

The Noble and the Ignoble Bandit

Changing Literary Representations of West-European Robbers

Florike Egmond

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Tracing developments in the literary representations of four famous West-European bandits – Cartouche, Bakelandt, Jan de Lichte and Schinderhannes – this paper shows how most of the tales about these bandits revolve around two stereotypical images: the Noble and the Ignoble Bandit. Both images can be regarded as inversions of the equally stereotypical self-image of established West-European citizens. Though many of the bandit-tales at first sight belong to ‘popular’ culture, their readership in fact could be designated as a ‘mass-audience’ from a broad social spectrum. The literary ‘careers’ of these four robbers show that bandits only acquired a positive image if members of the middle strata in their societies could in some way identify with their activities. Finally, the prominence of both the negative representation of bandits (as a dangerous counter-society) and the positive version (as an idealized community) from the 16th until the late 19th century, is related to processes of state formation and ‘internal pacification’ in Western Europe.

Florike Egmond, Kerkpad NZ 55, 3764 AJ Soest, The Netherlands.

Stories about bandits have for a long time formed part of oral and written traditions in Western Europe. Famous robbercaptains, such as Robin Hood, Schinderhannes, and Cartouche figured as protagonists in tales and legends with which many Europeans were familiar. And even now, though the large robberbands have long since disappeared, bandits have still not lost their fascination: we find them in historical novels and plays, in comic strips, children’s tales, television series and films. In the course of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries the literary representations of banditry have taken many different forms, ranging from dry enumerations to sensational reports, and from relatively unadorned descriptions to entirely fictive accounts. Their pictorial representation, too, includes fairly realistic portraits of individual bandits as well as strongly romanticized images.¹

The longstanding literary interest in bandits may be interpreted in many ways, but in this article I will be mainly concerned with the implications of their position as marginal people par excellence. As E. P. Thompson has remarked, “the untypical may serve to give a glimpse into norms”.² Starting from this point and trying to combine a historical and an anthropological approach, I hope to show that the representations of banditry in West-European literature form a revealing counterpoint to the self-image of non-marginal West-European society. Thus, by studying literary images of robbercaptains and their followers, we may discover how established West-Europeans regarded themselves – and at the same time set standards of civilized behaviour by the contrasting image of the marginal, uncivilized bandit. Moreover, we may connect developments in the literary representation of bandits

with the changing self-image and social position of West-European citizens.

The first part of this article deals with the 'literary history' of four famous European robbercaptains between the early 18th century and the middle of the 20th century. It concerns four bandits who were active between about 1720 and 1805 and who may be regarded as the best-known bandits of the French-, Flemish- and German-speaking areas respectively.³ Some of the tales about these robbers consist almost completely of fictitious elements, but the bands themselves have a by now relatively well-known historical background. Precisely because we are dealing with real, historical bandits, it is easier to discover how their literary representations were made to fit stereotypical notions about bandits. The Band of Cartouche operated between 1715 and 1721 in and around Paris. Bakelandt and his companions were active in the western part of Flanders between 1798 and 1802. The Band of Jan de Lichte operated in eastern Flanders between circa 1744 and 1748. And the Schinderhannes-band committed thefts and robberies in the northern Rhineland from about 1798 until 1802.

It is not my intention to consider the whole literary history of all four bandcaptains, but to focus on some of the most widely read publications and on the long-term development of their images. The writings of two anthropologists in particular have been helpful: the structuralist interpretations of Edmund Leach, and Anton Blok's essays on banditry, honour, and infamy.⁴ Comparing the stories about the four bandcaptains, I will emphasize some of the most striking structural characteristics, which form a more general pattern in the literary representation of West-European banditry. Most of the tales revolve around two main stereotypes: the negative image of the Ignoble Bandit - a wild and cruel savage - and the opposite image of the Noble Bandit, who is a heroic figure. Both stereotypes can only be understood in relation to the equally stereotypical self-image of non-marginal West-Europeans.

