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Lindenwood University
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Paulus Potter's *Punishment of a Hunter*: A Study in Cultural Shifts, Moderation and Class

By

Taylor Brown

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters Arts in
Art History and Visual Culture

March 2024

ABSTRACT

PAULUS POTTER'S *PUNISHMENT OF A HUNTER*: A STUDY IN CULTURAL SHIFTS, MODERATION AND CLASS

Taylor Brown, Master of Art History, 2024

Thesis Directed by: Caroline Paganussi, PhD

This paper proposes a new reading of the painting *Punishment of a Hunter* (1647-1652) by Dutch painter Paulus Potter through the lens of its unique position in seventeenth-century Dutch art with regards to allegory, human and animal caricature, human nature, class, and the influence of economic growth and complexity of class in Amsterdam. The painting consists of fourteen individual vignettes on one panel of wood. Utilizing socio-economic, political, historical and formal analysis, this thesis proposes a reading of the painting. A total of five chapters, each addressing key themes of the painting, will contribute to my main thesis asserting that *Punishment of a Hunter* is a critique on class and the aspirations of wealth by the rising merchant classes of Amsterdam. First, prints and paintings that informed certain vignettes will be addressed and used to show the satirical core of *Punishment*. Potter's decision to use fourteen vignettes in the work will be described. The significance of the lack of unity between his landscapes and figures within will be shown to mirror the disconnect between man and nature. Said figures in *Punishment* will be compared to Potter's peasant figures in other works illuminating an affection for the peasants and farmers while also indicating a disapproval of the hunting figures in *Punishment*. Finally, the history of hunting images in Dutch seventeenth-century art will be examined. I will explain the close correlation between hunting, class and moderation in Dutch and Flemish paintings and how these inform Potter's *Punishment*. These five arguments will come together to support my argument that Potter created *Punishment* as a critique on social-climbing, the accumulation of wealth, and the resulting loss of farmland and rural space in his home of the Dutch Republic.

Acknowledgements

I firstly would like to thank my father, to whom this work is dedicated, for the unending support and encouragement in all of my life's ventures before his untimely passing in March 2023. I would also like to thank my mother, who, despite having to deal with seemingly insurmountable obstacles this year, has provided invaluable assistance as a reader. I also want to thank my partner Seth whose words of encouragement spurred me on despite being so far away. Lastly, I give my thanks to the members of my committee: Dr. Caroline Paganussi for her welcome enthusiasm on this project and for her great assistance in my research, Dr. Esperanca Camara and Dr. Sara Berkowitz for their valuable input regarding my work.

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Introduction

A goat practices a jig on his hind limbs while a doe and bull rear up behind him, leaping in a joyous and excited fashion. A bear cries upward to the sky as he stands on two legs. A mangled, bloody corpse of a dog lies on the ground near the frolicking animals; it is ignored, narrowly escaping being stepped on. Other dogs are hanged from a tree, one already dead, one evacuating his bowels in the process. A boar and goat are roasting a human on a spit. This disturbing vignette is only one of several rendered in Paulus Potter's *Punishment of a Hunter* (1647-1652) (Figure 1). Potter's painting is 33.2 by 47.2 inches, oil on wood panel. Within that frame are fourteen vignettes arranged as follows: Three rectangular pictures make up the top "row." Another three make up the bottom "row." Between the two rows are, from left to right, a column of three square pictures, then two larger rectangular pictures, one on top of the other, and then another column of three square vignettes.¹

Completed between the years of 1647 and 1652,² *Punishment of a Hunter* deviates from Potter's typical oeuvre of peaceful, agricultural landscapes and contented livestock of his works that came before and after. Paulus Potter is most well known as a painter of animals, so it is not surprising the number of animals present in this work. His focus was particularly on domesticated livestock in farm landscapes, but he depicted the occasional religious and mythological scene, as well as mixed landscape and genre paintings and hunting compositions as well.

¹ The painting is called by two other names in addition to "Punishment of a Hunter;" Edwin Buijsen refers to it as *Life of a Hunter*[#] while Hofstede de Groot calls it *Life of a Huntsman*.[#] For the purposes of this paper I will refer to it as *Punishment of a Hunter* as that is how it is listed on the English language translation of The Hermitage Museum website where the painting resides. The names I use for the vignettes will be how Buijsen lists them in his catalog of Potter's paintings.

² Edwin Buijsen, "Life of a Hunter," in *Paulus Potter: Paintings, Drawings and Etchings*, by Amy Walsh, Edwin Buijsen and Ben Broos, (Zwolle, Netherlands: Waander Publishers, 1994), 127; Piers Beirne and Janine Janssen, "Hunting Worlds Turned Upside Down? Paulus Potter's *Life of a Hunter*," in *Murdering Animals: Writings on Theriocide, Homicide and Nonspeciesist Criminology* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 59.

Even though he died of tuberculosis at twenty-eight years old, Potter amassed an impressive body of work. He had become a proficient painter by fourteen, already having surpassed his father. He married the daughter of the town architect and had two children with her. Tragically, his first born, a son, died in 1651; shortly after, Potter himself died and then his three-year old daughter shortly after. What we know about Potter and his work is due to the efforts of his wife Adriana van Balckeneynde, who kept Potter's memory alive and did what she could to preserve his sketches and paintings. She would tell stories about Potter to her son from her second marriage who then related information to Arnold Houbraken.³

Punishment is a singular work within the realm of seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish painting as a whole – so much so, it defies categorization. It contains aspects of history painting, hunting portraiture and hunting scenes, allegory, and landscapes, in addition to bearing similarities with satirical prints. This paper addresses the reasons for such a divergence in Potter's style.

There were significant cultural and economic shifts occurring in the Dutch Republic during Potter's lifetime, and Amsterdam was the one city that experienced the greatest economic and metropolitan growth compared to any other city. The ascendance of not one, but several "middle classes", upset the long standing balance of class, power and wealth that had existed for years. The concept of nobility and the wealth and power they retained began to matter less as the merchant class grew in wealth. The new importance placed on status and capitalism, and those citizens eager to elevate their status, defied the Dutch Republic's Calvinist pragmatic cultural heritage that influences the current state of the Netherlands today. A word that comes up

³ Amy Walsh, "The Life of Paulus Potter (1625-1654)," in *Paulus Potter: Paintings, Drawings and Etchings* edited by Amy Walsh, Edwin Buijsen and Ben Broos, (Zwolle, Netherlands: Waander Publishers, 1994), 14.

frequently when discussing the essence of Dutch culture is “moderation.” Moderation was a dominant feature of Dutch society and the reason, in Dutch minds, for their prosperity.⁴

I argue that Potter utilizes animal caricatures in allegorical and satirical presentations to create a piece that rails against this cultural shift. He denigrates those who attempt to step out of their class. *Punishment of a Hunter* comments on class and the fierce desire to attain wealth and status; how it not only leads to folly for perpetrators, but also affects the land of Holland to the detriment of small peasant farms.

In order to fully analyze the meaning of *Punishment*, I will examine the visual aspects of the painting including the use of landscape and the arrangement of figures within it, as well as the work’s overall composition, light and shadow. I will delve into the themes and history of Dutch landscapes, hunting, genre and satire to establish *Punishment’s* unique position within the realm of Dutch painting. Throughout, I will utilize the works of Potter’s many influences and of his contemporaries to bolster my argument. Chapter One examines both satirical and non-satirical works that served as inspirations for some of the vignettes, and other aspects that support the satirical and moralizing aspects of the work. In addition Chapter One addresses the primary accepted satirical reading of the composition and why it is incomplete. Chapter Two will focus on Potter’s choice in using vignettes and how they help to serve his message. Chapter Three highlights Potter’s utilization of the landscape and the relationship of the figures within. Chapter Four explores Potter’s depictions of peasantry in *Punishment* and other works, arguing for his affinity for them. The final section addresses the theme of hunting and how *Punishment’s* depiction of it fits into the historical realm and thematic bases for hunting-related works in Dutch and Flemish art and its relation to class and moderation. Together each of these arguments

⁴ Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), 53.

support the overall thesis that Potter's *Punishment* pointedly uses hunting as a metaphor to criticize the disconnection of man and nature and aspirational wealth.

For the purposes of this paper "Dutch and Flemish" will refer to culture and art from the region, including what was the Calvinist Dutch Republic, the Spanish-Catholic ruled southern provinces that make up modern-day Belgium, and the lands in between the territories. The "Dutch Republic" refers to the republic that lasted from 1581-1795 and that included the seven northern provinces. The "low countries" refers to what are today Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. The proper noun "Netherlands" refers to the modern-day incarnation of the country excluding its various overseas territories. The term "Holland" will be used solely for the specific region of the Netherlands located on the western coast; it will not refer to the Netherlands or the Dutch Republic as a whole. In addition, it should be noted that the artist Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525-1569) changed the spelling of his name from Brueghel to Bruegel in 1559.⁵ For consistency's sake, his name will be spelled "Bruegel" without the "h" throughout the paper except where it is otherwise spelled in titled publications and direct quotes.

⁵ Margaret A. Sullivan, "Brueghel's Proverbs: Art and Audience in the Northern Renaissance," *The Art Bulletin* 73, no. 3 (1991): 459.

Literature Review

There is not a significant amount of literature directly regarding *Punishment of a Hunter*. There has been very little scholarship on the painting so far, with the most comprehensive treatment of the work interpreting it as a commentary on the military overreach of Prince William II of Orange (1626-1650). This reading goes into depth only on the top three and two center vignettes without much explanation for the other nine. Buijsen argues that the hunter with the hare in the top middle section is a portrait of Count Johan Maurits of Nassau-Siegen (1604-1679) and that the work is overall a commentary on tyrannical rule. Buijsen likens the “hunter” to the Prince who overextended his reach.⁶ Buijsen also describes the legend of Saint Hubert and the story of Diana and Actaeon, providing context to their corresponding section of the painting, and tying them more firmly into the overall hunting theme. Buijsen addresses the bases for the vignettes *Trapping a Leopard* (Figure 2) and *Capturing Monkeys* (Figure 3) and describes the paintings of Potter’s contemporaries from which he would have drawn inspiration for the more straightforward hunting scenes.

Cornelis Hofstede de Groot catalogs *Punishment* in Volume IV of his *Catalogue Raisonne of the Works of the The Most Eminent Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century*, and provides some information on its provenance. In *Murdering Animals*, Piers Beirne and Janine Janssen address the specific implications of the hunting themes present in *Punishment of a Hunter*. They extrapolate the possibility of a message against animal cruelty in the painting, culminating in the proverbial hunter’s punishment. Part of their argument is based on Potter’s other works in which his animals are so well rendered they are arguably portraits, and that this shows a “deeply held respect and admiration for his fellow creatures and interest in animals in

⁶ Buijsen, “Life of a Hunter,” 131-133.

themselves and for their own sakes.”⁷ The authors cite a Theodoor Galle engraving published in 1600, *Wild Animals Take Their Revenge on Hunters and Hunting-dogs* (1580-1600) (Figure 4), which Buijsen also mentions. It simultaneously depicts the trial and execution of a hunter and his dogs by different species of animal. Beirne and Janssen also draw parallels to Potter’s work and the world upside-down theme, discussing the common use all throughout Europe in carnivals from the twelfth century featuring “half-animal/half-human” figures.⁸ Potter’s other works are mentioned in a variety of literature including several museum catalogs including Moqtaderi’s *An Inner World*.⁹ Potter’s proficiency in landscapes is discussed briefly in Seymour Slive’s *Dutch Painting 1600 to 1800*¹⁰ and his humor and some insight into his peasant figures is discussed in Ronni Baer’s *Class Distinctions: Dutch Painting in the Age of Rembrandt and Vermeer*.¹¹

The little that is known about Paulus Potter’s life has been covered in a handful of sources. Arnold Houbraken’s *Great Theater of Netherlandish Painters and Paintresses* (1718) is one of the main sources from which contemporary scholars draw their information.¹² Amy Walsh uses Arnold Houbraken’s works for her essay on Potter’s life in her anthology focusing on his paintings, drawings, and etchings.¹³ Potter’s unique ability and talent in rendering animals is discussed often in the literature and he is generally accepted as one of the first “animal portrait

⁷ Beirne and Janssen, “Hunting Worlds Turned Upside Down?” 61.

⁸ Beirne and Janssen, “Hunting Worlds Turned Upside Down?,” 60.

⁹ Heather Moqtaderi, “Introduction: Pulling Back the Curtain,” in *An Inner World: Seventeenth-Century Dutch Genre Painting*, edited by Heather Moqtaderi and Lara Yeager-Crasselt, (Philadelphia: Arthur Ross Gallery, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021).

¹⁰ Seymour Slive, *Dutch Painting 1600-1800*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 210.

¹¹ Ronni Baer, *Class Distinctions: Dutch Painting in the Age of Rembrandt and Vermeer*, (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts Publications, 2016), 215.

¹² Arnold Houbraken, *Great Theatre of the Netherlandish Painters and Paintresses Volume II*, translated by Hendrik J. Horn and Ricke van Leeuwen, (The Hague: RKD Netherlands Institute for Art History, 2021).

¹³ Walsh, “The Life of Paulus Potter (1625-1654),” 11.

artists.”¹⁴ Various scholars write about Potter’s aptitude for painting animals, but the most in-depth look at his progression and style of painting is in Amy Walsh’s extensive detailed catalog of his paintings, drawing and etchings.¹⁵

Given the compositional choices and emphasis on landscape in Potter’s *Punishment*, there is a larger overarching theme of man’s dominion over the environment as well. There is not a great breadth of literature on seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish attitudes towards the environment per se. What literature exists, pertains to the twentieth century and the modern Dutch concept of *Maakbaarheid* (the obligation and right of man to control nature) currently being enacted in Rotterdam.¹⁶ As Simon Schama points out in *The Embarrassment of Riches*, the Dutch spent a lot of time molding and changing the land of the Netherlands, creating land where there was previously only water.¹⁷ This history of land cultivation is in line with the idea that the land is for man to do with what he wants, just as animals are there to use. This leaves little room for environmental or natural concerns. There is almost no wild land left in the Netherlands today, and there was limited wild land in the seventeenth century.¹⁸ Exploring the genre of landscape painting yields some insight into Dutch and Flemish attitudes towards the environment and also provides insight into Potter’s choices of composition and landscape in *Punishment*.

