

# **Identity Achievement, Education, and Social Legitimation in Early Modern Dutch Society: The Case of Evert Willemsz (1622-23)**

Willem FRIJHOFF  
Free University Amsterdam

## ***Introduction: byways***

Unlike the dynamic image we cherish of our own society, former, pre-industrial societies are often thought of as fundamentally stable. Pre-modern identity is essentially imagined as a collective goal that was achieved along fixed educational patterns and in primarily traditional institutions such as family, church, school, workshop, etc. In such a vision the individual was virtually unable to change the social and cultural conditions set by others and was normally deemed to be a mere copy of his predecessors in the social group he pertained to. According to this view, education, both formal and informal, was mainly reproductive, until the Enlightenment, the industrial society, and the ideals of meritocracy changed the game. Some decades ago, sociological theory has consecrated this view in the reproduction thesis of schooling (Pierre Bourdieu).

Of course, from the outset past societies were fundamentally oriented towards social stability, and indeed fixity. Yet, fixed cultural values, institutions and traditions had to be transmitted and assimilated by individuals. It is precisely on that level of appropriation by the individual, or the small group, and in the attribution of meaning to previously given sets of values, symbols and codes of behaviour, that the social process could show a great elasticity and leave to individuals a certain room for manoeuvre. That was the cornerstone of social dynamics and the very condition of social change. By overemphasizing the social conformity, the geographical stability, and the cultural uniformity of historical groups -- these characteristics being obviously much more important at the top of society than at its bottom -- current socio-historical pictures underrate the effects of the moments of choice or the lines of fracture in the individual life cycle of the past, and underestimate the opportunities that could be seized by a man or woman, or even by an adolescent determined to adjust the course of his life. They underestimate the challenge of cultural differences in early modern societies, and do not really account for the individual's ability to fashion the self, or to achieve, more or less openly, personal ambitions along alternative routes, and through diverging forms of

assimilation.

My point is, however, not social, but cultural in scope. The importance of education for reconversion strategies towards other social careers has been underlined long ago. I am not primarily concerned, however, with social careers but with identity, which is both a social and a cultural phenomenon. Identity involves not only social abilities, knowledge and behaviour, but is linked up with the attribution of meaning to the self, both by oneself and by the others. Even, and perhaps particularly, in rigid societies traditional routes and routines may be used to achieve goals they were not intended for. We may call them "byways" (*sluipwegen*) -- not in the sense that nobody knew them or that nobody was supposed to be aware of them, but inasmuch as the individual could seize them in order to achieve autonomy of meaning without breaking the rigidity of the patterns and the structures.

In this paper, I shall illustrate this thesis by commenting upon one individual life of the past and its search for meaning. Inasmuch as the attribution of meaning for the achievement of identity is concerned, quantification does not really make sense. The individual life commented upon is that of a Dutchman of the first half of the seventeenth century, working for his own and others' identity. It revolved partly in an European setting, partly oversea, in confrontation with other ethnical groups. The paper will show how the inevitable tensions between personal achievement and public legitimation were solved, and it will make clear that the socialization process was not always passively undergone. Even at the bottom of the social hierarchy, socialization could be managed and, unto a certain point, guided by the individual himself. Different forms of education (formal, informal) and self-education could be used by an individual man to achieve socially his intended identity.

The scope of the paper is not so much to obtain new certainties as to further disclose the field of early modern identity and education. It intends to show the tensions between the uncertainties of the individual life on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the collective infrastructure and the common traditions and norms, the elasticity of which was constantly challenged by the individual desire for autonomy and by alternative forms of self-education and self-formation. But let me tell you the story first.

### ***An uncommon orphan***

During the summer of 1622 and the next winter the town of Woerden in the province of Holland was a hive of rumours.<sup>1</sup> A sudden sickness, physical troubles, and a spiritual experience had stricken a fifteen year old boy, named Evert Willemsz, native of the town. He claimed to be in communication with his heavenly Father, through an

angel. The boy lived in the local orphanage together with his older brother Pieter and two younger half-brothers. Cornelis, their eldest brother, lived nearby in town; he was probably trained for a tailor, but in 1636 he started a grocery shop in Leiden. Evert's family name appears to have been Bogaert, but he never used it otherwise than in its Latin form Bogardus: so at Leiden university, where he matriculated in 1627, and since 1633 as a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church on the island of Manhattan in New Netherland, the present-day State of New York.<sup>2</sup>

We know nothing for certain about his parents. Evert must have lost his natural father Willem Bogaert when he was very young. He was certainly educated by his stepfather Muysvoet, who must have died in his turn, just like Evert's mother, some years before the boy's spiritual experience, perhaps in the plague year 1617-18.<sup>3</sup> The four younger sons were then placed in the burghers' orphanage of Woerden. There is no question of any sister. As no account of any property appears in the administration of the Woerden orphan chamber, the family was without means. Other members of his stepfather's family are known as small artisans, mostly shoemakers. In 1622, a putative uncle Muysvoet in Leiden is called a clog-maker; he is very poor, and has to care for a sister and five children. Evert's (step)father may have been involved in one of the wooden trades too, as a carpenter, a cabinet-maker, or a cooper: that was the branch of industry in which Evert's eldest brother found his wife, equally native from Woerden. Without parents, without the help of a local family network, without money or property, and having an uneducated (though not necessarily illiterate) background, the boy had virtually no opportunities to rise in society. But he had got something else: intelligence, and faith.

What happened to Evert Willemsz in 1622-23 is known to us from two contemporary pamphlets which confirm each other and partly repeat the same information.<sup>4</sup> Their editor was Lucas Zas, headmaster of the small local grammar school, and an eye-witness of the events. However, the pamphlets' author was in a certain sense Evert himself, for the text of the pamphlets consists for the most part of the messages which he wrote down during his spiritual experience when he was temporarily stricken with deafness and dumbness. His communication with the people around him was then carried on with notes, referred to as "copies" in the pamphlets and printed in a bigger letter. Each slip of paper contained both the questions and the answers of a dialogue with one single person having come to discuss with Evert. Other notes contained his spiritual messages, written under the impulsion of an angel's apparition or after his ecstatic experiences. His own version of the summer experience of 1622, written down some weeks afterwards in a long hymn, was also added. **(fig.1)**

It was not Evert himself but Master Zas who made a coherent story out of the

notes, but without any rewriting of Evert's own words and without literary pretensions. The pamphlets were printed straight away. The manuscript of the first one was hurriedly carried by Master Zas to Utrecht on Friday, 20 January 1623, during Evert's second spiritual experience, when he was still waiting for his redemption. The second manuscript was first checked against Evert's own handwritten notes by the Woerden town council and the church consistory, and then ordered by them to be brought to a zealous Calvinist bookseller in Amsterdam, Marten Jansz Brandt, who published it immediately. Both pamphlets were reprinted at least once, an indication of the public attention which the young man enjoyed for a while. The decisions taken by the Woerden town council on Evert's behalf demonstrate that we are not dealing with a religious hoax.<sup>5</sup> In fact, the council never ceased to favour him above other pupils. Especially the orphan master and school inspector Gerrit Gijsbertsz Vergeer, a wealthy clothier-merchant who from the very beginning had been one of the leaders of Calvinist orthodoxy in Woerden, appears as Evert's stronghold on the council. In 1622 Evert is admitted to the Latin school, four years later the new town organist is ordered to teach him music, in 1627 he is authorized to leave for Leiden university, and in 1629 the Woerden scholarship in the States' theological College in Leiden is granted to him.

Apparently, the events of 1622-23 are strewn with the classical commonplaces of adolescent conversion, the straightest course to a successful identity achievement, to use Erik Erikson's terms.<sup>6</sup> Evert follows the psychosomatic patterns of what Freudian psychiatrists call a conversion hysteria.<sup>7</sup> However, in reducing his experience to the stereotyped outlines of a psychiatric model, we would lose our hold of the multiple meanings of the event: personal, social, religious, cultural. Besides, the pamphlets have not been hatched up as the exemplary story of a youthful hero who remains above the event and his calling, as we see in the accounts of many other young Protestant religious enthusiast, some of which go back to before Evert's time.<sup>8</sup> The boy's resistance to his recuperation as a model by whatever authority, either religious or political, may also be the reason why the story of Evert Willemsz was not later used in edifying literature. It has remained the life story of a real young man, its relevance restricted to the time period in which it happened.