The second part of this article concerns the self-image of these established citizens, which

forms in almost every respect an opposition to the characteristics ascribed to the bandits. As I will show, many authors and a very large part of the readership of the bandit-stories belonged to this broad category of non-marginal, established Europeans, or at least strongly identified with their norms and codes of behaviour. Information about their social position and interests makes it easier to understand why the images of two of the four bandits should have been predominantly positive, while the others were mostly depicted in negative colours. The final paragraphs deal with long-term changes in the literary representation of bandits. These developments should be understood in the context of the increasing power of the nation-states, which could not but influence the relation between 'marginals' and 'non-marginals', and thus also acted upon their perception of each other.

I. The four robber-captains

Since about 1960 - shortly after the publication of Louis Chevalier's *Classes laborieuses et Classes dangereuses* (1958), and as part of a growing concern for the history of 'ordinary people' - historians, folklorists, and historians of literature have shown an increasing interest in the literary representations of crime and criminals in the past.⁵ The following account of the changing literary images of Cartouche, Bakelandt, Jan de Lichte, and Schinderhannes is largely based upon this recent literature.

Cartouche

Cartouche was (and probably still is) the most famous French bandit. He was already well known by the time of his death, in 1721, but his reputation grew during the following years, when a biography, comedies, poems, and dialogues in which he played a central part, reached a vast public. His anonymous biography, for instance, became one of the bestsellers of the well known French series of cheap publications, the *Bibliothèque Bleue*; Dutch and German translations appeared almost simultaneously with the French original - in the be-

ginning of 1722, just a few months after his execution – and all editions were reprinted numerous times. In the course of the 18th and 19th centuries at least eight plays were written about Cartouche and by the second half of the 19th century, if not before, he had become a figure of European standing.⁶

In his study of French 18th-century literature on crime and famous criminals, Lüsebrink shows that even before his death Cartouche had become the protagonist of two comedies, which enjoyed considerable success in Paris during the late autumn of 1721. Cartouche's most striking characteristics, as represented in these plays, were his versatility and his repeated success in escaping from and making fools of the Parisian police.⁷ Typically, one of the plays was called (at first) *Cartouche ou l'Homme imprenable*. (The première took place at the Comédie Française, one week after Cartouche's arrest and just one day after the first performance of the comedy *Arlequin-Cartouche* at the Théâtre Italien.⁸) Although Cartouche's image underwent some transformations in the subsequent literature, it never lost this central characteristic of opposition against the established authorities. Sometimes, he was depicted as 'the criminal who is not really bad at heart', as 'the man whose only choice is between starving and stealing', or as the 'ambitious individual to whom society offers only the possibility of a criminal career'.⁹ But one of the most eloquent representations was probably that of Cartouche as the king or ruler of an alternative, sometimes even inverted, society – an image which may be found in one of the comedies as well as in a burlesque poem and in the abovementioned anonymous biography. In some of these versions the rule of Cartouche was compared favourably with that of the authorities of 18th-century France. The theme of the 'just ruler' also emerged in the more philosophical 'dialogues of the dead', which were written for a relatively learned public.¹⁰ The tenor in all these cases was the same: the authors used the image of an inverted or counter-society ruled by 'king' Cartouche to show what was wrong with French society in their opinion.

From Lüsebrink's description we may con-

clude that most of the literary publications give a positive image of Cartouche; that is, he is represented as a folk-hero, as a 'rebel with a cause', or as an intelligent leader whose 'just rule' is contrasted with the author's negative view of French administration and justice. The historical circumstances of the years just before 1721 help to make clear how Cartouche could become a folk-hero so rapidly and, consequently, why he was such a convenient figure-head for social and political criticism. While Cartouche and his band usually operated in the largely rural area surrounding Paris (attacking farms and inns as well as mail-coaches from Paris to Lyon), the French capital itself provided hiding places, a market for stolen goods and an area of recruitment. Quite a few bandmembers and assistants came from the lower middle strata of Parisian society, especially from the ranks of shopkeepers, street-sellers and artisans. Thus, to the *menu peuple* of Paris Cartouche was not a stranger, an outsider, but someone with whom they could easily identify. Moreover, during the early 1720s, a strong enmity had developed between parts of the Parisian population and the police of this city. In particular in the faubourg Saint Antoine this had resulted in violent clashes.¹¹ Obviously, anyone who was able during these years to mock and deride the Parisian police publicly, could count upon a large measure of public sympathy and support. Cartouche was clearly regarded as a master at this 'mocking game' and he soon obtained almost mythical proportions: to many people reading or hearing about his exploits he must have epitomized the (temporary) reversal of weak and powerful.