¹⁴ Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, “Section XVI: Paulus Potter,” in *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch Painter of the Seventeenth Century based on the Work of John Smith, Volume IV*, translated by Edward G. Hawke (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1912), 583.

¹⁵ Amy Walsh, “Stylistic Development in the Work of Paulus Potter,” in *Paulus Potter: Paintings, Drawings and Etchings* edited by Amy Walsh, Edwin Buijsen and Ben Broos, (Zwolle, Netherlands: Waander Publishers, 1994), 20-37.

¹⁶ *The Free Library*. S. v. Maakbaarheid, a uniquely Dutch concept of social improvement through architecture, has given impetus to a set of new urban proposals for the Rotterdam Beinnale.” Retrieved Feb 27 2024

¹⁷ Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches*, 15-50.

¹⁸ H. S. Grantham et al, “Anthropogenic Modification of Forests Means Only 40% of Remaining Forests have High Ecosystem Integrity,” *Nature Communications* 11, 5978 (2020).

Julie Berger Hochstrasser argues that the literature prior to the 1990s is too heavily focused on past historical context, and less so on formal analysis of the painting. Hochstrasser instead uses a semiotic approach to address the meaning of landscape paintings. She argues that the reverence for roads indicates the increasing value of rurality compared to urbanism.¹⁹

Kristina Hartzler Nguyen also explores the concept of landscape artwork in Dutch and Flemish art. She analyzes a variety of works and subjects including country estates, ruins, cityscapes, boundaries, urbanized country-side and others. She notes that it was virtually impossible for people to “be apart from the urban landscape,” and that while there was an idea of “escaping to the idyllic countryside,” urban areas were not held in disdain, but praised for their cleanliness and orderliness.²⁰

While Buijsen refers to *Punishment* as seminal work by Potter and heavily praises it, little attention is paid to the stark difference within that sets it apart from Potter’s *oeuvre*. While some of the animals represented in *Punishment* are similar to his work from around the same time, *Orpheus Charming the Beasts* (1650) (Figure 5), Buijsen does not discuss the probable lack of preservation, the less than vivid colors, the strong compositional choices, nor the use of individual vignettes. Bernhard Ridderbos’s *Early Netherlandish Paintings: Rediscovery, Reception and Research* provided some needed context for the precedence of vignettes in the form of triptychs and polyptychs.²¹ Nadia Baadj provides information on the Dutch tradition of furniture and cabinet painting that utilized vignettes. She also discusses Jan van Kessel’s series

¹⁹ Julie Berger Hochstrasser, "Inroads to Seventeenth-Century Dutch Landscape Painting," *Nature and Landscape in Dutch Art 1500-1850* 48 (1997): 207.

²⁰ Kristina Hartzler Nguyen, "The Made Landscape: City and Country in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Prints," *Harvard University Art Museums Bulletin* 1, no. 1 (1992): 14.

²¹ Bernhard Ridderbos, "Objects and Questions," in *Early Netherlandish Paintings: Rediscovery, Reception and Research*, edited by Bernhard Ridderbos, Anne van Buren and Henk van Veen, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), 4-170.

The Four Parts of the World (1666) (Figure 6) and his use of multiple copper plates to form one work with several vignettes.²²

Edwin Buijsen provides insight into *Punishment* by pointing to works from which Potter borrowed. These include the images of the goddess Diana, satirical prints, animal hunting prints, other hunting images and the image of Saint Hubert, the patron saint of hunting. The image of Saint Hubert is particularly interesting as he is not commonly depicted in Dutch works of the seventeenth century, even in hunting images. The only notable seventeenth-century Dutch painting to place Saint Hubert front and center was by Haarlem artist Philips Wouwerman and it was completed in 1660 (Figure 7) after Potter had passed away. Saint Hubert is seen in Flemish works of the sixteenth century, for example in Bruegel's *Hunters in the Snow* (1565) (Figure 8). The legend of Saint Hubert varies. Some stories imply he gave up hunting altogether, while others say he simply devoted himself to God but continued to hunt. The question of the morality of the specific act of hunting is not clear, but the implication of the virtues of prudence and moderation have a firm basis in Dutch Calvinist culture.²³

Simon Schama explores historical Dutch culture through its art and literature, emphasizing the heavy moral emphasis and the fear of natural disasters and retribution for trespasses.²⁴ The works of John Calvin (1509-1564) specifically prescribe moderation. Dutch philosopher Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) heavily influenced the humanist thoughts of John Calvin, though Calvin did not agree with everything Erasmus said,²⁵ and suggests all the ways in which to be a good Christian in his *Handbook of the Militant Christian* (1533). Erasmus, a

²² Nadia Baadj, "A World of Materials in a Cabinet without Drawers: Reframing Jan van Kessel's 'The Four Parts of the World,'" *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (NKJ) / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 62 (2012): 213.

²³ Alastair Fowler, "Brueghel's 'Hunters in the Snow,'" *Notes in the History of Art* 34, no. 2 (2014): 11-15.

²⁴ Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches*, 130-220.

²⁵ Max Engammare, "John Calvin's use of Erasmus," *Erasmus Studies* 37, 2 (2017): 177-192.

Catholic himself who wrote long before Potter, makes some intriguing statements about religions and morality in general as well as the baser natures of man and how to overcome them.

Moralizing messages in Dutch painting is a heavily discussed topic with differing opinions. To the layman many Dutch works appear to be amoral or non-devotional but Seymour Slive writes about the dichotomy of artists who created both moralizing works and works that seem to celebrate the revelry in tavern-scene paintings. Slive provides an argument for such paintings depicting vices of prostitution and gambling as being moralistic themselves arguing that they serve as reminders of what not to do.²⁶ Wayne Franits challenges some of the moralistic readings in his own writings – specifically that many paintings thought to depict the story of the prodigal son simply do not provide enough evidence and that they are simply portrayals of salacious activities.²⁷ Wayne Franits' *Dutch Seventeenth Century Genre Painting* is an in-depth look into the history of “genre painting,” which refers primarily to those works pertinent to the everyday lives of peasants and other non-noble classes including tavern and interior scenes, from within the greater political and societal context of the Dutch Republic specifically.²⁸

Like the landscapes that Nguyen and Hochstrasser discuss, these genre scenes serve as “escapes.”²⁹ Slive discusses the separation of moralistic messages and religions in art as well.³⁰ Purely religious depictions became significantly less common in the seventeenth century due the

²⁶ Seymour Slive, “Realism and Symbolism in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting,” *Daedalus* 91, no. 3 (1962): 20-25.

²⁷ Slive, “Realism and Symbolism in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting,” 20-25.

²⁸ Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting*, (London: University Press, 2004), 3.

²⁹ Hochstrasser, "Inroads to Seventeenth-Century Dutch Landscape Painting," 201-203.

³⁰ Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting*, 24-25.

discouragement of religious depictions for fear it would encourage idol worship. For the Dutch it was easy to have moralistic messages without overt or even any religious imagery.³¹

Another major theme in *Punishment* is satire. Margaret Sullivan delves into the role of satire in Dutch and Flemish art. She describes it as a genre “inherited from the ancient world in which wrongdoing is exposed in an entertaining way.”³² Sullivan specifically cites Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Hieronymus Bosch for their consistent use of satire. Margaret Sullivan explores Bruegel’s specific use of satire that Potter also seems to use. She discusses the use of the archetypal figures, particularly of plebian classes, that are not necessarily religious or mythological.³³ Potter of course uses both religious and a mythological allegory, but uses nonreligious and non mythological allegories in the same painting. Sullivan’s direct comparisons of specific works are thorough, evidence-based methods to argue her point.

Carol Janson explores the use of animals as archetypes in sixteenth century Dutch art through a case study of Willem van Haecht the Elder’s (1527-before 1612). Janson goes into detail describing each engraving and connotations of each. These prints focused on the “strength and courage” of animals that symbolize different vices and virtues in Dutch and Flemish culture, and also specific political messages that likened certain animals to particular political figures such as William of Orange. Janson calls some of this imagery propaganda, which arguably is closely tied to satire. Janson explores how these specific messages can be descended from “generic” images based on centuries-old European fables.³⁴

³¹ Slive, “Realism and Symbolism in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting,” 20-25.

³² Margaret A. Sullivan, “Bosch, Bruegel, Everyman and the Northern Renaissance,” *Oud Holland* 121, no. 2/3 (2008): 118.

³³ Sullivan, “Bosch, Bruegel, Everyman and the Northern Renaissance,” 125.

³⁴ Carol Janson, “The Animal Fable: Prints and Popular Culture in the Dutch Revolt,” in *From Revolt to Riches: Culture and History of the Low Countries, 1500-1700*, edited by Theo Hermans and Reinier Salverda, (London: UCL Press, 2017), 69-70.

The world upside-down motif as a political force in the sixteenth century is discussed by Wim Vroom. Vroom argues that while allegorical prints common in Antwerp at the time can be seen as political, rarely are they linked to specific political events. Like Janson, Vroom focuses on the prints of publisher Willem van Haecht.³⁵ The world upside-down is referenced in connection to *Punishment* in Edwin Buijsen's essay in which he cites such sixteenth-century etchings such as *Lords Who Are Too Severe Turn Respect Into Hatred* (1650) (Figure 9), which bears a strong resemblance to the two central vignettes of *Punishment*.

Depictions of hunting in Dutch art fall into several different types. The literature mostly discusses hunting portraits and relations to class. Among the many genres in Dutch seventeenth century painting, landscapes, marine paintings, history painting, portraiture, still lifes, and the genre painting – hunting is not categorized as a genre itself, but appears in the categories of portraits, still lifes and landscapes. Scott A. Sullivan presents a case study that addresses Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) and his strange self-portrait, *A Dead Bittern* (1639) (Figure 10) As in *Punishment*, Sullivan points out the lack of literature, at the time of his writing, about Rembrandt's *Bittern*. Sullivan takes a historiographic view, looking at Dutch concepts of class and money and how the sport of hunting fits into them with the growing demand for hunting portraits at the time. He utilizes primary sources, documents containing hunting ordinances applicable during the early 1600s, information on Rembrandt's personal life, and citing other examples of hunting portraits with dead game, Sullivan argues the motivation for such a

³⁵ Wim Vroom, "The World Upside Down as a Political Motif," *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 58, no. 2 (2010): 103-106.

self-portrait is intrinsically tied to the status and class related to Rembrandt's newfound prosperity.³⁶

The literature that approaches themes of hunting and dead game in Dutch and Flemish art utilizes interdisciplinary approaches, examining the artists' lives along with philosophy in an attempt to determine attitudes toward hunting and animal treatment during the seventeenth century Netherlands. Hunting has often been utilized as an allegory for war in painting.³⁷ The theme of hunting and its implications throughout are important to explore in the context of seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish culture, particularly when it comes to virtue and moderation. Rather than discussing hunting scenes per se, Frank Palmeri addresses the sub-category of dead-game pieces. The author questions if they serve to criticize the excesses of nobility at the time. The genre of dead game paintings existed in both Dutch and Flemish art; Palmeri focuses on a handful of artists including Frans Snyders, Jan Fyt and Jan Weenix. He explores the implications of such paintings and how they indicate the artists' personal philosophies on hunting, excess, and animals in general.³⁸

In addition to a general overview of genre painting, Franits organizes his research by location and focuses on significant metropolitan cities. Franits attributes part of the proliferation of secular paintings of everyday life to economic developments that benefited the middle classes. He notes how the class divisions have been studied by sociologists and divided into several levels, with multiple identifiable "middle classes."³⁹ These middle classes were relatively

³⁶ Scott A. Sullivan, "Rembrandt's Self-Portrait with a Dead Bittern," *The Art Bulletin*. 62, no. 2 (June 1980): 236-243.

³⁷ Buijsen, "Life of a Hunter," 130-131.

³⁸ Frank Palmeri, "A Profusion of Dead Animals: Autocritique in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Gamepieces," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 16, no. 1 (2016): 50-77.

³⁹ Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting*, 13.

wealthy. Due to the rise of the middle class, more and more artists depicted these average Dutch citizens. Simon Schama, Ronni Baer, Henk van Nierop and Mariët Westermann all discuss the complicated mechanism of class in seventeenth century Dutch society. They use this socio-economic lens to look at Dutch portraits, genre scenes, landscape and scenes of peasant labor representing a cultural shift. The period of socio-economic changes was a confusing time. The result of economic growth not only changed lives in the urban areas but it changed the lives of small farmers who were unable to support their families through farming due to the invading wealthy landowners who saw the ownership of large swatches of lands as a signal of status. Amongst these changes there were those writers and artists alike who were critical of the ladder-climbers who formerly would have been significantly less wealthy than the aristocracy, but now were walking about in fine clothing some thought were fit only for nobility.⁴⁰

The literature on *Punishment of a Hunter* and Paulus Potter's life is limited. However, by looking at various themes throughout, and the extensive literature present on the changing social landscape, satire, landscape and others, light can be shed on the probable meanings behind Potter's works. Searching for a probable meaning behind the painting in turn helps to illuminate the reasons behind the compositional and other stylistic choices Potter made in creating a work that contrasts very much from his previous works and even the paintings that came after.