### *Physical disabilities and heavenly messages*

In the spring of 1622, Evert had gone through his elementary education and, while living in the orphanage, was working as a tailor's apprentice with Master Gijsbert Aelbertsz, who had a workshop on the Rhine, a few streets away. Orphanage and workshop were two separate places but appear as complementary atmospheres. In fact,

Evert had virtually completed his two-year apprenticeship with this master, whom he loved very much for his piety and for their discussions of God's word. This very companionship may well have opened his eyes for his true vocation: not as a tailor, but as a minister of God's Word.

According to the story in the pamphlet, Evert had for some time been seriously ill. Hardly had he recovered when there appeared other physical phenomena. From 21 to 30 June 1622, for nine days, he neither ate nor drank (see the diagram).

In fact, he isolated himself from the community. Sensational goings-on in this densely populated orphanage of some thirty children, in which all deviations from the everyday routine were welcome. Evert's refusal of the daily aggregation ritual of meals taken in common was the most efficient way to bring him to the attention of both the orphans and the trustees. The pamphlets show clearly how concerned the matron of the orphanage was about his well-being, not to speak of her embarrassment with the disorders in the group caused by Evert's dealings with heaven.

This first phase of physical isolation was followed by a second, which lasted seventy days, throughout the summer, from 30 June to 8 September. Evert was stricken deaf and dumb. He could neither speak nor hear, and occasionally he lost his sight, "as also for a long time the proper use of his reason" (B6). This phase of physical paralysis, of the privation of almost all use of the senses, served as a climax. It suggests a slowly intensifying struggle which naturally lead to a new, crucial moment of transition. It prepared Evert for a third, ecstatic phase, which again lasted for nine days, from 8 to 17 September 1622. Evert returned to fasting and still could neither hear nor speak, but this last phase was circumscribed by the double apparition of an angel of the Lord. This points to its true meaning: communication with heaven. The angel delivered to him a message from the Father (*his* Father): he had to convert people and admonish them to repent, to deliver themselves from their sins. The heavenly origin of the message, and the veracity of Evert's encounter with the angel, would be proven and legitimized by his deliverance from the physical disabilities with which God had stricken him, and his return to his previous health. Incidentally, the angel brought a second message of social conversion for himself. We will return to it.

After the angel's first apparition, Evert went into something like a trance, a long period of ecstatic writing. For whole days he wrote his heavenly messages down on little slips of paper, mostly simple messages of a repetitious nature:

Spread the word, spread the word, for God is sorely displeased that word of his wondrous works is not spread. Oh spread the word, oh my dear friends, I beg you, spread the word, for God is displeased that his godly things are not

communicated throughout the whole world. Spread the word, then, oh spread the word. (A3)

The message was just as simple as the knowledge of the world which the young tailor's apprentice had acquired. He repeated it throughout the pamphlets: there are good men and bad; God wants the good to repent; therefore, his word must be spread, and the signs must be read. In the background of this message, we may detect a very simplified form of belief in the double predestination, as defended by orthodox Calvinism and confirmed in 1618-19 by the Synod of Dordrecht. It was quite similar to the grassroots form of everyday theological discussion in Woerden which appears in the documents related to the confessional struggles of the 1610s and 1620s: the bad are damned and the good are elected. But God will punish even the good if they do not publicly behave as his perfect faithful.<sup>9</sup>

The signs of God's wrath were easy to detect: the repeated plagues, dearth (implying famine), and war (A2-4, B24-26). This traditional triad ("*a peste, fame et bello...*" ["by pestilence, hunger, and war ..."]) was preceded by the 1618 comet ("the rod," A3) as their presage.<sup>10</sup> But the most important sign of all was God's wondrous work in his faithful child Evert Willemsz: having first stricken him with sickness and deprived him of the use of his bodily functions, He will sovereignly deliver him at the moment chosen by Himself and announced through the angel's intervention. To believe in the truth of Evert's spiritual experience was therefore to believe in God's work with all his elected people. Evert had no doubt whatsoever about his own election. The affliction which God had put upon him was the very proof of his election. God visits the one He loves. Evert felt like Christ: he suffered for his Father, but finally reconciled his will with God's will (Luke 22:42; B7, B10). He knew for sure that he was one of the 144,000 elected who would sing the hymn of the Lamb (Apoc. 14:1-5, 15:3; B17-18). But unlike some other contemporary prophets he did not take Christ's place: although he may have been tempted by the role of a godly mediator, he finally remained in his human station, as a messenger and a minister of God.

Evert's texts certainly reveal a form of youthful radicalism that linked up well with the firm positions of the believers in predestination and was more easily satisfied by the pious and straightforward intolerance of orthodox Calvinism than by the political accommodations of Arminian latitudinarianism and humanist toleration. He did not worry about subtleties such as the why, the when or the how. In his perception, there was no clear distinction between heaven and earth, nor between time and eternity. The present day and the Last Judgment overlapped. The sins were great and

punishment was near. However, he was not naive. He followed the apocalyptic mainstream of orthodox Protestantism but kept his eyes fixed upon his own destiny. Current conventions were used by him to achieve his autonomy. He willingly used church and civil authority for his divine goal, but refused to become a will-less victim of these powers, as we shall see later on. In a rhymed message Evert resumed his position, telling us which were the evil ones' sins:

O woe that ever we were born,  
 So angry is the Lord,  
 That people will not live  
 According to God's word. ...  
 For people now are very full  
 Of excess and of pride  
 They give themselves to drunkenness  
 And adultery besides.  
 People commit so many sins  
 That God cannot abide. ...  
 The Lord will soon come down to us  
 To punish all the bad.  
 That is the meaning of the rod (= the comet)  
 So frightfully sad. (A3)

### ***Personal achievement***

During Evert's first spiritual experience everything remained enclosed within the boundaries of the orphanage's community. But of course his activities drew attention in Woerden, all the more so since the young man had found in the meantime his impresario in Master Zas. Lucas Zas (ca.1591-1636), the son of a Gouda schoolmaster, had before his appointment as a headmaster and precentor in Woerden worked as a teacher of Latin and French in Utrecht and nearby Montfoort. Except the two pamphlets, he published in 1628 a play on the parents' responsibility for their children's education and the choice of a profession (*Borgerlijcke Huyshoudingh*). The pious play includes a panegyric of the sacred ministry, from which young Evert may have borrowed some traits of his ecclesiastical calling. In 1631 Zas edited a rhymed translation of Juan Luis Vives' life rules, the *Introductio ad veram sapientiam* ("Introduction to True Wisdom"). In the introductory poems to this edition, he overtly criticized the hypocrisy of the new Calvinist elites. In his person, Stoa and Bible met

each other. Humanistic concern went together with orthodox belief. He was Woerden's independent intellectual, the ideal partner for an independent believer.

