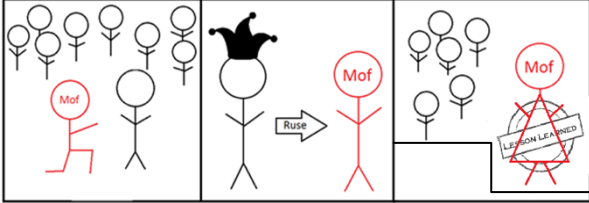

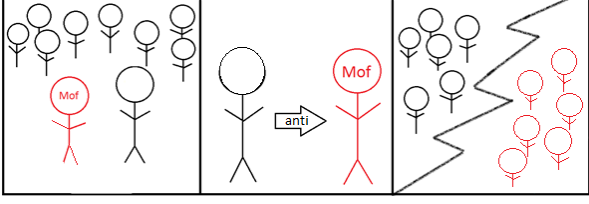

¹⁹⁰ Unknown author, *De kantoort-subordinatie, of de mof meer gewild als Hollander* (Amsterdam, 1778?).

¹⁹¹ *Hedendaagsche Vaderlandsche Letter-Oefeningen waar in de boeken en schriften die dagelyks in ons vaderland en elders uitkomen, oordeelkundig tevens en vrymoedig verhandeld worden benevens mengelwerk tot Fraaije Letteren, Konsten en Weetenschappen betrekkelyk* 7 (Amsterdam, 1778), 618-619.

strangers are positioned or favoured above a more skilled resident. This shows that both serious and humoristic genres emphasized the fact that a *mof* should never be placed above a Dutchman.

(Moffen)klucht: distance through humour

As visualized in the figure below, different types of humour were used in *moffenkluchten* throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century, all creating a certain amount of distance between the Dutch Self and the German Other in the form of the *mof*. The earliest *moffenkluchten* use an exclusive humour, in which the plot seems to have the following message: 'go away *mof*'. Though the *moffen* in farces from the second half of the seventeenth century are married to Dutch characters, suggesting some rapprochement in that they have been included in Dutch society, the disciplining humour that is used in these farces is a way of warning *moffen* not to overstate their 'clearly' inferior position within their household, and within Dutch society. The effeminizing of the *moffen* as seen in early eighteenth century *moffenkluchten* is another way of emphasizing the inferiority of the German character and by the end of the eighteenth century a patriotic anti-immigration movement underscores the *mof*'s inferiority once again by criticizing the supposed xenophilia of the time, creating a definite distance between the Dutch Self and these German Others. As is portrayed in the figure below, even when the *mof* in these farces seems to be doing a little better, for example by intermarrying, the humour used in *moffenkluchten* continues to keep the focus on distancing the *mof* from the Dutch Self through underscoring various levels of the *mof*'s inferiority.

Time period	Humour	Distance/rapprochement
Early 17 th century	 <p>Excluding the <i>mof</i></p>	
Late 17 th century	 <p>Disciplining the <i>mof</i></p>	
Early 18 th century	 <p>Effeminizing the <i>mof</i></p>	
Late 18 th century	 <p>Anti-<i>mof</i></p>	

Conclusion: *moffenklucht*, the politics of humour and imaging

To end this thesis the way it started, let us return to the play I described in the introduction. If one does not know that I was describing an early modern play instead of a contemporary performance, the framing of this play as 'innocent entertainment' must have at least seemed strange. This is of course, because claiming the continuous mocking and ridiculing of an immigrant minority as simply innocent entertainment would nowadays be perceived at the very least as insensible. Though it is not uncommon that a comic genre's ability to be political is denied due to the genre's non-seriousness, this does not give a reliable interpretation of humour in the public sphere. Even though the genre of *moffenkluchten* before the second half of the eighteenth century might not have caused an obstacle for German immigrants to assimilate quickly in Dutch society, that does not mean that these farces were thus not political. By using the early modern ridiculing of German immigrants in Dutch farces as a case study to look at the politics of humour and imaging, this thesis thus aimed to show that seemingly innocent forms of humour can still have a way of doing cultural political work.

The *moffenklucht* was not just a way of giving a voice to Dutch feelings of discontent and anxiety, but as a genre, it became a way of creating and upholding a negative value judgement of these German strangers. By using a typology of the relationship between Self and Other that considers an axiological, an epistemic and a praxiological dimension, as a framework, it has been my aim to explore the way in which these farces helped create this strong and enduring negative image of the *mof* that played such an important role in the explicitly political anti-German sentiments of the 1780s.

Not only were the stock characters within the category of the German stereotype a way of feeding the early modern audience a very specific collective knowledge about German immigrants, but over the course of two centuries, this normalized negative image, through humorous strategies like repetition and simplification, became part of the Dutch cultural repertoire. By placing these characters that initially differ in class, origin or gender, all under the same overarching stereotype, it establishes in the *moffenklucht* an 'activity type' in which the audience of a *moffenklucht* expected to laugh at a *mof* who invites his or her own fate by being deceitful and probably also drunk. Since this normalized image of the *mof* became well-established as collective knowledge within Dutch society, this became, by the end of the eighteenth century, a ready image to use in more xenophobic and anti-German writings, precisely because it was so easily recognisable.

The image of the German immigrant that is created through these *moffenkluchten* becomes such a strong and enduring image, precisely because it is so detailed and interwoven in all these varying stage types, whose characteristics are, in turn, coherent within the bigger concept of the *mof*.

Thus far, most research into these early modern *moffenkluchten* has come as far as establishing the fact that German immigrants are being ridiculed in these farces. However, it has been my aim to show, through my analysis of the *mof* as comic stereotype, that there is much more to it: *moffenkluchten* are in fact a very complex form of humour, because they exist on the intersection of humour and imaging.

It seems at first glance that, after the Dutch have overcome the initial shock of the large number of Germans coming to the Dutch Republic, the Germans not only assimilated well into Dutch society, but that a rapprochement was also sought in these *moffenkluchten* between the Dutch characters (or what it means to be Dutch) and the *mof*. However, upon taking a closer look at the way that humour is used in these farces, it turns out that, be it in varying degrees, it is actually continuously focused on creating a distance between the Dutch Self and the German Other in the form of the *mof*. Again, this subtle interplay between sometimes exclusive humour, and sometimes more disciplining or even effeminizing humour, shows the complexity of this comic genre. There is much more at play than merely stating that Germans are idiots. It is the constant negative imaging and the continuous acts of distancing that are created through various forms of humour in these farces that eventually enable such a strong image of the inferior German Other that it lays the groundwork for the anti-German sentiments at the end of the eighteenth century.

Though a farce is inherently a conservative humour form, when this humour is used not only to create a stable negative image of the Other, but also to create a continuous notion of distance between the Self and the Other, it does have a certain way of doing cultural political work. Especially when looking at the workings of humour in the long term, even humour in the past should thus not so easily be discarded as 'simply innocent entertainment'. Instead, we should consider the politics of humour not only in political, contemporary and progressive forms of humour, but also in historic cases of conservative and seemingly innocent humour. It is striking that acts of stereotyping and 'othering' in any other case would be deemed discriminating, inhumane, or at the very least as 'wrong', but that in the case of *moffenkluchten*, it's seriousness is dismissed because farces are known to use stereotypes and are never meant to be taken serious. The fact that these types of farces have, for such a long time been framed as 'innocent entertainment', however, proves how powerful a political tool they can be: it allows for a negative image to be created and upheld without anyone batting an eye, precisely because 'it is just a farce'.

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