⁴⁰ Henk van Nierop, "The Anatomy of Society," in *Class Distinctions: Dutch Painting in the Age of Rembrandt and Vermeer*, by Ronni Baer, (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts Publications, 2016), 24-26.

Research Methodology

My thesis will utilize a qualitative approach that involves history, culture, and semiotics to analyze Paulus Potter's *Punishment of a Hunter*. The objective of my thesis is to firmly establish *Punishment's* place within the greater context of Dutch and Flemish art in addition to adequately providing an alternative reading to what has previously been presented.

My argument hinges primarily on my in-depth formal analysis of *Punishment of a Hunter* from thematic and stylistic perspectives. I will extrapolate thematic meanings by paying close attention to stylistic and compositional choices. Works of painters who came before Potter, including Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), Pieter Bruegel the Elder, and others, will be utilized while comparing and contrasting certain elements in each. The role of satire and animals within satire, and how Potter integrated these concepts into his work, will be explored. I will also illustrate how *Punishment* diverges from Potter's other works and those of his contemporaries while also addressing and examining the historical and socio-economic context and how each of these are manifested in Dutch painting.

Because my methodology will be multi-modal and most of my sources are historical in their perspective, much of my analysis will be my own original observations based on the historical information obtained. The already recognized theories regarding Potter's *Punishment* will be discussed as well, but the majority of my analysis will be based on my own observations. I aim to view the works through the cultural perspectives surmised from historical events without implementing a modern-day perspective. It is important that my supposition on the artist's thoughts or intentions is as close to accurate as possible.

Analysis

CHAPTER ONE: INFLUENCES ON *PUNISHMENT OF A HUNTER*

While *Punishment of a Hunter* is an unusual painting for its region and time period, there are several works that Potter used as influences. Some of these works are classically satirical indicating the presence of satire in *Punishment*. Other works that Potter imitated in his vignettes are not originally satirical but Potter changed them as if to make fun of them. In addition to other works Potter directly sourced, the use of anthropomorphic animals, caricatured human figures and local color also contribute to the indication that Potter was creating a satirical work. Established satirical readings will be explored in this chapter to bolster this claim, but it will also be explained why those readings are incomplete. Before addressing the inspirations for *Punishment*, first a brief description is necessary.

Beginning with the most violent of the hunting scenes, *The Bull Hunt*, *The Lion Hunt*, *The Boar Hunt*, and *The Bear Hunt* (Figures 11-14) feature dogs, horses, wild beasts, and men locked in violent struggle. While animals are maimed, the hunters are atop their horses, away from immediate danger. The facial expressions of all animals in the scene are rendered with terror and aggression. Meanwhile, the bear hunter has a contented look on his face and another man in *Lion Hunt* peers behind himself at the viewer, wielding a toothy grin. Less harrowing scenes, *Hunting Mountain Goats* and *Hunting Rabbits with a Ferret* (Figures 15, 16), also show the elevated position of the hunter. The goat hunter is poised on a cliff high above his prey. Likewise the man hunting rabbits is situated above the creatures, safely tucked away while the ferret is the primary workforce, flushing out the rabbits.

In *The Wolf Hunt* (Figure 17), unlike in most of the vignettes, the primary weapon-wielders, judging by their dress, are peasants. One noble equestrian in fine clothing

holds up his sword serenely at the wolf below him with an expression that contrasts to the aggravated, contorted faces of the peasants. The wolf stands on his hind feet and holds onto the rake as if trying to keep it from entrenching him further. The wolf enacts an animalistic tactic as well by biting at the prongs of the pitchfork. *Trapping a Leopard* and *Capturing Monkeys* do not feature the would-be hunter as an intrinsic factor in the story. In *Capturing Monkeys*, it is difficult to discern that the hunters are even human, as they are obscured in the distant horizon.

Two of the top vignettes are less overt in their relation to hunting. They include religious and mythological allegories. The top-left vignette, *The Vision of St Hubert* (Figure 18), shows the would-be saint Hubert as he genuflects on the ground before a handsome stag sporting a cross between its antlers. The top-right vignette, *Diana and Actaeon* (Figure 19), is strikingly different from the other vignettes in painterly technique. It is no surprise that Cornelius van Poelenburgh (1594-1667), known for his Italianate landscapes and mythological scenes, is the actual painter of this particular scene.⁴¹ A nude goddess of the hunt, Diana, knowingly gazes at the viewer as she reclines with her ladies in waiting; Diana's arm is outstretched in front of her, pointing to the antlered man Actaeon as he transforms into a deer as punishment. In doing so, she points to other vignettes as well.

In between *Saint Hubert* and *Diana* is an off-kilter hunting portrait, *Hunter with Dead Hare* (Figure 20). A nobleman proudly holds up a dead hare. His dogs stay by his side looking at the dead animal. The trio of man and dog are not at the center of the vignette but are situated far to the side, while the rest of the area is devoted to an empty open field, with a lone figure far in the distance. The fields of yellow and gray-tinted sky leave a dismal, barren taste in the viewer's mouth.

⁴¹ Buijsen, "Life of a Hunter," 127.

The two center scenes are the most telling of the painting. The exact center of *The Hunter and his Dogs Tried by the Animals* (Figure 21) is occupied by a sliver of empty space between a stag and a rampant bear. The bear plays a bailiff, escorting a human man to appear before his judge, a maned lion wielding a staff. Accompanying the lion and bear are several onlookers and other members of the court, including a fox, goat, leopard, and boar. The only animals that are not taking part in the prosecution are those who could be considered accomplices to the man: an overwrought horse tied to a tree, and several dogs led on leashes by a bear and a boar. As he approaches his judge and jury, the hunter is flanked by two wolves rather than his trusted hounds. The hunter does not lead the wolves as he does his hounds. The wolves instead lead him, holding his “leash” – the rope that binds his hands. These wolves are naturalistic, and contrast greatly to the image of the wolf in *The Wolf Hunt*. They even appear docile, gently leading the hunter utilizing their mouths, the only tool available to them, to hold the ropes. The hunter’s dogs are prisoners as well, contained by ropes around their necks and also led by a boar and bear.

Just below *Tried* is *The Execution of the Hunter and his Dogs* (Figure 22), the scene briefly described at the beginning of the introduction. The animals here have taken on more human characteristics and are using tools – tools taken from the hunter. They find no use for the gun lying on the ground, though. Near the spit where the man is being roasted, two bears look up at the hanged dogs. In the foreground are a rabbit and its much larger cousin the hare. They join in on the festivities but retain their innocent, animalistic qualities. A boar on all four feet looks on as another doe rears up, mirroring the goat’s pose on the left-hand side of the scene and echoing the strained pose of the hunter’s horse in *Tried*. Far in the distance, the lion and leopard, hunters in their own right, look on. What can be seen of the sky remains a bright blue, bluer than that in the surrounding vignettes, but it has been obscured by the smoke from the fire of the pit.

The grass in both *Tried* and *Execution* is a rich green, contrasting to the yellowish overtones in the outer vignettes.

In Poelenburgh's segment the lightsource is very clear, but it is haphazard in much of Potter's vignettes. In *Tried* the light seems to magically emanate up from the ground. If there was to be any divine or magical light, one would think that the use of a dramatic, spiritual light source would be appropriate when depicting Saint Hubert's conversion. His shadows are similar to the way some of Bruegel's figures are harder to discern, hidden in the shadows of houses, and may take an effort to glean. Some of Potter's animals are obscured heavily by darkness – for instance, the Asian elephant and a monkey concealed by the forest on the far left side of *Execution*. This could be due to lack of conservation.

The two central vignettes of *Punishment: Tried* and *Execution* are likely based on two satirical prints, the first of which has its origin in Antwerp (Figures 4, 9). Both prints are by anonymous artists, one published by Theodoor Galle in Antwerp around 1600, the other published by Hugo Allaerdt in 1650. Both prints show a trial and execution of hunters and hunting dogs run by several anthropomorphic animals. The 1650 print is accompanied by several moralist messages written throughout. Some of the various inscriptions read, for example, "Lords who are too severe turn respect into hatred," and "Let us dance and take joy, for now that the hunters have been captured."⁴²

Anthropomorphic animals have a historical role in satire going back at least to the sixteenth century. According to Margaret Sullivan, satire was ideal to serve the purposes of the Reformed Church.⁴³ The printing press enabled the influence of it to become widely available to

⁴² Buijsen, "Life of a Hunter," 124.

⁴³ Sullivan, "Bosch, Bruegel, Everyman and the Northern Renaissance," 118.

the public. Willem van Haecht was one of the leading publishers of satirical designs during the sixteenth century in Antwerp and influenced Dutch art as well. The period between 1566 and 1585 was a time of political turmoil in the Spanish Netherlands, particularly in Antwerp. Along with physical revolts, a war of propaganda occurred with hundreds of pamphlets published by Van Haecht.⁴⁴ Many of the prints contained animals used as caricatures, representation of human vices and sometimes specific persons. Examples of such tropes include the sleeping lion and the gluttonous wolf. The wolf was thought to specifically represent King Philip's (1527-1598) military commander Don Juan (1547-1578).⁴⁵

Based on these observations, Edwin Buijsen presumes there is a direct political relation to the contentions against the Prince of Orange, Prince William II in the Dutch Republic at the time. Buijsen argues that the whole of *Punishment* is a condemnation of Prince William II in which hunting is used as a metaphor for warfare. There was heavy tension at the time between the Prince and the state powers. The Prince was being challenged by the state for an overreach of his military might, and they were wanting monetary cuts made. The Prince regarded this as an affront to his power. In order to maintain peace, the States-General passed a resolution placing all military power in the hands of the Prince in 1648. However, the city of Amsterdam refused to accept the resolution. In retaliation, Prince William II occupied Amsterdam with his excessive army for several days. Protests erupted and the Prince was referred to as a "tyrant," among other things. His death from smallpox that same year was what ended the struggle. As his successor was only an infant, his older brother Count Johan Maurits of Nassau-Siegen was suggested as successor instead, with the hopes his temperament would prove for a moderate reign and more of

⁴⁴ Vroom, "The World Upside Down as a Political Motif," 103.

⁴⁵ Janson, "The Animal Fable," 69, 72.

a balance of power.

Buijsen suggests the hunter holding the dead hare in the top center panel of *Punishment* is a portrait of Count Johan Maurits (Figure 23)⁴⁶ and that the figure in the background is not flushing out the game but rather rushes to deliver a message to the would-be hero Count. Buijsen explains how Maurits is positioned between two hunters, Saint Hubert and Actaeon, as he is faced with a choice. Shall he take up arms and end up “punished” like Actaeon, or will he remain peaceful like Saint Hubert? Potter personally knew Johan Maurits and was on good terms with him through his father-in-law, (Maurits regularly visited Potter in his studio),⁴⁷ so, if this is Johan Maurits, why would Potter render him so unflatteringly?

Buijsen implies that the representation of Maurits faces a choice, but in the image the man has already chosen the hunt. If hunting is like warfare, then why is he holding a hare? Also, Buijsen’s interpretation does not elucidate the remaining vignettes. We already have a vignette of a hunter being “punished,” so are the central panels alluding to the Galle and Allaerdt prints to make its intentions clear, and if so, is the hunter within meant to be the deceased Prince William II? That would seem an odd depiction considering his natural death.⁴⁸ Also, if this work is a reference to the print *Lords*, directly calling out a leader being turned on by his countrymen, would it not make more sense for Potter to have used more cattle to represent the Dutch people, as was so common?

Furthermore, while the “Punishment” referenced in the title surely does point to the center panels and even *Actaeon*, there are several “punishments” throughout, and not every

⁴⁶ Buijsen, “Life of a Hunter,” 131-133.

⁴⁷ Houbraken, *Great Theatre of the Netherlandish Painters and Paintresses Volume II*, 127.

⁴⁸ Beirne and Janssen, “Hunting Worlds Turned Upside Down?” 58-59.

“hunter” is a human. There are several animals throughout that are hunters themselves: the lions, the leopard, the ferret, the wolf, and of course the hunting dogs themselves. The dogs are being “punished” in several vignettes, one by being kicked up into the air, some are dismembered and mauled by a bear. The wolf in *Wolf Hunt* is being “punished” for his probable transgressions against the farmer’s livestock. A hunter and his horse are punished in *The Lion Hunt* and in return the lion attacking them is punished with a spear piercing his flesh. Actaeon is not being punished for hunting specifically but rather for daring to see the naked body of the goddess of the hunt.

The vignettes of *The Lion Hunt*, *The Wolf Hunt*, and *The Boar Hunt* are all based on other works. *The Wolf Hunt* is designed after Peter Paul Rubens’ *The Wolf and Fox Hunt* (1616) (Figure 24). Rubens’ depiction is much more detailed and crowded than Potter’s rendition. There are what appear to be peasants in Ruben’s work but they are less noticeable than those in Potter’s version. There are several foxes throughout and two wolves, one being run through with a spear rather than a pitchfork. The overall effect of the work is quite dramatic and baroque in its rendering. One of the hunters on horseback retains the expression of a legendary hero with a calm and determined expression. Potter omits several figures and animals, centering the scene around just a small number of people and effectively changing the narrative from that festive scene to a life and death struggle. Potter used another of Rubens’ works — *The Lion Hunt* (1621) (Figure 25) for his own end in *Punishment*. Potter again removes most of the figures.