Zas came running as soon as Evert had him called, collected the messages, and had them printed. He understood what was happening. Evert had good reason to choose Master Zas, for besides his call to repentance, meant for outsiders, he also had a personal message to share with him. So on 17 September, just before his first deliverance:

I hope that God will release me this night so that I may again hear and again speak: I do not know this by myself, but through the Spirit of God, which will enlighten me.... If He has the power to inflict things upon me, He also has the power to deliver me again: for do we not read in God's word that He made the deaf hear, the blind see, the crippled walk, the dumb speak (Matthew 11:5; 15:30)? ... Does He not then have the power to give back two of my five senses? Oh yes, I have had that trust and I still have it. But when I have recovered my speech and my hearing, it pleases God and the Spirit of God that I go to school until the time has come for me to do the work by which I shall be blessed. I intend then to become a minister and nothing else. Then you shall see what the Spirit of God shall work through me. I must no longer sew, when I have finished my clothes; for it pleases God almighty and the Spirit of God that such shall no longer be my work. I must fear the Lord, as the angel of the Lord has commanded me, and that I must do. (B11)

Evert's corporal and spiritual experiences, his sickness and his ecstasy, made him aware of his real calling, the sacred ministry. He used the impact which the event made on the local community to achieve this calling and to turn his life into another direction. But in order to be credible, it had to be legitimized by higher authority. This legitimation, announced by an angel of the Lord, was to occur by a ritual of deliverance. Since it adopted the symbolic language of the community, it would not only point to heaven, but reconstitute the boy to his social group. Sickness and health were therefore not only metaphors of a spiritual destiny, but also instruments of social approval. For Evert, the process of healing was his supernatural calling made visible to man. Healing was not simply a personal benefit, but could be a sign of heaven meant to change the course of individual and social life.

Evert's first deliverance took place nine days after the beginning of his ecstatic experience. We may well consider this delay as a spiritual metaphor for the nine months of pregnancy, previous to his rebirth as a converted Christian, in the pietistic and

Puritan spiritual tradition?<sup>11</sup> Evert himself spoke of his "laying down the old Adam, in order to begin a new life, in all virtue and godliness" (B8). Since he adopts here the very terms of the pietistic idiom, we may certainly conclude that he was also acquainted with the central themes of its spirituality and in particular with the spiritual symbolism of illness and recovery: illness was closely linked to sin, recovery to conversion from a sinful life, to the regeneration of the old Adam as a true Christian, under the exclusive impulsion of the Holy Ghost. No magic, no demonology. Evert's devil was not more than God's biblical opponent, in hell.

Evert was then spiritually re-born in an accelerated process just as he had been born physically fifteen years earlier. In the almighty God, who made him re-born, he recognized his new father. The place of his rebirth was the orphanage, where the orphans, the rector, and the matron -- who was addressed by Evert affectionately with the name "my mommy" and indeed seems to have been a new mother to him -- were standing around him and praying. They sustained his spiritual birth pains in singing together Psalm 100, as he had predicted in one of his notes some days before. Carried away by the dynamics of the ritual, all of a sudden Evert was singing with them. He had recovered his ability to hear and to speak and was now completely his old self, but reborn as a new Adam. Three days later, the magistracy of Woerden, convinced by God's own support of Evert's words, authorized him to leave the tailor's shop, and without having to earn his own living, to attend the Latin school, following his self-chosen adviser Zas.

Thus, although his messages had from the very first moment a universal goal, Evert's first deliverance testified to the authenticity of his religious experience, but also served his own, personal achievement: it was God's legitimation of a career turn which otherwise would have been virtually unthinkable for a poor orphan without any fortune or family. Evert needed protection in the right spot. His heavenly recovery from a godly affliction procured him two powerful friends: on the one hand headmaster Zas, who from that moment really acted as his spiritual mentor; on the other hand councillor Vergeer, who as an orphan master and a school-inspector was in charge of the orphan's material well-being and education. Both men gave him their firm support over the years.

### *The Woerden community*

In and of itself, Evert's message was of course not sufficient to win the unconditional trust of all the people around him, especially since, three years after the National Synod of Dordrecht (1618-19), which had established Calvinist orthodoxy, few cities in Holland were torn apart by religious conflict as much as Woerden. As a

matter of fact, Evert's spiritual dealings provoked scepticism and resistance in the town. As the boy himself remembers us, critics grumbled that they would beat the deaf-and-dumbness out of him:

They have called out with pride,  
And still cry noisily  
That they may punish me,  
And beat me terribly  
So that to me again  
Speech and hearing be given.  
Oh woe, oh woe such people,  
For God knows up in heaven! (B34)

Woerden was not in all respects an average Dutch town. **(fig.2)** Its position on the Rhine, as a gateway to the province of Holland, made it a strategical place, provided with a strong castle and a garrison. Apart from its market function in one of the most prosperous rural areas of Holland, Woerden possessed many tile- and brick-yards along its two rivers, the small Linschoten and the Old Rhine, in which most of the town population of about 3,500 were employed. But Woerden was an utterly divided town, torn apart by three competing confessions: Lutheranism, liberal Arminianism, and orthodox Calvinism. Lutheranism had invested the town and the Land of Woerden almost by accident, as an unexpected result of king Philip II's pledge of the Land of Woerden to his commander, duke Eric of Brunswick, in 1558. When in 1572 Woerden joined the rebels under the prince of Orange, it was under the express condition that the free exercise of the confession of Augsburg be guaranteed. However, the rebellious States General started an active policy of Calvinisation, and by 1602 Calvinism had become the only official religion in a still mainly Lutheran town. But soon Calvinism itself was torn into two bitterly opposite factions: from 1617 onward, the liberal Arminians who by then dominated the town council, having also the sole use of the church, had to face public opposition from a dissenting orthodox consistory supported by a steadily increasing number of town councillors and by one of the two burgomasters. By the end of September 1618, the stadtholder prince Maurice dismissed the Arminian members of the magistracy and replaced them with orthodox Calvinists. They took over the church, too. The following year, the Synod of Dordrecht formally condemned the Arminians and cut off the languishing dialogue with the Lutherans.

The Arminians offered an active resistance. They were particularly numerous among the labourers in the brick- and tile-yards, rough customers who inspired the

magistracy with terror. The fear of a popular insurrection brought the town council to a radical repression, with the active help of the Estates of Holland. By 1622-23, the Lutherans still formed about one third of the population; the Arminians accounted certainly for more than forty percent, but they were the poorer half; the Calvinists assembled approximately one quarter of the population, but they were in a leading position in town and countryside, many of them probably being social climbers. Small numbers of Catholics and Mennonites subsisted also, but they played no visible role in the public events of that moment.

By then, the opposition between the three main religious factions was sharper than ever before. The Arminians were heavily fined for their conventicles, the Lutherans for keeping up their own rituals: that is, christening and wedding at home, and preaching at funeral services. While the two Arminian ministers were forced to leave the town, one of the new Calvinist ministers, Henricus Alutarius, assaulted the Lutherans in 1623 with a theological treatise proving that Luther had been a true Calvinist and that his successors had perverted the true (i.e. Calvinist) meaning of the confession of Augsburg. Two years earlier, he had published a small Reformed catechism for the orthodox education of the local youth. Confronted with two oppositional groups, which both claimed their priority in time and their good faith, the Calvinists badly needed a justification of their rights.

In this religious landscape Evert's spiritual experience naturally took on a particular meaning. In fact, the question is twofold. Where did he stand himself? Which religious party took him as its emblem? The two questions are, of course, interrelated, but there was room for manoeuvre, and Evert did not hesitate to seize it. We do not know for sure if his parents were orthodox Calvinists, but the Woerden orphanage, founded just after the beginnings of Calvinist penetration, functioned as one of the main agencies of Calvinisation in the town. Evert's elder brother Cornelis Bogaert lived in Leiden in orthodox circles and married the sister of a radical young Calvinist, Cornelis Paludanus, who after having actively combatted Arminianism in Woerden, taught himself theology. He was admitted a candidate for the ministry in the very months of Evert's ecstasy, and in 1625 got a parish near Woerden. In 1636, the two ministers, Everhardus Bogardus and Cornelis Paludanus, were made guardians to the children of Cornelis Bogaert, their brother resp. brother-in-law.<sup>12</sup> Paludanus's fervour may have inspired young Evert, who at the same time was clever enough to reject the difficult way of a self-taught theologian and therefore demanded access to the Latin school. Evert's half-brother Pieter Muysvoet became an orthodox schoolmaster in the nearby village of Linschoten, and Evert himself got his ministry in New Amsterdam as a favourite of the orthodox party within the Amsterdam consistory, which in those years

decided on appointments for the oversea churches.