However there were also a few publications in which Cartouche was not accorded the part of a hero. These consisted mainly of a small collection of printed songs or *complaintes* and of summaries of the official indictment, which were sold during the execution of Cartouche. The songs tell us about the sorrowful fate awaiting the condemned man, without going into details about his life and deeds. His criminal activities are qualified here as inspired by the Devil. This diabolical element returns in a more vehement form in the abbreviated indictments, which clearly represented the view

of the authorities: they wished to interpret the illegal activities of Cartouche as 'satanic' and 'monstrous'.¹²

Summing up, we find a sharp division between a rather negative image of Cartouche as outlined in the 'official' publications and a much more positive one in most of the other texts, comprising stories, comedies, and burlesque poems as well as the widely read biography and some dialogues which were mainly concerned with social and political criticism.

Bakelandt

Similar contrasts may be discerned when studying the literary images of two Flemish bandits: Lodewijk Bakelandt and Jan de Lichte. As far as the geographical extension of their reputation goes, these men were hardly in the same league as Cartouche, for they certainly did not become known all over Western Europe. Nonetheless, they are regarded as the most famous bandits of the Flemish-speaking areas and they have inspired quite a long list of publications. Of the two men, Bakelandt is best known. During the years between 1798 and 1802 his band – of which he was one of the more important members, but hardly the only leader – operated in the western part of Flanders. While Cartouche was connected in many ways with the French capital, the group of Bakelandt was an almost completely rural phenomenon. Most of the armed robberies were directed at isolated farmhouses and at the houses of shopkeepers and other retailers in the smaller towns and villages of Western Flanders; sometimes, bandmembers acted as highwaymen, attacking travelers who returned from the market where they had sold their wares. Members of the Bakelandt-band predominantly came from the area itself, having been occupied as day-labourers, rural artisans, carters, and pedlars. Many of them were linked by ties of kinship and a common regional or even local background. The band originated at a time when the French had just succeeded in putting down a rebellion of parts of the rural population of Flanders and Brabant (the so-called *Boerenkrijg*). Popular resistance against French conscription formed an important element in this rebellion and a

few of the bandmembers had a record as conscript-deserters.¹³ We will soon see how some of these themes were transformed in the 19th- and 20th- century literature.

As in the case of Cartouche, various songs were published and sung at the time of the executions of Bakelandt and his companions, in November 1803. They were written by two well-known Flemish broadsheet-poets and their tenor was mostly moralizing, warning against the consequences of a bad upbringing. The songs stress Bakelandt's excessive drinking and his debauchery, his aversion to a regular job, his "hateful and unscrupulous horrendous deeds", his thirst for blood, and the "diabolical inspiration of this man who had placed himself beyond the pale of God's law".¹⁴ After his execution, however, interest in Bakelandt's deeds dwindled, until by the late 1850s he had almost completely been forgotten – even in the area where he had committed most of his robberies. By that time he just played a minor part as a semi-mythical bogeyman, summoned only to frighten the children.¹⁵