There is an air of true human drama as one of the hunters falls from his horse and is mauled by a lion. A sympathetic light is given to the fallen man and the two men on the other side of him also on the ground. This contrasts to the way Potter chose to render a man going through the same act. Potter does not give him a dramatic heroic pose; rather half of his face is

covered by the lion and the strange smiles of his fellow hunters indicate a lack of empathy. Again, Potter also drastically widens the composition lending almost half of the work to the mountainous features in the background. The *Boar Hunt* vignette echoes Antonio Tempesta's *The Boar Hunt* (1608) (Figure 26), again with less activity in the background. The hunter in Tempesta's work is smiling down at the animal, indicating his confidence in his dogs subduing the beast, but the hunter in *Punishment* does not have the confident look of Tempesta's hunter; he does have strangely serene non-expression while not one but multiple dogs are overcome and at least one dog has already lost his leg. There are other figures in the distant background, but again the subject is not solely focused on the hunt in the foreground, as the landscape occupies half the space. However, in *Bear Hunt* the hunter is not so confident, and the bear holds a dog in his mouth, violently maiming him. Here the bear has the upper hand over the dogs even though the human hunter is about to shoot him in the skull. The hunter gets his kill but not without significant loss.

The leopard and monkey scenes are also based on other works of art. Johannes Stradanus (1523-1605) was a Flemish artist who practiced a range of media. His designs featuring leopards and monkeys were published in several print series (Figure 27, 28). Each print has an explanation on the bottom explaining the scene.⁴⁹ In one of the prints, hunters are using mirrors to trick leopards. The first step is to steal her cubs while she is away, then, in her distraught state looking for them, she mistakes her reflection for one of her cubs. She jumps into the cage with the mirror where she thinks her cub is and is subsequently trapped. Stradanus's scene depicts a landscape with several leopards all looking in mirrors in cages, several caves with cubs inside, and the hunters using the mirrors to trap the leopards are also present. Potter, rather, chooses to

⁴⁹ Buijsen, "Life of a Hunter," 128.

depict one leopard falling prey to the trap, and no hunters or cubs are in sight.

The symbol of the mirror plays a significant role in the history of satire. It was most notably present in Pieter Bruegel the Elder's works, such as *The Battle Between Carnival and Lent* (1559) (Figure 29). As Bruegel was famous for doing, Potter is examining humans critically, possibly through an Erasmian lens. Erasmus was a Dutch philosopher who heavily influenced Dutch Calvinist thought, parlayed to the common man via study of the Bible and Calvinist teachings. Though Erasmus was not popular among strict Calvinists, Dutch protestants were known to have studied his works.⁵⁰ He essentially argues in *Handbook of the Militant Christian* that as humans, we are under siege by the "external world" and our "human nature." The only way to combat this is through *self-reflection*.⁵¹ The word reflection is metaphorical, but is represented in the literal reflection of the mirror.

This may not seem like true satire, but Sullivan argues this was a form of satire Bruegel used, and Potter uses it similarly in *Punishment*.⁵² While Bruegel encourages people to reflect inwardly, as represented by mirrors throughout his work, he also implies the impossibility of true self-knowledge, as illustrated by the image of a fool as he looks at himself in a convex mirror in Pieter Bruegel's design *Everyman* (1558) (Figure 30) engraved by Pieter van der Heyden.⁵³ Another "satirist" to utilize the mirror as a representation of introspection, Sebastian Brant, the fifteenth-century German satirist, who wrote *Ship of Fools* (1494), describes his very manuscript as a 'mirror' for 'fools' so each one can discover himself.⁵⁴ Potter's rearrangement of Stradanus's

⁵⁰ James D. Tracy, *Erasmus of the Low Countries*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 189-191.

⁵¹ Desiderius Erasmus, *Handbook of the Militant Christian*, translated by John P. Dolan, (Notre Dame, Indiana: Fides Publishers, 1962), 83.

⁵² Sullivan, "Bosch, Bruegel, Everyman and the Northern Renaissance," 120.

⁵³ Elizabeth Alice Honig, *Pieter Bruegel and the Idea of Human Nature*, (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2019), 14.

⁵⁴ Sullivan, "Bosch, Bruegel, Everyman and the Northern Renaissance," 129.

design emphasizes the image of the mirror, calling for the viewer to examine themselves.

Potter had an unprecedented talent for rendering animals with human-like feeling, but in *Punishment*, he takes his animal figures to an outright anthropomorphic level he had not previously used, clearly inspired by the prints previously discussed. A number of these animals are rendered cartoonish and exaggerated, reminiscent of the figures in *Carnival*, which are not actual persons but instead serve as caricatures participating in his allegories.⁵⁵ Potter uses much more human activity than seen in the published prints Buijsen cited. Some of the animals walk on two legs as they celebrate and smile. The animals in the prints however are stern and stoic. The contrasted revelrous activities of Potter's animals, in carrying out their punishment, are not bastions of virtue but rather flawed as well. They partake in their baser desires.

The main attention of the animals in *Tried* and *Execution* is focused on the numerous exotic animals taking part in the trial. These exotic animals make up the majority of the animals behaving in a human manner. They are more prevalently cartoonish than the animals Potter would have seen in his everyday life. Obscured by the shade of a tree to the far right of *Tried* is a cow. It does not appear to be the same animal seen in *The Bull Hunt*, and as that animal is more likely a European buffalo.

When Potter painted *Charming the Beasts* (1650), he included over thirty species of animals in addition to several birds and insects.⁵⁶ They are rendered relatively poorly compared

⁵⁵ Honig, *Pieter Bruegel and the Idea of Human Nature*, 112.

⁵⁶ Edwin Buijsen, "Orpheus Charming the Beasts," in *Paulus Potter: Paintings, Drawings and Etchings*, by Amy Walsh, Edwin Buijsen and Ben Broos, (Zwolle, Netherlands: Waander Publishers, 1994), 124.

to his beloved cattle, but much better than they are in *Punishment*, which was probably painted after *Orpheus*, or if not within the same five year time-span. The *Orpheus* animals do not appear as caricatured as they do in *Punishment*. A number of the non-anthropomorphic animals in selected vignettes are cartoonish as well. As for the animals of the bovine variety, including the shaded cow behind the lion in *Tried*, the European buffalo, and the Mediterranean water buffalo, they are rendered with Potter's usual skill and sentiment.

It is possible the cow-like animals could be the most realistically depicted in part due to Potter's predilection for cattle and his years spent painting them as shown by his extensive body of work. The horses and dogs are well-rendered as well but non-exotic wild animals such as deer and wild boar are not entirely realistic. Hofstede de Groot describes Potter's singular talent in creating human-like character in his animal portraits likewise animal-like traits to his humans.⁵⁷ The bovine animals in *Punishment* have the most "human character," Hofstede de Groot speaks of, but they are the *least* anthropomorphized.

By Potter's time the cow had been an established symbol of the Netherlands. It was codified as such in the late 1500s with an anonymous English painting that satirized the Dutch Republic's exploitation by the Prince of Orange – the Dutch Republic represented by a "brutalized milk cow."⁵⁸ With the precedent of humans represented as animals in satire, the gentle cow represents the Dutch land itself. Concurrently, it is likely that most, if not all the animals seen in *Tried* and *Execution*, are not animals at all, but people. Those participating in the most anthropomorphic of activities are effectively turned to beasts by giving into baser instincts.

⁵⁷ Hofstede De Groot "Section XVI: Paulus Potter," 583.

⁵⁸ Peter C. Sutton, *Dutch and Flemish Paintings: The Collection of Willem Baron van Dedem*, (London: Frances Lincoln Limited, 2002), 108.

Not only does Potter utilize satirical themes he had not previously used, he also uses some moralizing themes not present in his typical bucolic landscapes. The expression and direct look given by goddess of the hunt Diana in Poelenburgh's vignette echoes the knowing looks of women seen in many a moralizing work. Jacob Duck's *Musical Ensemble with Cockatoo* (1660) (Figure 31) is one example. At first glance this painting is a typical scene of revelry common in seventeenth-century Dutch painting, but Mariët Westermann points out the subtle cues in it indicating a moralizing message. While the majority of the composition is taken up by several musicians and imparts a sensation of fun, on the far left side of the painting two dogs direct the viewer's attention to a woman seated at a table. Westermann describes her "knowing look" as similar to that of Diana's in *Punishment*. The woman, like Diana, is also pointing to something. Westermann reads her pointing to a clock as a reminder of the impermanence of worldly pleasures.⁵⁹

The dancing animals in *Executed* are reminiscent of dancers in Dutch tavern scenes. Wayne Franits notes the general Calvinist attitude towards dancing, sometimes being depicted as negative with the idea that dancing leads to sex and other lewd behaviors.⁶⁰ Potter specifically uses dancing here to illustrate the lack of morals in the animals. Even though moralizing themes were not present in most of Potter's work, it comes as little surprise here that Potter uses some of the same tropes. Houbraken writes in his excerpt on Paulus Potter that he was reportedly of outstanding virtuous character, traits not necessarily shared by his friends and contemporaries.⁶¹

Related to moralizing images, the religious and mythological images must be addressed

⁵⁹ Mariët Westermann, "Subject and Value in Seventeenth Century Dutch Painting," in *A Moral Compass: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Painting in the Netherlands*, by Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Grand Rapids Art Museum; New York: Rizzoli International Publication Inc., 1999), 38.

⁶⁰ Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting*, 58.

⁶¹ Houbraken, *Great Theatre of the Netherlandish Painters and Paintresses Volume II*, 128.

as well. These are not common occurrences in Potter's work. While Potter created religious and mythological images early in his career, they are far from common in his work.⁶² Julie Hochstasser notes that in the seventeenth century, mythological and religious images were almost always featured only in allegorical works.⁶³ This is another indication of the allegorical manner for the entire painting.

Potter's *Punishment of a Hunter* is first and foremost a satirical work that also uses allegory and moralizing themes. This is based on the fact that some of the works from which Potter based his painting are satirical. In addition Potter represented his animal figures in caricatured form and indicated they are representations of people, a common trope in satire. Other indications include Potter's usage of local color and lack of natural lighting to create a flatter appearance and creating a cartoonish overall appearance to the work. His uses of religious and mythological imagery also point to allegorical and moralizing themes along with similarities to moralizing genre pieces of the time. The established literature on *Punishment of a Hunter* agrees it is a satirical work as well, but the political reading is incomplete. In the following chapters I will expound upon my own interpretation.

⁶² Walsh, "Stylistic Development in the Work of Paulus Potter," 21.

⁶³ Hochstrasser, "Inroads to Seventeenth-Century Dutch Landscape Painting," 198.

CHAPTER TWO: THE ROLE OF VIGNETTES

In service of the satiric reading, Potter chose to use vignettes. In these fourteen separate compositions, they are thematically connected with a hunting motif. However, hunting alone fails to fully unify each vignette. More importantly, there is an underlying meaning to the hunting scenes that can be understood only when looking at each composition juxtaposed together. Each smaller composition helps to form a larger picture, and Potter's organization of each scene into its own composition is vital. This chapter will explain how said vignettes allow for a variety of environments, guide the viewer's eye in the direction that Potter intended and finally how the symmetry they create highlights the asymmetry in the individual compositions emphasizing the landscape.

While it is tempting to focus solely on individual vignettes, it is important to examine the painting as a whole. Firstly, the absolute middle of the painting is a mix of the ground below the bear's feet in *Tried* and the bright orange hue above the hanging tree in *Execution*. The center of *Tried*, as well, is the negative space between the stag and bear, while the center of *Execution* is the trunk of the hanging tree. Even though the arguably most interesting activity occurs in these two center panels, the eye is not immediately drawn to the center; rather the initial image the eye is drawn to is the elephant in *Tried*. The elephant stands out as the brightest spot in the vignette, and due to its sheer corpulence, in comparison to every other figure. Above the elephant is the hare hunter. He is not exactly centered at the top but together with the surrounding foliage of *Tried* and *Execution* forms a triangle with the hunter at the very top.

In addition, Potter uses his individual asymmetrical compositions to create a balanced image overall. Pairs of outer vignettes that are situated directly across from each other, such as *Hunter with Dead Hare* and *The Lion Hunt*, balance each other as the hunter and his dogs take up

the entire right side of their respective painting and the activity in the lion hunt takes up the left side of its scene and leaves a mostly empty landscape beside it just as in *Dead Hare*. *The Wolf Hunt* and *Capturing Monkeys* complement each other somewhat as well. While most of the subjects of *Wolf Hunt* are uncomfortably squeezed into the right side of the frame, there is one figure halfway out of frame with a significant amount of negative space separating the two sides, with only an improvised weapon connecting the two configurations. The monkeys likewise are sequestered to the left side of their painting and a thin tree sits in the distance opposite them while figures barely recognizable as humans peer on. The tree behind the monkeys echoes the man with the pitchfork in *The Wolf Hunt* as the branches reach past the frame.

Meanwhile, the boar fights for its life against a pair of hunters and a pack of dogs appears almost as if it could run into the frame of *The Lion Hunt*. The man on horseback in *The Boar Hunt*, bending forward with his sword lowered, reflects the man on the dappled horse in *The Lion Hunt* as he looks up rather than down with his sword held high above his head. The lion hunter flees the scene while the boar hunter remains steadfast. The sparsely dressed man on the far left of *Lion* is back-to-back with the hunter on foot pointing his firearm at the boar. Each man has a weapon – one a gun, one a spear, and holds them parallel. *The Boar Hunt* and *The Lion Hunt* by themselves could be construed as one painting, one scene, if not for the obvious difference in geographical locale made evident by the clothes each party wears and the species being hunted. The men are not the only ones in the vignettes playing off of one another, as dogs and lions mirror each other as well, though one is hunting and the other is hunted.

These are not the only ways in which the vignettes interact with one another. The goddess Diana, in her rectangular world, looks directly at the viewer while gesturing toward the hunter Actaeon, pointing out his punishment of transformation. Is she pointing to Actaeon though? Her

arm would be rendered slightly inward and lower if so. Instead, it looks as if she is directly pointing to the top-center vignette of the hunter with the dead hare. Like Actaeon, the faraway figure running in the distance of *Dead Hare* is in a hurry, but rather than fleeing as Actaeon does, he runs towards something. In fact, he and Actaeon run towards each other. The hunter, less obviously, points to the top left panel as Diana pointed to him. Saint Hubert's horse then takes up the role of directing the viewer's gaze. The aim is well-disguised, in that the horse is portraying typical horse behavior, an equine version of *contrapposto*, resulting in one hoof pointed downwards. The hoof gestures towards the vignette containing the hunter in the mountains hunting a goat.