In fact, the three brothers must have been close relatives of a zealous Calvinist minister, named Vincent Muysevoet, Muesevoet or -- Dutchified -- Meusevoet (1560-1624). This minister was the son of a Flemish shoemaker who as a convinced Calvinist had in 1568 fled in exile to Norwich (England). From there, Vincent came back to Holland in 1586 with the new Calvinist governor, the earl of Leicester. He served first as a minister in Zevenhoven near Woerden, then in Schagen near Alkmaar, where he terrorized the Arminians. He has earned some fame in the history of Dutch Calvinism because of his work as a cultural intermediary. Between 1598 and his death in 1624 he translated more than thirty Puritan and pietistic treatises from English into Dutch, among which were virtually all the works of the famous Puritan divine William Perkins (1558-1602), and some of king James I.<sup>13</sup> He acted in fact as the main introducer of Puritan pietism in the Netherlands. The second marriage of Evert's mother with a Muysevoet must have made him Evert's uncle. Hence Evert's acquaintance with the pietistic idiom and the Puritan doctrine of regeneration. It may be no accident that Meusevoet's second English translation, in 1599, was that of Perkins's treatise on sickness and death.<sup>14</sup>

### *Public legitimations*

With this spiritual genealogy in mind, Evert's second ecstasy may receive a new interpretation. Spiritual experience is of course embedded in social traditions of bodily control and physical constraint. Prayer, fasting, visions, celestial messages, and miraculous healings adopt traditional forms of communication between heaven and man.<sup>15</sup> Such forms, stored in what we may call the "social memory" and transmitted through the repeated and shared experiences of individuals or groups within the community, are prerequisites for the production of spiritual experience by the subject. But they also make this experience recognizable to the target group, which shares with the subject a network of traditions and meanings, and form with him or her what Fish has called an "interpretive community." In accentuating the basic features of such traditions, the theatrical expression of spiritual experience is a guarantee for its appropriate transmission, not only to the target group, but also to others, who may recognize the traditional forms, even though they may not immediately give them the same meaning as does the target group.

In the second phase of his spiritual experience -- we may call it the communitarian phase --, Evert tended to over-accentuate its theatrical expressions because his aim was no longer his self-promotion as an agent of God, but the adhesion

of as many social groups as possible to his message: the target group of the elected, of course, i.e. his own religious entourage, but also the other religious groups in town. Whereas the spiritual traditions were from the very beginning easily recognized by all, Evert's major concern was now the transmission of their true meaning.

Even apart from God's commission, there was a good personal reason for his obstinacy. His experience involved the entrance into public life, with an individual life project that had to be acknowledged by the community. Here is an evident parallel with the appearance in the temple of Jesus who at the age of twelve explained the Bible to the scribes (Luke 2:46-47). Now, as was said above, many in Woerden still remained rather sceptical about what had happened to Evert. Again, this is not without its parallel with Jesus who, when he revealed the truth in the synagogue in Nazareth, was received with disbelief and barely escaped a violent death (Luke 4:16-30). For Evert Willemsz, who like Jesus achieved spiritual autonomy and adult status by delivering a public message, it was vital to finish his task by making his experience credible to the unbelievers. Hence the second stage of his experience, much more socially instrumental than the first.

Four months after his spiritual regeneration, on a Wednesday morning, 18 January 1623, Evert got up with a severe headache. Again, he isolated himself in the particular way the close community of the orphanage permitted. He refused to eat or drink, and predicted that he would again lose the ability to hear and to speak. And indeed, that happened about noon. This time it lasted only three days. Perhaps Evert's experience was now more intense and more exhausting (as minister Alutarius suggested), perhaps the passing of his message did not need more time. Anyway, Evert now behaved in a completely different way. He was still surrounded by the group of orphans, who found this break in the daily routine extremely interesting, did not want to miss one minute of it, and perhaps collectively shared or intensified his spiritual excitement, although there are no traces of a collective spirit possession in Woerden as was the case in some other Dutch orphanages. **(Colour plate VII)**

Instead of a target group as in the first phase, the orphans were now made Evert's assistants, the new target group being the unbelievers outside. With their help as public witnesses, Evert now orchestrated a public recognition of his career turn and his mission. One by one he called the representatives of the various institutions which made up his social horizon into the room which had been put at his disposal. Together, they legitimized his actions to the whole town.

First came the matron, representative of the household sphere; then his older brother, his next of kin, as a representative of his family; next the rector of the Latin school, the main agent of literate culture in the town; after that, his former employer,

master tailor Gijsbert Aelbertsz; then the ruling mayor, contractor Jan Florisz van Wijngaarden; finally the minister, Domine Henricus Alutarius, in the name of the church council. The whole community in all its ramifications, as far as they were significant for a young man's world picture, lay as well as cleric, public and private, paraded symbolically past the chair from which Evert sent out his messages into the world. And each in the process was assigned a task related to his mission.

The church was never absent in those days, and certainly not in Woerden where the confession was a major element of group identity. The social recognition of Evert's experience needed the approval of the ecclesiastical leaders of his group, the two orthodox Reformed ministers. Both came to see him, but only one of them was expressly summoned by Evert as his judge: Domine Henricus Alutarius (c. 1592-1633), a strong character, orthodox without being sectarian (as was indeed his colleague Jacobus Cralingius), an excellent theologian, a popular preacher, and at the same time a practising physician. We know from another source that around the same time he treated medically a peasant from the neighbourhood stricken with "salvation panic." Just like Francesco Spiera seventy years before, the peasant was convinced of being eternally damned by God and let himself die.<sup>16</sup> Alutarius took him into his house, in order to observe him and to treat what he considered to be a psychic disorder.

We do not know for certain what exactly he thought initially of Evert's spiritual experience, but there is no evidence of any medical treatment by the minister. In this case Alutarius' concerns were not medical but ecclesiastical. He doubted the truth of Evert's religious experience, even if (perhaps, especially while) both lived in the same sphere of orthodoxy. Did Evert's experience conform to the Calvinist canon of scriptural exegesis, and could it support the interests of the orthodox party in Woerden? Or was it to be combatted as detrimental to the purity of the faith and the cohesion of the church? And how to measure the dangers?

Domine Alutarius therefore looked for instruments, signs which could serve to incorporate what was happening to Evert into the discourse of dogmatics and into the logic of the church order. Hence his questions:

*(Ds. Alutarius:)* Did the Lord make any special promise to you or any other disclosures that he will keep you alive without the usual means of eating and drinking which he wants us to use for our preservation?

*(Evert:)* Yes, he certainly did; for that is my promise from the voice that said to me that God would keep me healthy and powerful in this world; for that is spoken by the mouth of the angel who said it to me.

*(Ds. Alutarius:)* In the New Testament the Lord does not speak to his people

through visions and divine revelations like in the Old Testament. And the Holy Ghost warns us that we must not lightly depend on such things since there have been many who have believed them and have been deceived. Therefore, I beseech you that you ponder deeply whether you are doing these things on a firm foundation. Especially since much will depend on it and it will be everywhere publicized; for that reason, we must act very carefully and be assured of everything before we reveal it to others. Will you repeat to me here once again what kind of outcome you think there will be for you? But take care not to strain your heart too much; better keep it for tomorrow and write it out in detail.

*(Evert:)* What I have written is truthful, for the spirit of God is indeed in me. But I have not much read the Old and New Testaments. But what God is doing, He is doing through a punishment as an example for all people so that people will repent; for God is very angered, and that because people do not live according to his word; for God lets many miracles take place, but we cast them to the wind. So take this to heart. (B26)

Evert here puts himself emphatically in the realm of the deed. God speaks to and through him by way of reality. His miracles, and the apparitions of the angel, precede His words, which are nothing but explanations of what anybody is capable of seeing with his own eyes. The proof of Evert's legitimacy lies therefore in what happens to him, not in the text of the Bible, which he has hardly read. At least, so he said. And perhaps it was true. His familiarity with the word of God seems more connected to oral transmission, hearing or discussion in particular situations (the tailor's workshop, the orphans' recreations, church-going and catechism), than systematic.