The articles on Bakelandt by Strubbe and Top – which contain most of the information summarized here – clearly indicate that interest in Bakelandt only revived because of the literary efforts of a priest called Victor Huys. It might even be said that Huys has created the literary figure of Bakelandt. Between 1857 and 1859 Huys' story about Bakelandt was published in installments in the daily paper of Bruges; shortly afterwards, in 1860, a revised and enlarged version was published as a "historical novel". A second dramatic version of Bakelandt's history appeared almost at the same time. The author, P. D. Cracco, was known as a writer of *volksboeken*, literally popular books or books for the people. Both novels were regularly reprinted until far into the 20th century. At least until the second world war, the books by Huys and Cracco dominated and conditioned the literary image of Bakelandt and, to a certain extent, that of Flemish banditry in general. They have also reintroduced Bakelandt in Flemish folklore, where he has found a place in children's games, expressions, puppet theatre, etc.¹⁶

Yet their books present very different im-

ages of Bakelandt. Huys continues the moralizing tradition – depicting the bandcaptain as an example of “the depraved rascal who has developed a licentious and abominable way of life because of a neglected education and bad company”¹⁷ – but he also adds a new element: irreligion, inspired by the French. His Bakelandt becomes a personification of French danger to old Flemish beliefs, norms and traditions. Clearly, this is a far cry from the roguish and even heroic image of Cartouche. Cracco on the other hand, presents us with an almost fully developed image of a social bandit.¹⁸ As a son of poor folk Bakelandt realizes at an early age that wealth and possessions are unequally divided. Consequently, he tries to redress the balance by stealing from the rich – which he does not regard as a criminal or illegal activity, but as a simple act of social justice. He is a rebel and a champion of social equality.¹⁹

These first literary publications about Bakelandt formed part of a real flood of moralizing tales and historical novels about various robbers and murderers which were published in Belgium mainly after 1840. In the *volksbibliotheken* (popular libraries) – which sprung up between 1845 and 1860 – these tales were much sought after by the public. But especially Bakelandt continued to attract a lot of attention; three more novels about him appeared in 1882, 1923, and 1954, and a satire was published in 1961. During the 1970s he was still the most famous Flemish bandit.²⁰ By then his image had been slightly modernized: the novel of 1954 presents Bakelandt as a gangster and hired killer, while in the 1961-satire he has become a teddy-boy.²¹ Yet, the variety of his images and representations only barely conceals that they belong to a positive and a negative series. Some authors regard Bakelandt as a social reformer and avenger of injustice; but in most tales he is a negative figure, alternately qualified as an assistant of the Devil, a drunken en dissolute villain, a dictatorial bandcaptain, an atrocious murderer, a gangster or a teddy-boy. I certainly do not wish to reduce this variety to the opposition positive/negative, but it is important to recognize the structuring principle – a point to which I will return later.

Jan de Lichte

Clearly Bakelandt was not the only robbercaptain saved from almost total oblivion by 19th-century literary dramatizations. Approximately the same thing happened to Jan de Lichte, whose band reached the height of its activities in 1747–48, just before the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle concluded the war of the Austrian Succession. The Southern (Austrian) Netherlands had been occupied in 1744–45 by French armies and during the following years various armed forces used the country as a kind of transit camp, while French domination remained somewhat precarious. In these circumstances the band of Jan de Lichte flourished. Besides numerous thefts and burglaries (often undertaken to obtain quantities of bread, butter, bacon and cheese from the cellars of farmhouses), the robbers also committed a number of large scale armed robberies. Among the victims were mainly farmers and rural retailers, but also a few priests and estate owners. In the course of 1748, however, most of the bandmembers were arrested. Sentences were pronounced against 101 persons: 5 men, among whom Jan de Lichte himself, were broken on the wheel; 18 were hanged, and 55 bandmembers were banished after being whipped.²²

In Jan de Lichte's case a very long interval occurred between the publication of his sentence and the first literary dramatization: in 1873 E. Ternest published a 300-page novel based upon historical records, folktales, and his own imagination; a 9th reprint appeared in 1926. Apart from an anonymous novel published in 1888 at Aalst, most of the subsequent literary versions were adaptations of the work by Ternest. Only after the second world war a new interpretation appeared, which again revived interest in Jan de Lichte: Louis Paul Boon's novel *De bende van Jan de Lichte* (1953), which until recently has been reprinted many times.²³