When we reach here the vignette of *The Boar Hunt*, that easily leads our eye to *The Lion Hunt*, then to the buffalo. In the vignettes *Hunting Rabbits*, *Trapping a Leopard* and *The Wolf Hunt*, the figures are all facing the center panels. This serves to draw the viewer's attention. Neither of the two center panels seem to have a clear focus that draws the eye in. As discussed previously, the elephant is what initially grabs the attention of the spectator. We are meant to see the elephant and ponder meaningfully while she and the figure of Diana direct our attention to the hare hunter situated above. Thus we make our way around the world of the huntsmen, ultimately leading us back to the elephant *in media res* and then finally to the morbid ending of the "story."

Potter chose to have two central panels. They are at the same stage so to speak, but at different points in time. One scene shows the hunter at his trial, and the other shows the period of time after his execution. These two scenes read like a modern day comic strip. This suggests a story that is being told. Rather than the outer vignettes serving as ornamental accompaniments, they serve as part of said story. Creating the separate compositions better enables Potter to have

control over how the painting is viewed, in effect controlling the narrative of the “story.” It is not a story in a true sense of linear story-telling but rather an episodic story with the “before” surrounding the “after.” It is difficult to truly understand the meaning of the whole until seeing first the outer panels then reaching the center panels. The scenes in the panel could have been in any order, but the point was for our eye to stay outward and be guided slowly toward the middle as if in a spiral.

Utilizing the vignettes also enables Potter's subjects to be framed in their own world. In his younger days, when he was still developing his style, he would recreate images of other artists, reworking the compositions and refitting the figures into the space. According to Amy Walsh, when Potter would create these copies, he would change enough compositional elements to make it his “own.” Examples of changes he would make are: reducing the number of figures, relocating figures to the background, and simplifying and giving focus to the main subjects.⁶⁴ He would rework his own paintings this way as well. His *Two Pigs in a Sty* (1649) (Figure 32) had been reworked more than once before developing his final composition in which the titular pigs take up the entirety of the space with very little to observe in the background.

Another factor can be related to Potter’s painterly shortcomings. First, Potter was generally better at creating unified compositions the smaller they were.⁶⁵ His large seven by eleven foot painting *The Young Bull* (1647) (Figure 33), at once lauded as an impressive painting, is deeply flawed when it comes to the foreground and how the animal and human figures connect to the landscape. In addition there are some inconsistencies in the bull itself which indicates that Potter used a mismatch of several specimens from which to study.⁶⁶ In contrast, the majority of

⁶⁴ Walsh, “Stylistic Development in the Work of Paulus Potter,” 21.

⁶⁵ Slive, *Dutch Painting 1600-1800*, 210.

⁶⁶ Edwin Buijsen, “The Young Bull,” in *Paulus Potter: Paintings, Drawings and Etchings*, by Amy Walsh, Edwin Buijsen and Ben Broos, (Zwolle, Netherlands: Waander Publishers, 1994), 70.

Potter's other works are considerably smaller, which serves his skill set. *Punishment of a Hunter* gives the impression that it is a very large painting, but it is rather small for its subject matter and the vignettes within are very small, some as small as seven by eight inches. The individual compositions also enabled Potter to paint in the smaller form in which he was more accomplished. Potter was also heavily praised for his talent in illustrating detail, likening him to a miniaturist.⁶⁷

Potter's inability to portray "animated scenes" is decried by Hofstede de Groot, which may be another reason that contributed to his choice.⁶⁸ Poelenburgh's reclining immortals in *Diana and Actaeon* contain more fluidity than any of Potter's visceral hunting scenes. Potter was surely aware of this shortcoming but realized he could use the pattern of sky and land to create a different kind of movement in which the compositions interact with one another, belying the frozen forms of man and beast; the asymmetry of each vignette serves to create more movement to make up for the otherwise still scenes.

It must be taken into account that this is all based on the assumption that Potter was the one to have made the choice and it was not a request made by whoever commissioned the painting. It is unknown if the painting was commissioned and if so, by whom. It is likely, as during this period of time many Dutch and Flemish painters of this period – the Golden Age of Dutch painting – made their money through commissions, and it is known that Potter did create commissions, one famous example being *The Farmyard* (1649) (Figure 34), purchased by Princess of Orange Amalia van Solms-Braunfels, and then subsequently rejected on the advice of her court, due to the unsightly image of the micturating cow.⁶⁹ Piers Beirne however notes the

⁶⁷ Hofstede De Groot "Section XVI: Paulus Potter," 583.

⁶⁸ Hofstede De Groot "Section XVI: Paulus Potter," 583.

⁶⁹ Houbraken, *Great Theatre of the Netherlandish Painters and Paintresses Volume II*, 127.

unlikelihood that this *Punishment* itself was commissioned.⁷⁰

Potter's use of vignettes, while an unusual one, was a choice he made to enable him to control the narrative. He was able to have more control over his compositions by dividing his scenes up, which in turn allowed for changes in scenery and different exotic locales. It also better enables him to arrange each scene as to guide the viewer's eye the way he wanted them, ultimately leading to the consequential ending. Finally, his use of the vignettes enabled him to create an illusion of symmetry that emphasized the asymmetry and vastness of the empty landscape in relation to the figures.

⁷⁰ Beirne and Janssen, "Hunting Worlds Turned Upside Down?," 59.

CHAPTER THREE: RELATIONSHIPS OF THE LANDSCAPE AND FIGURES

The rural landscape had special meaning to the Dutch populus. In order to demonstrate Potter's pointed satire and how it relates to man's connection with rurality, Potter arranges his landscapes and the figures in a disjointed manner to mirror reality. He uses a combination of tactics to achieve this. He does not unify his compositions tonally in *Punishment* despite his ability to do so. With that lack of unity comes a disjointedness between the figures and their environment. The placement of his figures within the landscape denote a lack of peace along with a lack of perceived depth and emphasizes the amount of space devoted to the landscapes in certain vignettes. He also neglects to include clear and up close man-made structures, highlighting the "wildness" of such landscapes. He utilizes gray and yellow hues in most of his landscapes to illustrate a barren land. He does this to bring to mind the loss of rural and wild landscapes to the viewer.

Julie Hochstrasser discusses the meaning of landscapes in sixteenth and seventeenth Dutch and Flemish art. It was a common pastime for the Dutch to partake in relaxing strolls through the rural countryside.⁷¹ Those citizens who could not participate in travel served as the primary target audience for small landscapes.⁷² Hochstrasser speculates that in the appeal of the countryside, there was an implicit value in rural images given the ever expanding population of the Dutch Republic.⁷³

The population of the Dutch Republic grew exponentially during the seventeenth century, and was already heavily urbanized versus the rest of Europe, especially for such a small area of

⁷¹ Hochstrasser, "Inroads to Seventeenth-Century Dutch Landscape Painting," 202, 207.

⁷² Nguyen, "The Made Landscape," 29.

⁷³ Hochstrasser, "Inroads to Seventeenth-Century Dutch Landscape Painting," 206-207.

land. The city of Amsterdam was the hotspot for population growth, more populous than neighboring cities such as Haarlem and Leiden. What little countryside that existed was in the process of being developed, and bore little resemblance to traditional rural society. The dwindling amount of farmscapes of Holland likely contributed to what Walter Liedtke refers to as the “rustic feel” that rural landscapes provided for those urban citizens.⁷⁴ Potter himself was an example of a frequent participant of the exercise. He would go on walks in the countryside near his home in The Hague, sketchbook in hand, to create studies of animals, people and landscapes he saw.⁷⁵

Not only was pure natural landscape lacking in the Dutch Republic by this time, but farm life seemed to be disappearing.⁷⁶ By the mid-seventeenth century, peasant farmers were being forced out of their lands as wealthy urban citizens invested in land. Kristina Nguyen notes the trend of building “country houses” on farmland among the wealthy. These very houses were a physical manifestation of the ever-expanding distance between the wealthy and the country peasants.⁷⁷ Farmers who once labored in the idyllic countryside now were forced to labor in the expanding villages and towns.⁷⁸ Considering Potter’s frequent depiction of the beloved landscapes and farmlands near his home in The Hague, it would be likely that Potter had a certain affinity for the country escape and the animals in it as well. It would have especially made an impression on him after moving to Amsterdam, the hotspot of said growth.

⁷⁴ Walter Liedtke, “Landscape Painting in the Netherlands,” *Metropolitan Museum of Art* December, 2014. Accessed January 17th, 2024.

⁷⁵ Walsh, “Stylistic Development in the Work of Paulus Potter,” 23.

⁷⁶ Van Nierop, “The Anatomy of Society,” 37.

⁷⁷ Nguyen, “The Made Landscape,” 21.

⁷⁸ Baer, *Class Distinctions*, 215.

With this in mind, landscape painting was a very popular subject among Dutch artists. Harmony created by naturalistic lighting and an overall tonal hue are what elevated a painting to a “higher status.”⁷⁹ Seymour Slive credits Jan van Goyen (1596-1656) with this movement of tonality in landscape painting. The tonal school involved a monochromatic veil-like quality over the entirety of a composition and grayish-green with transparent browns for shadows, an “airiness” that held an increasing level of transparency on the horizon and a compositionally diagonal recession.⁸⁰

Julie Hochstrasser also notes these elements in her work on landscapes citing Jan van Goyen’s *Beach at Egmond aan Zee* (1646) (Figure 35). Hochstrasser points out Van Goyen achieves the desired unification with a leading diagonal and especially unity of tone that “subdues the local color.”⁸¹ While residing in The Hague, Potter’s family rented a house from Jan van Goyen, who also lived next door, so they were well acquainted with him.⁸² Goyen’s influence on Potter’s landscapes is apparent.

Amy Walsh praises Potter’s ability to create an atmospheric landscape with light reflecting off the surfaces beginning as young as sixteen years of age.⁸³ Potter’s adeptness at creating a unified landscape and exacting understanding of light is proven by many of his early paintings, including but not limited to *The Milkmaid* (1646) (Figure 36) and *The Flight into Egypt* (1644) (Figure 37). In *The Milkmaid*, the landscape appears simple, and Potter easily creates a sense of space and depth, wherein in the foreground, the young milkmaid and her

⁷⁹ Liedtke, “Landscape Painting in the Netherlands,” Accessed January 17th, 2024.

⁸⁰ Slive, *Dutch Painting 1600-1800*, 186-187.

⁸¹ Hochstrasser, “Inroads to Seventeenth-Century Dutch Landscape Painting,” 194-195.

⁸² Walsh, “The Life of Paulus Potter (1625-1654),” 11.

⁸³ Walsh, “Stylistic Development in the Work of Paulus Potter,” 21.

animals blend into and are a part of the landscape. *The Flight into Egypt*, completed two years after *The Milkmaid*, achieves even more tonality, as the figures' clothes and animals all share the same shades of red-brown, with the earth accurately depicting the effects of the sunrise on local color. There are a few contrasted colors of green that are present in the trees, yet they do not clash but show the vastness of the space in which Mary, mother of Jesus, finds herself. Potter was even an innovator in the world of landscape as he was the first Dutch artist to render landscapes in stormy weather, and he did it well in *Cattle and Sheep in a Stormy Landscape* (1647) (Figure 38), so he was certainly learned and adept.⁸⁴

However, when looking at the landscapes in *Punishment*, there is an apparent lack of unification, particularly between the figures and their environments. All of the outer vignettes share these characteristics, but I will use just two vignettes as examples: *Hunting Rabbits* and *The Wolf Hunt*. In addition to the lack of tonal unification in *Hunting Rabbits* there is no real effort made here to depict natural light. While there is depth of space, the horizon line is generally flat and uninteresting save for an amorphous hill in the background. There is no clarity that gives shape to the background. It is a vague representation, a suggestion, indicating a land that does not exist in reality.

The dog lying down next to his master is the same color as the landscape. Normally this would indicate a unification of said landscape, however, the color of the dog is localized. There is no indication that the color of his fur is affected by a light source reflecting off the ground. This is apparent by the dark snout of the dog. He is flattened in comparison to the landscape, and his master even more so. The hunter here is unaffected entirely by the surrounding colors; as a result he is disjointed from the rest of the painting. The effect is similar to the contrast created by

⁸⁴ Edwin Buijsen, "Cattle and Sheep in a Stormy Landscape," in *Paulus Potter: Paintings, Drawings and Etchings*, by Amy Walsh, Edwin Buijsen and Ben Broos, (Zwolle, Netherlands: Waander Publishers, 1994), 71.

the combination of flat animated characters dwelling in detailed, pleasant and muted backgrounds in early Disney animation. This also contributes to the satirical and cartoonish appearance of the overall painting. Piers Birne specifically notes how the painting overall has the “look of a cartoon.”⁸⁵ Even the figure in the background of *Hunter With a Dead Hare*, presumably helping to flush out more game, is haphazardly rendered and frankly appears barely human – more crocodilian in character. In the vignette, *Tried*, the light source does not appear natural and is utilized only to highlight the central scene involving the honorable judge in the form of the lion as the hunter accepts his sentence.