But Evert did not avoid discussion. On the contrary, the way in which he constructed his public mission was totally directed towards a discursive, public proclamation. He had, however, learned a lesson from the first phase of his spiritual experience: the discourse should no longer come from himself, as if he were an untouchable and irrational child prodigy, a wonder boy. On the contrary, as a candidate for adulthood he had to submit himself to the public, reasoned acknowledgement by his fellow adults. Thence the importance of the discussion about the legitimacy of his claims.

His second deliverance was, therefore, of a public nature. During the second spiritual experience, he must have realised how vital public legitimation was, both for orthodox Calvinism in Woerden and for himself. Hence the instrumental character of this second deliverance. It still took place in the orphanage, but Evert announced it well

in advance. He made sure that not only the rector but also both ministers -- three qualified and critical witnesses -- were present. When at a given moment he saw the other orphans gathered around the hearth fire (it was the middle of winter), writing and talking, what he perceived reactivated his consciousness. He wrote on a slip of paper that the rector and the ministers should be brought, and then he asked them all to sing together a most appropriate psalm, ostensibly found by opening the Bible at random: "Out of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength..." (Ps. 8:2). During the singing, Evert regained successively the use of his senses until he left the condition of the babe mentioned in the psalm and sang along with the rector and the ministers as an adult.

For both ministers, this was sufficient proof. Indeed, the proof of Evert's authenticity was in the visible reality of God's public intervention in the life of an individual, perceived and hence sanctioned by the community present. On the next day, a Sunday, Evert was allowed to read in church before the whole congregation the responses of the Heidelberg catechism to the thirty-fifth question, fourteenth Sunday. Again a very appropriate text: "What do we call what is received from the Holy Ghost?" Had Evert not repeatedly emphasized that the Holy Ghost was working through him? We may consider this reading as the last rite of passage, that achieved Evert's official entrance into public life. From this point on, he was empowered to speak in public with adults. But this very confirmation of the change in his life's direction provoked new, harsh criticisms in the town.

Evert then played his last trump. Two nights later, his two little brothers who slept in the same bed with him, and the other orphans were awakened because Evert was talking aloud in his sleep. Someone went to call the matron downstairs. Troubled, she woke him and asked whether something was wrong. Evert calmed everyone down and persuaded them to go back to bed. Hardly had he gone back to sleep himself, when he started speaking aloud, as if in a dream. Pieter, five years older than he, obviously knew his younger brother's tricks. He had pen, paper and candle ready, and wrote Evert's long rhymed message down for us. The beginning and end again set the tone:

Oh woe, oh woe, people with pride and excess,  
Oh ye people mean and heartless,  
Your lives today are so godless....  
And so that people know  
Through the work of God the Lord,  
Through me they should repent  
And listen to God's word.

All that is spoken here  
Will help you ward off sin.  
Stop speaking blasphemous words;  
Think before you begin.  
Then God his blessing to you will give,  
And I will depart eternal life to live. (B34-35)

This dictated dream -- the most classical form of a message from the hereafter, a judgment of God -- brought the last Calvinist critics over into Evert's camp. God himself here legitimized his spiritual experiences and the direction which he wanted to give to his life, his public mission, -- not through Evert's own doing but while he was unconscious. The next day, the magistrates had the witnesses, including Evert's brothers, appear before them, authenticated the whole story, and gave the church council orders to have it published as quickly as possible in Amsterdam. And so it happened.

Although Evert's gradual legitimation among the dominant Calvinist party in Woerden is well documented, we know very little about his acceptance by other local congregations. Six years later, the Amsterdam chronicler Claes van Wassenaer (1571/72-1629), a former Calvinist preacher and also a university trained physician, argued that the whole story was a fraud and that the fasting orphan had been a simulator.<sup>17</sup> However, the publication of this popular chronicle did not prevent the Woerden magistracy from providing Evert Willemsz half a year later with the town scholarship to Leiden, nor the Amsterdam consistory from having a very positive opinion of his abilities and sending him successively as a comforter of the sick to the Coast of Guinea (1630) and as an ordained minister to New Netherland (1632). Therefore the unfavourable sentence of the critical chronicler remains somewhat of a mystery and we may well wonder whether after all this sceptic deserves more credit than the believers.

The solution of this mystery should perhaps begin at the other end of the story: Evert Willemsz Bogardus's later life as a Calvinist preacher. The form which he gave to the second, adult phase of his life makes it clear to us that the spiritual experience of the fifteen year old boy was not a passing fancy, not an isolated event, not a happening which befell the visionary from above or beyond, and in which he had no part or participation. On the contrary, his sickness and ecstasy formed part of a design for living that took shape at that precise moment and of which we can perceive the outlines retrospectively in the account of the 1622-23 experience. This account signals a threefold transition: from an oral culture to a written culture; from a diffuse to a

publicly structured discourse; from a personal identity achievement to a public representation of self -- in a word, to the structuring of the self, of an individual public identity coupled with a mission (the ministry) and a message (the call to repentance). The message laid the emotional and moral foundation for Evert's public mission ten years later.

### *Byways to the ministry*

Ten years later, indeed, Evert's strong personality brought him what he wanted: the public function of a Reformed minister, but once again he followed his own byways. His spiritual experience had brought him the recognition of the town council. As an exceptional favour to an orphaned boy of his social extraction, he had been admitted to the Latin school, four years later the new town organist was ordered to teach him music, and in 1627 he was authorized to leave for Leiden university where he continued his humanities and prepared himself for the study of theology. Finally, in June 1629, Evert being by then twenty-one or twenty-two years old, he was given the scholarship of the States' theological college in Leiden which was at the disposal of the town of Woerden. Thus, apparently Evert got what he wanted so badly, since everybody cooperated to make him a regular minister.

Yet, barely a year after having received his scholarship, in June 1630, Evert left the university before having finished his study in theology. There is a first mystery here. Why would a boy without parents and with a poor social background renounce a scholarship that was meant to realise for him the very vocation he had fought for in the critical years of his identity formation? Does this make any sense? In the Autumn of 1630 he engaged as a comforter of the sick in the service of the West India Company and was sent by the Amsterdam consistory to the company fortress on the Coast of Guinea (present-day Ghana), where he worked and studied in 1631-32. In fact, this was the normal way to the sacred ministry for the so-called *Duytsche clercken* ("Dutch clerics"), i.e. young men desirous of becoming a minister of God's word, but unschooled and unable to read the Bible in the original tongues, in Latin or in Greek. As comforters of the sick, they were allowed to study the Bible and the learned and pious authors of Protestantism, as a preparation for the holy ministry. For many young people, this function served as a kind of working scholarship, a part-time job combined with enough spare time for study. In fact, Evert Willemsz used this traditional formula, that was clearly below his intellectual abilities, as a byway to achieve his autonomy as a minister: to the learned theology imparted by university training, for which his scholarship was meant, he opposed his own conception of the minister as a fieldworker

schooled in practical piety. The transitional, psychosomatic experience of his youth, i.e. the healing of the physical disabilities with which God had stricken him, had indeed made him exceptionally fit for the spiritual function of a comforter of the sick in this reputedly most murderous of all Dutch possessions, where sometimes more than half of the Company servants died within a year from the effects of the dreaded Guinea fevers. His very survival after his Guinea term suggests that he had no sickly constitution at all. He was a strong man, with an independent spirit and a fierce temper, who got himself in New Netherland the reputation of a heavy boozier.

In June 1632 he returned home and appeared before the Church authorities of Amsterdam. He presented excellent testimonials from the colonial authorities, was examined, and admitted as a minister of God's Word. Again, it was not in a parish of his homeland that he choose to achieve his identity as a preacher, but in another colony oversea, in New Netherland, on the island of Manhattan.(fig.3)

This new arbitrary choice of the former mystic may at first sight seem a new mystery. Why would he not look for a living in the district of his home town, which had invested in his future? In fact, it was probably this self-designed curriculum which brought him exactly what he looked for: perfect autonomy, a parish oversea, virtually uncontrolled by higher authority, far from the scrutinizing eye of church and state, and finally, the liberty of a minister who was free to impose his own spiritual shape upon a community within which he functioned as the supreme moral leader.