During the 19th century De Lichte has been consistently described as a much more dangerous figure than Bakelandt, and his band has often been represented as a subversive counter-society. Ternest, for instance, depicts Jan de Lichte as an unscrupulous brute whose

main character-traits were vanity and an insatiable lust for power and prestige. At the same time he is presented as an excellent organizer, dominating and structuring the closed community which is formed by the band.²⁴ The emphasis on the use of a special language (argot or thieves' slang) and the references to general assemblies and riotous feasts of the band strengthen the image of the counter-society. As we will see later on, it is no coincidence that the communal activities of the band are *not* located in a village or just under some kind of roof, but out in the open, in the woods. In the anonymous novel of 1888 Jan de Lichte and his companions are represented as more subtle and therefore as even more dangerous. Starting out as a relatively cheerful, roguish protagonist, he becomes a sombre and ruthless murderer, ruling autocratically over a parallel society with its own rituals, hierarchy, laws, and punishments – a community which is trying to extend its influence over the whole of the Southern Netherlands.²⁵ Early 20th-century publications add only a few moralizing elements, but the novel by Boon offers a radically different interpretation. Boon presents us with a social bandit, a heroic figure, a rebel against injustice, a champion of the poor and oppressed, an honest and just fighter against the hypocritical tyranny of the rich and powerful. Boon regards the illegal activities of Jan de Lichte and his band as a prelude to the French Revolution: his story is an epos, ending with the execution of a man who has proudly refused to submit.²⁶

Obviously, the dominant theme in these literary representations of Jan de Lichte is subversion of established society. The recurring image of the dangerous counter-society in the 19th-century novels seems to indicate that the authors (and readers) were quite preoccupied with the stability of their own society. And this concerns not only – and perhaps not even in the first place – the political stability. The different customs, laws, and rituals of the bandits were clearly seen as a threat to the basic norms and categories of established 19th-century citizens. Of course, this subversive character was exactly the element that appealed to Louis Paul Boon.

Schinderhannes

The German robbercaptain Schinderhannes ranks with Cartouche among the most famous bandits of Western Europe. Schinderhannes was mainly active in the Rhineland and between about 1798 and 1802 his men were involved in a variety of illegal activities, which included armed robbery, horse-stealing, highway-robbery, and extortion. At the time, the whole area west of the Rhine formed part of France, while the territory east of this river was still governed by various German states. Until 1802 conditions were especially favourable for the various robberbands active in this region, but after circa 1801 German and French authorities began to cooperate in an attempt to purge the whole area of bandits. In the spring of 1802 Schinderhannes and his companions were arrested. During their trial in 1803 (by a French *tribunal spécial* at Mainz) 70 defendants and more than 400 witnesses could be seen and heard. It drew a vast audience, and the executions of Schinderhannes and 19 of his accomplices – which took place on November 21, 1803 – were attended by an unprecedented number of people.²⁷ Like Cartouche, Schinderhannes very rapidly became a legendary figure. His 'literary career' has been discussed at some length by Manfred Franke, who describes how the first dramatizations of Schinderhannes' life and deeds began to appear immediately after his arrest: from the beginning they contained all the elements which have characterized his public image ever since – i.e. until well into the 20th century.²⁸ Among the first publications were a bulky novel by I. F. Arnold – referring in its title *Schinderhannes, ... Ein wahrhaftiges Gegenstück zum Rinaldo Rinaldini* to the famous romantic bandit-figure created in 1798 by Vulpius – and a fairly long chapter in a two-volume edition of *Kriminalgeschichten*.²⁹

In the *Kriminalgeschichten*, published in 1801 and 1802, the four main elements of the Schinderhanneslegend are already present: the bandit as a popular leader and hero; Schinderhannes as a social bandit who steals from the rich and helps the poor – a man who abhors violence; the bandit as a national hero, a rebel and freedom-fighter against the French; and

the robber as an enemy of usurious Jews. Moreover, the *Kriminalgeschichten* also provide us with the by now well known image of the band as an extensive, well organized community with its own language, rules and rituals. However, in this case the bandmembers are not depicted as brutes, but as fundamentally respectable people. Nor is the band regarded as a subversive anti-society, for all its special language and customs.³⁰