In the genre of landscape painting, human figures were present, but only to serve the landscape. Kristina Nguyen writes of the typical landscape, “Peace is created by the almost magical blanketing of the traces of human habitation.”⁸⁶ Writing about “traveler figures” in landscapes, Kristina Nguyen notes that such placements are usually used to emphasize the vastness of the landscape itself.⁸⁷ Works such as Hendrick Avercamp’s *Winter Landscape with Skaters near a Village* (1610) (Figure 39) and Jan van Goyens’ *Beach at Egmond aan Zee*. In these works the human life scattered throughout is used to invoke the spirit of the season rather than tell the viewer anything about the individual lives of the paintings’ inhabitants. In the words of Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., “the environment establishes a space for the figure, but the figure focuses it and gives it meaning.”⁸⁸ Avercamp’s skaters emphasize the size of the space, but they simply serve the purpose of the painting which is to illustrate the town landscape. Wheelock was

⁸⁵ Birne and Janssen, “Hunting Worlds Turned Upside Down?” 56.

⁸⁶ Nguyen, “The Made Landscape,” 30.

⁸⁷ Hochstrasser, “Inroads to Seventeenth-Century Dutch Landscape Painting,” 197.

⁸⁸ Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., *Perspective, Optics, and Delft Artists Around 1650*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1977), 286.

specifically talking about interior scenes by Johannes Vermeer, but the sentiment applies to exterior scenes as well. Potter does the opposite though, using the landscape to serve his figures rather than his figures serving the landscape. In addition, in contrast to the way the scarcity of human figures is used to denote peace in landscapes, by placing his figures in the foreground, rather than only hinting at a human presence, helps to emphasize a lack of peace within his landscapes beyond the obvious violence and aggression that is present.

Typically Potter would carefully place his figures in the middle ground to create depth in his compositions.⁸⁹ Potter does not utilize this technique in *Punishment*. Rather, the majority of his figures are in the foreground, and the occasional distant figure is far in the background. The only real indication of depth in *Hunter With a Dead Hare*, is the running man in the background, and he is displaced. It is difficult to delineate the space: what is the background and what is the middle ground here? The only assurance is the foreground. In *Hunting Mountain Goats*, Potter comes close to convincing the eye that the goat is far away and down in a valley, but the goat's size betrays this. In *Capturing Monkeys*, he creates more space and distance between the monkeys and their potential captors, including a distant body of water and two tiny human figures that could easily go unnoticed. *The Bear Hunt* is another vignette where the space is made confusing by a figure not present in the foreground, this time a dog rather than a man.

The lack of attention given to each landscape is especially telling given the amount of space in the painting as a whole dedicated to empty landscape. It is especially apparent in the most curious composition of *Hunter with a Dead Hare*, in which the amount of space dedicated to the landscape alone is at least sixty percent. In other vignettes such as *Capturing Monkeys*, *The Boar Hunt*, *The Lion Hunt*, *Hunting Rabbits*, and *Hunting Mountain Goats*, at least half of the composition is taken up by a natural landscape. The asymmetry present in the individual

⁸⁹ Walsh, "Stylistic Development in the Work of Paulus Potter," 23.

vignettes actually balances out the entire work.

While Potter's typical landscapes echo the farm life of the rural landscapes, in *Punishment* they appear to be purely wild places, touched by human hands only when the occasional hunter decided to try his luck. This is made evident by the lack of man-made structures. Landscapes of the Dutch Republic were rarely purely natural (given the reality that very little of the Netherlands at this time had been left undeveloped).⁹⁰ Particularly unusual is the lack of architecture of *Diana and Actaeon*, something that otherwise is common in Italianate landscapes by Dutch artists.⁹¹ Though Potter collaborated with Poelenburgh for this vignette, it is likely Potter made this choice, not Poelenburgh.⁹²

What evidence there is of humanity's presence is slight. Making a choice to depict unadorned landscapes could represent his lamentations of the disappearing farmland. There is of course a separation between nature and farm land, but in the context of seventeenth-century Dutch thought there may not have been a strict difference. The idea of "nature" as equivalent to "wild lands completely untouched by man" is a concept that arose in the eighteenth century with the rise of industrialism. Prior to then they were not seen as entirely separate entities. According to Kristina Nguyen, the typical Dutch landscape illustrated a boundary that existed in Dutch minds between the "city" and the "rural." In *Hunting Rabbits*, the distance between the blurry man-made structures in the background and the figure illustrates the firm placement of the hunter in "nature." The boundary Nguyen speaks of takes visual form in *Rabbits*. It is the netting set up surrounding the rabbits' warren.

⁹⁰ Nguyen, "The Made Landscape," 8.

⁹¹ Nguyen, "The Made Landscape," 24.

⁹² Buijsen, "Life of a Hunter," 128.

Despite the emphasis placed on the natural landscapes, they are not as beautiful and bright as can be seen in Potter's other landscapes. The landscapes present in most of the Potter's vignettes are featureless. The landscape in *Hunting Rabbits* is saturated in a yellowish hue; It speaks of a barrenness. The most barren landscape is present in *Hunter with Dead Hare*, also the vignette that dedicates the most space to the land. In *The Wolf Hunt* the pitchfork implies the presence of hay and livestock, but there is no sign of livestock in the background, an ominous indication of what once was.

There are yellow overtones present in the landscapes throughout *Punishment* that do not express the beauty Potter implemented before and after *Punishment*. The hunting scenes all take place on yellow terrain with the slightly greener leaves of the sparse trees. The small amount of green that is apparent in the painting occurs in the two center panels, the mossy green providing a feeling of peace that contrasts heavily to the scene occurring in the foreground. This of course could easily be a result of lack of recent conservation or cleaning of the work. It is possible Poelenburgh's vignette was better preserved than the rest, or that he used higher quality hues less likely to degrade, resulting in the much bluer sky and deeper green in *Diana*.

Potter's varying treatments of *Punishment's* landscapes indicate he wanted the viewer to pay special attention to them. The effects Potter uses on the landscapes, changing and shaping them, purposefully using poor perspective, echoes the negative effects of increasing city-life and man's effect on the land. The yellow and gray tints indicate the potential barren land of the countryside as small farms were forced out with the increasing population. The figures within the landscape and the way Potter used them are the strongest indicator of the disconnect between man and nature. Potter is not creating what he wants, rather what he does not want: a twisted, disappearing world.

CHAPTER FOUR: POTTER'S PERSPECTIVE ON PEASANTS

Just as Potter had an affinity for rural landscapes, he had an affection for the people within them. Many of his mixed landscapes and genre pieces lovingly depict peasants going about their daily lives. In some, the peasants are rendered in a stereotypical way, which was used by other artists to illustrate disdain. Potter however, was able to express his appreciation for them as individuals, and he likely knew his subjects personally and encountered them on his country walks. In contrast to the techniques used to illustrate his peasants, Potter uses techniques in *Punishment* illustrating his disapproval of the hunters. This distinction between how Potter depicts wealthy hunters versus peasants is intrinsic to the argument that *Punishment* is a direct critique of social climbing and the accumulation of status and wealth.

Depicting peasants in "gainly, stooped postures" was typical for the sixteenth-century Netherlandish paintings, and the tradition continued into seventeenth century Dutch painting.⁹³ These depictions were used in a derogatory manner beginning in the sixteenth century.⁹⁴ Potter uses the convention for peasants as well. However, other aspects of his peasant paintings indicate they are not derogatory images. In *Peasant Family with Livestock* (1646) (Figure 40), the adults and especially the children are stout and blocky, their proportions not entirely accurate, yet their movements and pose, not to mention their facial expressions, are natural and relaxed. Potter's animal figures were unequivocally considered superior in form, but even his anatomically inadequate peasants had a glow about them. The little group in *Peasant Family* are depicted partaking in a wholesome family activity. It looks like one young child is being encouraged by her mother and sibling. She is learning to walk. A man, presumably the child's father, looks over his wife's shoulder with a gentle smile. The livestock surrounding them, particularly the peaceful

⁹³ Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting*, 90.

⁹⁴ Honig, *Pieter Bruegel and the Idea of Human Nature*, 128-129.

sheep, reinforce the purity of the scene. The peasant woman, mother to the two children, has the sun illuminating her gentle features and emphasizing the attention she pays to her child, illustrating her perceived good character as a wife and mother. The scene could easily have been one Potter saw in real life, and likely was. These somewhat stubby-looking people are reminiscent of the similarly affectionate renderings by Pieter Bruegel the Elder that can be seen in works such as *Children's Games* (1560) (Figure 41). The similarity seen between some of Potter's figures and proto peasant-ethnologist Bruegel's figures imply Potter may have had similar warm feelings towards the peasantry.⁹⁵ The view is a stereotypical romanticized view, but positive regardless.

In contrast, Potter's figures in *Punishment* are rather stiff and awkward. The figure in *Hunter with Dead Hare*, for example, stands in an unnatural way, his toes facing away from each other and his left leg awkwardly placed behind his right while his hips line up squarely. His body is overall angled one way, towards the empty space to his right, while his neck is turned to its limit as he looks at something out of frame. His torso is not turned with his face at all and his left arm stalwartly points the other direction, as he takes pains to reach across his torso while holding up the very large hare. This figure's twisted anatomy echoes the shape of the barely alive tree behind him. The hare, like the tree, does not appear completely dead, as it seems to hold its head up in quiet desperation. The hunter has a stern expression on his face, exaggerated, cartoonish and unrealistic. On the contrary, the kneeling hunter in *Saint Hubert* is proportional and posed naturally. The hunter figure in *Tried* and the goat hunter likewise are the most natural-looking figures and are proportional. Interestingly, the other thing they have in common is that all of their faces are obscured, as they are faced away from the viewer.

⁹⁵ Honig, *Pieter Bruegel and the Idea of Human Nature*, 142.

However, Amy Walsh, in her essay on the stylistic elements of Potter's work, corroborates the awkward features of Potter's figures by calling them "rough Dutchmen."⁹⁶ In some of his earlier works in the 1640s, Potter showed the capacity to create elegant figures, including peasants. In revisiting Potter's *The Milkmaid*, the young girl dutifully carries her buckets of fresh milk from her charges; she is bathed in the fine light of the morning as she showcases her hard work and strength. She is a handsome young woman stopping to ponder the beauty in the landscape. She has a hint of a smile, indicating the joy she finds in her work. She is poised, proportional and has a gentle, almost expressionless look on her face. In *Halt at the Inn* as well the figures within are anatomically proportional. They are not stockily built or short and stubby. They do not appear awkward; their movement is fluid and natural. Even though the playful hunter and the serving wench could be considered to be partaking in lewd play, they are not depicted in a particularly negative light, both of them maintaining handsome countenances. These paintings and others illustrate his understanding of anatomy and his ability to render them realistically while also capturing the characters' inner personalities. The contrast between the types of "characters" and personalities also illustrates Potter's range.

There are a few peasants that are present in *Punishment*, but they are relegated to the single vignette of *The Wolf Hunt*. The most prominent person in the vignette is facing off against a wolf. The illusion of him being backed up against a wall by the wolf is given by the border of the image. He holds the wolf off with a pitchfork. The man's face is almost grotesque as he looks on with a mixed expression of both fear of the wolf and horror at stabbing the animal. Another peasant man comes up behind the wolf, club in hand, with an expression exuding fixation so great his eyes appear crossed. Both of these men's faces are comical, while the two elegantly

⁹⁶ Walsh, "Stylistic Development in the Work of Paulus Potter," 21.

dressed men on horseback are expressionless. A man in red on a dapple gray horse holds his sword up high, severely looking at the violent struggle below him. The other man on horseback behind him blows a horn to signal the capture of the wolf as it is a sport. Potter seems to be making fun of the dichotomy of hunting here. While the peasants are not participating in a sport per se, they are instead fighting with all their might against the wolf; perhaps he is killing their livestock and chickens. The equestrians meanwhile are dressed for a day of sport and aim to take credit for the killing and gain their trophy, not recognizing the plight of the peasant with their expressionless faces. The peasants' expressions are borrowed from the disturbing look of Pieter Bruegel the Elder's caricatures seen in *Netherlandish Proverbs* (1559) (Figure 42). There is an aspect of the "uncanny valley" within, as if they are automatons acting out their roles in Bruegel's painting. The disturbing Bruegelian sardonic smile is startling when looking closely at the rider of the dappled horse rider in *The Lion Hunt*. The positioning of his head as he looks back over his shoulder is reminiscent of the woman wrestling with the demon in the lower left-hand corner of *Netherlandish* (Figure 43).

The few humans in *Punishment* that are even remotely elegantly represented are the faceless men: Saint Hubert and the condemned hunter in *Tried*. They appear humbler and more human in that they are seen looking inward, indicating a form of self-reflection and self-knowledge only when it is too late for the condemned hunter. Saint Hubert was given a second chance. The faceless goat hunter is less clear as he is actively engaged in a hunt, but curiously, despite the strange perspective in which the goat is supposed to be very far away in a valley, as mentioned before the goat is rather large. The goat has already been shot, indicated by his slowly, dramatically collapsing to his death. He looks at the hunter with reproach.

This vignette is already a curious image, as the goat being hunted is a domestic landrace

goat, instead of a chamois that was typically hunted in the southern part of Europe. Potter may have not known what a chamois specifically looked like, given that they were not present in his area of Europe,⁹⁷ He did however know what a Dutch landrace goat looked like. He was a true cataloger of domestic breeds.⁹⁸ Has the hunter in the image realized his mistake? Has he killed a farmer's goat, depriving them of their livelihood? It is no coincidence that the hunter in this image and the peasant impaling the wolf mirror each other. The peasant kills the wolf out of fear and necessity. We see his guileless expression: he is lacking joy. The hunter meanwhile is participating in a sport, and in his haste shoots the wrong animal. Like Saint Hubert and the condemned hunter in the center, we do not see his face as he gains self-knowledge.

Faceless hunters are featured as well in Bruegel's *Hunters in the Snow*. In contrast to *Punishment*, there are no hunters proudly holding their kill or actively enjoying a sport. Instead they have performed duty, maybe it was to help feed the village, maybe it was simply to stop the chickens from being killed by foxes. These faceless hunters have their heads bowed as they trudge through the thick snow.⁹⁹ Like *Punishment*, *Hunters* utilizes the image of Saint Hubert and the hart. To the left of the hunting party and their numerous dogs is an inn with a broken sign. On the sign is an image of Saint Hubert with a halo and the holy stag he encounters. Saint Hubert is watching over them for their ethical capture.