Although Evert's life story seems rather peculiar to us, a closer look at early modern individual life cycles reveals many more apparent irregularities which are as many signs of self-willed forms of education and outspoken individual autonomy. Of course, the margins were never totally fixed. The room for manoeuvre always existed, but it was fluid. The freedom to operate on the margins of the educational system -- of elementary schools, grammar schools and universities, of apprenticeships and terms of probation -- diminished as the authorities (or the corporations) fixed regulations and curricular modalities, streamlined the school system, made training compulsory for particular qualifications. But other margins arose, and new structures or institutions gave way to new latitudes. The important thing is to realise that the achievement of individual identity normally passes through ways of transgression of the borders. Perhaps not so much the transgression of the institutions' formal borders, as that of the meaning preprinted within them. How to use normality for achieving autonomy? Or even, as in Evert's case, how to achieve singularity where conformity is intended?

The point is that we are not really accustomed to look at the room for manoeuvre left by the regular structures. Hence historians (and perhaps educationalists, too) tend to exaggerate conformities and to underestimate autonomy. There are two

main reasons for that blindness. The first proceeds from the source material itself. Our main sources on education, on the formation of the self, on the conquest of identity in past times are either normative (philosophy, norms and values, symbolic or emblematic images, treatises, resolutions, etc.) or administrative (school administration, registration, matriculation, correspondence, etc.). In both cases, they reflect regularities and obligations, not margins or latitudes. They say what everyone does, or has to do. They register mainstreams and conformities.

The second reason of our relative blindness is the propensity of scientific research in general, and of modern historians in particular, to look for general structures, overall tendencies, major evolutions, or global changes. This propensity makes it possible to formulate general statements -- which is, as we all have learned, the final scope of science. Yet, byways belong to history too, and their recognition may well be equally vital if they help to explain the way in which people really live and society works. A close look at individual life courses in history which are known with sufficient precision reveals the potentiality of two complementary visions of history: the structural image, stressing rules, necessities, and conformities, and a more libertine vision, accentuating autonomy, latitude, and liberty. Both visions do not exclude each other. They are not reducible to macro-history and *microstoria* respectively, or to a positivist versus a narrative approach, but they incorporate the two main dimensions of acting in history, I mean group-oriented and ego-oriented forms of behaviour, thinking, or representation.

In the particular case of the life story of Evert Willemsz, of which I have sketched very roughly the first outlines in this paper, educational structures really do function. The boy does definitely not reject the help provided by the group. His stepfather's family, the orphanage, the apprenticeship, the grammar school, college, and university -- they all contributed effectively to achieve a particular, but "normal," recognizable shape of his individual identity. They legitimized it socially and made it fit for collective meanings. Such institutions help people to function correctly within society, with the aid of the group identities generated by or around them: family, a job, citizenship, religion, culture, in brief, all those group solidarities which form together an "interpretive community," and hence fashion group identity. Yet, individual people may use them in another, if not a perverted sense for their own benefit, for achieving autonomy and constructing a truly individual identity. In that dimension of the individual life the educational framework of institutions, norms, values, and structures is barely more than a receptacle for the creation of personal meaning.

The particular model for achieving autonomy used by Evert Willemsz was conversion, exemplified by the apostle Paul and by Saint Augustine -- be it, in the

terminology of Travisano, a true change of identity implying a change in the perception of the self and its past, or a simple alternation of social identities. In a certain sense, conversion was for him the language of successful education. It may be no accident that precisely this converted youth appears in his New Netherland life as an active converter. Two levels may be distinguished: conversion of the Christians, and conversion of the others. As a Reformed minister, responsible for the public morality of the colony, he aimed at the conversion of his European fellow-Christians, the colonists, to a more truly Christian way of life, just as he had preached during his youth experience in the town of Woerden ten to twenty years earlier. In his colonial experience as a Reformed minister, which lasted from his arrival on Manhattan shore in 1633 to his death in a shipwreck off Swansea in Wales fourteen years later, a gradual shift can be noticed. During the first years of his oversea ministry, Domine Everhardus Bogardus, as he called himself by then, acted as a faithful servant of the West India Company which employed him. His flock consisted mainly of company servants originating from several countries and confessions, serving for a limited term, due to return to Europe, and mostly unmarried. Women and children were scarce, formal schooling was virtually non-existent. Religion was the instrument of group cohesion, and hence of moral education, the community of morals being the best way to guarantee integration. Soon after his arrival, minister Bogardus fought, and won, his first fight against the sheriff, Mr. Lubbert Dinclagen, a university trained jurist. He had to make his position quite clear: whereas commercial policy was the task of the director of the colony, and the sheriff had to warrant law and order, the minister was in his eyes the only company agent responsible for the definition of the colony's moral standards. Throughout this first conflict, the young minister acted in conformity with his pattern of behaviour as defined a decade earlier: he used formal structures for achieving individual authority, by exploring the margins of the company's power structure. He took advantage of the physical distance and the slow communication between himself and his employers to increase his autonomy. Collective facilities indeed permitted him to stress his autonomy, and to augment the interaction between the socialization process of the colonists, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, his individual conceptions of ethics and religion -- which, in fact, were the instruments of social integration.

Gradually, however, New Netherland changed. The crisis of the fur-trade made intensive colonization for the cultivation of tobacco and Indian corn (maize) more attractive. Colonists established themselves durably. The community itself changed its identity. Domine Bogardus' own life is the best example. He married in 1638 a deceased colonist's widow, and added four sons to her five surviving children. His own interest was not any longer vested in his homeland, but in the new world. It is striking to see

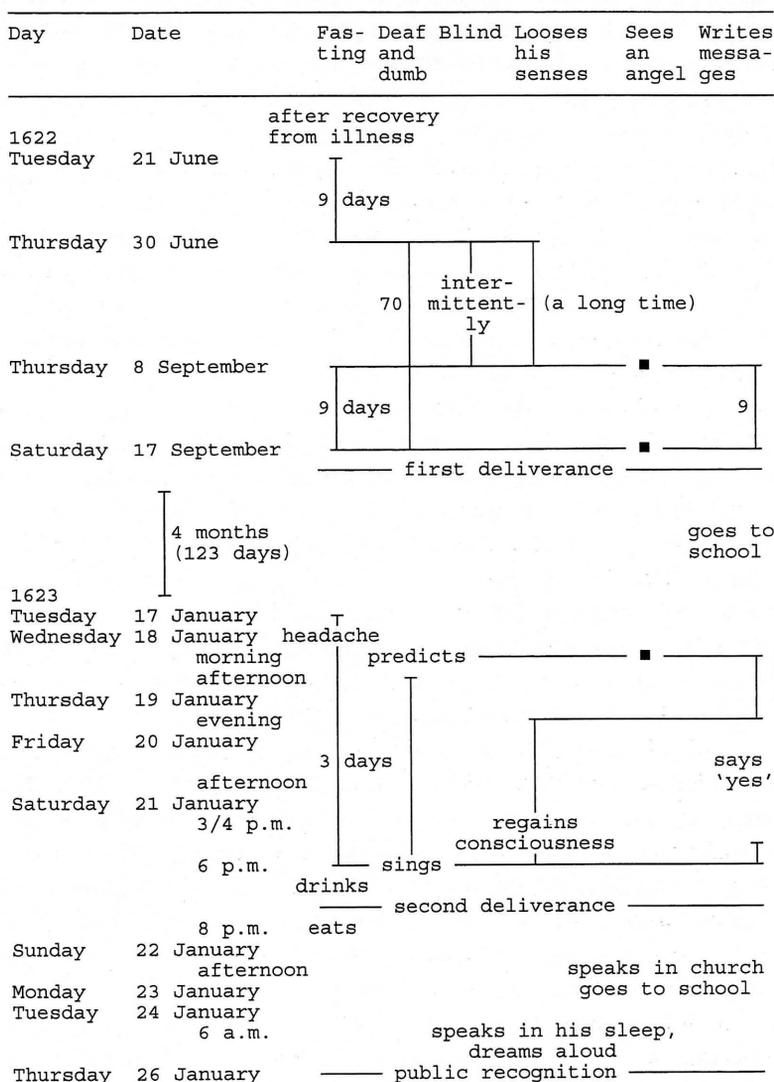
how his mental horizon changed within a few years, and brought him in fact to an entirely new definition of his personal identity, both socially and with regard to his self-perception. From a Dutch minister accountable to the West India Company, Domine Bogardus developed into a pioneer colonist whose prime responsibility was towards the local community. He adopted the positions and problems of the settlers as his own, and focussed entirely upon the need for new forms of social integration. The church still remained his major instrument, but he used its rituals, in particular the Holy Communion, for the shaping of the new community. Committed to the definition of the moral standards of the colony, he exchanged the homeland view for the autonomous interests of the colony with its multicultural structure, advocating a harmonious cohabitation of European settlers, enslaved or free Blacks, and Indians. In fact, he behaved as the colony's conscience.