Paulus Potter illustrates his affinity for peasants in his countryside compositions. He takes inspiration from Bruegel, also known for his affinity for and frequent depictions of peasants. In other paintings he makes his affinity even more clear by depicting them in a light that contrasts very much from typical depictions of them in seventeenth century Dutch painting.

⁹⁷ Tobias Jones, Flavia Geiger and Jenny Hannes, "Mortality Pattern of the Alpine Chamois: The Influence of Snow-Meteorological Factors," *Annals of Glaciology* 49 (2008): 56-62.

⁹⁸ Walsh, "Stylistic Development in the Work of Paulus Potter," 25.

⁹⁹ Fowler, "Brueghel's 'Hunters in the Snow,'" 14.

By the same token, his depictions of the middle and upper class indicate a feeling of disapproval towards them. In *Punishment* itself the few peasants present do more to illustrate the dichotomy between the acceptable duty involved with killing or hunting certain animals versus doing it for sport. This distinction is important to the overall argument that *Punishment* is a critique on class and the accumulation of status, a parallel to hunting prey.

CHAPTER FIVE: CLASS AND THE SPORT OF HUNTING

To position Potter among other painters of hunting scenes it is necessary to study the history of hunting themes in Dutch seventeenth-century painting. Based on the conclusions made by scholars in the realms of hunting portraits representing class, I argue that Potter directly imitates such hunting portraits, but renders his figures as caricaturish, undermining the traditional message of hunting portraits.

Upon initial viewing of *Punishment*, one may read it as an anti-hunting tableau. In his essay on the work, Piers Beirne hopes that it is an unprecedented work regarding animal rights.¹⁰⁰ It is highly unlikely however, given the time period. Potter, like his contemporaries, painted several other hunting-themed images throughout his career. He depicted hunters in a largely positive light. Prior to *Punishment* he created genre scenes of hunters taking refuge at various inns and partaking in merry activities. One such example is *The Halt at the Inn* (1650) (Figure 44). Edwin Buijsen also notes his elegant hunting compositions completed after *Punishment*, such as *The Hawking Party* (1653) (Figure 45).

Most of the hunting images in *Punishment* appear run of the mill. While Hofstede de Groot judges the painting as a “caricature of the hunting scenes of Rubens and Paul de Vos,”¹⁰¹ but this is an oversimplification. Images of inter human-animal aggression are prominent in late sixteenth-century Dutch and Flemish art. Typically, such works were allegories for Dutch autonomy, territory, boundaries and the violent struggles against the kingdom of Spain. Similarly to how animals are represented in political satire, the human and animal images functioned as a

¹⁰⁰ Beirne and Janssen, “Hunting Worlds Turned Upside Down?” 61.

¹⁰¹ Hofstede De Groot “Section XVI: Paulus Potter,” 592.

means to “comprehend and interpret relations between human subjects and the level of the individual and of a new national polity.”¹⁰²

Some hunting images are content to have criticized excess. Still lifes of dead game developed out of kitchen and market scenes. Over time the carcasses became less associated with food and more associated with trophies. Sometimes the animals were draped in dramatic poses, as if they were fallen heroes, and bathed in Baroque lighting (Figure 46).¹⁰³ The most prominent artists of these dead game still lifes were Flemish artists Jan Fyt (1611-1661), Jan Weenix (1642-1719), Frans Snyders (1579-1657) and Cornelis de Vos (1584-1651). The rise of such paintings accompanied contemporary debates on “the status” of animals and the argument that they are more than the automata of Cartesian theory.¹⁰⁴ Frank Palmeri and Nathaniel Wolloch ruminate on the implications of these still lifes and if the artists are making a comment on animal death. Wolloch notes the attempt to conceal blood and other indications of violence towards the dead animals, labeling it as recognition that there is something innately wrong with their death, and therefore something to hide or deny.¹⁰⁵ Perhaps the artists were simply creating commissioned works because they needed money to live, or they were making a statement on excess.

The “ramifications of excess” was a popular theme found in the writings and art of the Dutch Republic. It is less likely the artists were arguing against animal cruelty, especially the decadence perpetrated by the nobility. Hunting was a favorite sport of the nobility but there were

¹⁰² Eric Jorink, Joanna Woodall and Edward H. Wouk, “Humans and Other Animals in the Low Countries: An Introduction,” *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 71, no. 1 (2022): 24.

¹⁰³ Nathaniel Wolloch, “Dead Animals and the Beast-Machine: Seventeenth-century Dutch Paintings of Dead Animals, as Anti-Cartesian Statements,” *Art History* 22, no. 705.

¹⁰⁴ Wolloch, “Dead Animals and the Beast-Machine,” 706.

¹⁰⁵ Wolloch, “Dead Animals and the Beast-Machine,” 719.

those who considered it a “waste of time” and still others who thought it was perfectly moral, but only in moderation. This position was widespread especially when criticizing the wealthy and noble for excess in hunting. There were even monarchs accused by the public of ignoring their duties to hunt instead.¹⁰⁶ Various ordinances on hunting can be found in Paulus Merula’s *Placaten ende ordannancien optstuck vande Wildernissen* published in The Hague in 1605, and an anonymous manuscript of 1636 entitled *Het Jachts-Bedrieff*, now in the Royal Library in The Hague. According to these texts, the pursuit of most game was limited to the nobility and other officers of the state.¹⁰⁷ As of 1613, the average non-noble Dutch citizen could not legally hunt.¹⁰⁸ So, as an alternative, such citizens would commission a hunting portrait, symbolically inheriting a sort of status.¹⁰⁹ This status was so coveted that in the early seventeenth century Archdukes would sell titles of nobility to members of the bourgeoisie.¹¹⁰

The practice of hunting portraiture came out of these legal limitations. The genre was introduced to the low countries around the 1630s by Rembrandt van Rijn and his pupils, Ferdinand Bol and Govaert Flinck. Such works often involved the finely-dressed “hunter” framed within Italianate settings wherein two greyhounds were often present with the male sitters. In a similar vein, other paintings would depict several people, both women and men, typically on horseback with a beautiful landscape as the background.¹¹¹ These tableaus were not entirely realistic; for one, often the hunters and hunting parties would be depicted with several

¹⁰⁶ Palmeri, “A Profusion of Dead Animals,” 56.

¹⁰⁷ Scott A. Sullivan, “Rembrandt’s Self-Portrait with a Dead Bittern,” *The Art Bulletin* 62, no. 2 (1980): 236.

¹⁰⁸ Palmeri, “A Profusion of Dead Animals,” 55.

¹⁰⁹ Sullivan, “Rembrandt’s Self-Portrait with a Dead Bittern,” 242.

¹¹⁰ Palmeri, “A Profusion of Dead Animals,” 55.

¹¹¹ Sullivan, “Rembrandt’s Self-Portrait with a Dead Bittern,” 240-242.

types of equipment meant for several different species of animal, while realistically this would have been cumbersome for hunting parties. Usually one kind of animal was hunted at a time; it would be impractical to carry the equipment required for several species. More significantly, many of these paintings were commissioned by people who were not legally allowed to hunt.

Scott Sullivan writes about Rembrandt van Rijn's own hunting self-portrait *A Dead Bittern* in which he portrays himself with a dead bird. In the painting, Rembrandt thrusts the bird out towards the viewer as he himself is situated somewhat behind the bird, yet full of pride for his act of successfully killing the bird. Just like the hunting portraits commissioned by those who legally could not participate in the sport, there is no evidence to suggest that Rembrandt himself ever hunted.¹¹² Sullivan argues that Rembrandt, like others who commissioned such portraits, is in effect including himself among the nobility despite his non-noble heritage.¹¹³

For the first time in the Dutch Republic's history, things formerly reserved for nobility became available to the merchant classes. This not only complicated the hierarchy in Dutch society but also led to those decrying the exhibition of wealth by non-nobility. A pamphlet published in Amsterdam in 1665 stated, "I am disgusted when I see a tailor's wife flouncing around in velvet."¹¹⁴ The author of the pamphlet, J. van B., criticized tailors and other professionals and their wives who wore silk and velvet "as though they were barons."¹¹⁵ This growing merchant class resulted in an uncomfortable new order in which nobility were not necessarily the richest.¹¹⁶ In 1662 he published a pamphlet proposing segments of society by

¹¹² Sullivan, "Rembrandt's Self-Portrait with a Dead Bittern," 236.

¹¹³ Sullivan, "Rembrandt's Self-Portrait with a Dead Bittern," 242.

¹¹⁴ Sullivan, "Rembrandt's Self-Portrait with a Dead Bittern," 241.

¹¹⁵ Van Nierop, "The Anatomy of Society," 26.

¹¹⁶ Van Nierop, "The Anatomy of Society," 24.

outlining who was allowed to wear fine clothes, and who simply was not.¹¹⁷ Van Nierop writes that wealthy merchants even began to form a closed network imitating nobility, and with that came an effort to retain wealth within the family. To use a modern term, the *nouveau riche* would flaunt their riches, unlike the well-bred, well-mannered centuries-old noble houses.¹¹⁸

One event that may have had an impact on Potter's painting is the death of his son. If *Punishment* is dated at a time around 1650, potentially as late as 1652, as Buijsen asserts, such a time frame suggests that Potter and his wife lost their son around the same time. Along with the disappearance of the Dutch Republic's idyllic countryside, perhaps Potter's familial loss exacerbated Potter's ennui. Infant mortality was common in the seventeenth-century, and did not change one's life; Potter nevertheless would have experienced grief.

That same year of 1651 a comet was observed above Amsterdam. Schama notes that comets were portending omens and had appeared at several notable times in Dutch history. In addition to astronomical phenomena such as comets and shooting stars, catastrophic events such as massive floods, shipwrecks and crop loss were all considered to be signs of God's consternation with the actions of his people. The association between comets and disastrous said events was a result of such events often coinciding with the timing of comets and shooting stars. A shooting star observed by Dr. Lubincelsus in 1665 was considered a natural consequence of God's ire for sins.¹¹⁹

These very sins were those related to excess, invoking the same contentions some Dutchmen had against the upwards climb of social classes. Catastrophic events such as shipwrecks were commonly depicted in Dutch prints meant to represent the retribution that

¹¹⁷ Van Nierop, "The Anatomy of Society," 26.

¹¹⁸ Van Nierop, "The Anatomy of Society," 37.

¹¹⁹ Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches*, 147-148.

would inevitably come from sins of worldly attachment. The ship was a metaphor for the soul of a person being “destroyed from within” by the fault of having too much. An unseen enemy was feared as Dutch preachers constantly reminded their congregations that “the more lavish the feast, the more imminent the writing on the wall.” Acts that could result in such retribution are any form of self-interest.¹²⁰

Even relatively small and local disastrous events were seen this way. One specifically harrowing event was quite famous and became popularized in many circulated prints. In August 1647 a little boy Jacob Egh was playing when a bull attacked him. The parents, in trying to save him, died, but not before the pregnant mother delivered a baby boy who survived the assault only to die one year later.¹²¹ Perhaps Potter looked at the prints of the famous Zaandam bull (Figure 47) thinking of the calamities of life. In the vignette *The Bull Hunt* a dog is kicked upwards with great force by the pursued bull. The whites of the bull’s eyes can be seen, and his mouth even curls into what resembles a smile. The bull is unstoppable, like the march of time, threatening to invade the other vignettes.

Like the portraits and still lifes that are not entirely about hunting, *Punishment* uses hunting as a metaphor for something else. Hunting portraits tell us about class in Dutch culture; *Punishment* gives us an opinion on the correlation between hunting scenes and culture. Dead game still lifes decry the sin of excess as it relates to hunting “too much.” *Punishment* uses hunting as a signifier of excess, but rather than killing too many animals, those who are hunting status take too much land. Potter mourned the loss of such land, and it was compounded by the loss of his son and affirmed by the sight of a comet, a sign of God’s displeasure.

¹²⁰ Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches*, 29-33.

¹²¹ Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches*, 145-146.

Conclusion

Punishment of a Hunter is a singular diversion in Potter's oeuvre that has no precedent, nor descendant. What makes it unique is not found in the individual parts or themes from which there are many bases. It is unique in the way that Potter combined several different motifs, creating work that cannot be categorized within the several genres that existed in the Dutch and Flemish art of the seventeenth century.

Potter borrowed from satirical prints, fable images of monkeys and leopards, Baroque works of Rubens, Netherlandish works of Bruegel, mythological and religious images, hunting portraiture, genre painting and landscapes to create a unique allegory: an allegory in which his unique use of fourteen separate compositions in one painting served as story-telling devices that assisted in illuminating the meaning of the overall work.

In it, animals are people, people are animals. Several species of animals perform human tasks and behave violently towards both humans and other animals. In the midst of their violence they revel and dance as well. Some animals are wealthy merchants wresting land from peasant farmers. Buijsen offers a political explanation but his reading is incomplete and takes into account only a handful of vignettes without viewing the work as one. Not enough attention is paid to the landscapes and figural relationships.

Potter's use of landscape and the figures within is crucial to his meaning. The landscape is a major focus in each vignette and takes up as much space as his figures in many vignettes. The lack of tonal unity and the ochre tones imply a land that is no longer fertile and that those who inhabit it are disconnected from it, seeing only what they can take from the land. This comes at a time in the Dutch Republic when the countryside was shrinking and more and more citizens lived in urban areas, leading to nostalgia for the peaceful rural scenes. Rather than

preserving such places, the trend was to view them in landscape paintings – no need to step outside. Potter’s love for the countryside is impossible to separate from his admiration for those that resided in it: the farmers and peasants that tended the cows and other animals he loved to sketch and paint.