At the same time, and on the second level, conversion appeared as the proper language of integration of all the cultural groups into one single colonial society. The colonists had to share their new identity with the other ethnical groups on the new continent. In the first half of the seventeenth century, the Europeans of New Netherland still formed a minority in a mainly native American (Indian) world. Since the second quarter of the century, African slaves came in small numbers to Manhattan, some of them being emancipated after years of labour. Slavery had not yet reached the massive character which it would soon acquire with the scaling up of the triangular trade between Africa, the Americas and Europe. Nor was slavery legitimized as yet by the new Christian ideology of the black race as the cursed descendants of Cham, Noah's son (Genesis 9:18-27). In fact, many slaves came from former Portuguese possessions in Africa and seem to have been christened before their enslaving, albeit in the highly ritualized religion of the Catholic church. However, since blacks and native Americans were considered uncivilized heathens, integration presupposed in fact education to bring them up to the Christian standards of Protestantism as the religion of the Word. Domine Bogardus baptised black Americans in significant numbers. He and his fellow-ministers were not aware of the misunderstandings entailed by their cognitive approach that rejected rituals as superstition, whereas both the Africans and the native Americans considered ritual as the only form of religion. But their message was clear: notwithstanding the rigidity of its formal language, the church structure of the new continent had to function as a universal agency of integration, leaving room for new experiences and permitting individual byways which would in the long run be beneficial to the whole community.

\*\*\*

The above impinges on a larger question, which has been phrased as follows: "Is education a matter of identity formation? If individual identity is considered to be no more than internalized collective identity, then education merges entirely with socialization. Individual autonomy, often considered as an important aim of education, then becomes void". I do not pretend to have given a major answer to this question, but I do hope I have shown that the question is not correctly formulated -- at least -- for the past, since individual identity was not forcibly opposed to socialization, but could be achieved within the institutions of society, along the byways of the individual attribution of meaning to shared forms of social identity.

**Diagram:**  
**Times, rhythms, and modalities of Evert's spiritual experience**



## NOTES

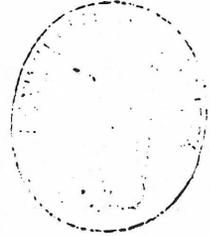
1. This essay is based on the material collected for my book *Wegen van Evert Willemsz. Een Hollands weeskind op zoek naar zichzelf (1607-1647)* ("Pathways of Evert Willemsz.: A Dutch orphan in search of himself, 1607-1647") (Nijmegen, 1995), where full references of all sources are given. I shall quote here only the most essential evidence.
2. From his matriculation at Leiden University in 1627 onward, his life story is well known. He died in 1647 at the age of forty in a shipwreck off the coast of Wales, near Swansea, leaving a widow (Annetgen or Anneke Jans, from Norway) with nine children. As a central figure in the 1643-45 Indian wars, violently opposed to the disastrous policy of West India Company governor Willem Kieft, he is one of the main characters of early New York historiography. However, the appreciation of his ministry and personality differs greatly among the authors. These different images are discussed in my book. The most reliable English version of his life is in Q. Breen, "Domine Everhardus Bogardus," *Church History* 2 (1933), pp. 78-90. On his New Netherland family: G.O. Zabriskie, "Anneke Jans in fact and fiction," *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* 104 (1973), pp. 65-72, 157-164. As his family name never occurs in the Woerden sources, the story of his youth has only recently be recognized as pertaining to the same person.
3. The family relations appear in his brother Cornelis Bogaert's second will, September 12, 1636. Municipal Archives of Leiden, Notarial records 265, deed 63.
4. Lucas Zas [Zasch, Zasius] (ed.), *Waerachtighe ende seeckere gheschiedenisse/ dewelcke is gheschiedt binnen de Stadt Woerden/ hoe dat Godt almachtich zijn Wonder-werck heeft betoont aen een seecker Wees-kindt genaemt Evert Willemsz. ...* (Utrecht, 1623), 4 pp.; *Waerachtige Geschiedenisse/ Hoe dat Seker Wees-Kindt binnen Woerden/ out ontrent xv. jaren/ tot tweemalen toe vanden Heere met stommigheyd/ doofheyd/ somtijts oock met blintheyt besocht/ ende van het gebruyck syns verstants berooft zijnde ...* (Amsterdam, 1623), 36 pp. (The Hague, Royal Library, Pf 1. Knuttel 3500-3501). Both pamphlets have been reprinted at least once. In this essay, the pamphlets will be quoted as A (Utrecht) and B (Amsterdam), followed by the number of the page. On the pamphlet genre, see C.E. Harline, *Pamphlets, printing and political culture in the early Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht, 1987).
5. On this problem, see W. Christian Jr., *Apparitions in late medieval and Renaissance Spain* (Princeton, N.J., 1981), pp. 188-203; G. Zarri (ed.), *Finzione e santità tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Turin, 1991); M. Cuénin, "Fausse et vraie mystique: signes de reconnaissance, d'après la *Correspondance* de Jeanne de Chantal," in J.-P. Massaut, ed., *Les signes de Dieu aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1993), pp. 177-187.
6. Cf. W. Frijhoff, "Enfants saints, enfants prodiges: l'expérience religieuse au passage de l'enfance à l'âge adulte," *Paedagogica historica* 29, 1 (1993), pp. 53-76. For the huge literature on conversion models in English and American Puritanism, the counterpart of Evert's adolescent conversion, see the surveys by L. Bergamasco, "Hagiographie et sainteté en Angleterre," *Annales ESC* 48, 4 (1993), pp. 312-342; P. Caldwell, *The Puritan conversion narrative: The beginnings of American expression* (Cambridge, 1983); K. von Greyerz, *Vorsehungsglaube und Kosmologie. Studien zu englischen Selbstzeugnissen des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen and Zürich, 1990).
7. For a recent illustration of the Freudian thesis: N. Yarom, *Body, blood and sexuality. A psychoanalytic study of St. Francis' stigmata and their historical context* (New York, etc.,