Rather than be content with their lot, as the peasants were depicted, urban merchants and shopkeepers took advantage of the booming economy of Amsterdam. They would use their money to buy up land, displacing farmers and farm animals. Potter used hunting as a metaphor for such activity, drawing on the ways in which hunting had been used in other works to illustrate excess and how they were used by middle classes to gain status.

Potter makes fun of hunting portraits commissioned by non-hunters. He uses a satirical hunting portrait and satirical hunting scenes to comment on what commissioned hunting portraits by non-hunters mean – the aim for status and wealth. He criticizes the search for worldly status. The demand for such portraits and the loss of smallholders’ land, is the direct result of the development of middle classes, the merchant class and bourgeoisie. Potter decried the ambition that led to an expanding Amsterdam and a narrowing rural space. He would have not been the only citizen to observe such ambition. Like Willem van Haecht’s wolf, Potter’s wolf in the *Wolf Hunt* vignette is ambitious for status by gaining wealth and encroaching on farmers’ land. Meanwhile, in thinking he has gained the status of nobility he is a fool because they will turn on him just as soon. Are the other quadruped hunters humans as well? The ferret, the leopard and the lions?¹²²

One of the last compositions that Potter painted is *Oxen Fighting in a Meadow (1653)* (Figure 48). Despite the title, these two bulls provide a significant contrast from the Zaandam

¹²² Janson, “The Animal Fable,” 79.

bull. Potter completed it likely around the same time he finished *The Hawking Party* in 1653, the last year of his life before he would die in January of 1654.¹²³ The image of bulls fighting was something Potter depicted in drawings and paintings throughout his career. This final painting, however, is muted in its movement. Other depictions as well seem to capture the true form of bulls locked together in battle. Bulls are slow lumbering creatures. Their fights are not quick or as startling as a dog fight, but there is a quiet force behind each blow with the powerful skulls of a bull. In the sketch Potter created in 1650 for the painting, the bulls appear to be in action, putting effort into their fight, but the painting itself does not exude the same force. Even the facial expressions of the bulls themselves bely the damage they could cause. Instead of pushing against each other, the bulls stand motionless, at rest with their heads touching, as if they have given up on their fight. They look into each other's eyes, reaching an understanding. These bulls are men as well, men who have realized the fault in trying to climb upwards, and defeat the competition, instead taking the time to appreciate what is left of the Dutch countryside.

¹²³ Edwin Buijsen, "Oxen Fighting In a Meadow," in *Paulus Potter: Paintings, Drawings and Etchings*, by Amy Walsh, Edwin Buijsen and Ben Broos, (Zwolle, Netherlands: Waander Publishers, 1994), 147.

Figures

Fig. 1. Paulus Potter with Cornelius van Poelenburgh, *Punishment of a Hunter*, 1648-1651, oil on wood panel, 33.2 x 47.2 inch. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia



Fig. 2 *Punishment* detail, *Trapping a Leopard*



Fig. 3 *Punishment detail, Capturing Monkeys*



Fig. 4 Anonymous artist, *Wild Animals Take Their Revenge on Hunters and Hunting-dogs* published by Theodoor Galle, c. 1580-1600, engraving. From Kunzle 1978, pg. 55



Fig. 5 Paulus Potter, *Orpheus Charming the Beasts*, 1650, oil on canvas, 67 x 89 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Fig. 6 Jan van Kessel the Elder, *The Four Parts of the World (America)*, 1666, oil on copper plates, 48.6 x 67.9 cm. Alte Pinakothek, Munich



Fig. 7 Philips Wouwerman, *Saint Hubert*, 1660, oil on canvas, 96.5 x 84 cm. Private Collection



Fig. 8 Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Hunters in the Snow*, from the series *The Months of the Year*, 1565, oil on oak wood, 46.06 x 63.77 inches. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

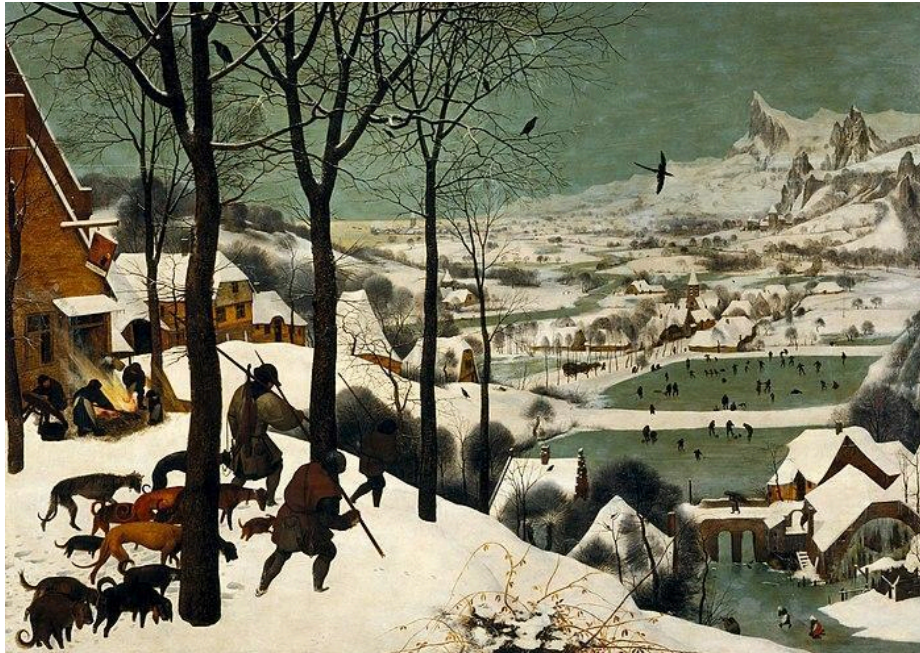


Fig. 9 Anonymous artist, *Lords Who Are Too Severe Turn Respect Into Hatred* published by Hugo Allaerdt, etching, 320 x 410 mm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Fig. 10 Rembrandt van Rijn, *A Dead Bittern*, 1639, oil on oak wood, 47.6 x 35 inches. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Germany

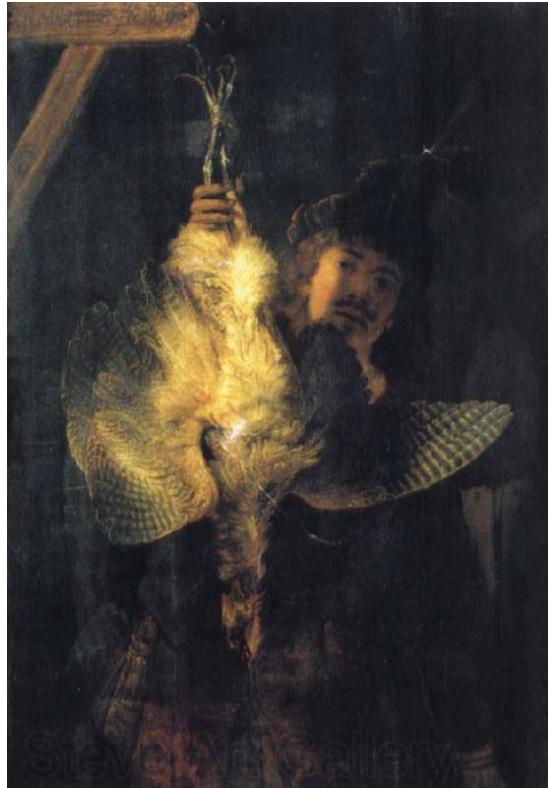


Fig. 11 *Punishment detail, The Bull Hunt*



Fig. 12 *Punishment detail, The Lion Hunt*

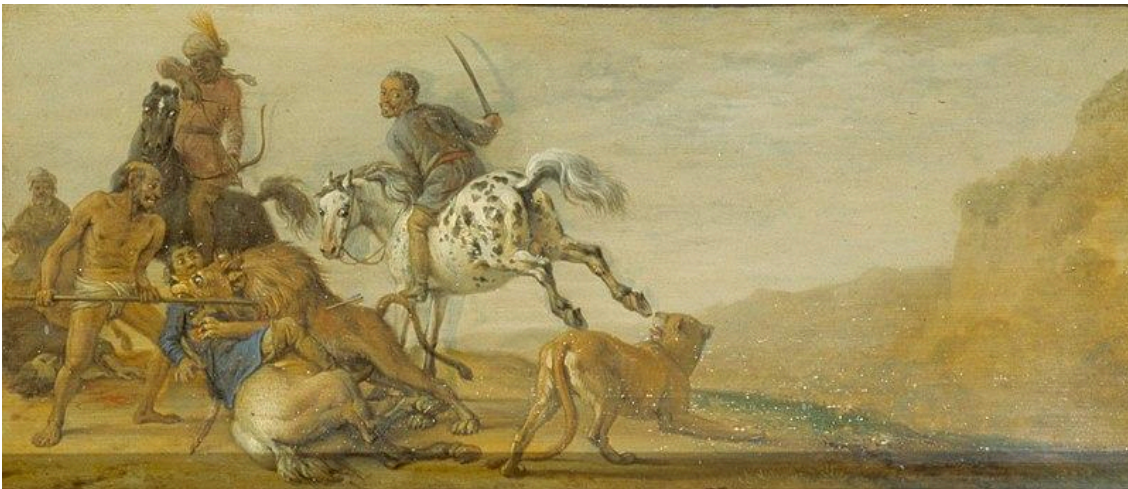


Fig. 13 *Punishment detail, The Boar Hunt*



Fig. 14 *Punishment* detail, *The Bear Hunt*



Fig. 15 *Punishment* detail, *Hunting Mountain Goats*



Fig. 16 *Punishment detail, Hunting Rabbits with a Ferret*



Fig. 17 *Punishment detail, The Wolf Hunt*



Fig. 18 *Punishment detail, The Vision of St Hubert*



Fig. 19 *Punishment detail, Diana and Actaeon (Cornelius van Poelenburgh)*



Fig. 20 *Punishment detail, Hunter with Dead Hare*



Fig. 21 *Punishment detail, The Hunter and his Dogs Tried by the Animals*



Fig. 22 *Punishment detail, The Execution of the Hunter and his Dogs*



Fig. 23 Theodoor Matham, *Portrait of Johan Maurits*,
Count of Nassau-Siegen, title page in C. Barlaeus,
Rerum per Octennium[...] historia, 1647, engraving. Haus Koekkoek, Kleve, Germany



Fig. 24 Peter Paul Rubens, *Wolf and Fox Hunt*, 1616,
oil on canvas. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City



Fig. 25 Peter Paul Rubens, *The Lion Hunt*, 1621,
oil on canvas, 249 x 377 cm. Bavarian State Painting Collections, Munich



Fig. 26 Antonio Tempesta, *The Boar Hunt*, 1608, etching.
Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam



Fig. 27 Hans Collaert, after Stradanus, *Hunters Luring Leopards into Traps with Mirrors*
published at Antwerp by Philips Galle, no. 19 in a series, engraving.
Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam



Fig. 28 Hans Collaert after Stradanus *Hunters Capturing Monkeys with Bird-lime* published at Antwerp by Philips Galle, no. 41 in the series *Venationes/Ferarum, Avium, Piscium* [...], engraving. Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam



Fig. 29 Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Battle Between Carnival and Lent*, 1559, oil on panel, 118 x 164 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna



Fig. 32 Paulus Potter, *Two Pigs in a Sty*, 1649,
oil on canvas, 31 x 44 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston



Fig. 33 Paulus Potter, *The Young Bull*, 1647,
oil on canvas, 92.7 x 133 inches. Mauritshuis, The Hague



Fig. 34 Paulus Potter, *The Farmyard (The Urinating Cow)*, 1649, oil on panel, 81 x 115.5 cm. The Hermitage, Saint Petersburg, Russia



Fig. 35 Jan van Goyen, *Beach at Egmond aan Zee*, 1646, oil on panel, 45 x 65 cm. Louvre Museum, Paris



Fig. 36 Paulus Potter, *The Milkmaid*, 1646,
oil on panel, 38 x 50 cm. Wallace Collection, London



Fig. 37 Paulus Potter, *The Flight into Egypt*, 1644,
oil on panel, 47 x 63 cm. Private Collection



Fig. 38 Paulus Potter, *Cattle and Sheep in a Stormy Landscape*, 1647, oil on oak, 46.3 x 37.8 cm. National Gallery, London



Fig. 39 Hendrick Avercamp, *Winter Landscape with Skaters near a Village*, 1610, oil on panel, 53.3 x 94.6 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Fig. 40 Paulus Potter, *Peasant Family with Livestock*, 1646,
oil on panel, 37.1 x 29.5 cm. Alte Pinakothek, Munich



Fig. 41 Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Children's Games*, 1560,
oil on panel, 118 x 161 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna



Fig. 42 Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Netherlandish Proverbs*, 1559,
oil on panel, 46 x 64 inches. Gemäldegalerie, Berlin



Fig. 43 *Netherlandish Detail, The Pillar-Biter*



Fig. 44 Paulus Potter, *The Halt at the Inn*, 1650, oil on panel, 46.4 x 47 cm. Staatliches Museum, Schwerin, Germany



Fig. 45 Paulus Potter, *The Hawking Party*, 1653, oil on canvas. Trustees of the Bedford Estates, Woburn Abbey, Woburn, Bedfordshire, UK



Fig. 46 Frans Snyders, *Still Life with Fruit, Dead Game, Vegetables, a Live Monkey, Squirrel and Cat*, 1614, oil on canvas, 212 x 308 cm. Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago



Fig. 47 Anonymous, *Zaandam Bull* published by Frans Sadelaar, 1647, engraving



Fig. 49 Paulus Potter, *Oxen Fighting in a Meadow*, 1653, oil on panel, 28.5 x 33 cm. Private Collection



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