- 1992).
8. Cf. L.F. Groenendijk and F.A. van Lieburg, *Voor edeler staat geschapen. Levens- en sterfbedbeschrijvingen van gereformeerde kinderen en jeugdigen uit de 17e en 18e eeuw* (Leiden, 1991); F.A. van Lieburg, *Levens van vromen. Gereformeerd piëtisme in de achttiende eeuw* (Kampen, 1991); L.F. Groenendijk, "De spirituele (auto)biografie als bron voor onze kennis van de religieuze opvoeding en ontwikkeling van Nederlandse pietisten," in L.F. Groenendijk and J.C. Sturm, eds, *Leren geloven in de Lage Landen. Facetten van de geschiedenis van de religieuze opvoeding* (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 57-90.
  9. See the depositions on Petrus Cupus and Petrus de Bricquigny, Reformed (Arminian) ministers in Woerden, in Algemeen Rijksarchief (The Hague), Oud Synodaal Archief, p. 157.
  10. See on the 1618 comet and its meaning: S. Drake and C.D. Malley, eds, *The controversy on the comets of 1618* (Philadelphia, 1960); J. Cats, *Aenmerckinge op de tegenwoordige staert-sterre, en drie lofdichten op Philips Lansbergen*, introd. by G.J. Johannes (Utrecht, 1986); E. Jorink, *Hemelse tekenen. Nederlandse opvattingen over de kometen van 1618* (unpub. Master's Thesis, Department of History, University of Groningen, 1993).
  11. See on the relationship between illness, healing and orthodox spirituality: A. Wear, "Puritan perceptions of illness in seventeenth-century England," in: R. Porter, ed., *Patients and practitioners. Lay perceptions of medicine in pre-industrial society* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 55-99; D. Harley, "Spiritual physic, Providence and English medicine 1560-1640," in O.P. Grell and A. Cunningham, eds., *Medicine and the Reformation* (London and New York, 1993), pp. 101-117; M.J. van Lieburg, "Zeeuwse piëtisten en de geneeskunde in de eerste helft van de 17e eeuw. Een verkenning van het werk van W. Teellinck en G.C. Udemans," in: A.I. Bierman, et al., *Worstelende wetenschap. Aspecten van de wetenschapsbeoefening in Zeeland van de zestiende tot in de negentiende eeuw* (Middelburg, s.d. [1987]), pp. 63-86.
  12. See footnote 4.
  13. C.W. Schoneveld, *Intertraffic of the mind. Studies in seventeenth-century Anglo-Dutch translation, with a checklist of books translated from English into Dutch 1600-1700* (Leiden, 1983); W.J. op 't Hof, *Engelse piëtistische geschriften in het Nederlands, 1598-1622* (Rotterdam, 1987), pp. 441-455.
  14. W. Perkins, *Salve voor een sieck mensche, ofte een tractaet vervatende de natuere, onderscheydentheden ende soorten des doots*. Transl. V. Meusevoet (Amsterdam, 1599; repr. 1604, 1620)
  15. These traditions and the way Evert Willemsz uses them are analysed in the chapters 8-11 of my book.
  16. M. MacDonald, "'The fearful Estate of Francis Spira.' Narrative, identity and emotion in early modern England," *Journal of British studies* 31, 1 (1992), pp. 32-61.
  17. N. van Wassenaer, *Historisch verhael alder ghedenckweerdichste geschiedenissen, die van den beginne des jaeres 1621 ... tot 1632 voorgevallen sijn*, 21 vols (Amsterdam, 1622-1635), Vol. 15 (1629), f. 64r<sup>0</sup>. Following Wassenaer, A.Th. van Deursen, *Plain lives in a Golden Age. Popular culture, religion and society in seventeenth-century Holland*, transl. M. Ultee (Cambridge, etc., 1991), pp. 257-258, calls him "a notorious faker."

# Ubaerachtighe ende seeckere gheschiedenisse/ dewelcke is gheschiedt binnen de Stadt

Woerden / hoe dat Godt almachtich zijn Wonder-werck heeft be-  
toont aen een seecker Weef-kindt genaemt Evert Willemsz. het  
welck hy heeft besocht met doofheyt ende stomheyt/ende hoe  
dat hem wondere dingen zijn wederbaren/ dewelcke hem/  
so hy schijft /vanden Engel Gods zijn geopenbaert/  
ende tot ghetupgenisse der waerheyt/soo is dit  
vanden Rector binnen Woerden/als we-  
sende zijn Meester geaffirmeert ende  
bevesticht / ende met eyghener  
hant onderteckent.

Dit is ghepasseert den 18. ende 19. Januarij/nieu-  
wen Styl/men seght dat hy nu wederom wonderlycke  
dinghen spreekende is.



t'Utrecht/ Ghesdrukt by Herman van Bozculo/ouder den Dom. 1623.  
Met consent.

fig.1

Title-page of the first pamphlet, printed in Utrecht, 1623, relating the wondrous experience of Evert Willemsz in the orphanage of Woerden. The engraving shows an orphan boy with the matron in the hall of an imaginary orphanage (The Hague, Royal Library, pamphlet Knuttel 3501)

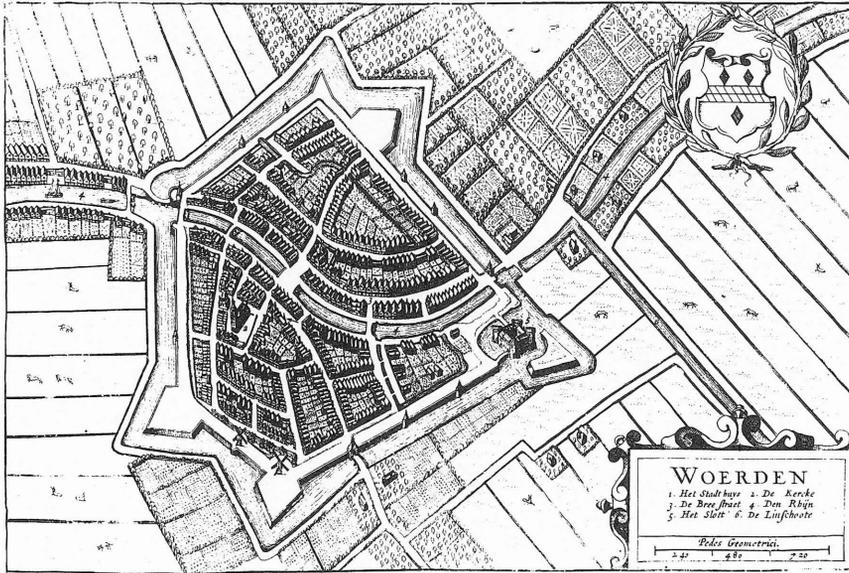


fig.2

Map of the town of Woerden on the Rhine, published in: Marcus Zuierius Boxhornius, *Theatrum sive Hollandiae comitatus et urbium nova descriptio* (Amsterdam, 1632). The orphanage, east of the Reformed church (Nr. 2 on the map) is marked by a small arrow. (Collection of the author)

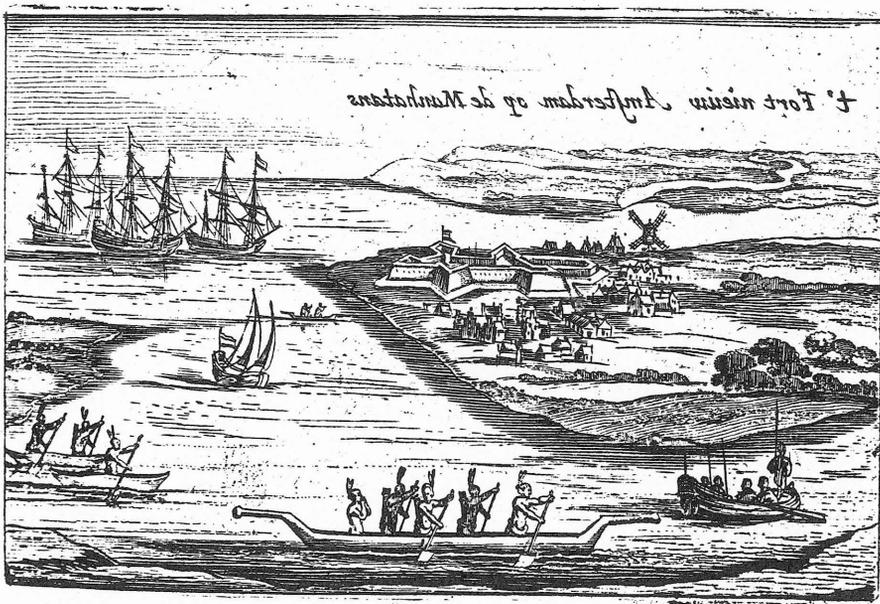


fig.3

View of New Amsterdam (New York) on Manhattan Island, as it was at Evert Willemsz's arrival in early 1633. (Collection of the author)  
N.B. the inscription is reversed in the original