There certainly was some historical truth in this description, but at the same time we are dealing here with a public image which Schinderhannes himself had cleverly promoted and which fitted in very well with a number of contemporary preoccupations. Schinderhannes made the most of his public appearance during the trial to build up his image as a reasonable, intelligent, cooperative, non-violent, family-loving man, who had been misled and could be regarded as the victim of circumstances.³¹ Some German newspapers did attempt to demystify his image, but they hardly succeeded. The newspapers overstated their case and overemphasized his brutality, while at the same time confirming some of the myths which they had set out to destroy. Schinderhannes was presented as a wild, brutal bandit, who treated his companions badly and whose only motif was self-interest. But his hatred against the Jews – not at all regarded as a negative quality at the time – was still given much attention. And there were even some allusions to an anti-French orientation on his part.³²

The use of the adjective 'wild' – meant as a purely negative qualification – could even have the opposite effect. As Franke remarks, this term would not only convey the impression of savageness, violence, outlawry, etc., to the early 19th-century public. It would also recall the image of the 'Noble Savage', a concept associated with all kinds of positive qualities, like simplicity, honesty, innocence, natural harmony, cheerfulness, and freedom from constraints. Thus it would confirm and strengthen the fusion of this concept with the image of the bandit, merging into the 'Noble Bandit' – a representation already widely known through the novels of Arnold, Spiess, and Cramer, and

of course especially through Vulpius' *Rinaldo Rinaldini* (1798) and Schiller's *Räuber*.³³

The many 19th-century *Volksbüchern*, novels, biographies, songs (*Bänkelliedern*) and plays about Schinderhannes seem almost without exception to have continued the familiar, mainly positive image. At the end of the century, in the novel by Rauchhaupt (1891), resistance against the French is still one of Schinderhannes' virtues. In her *Heimat*-novel of 1922 Clara Viebig depicts him as a noble folk-hero who embodies traditional German values and hates the Jews. And in Elwenspoeck's biography (1925; reprinted 1953) Schinderhannes has become a *Rheinischer Rebell*, a cheerful, virtuous fellow who becomes a tragic victim of the circumstances. Finally, two films have been made (in 1927 and 1958) about this robbercaptain, both of which were based upon a play written in 1922 by C. Zuckmayer. The first film again presents Schinderhannes as a romantic hero, a social bandit and a rebel who hates the French and the Jews. In the latter one, Schinderhannes – played by Curd Jürgens – has of course lost this hatred against Frenchmen and Jews, and has become a fighter against all forms of oppression.³⁴

Stereotypical images

Obviously, each of these varying literary perceptions of historical figures should be understood in its own context. For instance, Boon's image of Jan de Lichte was heavily influenced by his 20th-century idealist socialism, while (as Franke has shown) Rauchhaupt's version of Schinderhannes was coloured by the experience of the Franco-German war of 1870, and Elwenspoeck's image of the *Rheinischer Rebell* should be seen in connection with separatist tendencies in the Rhineland during the early 1920s and the French occupation of the Ruhr-area in 1923.³⁵ Yet here I want to focus on some of the structural aspects of these literary representations. Bringing together most of the qualifications and descriptive terms mentioned in the previous paragraphs, we find that they form two series of opposing characteristics, which may be presented as follows:

A The Robbercaptain

Ignoble Bandit

unscrupulous criminal
bloodthirsty, cruel, atrocious
revengeful, ruthless, savage,
uninhibited
depraved rascal
monstrous, ugly
sombre
modernized version
gangster, hired killer, teddy-boy
traitor, collaborator

B. The Band

negative counter-society
threat to existing social order
locations in the woods, i.e.
outside in the wilderness
wild = savage, no norms

leader as an efficient organizer =
tyrannical autocrat
excessive eating and drinking

debauchery
no regular work = idling
horrible rituals and oaths

Noble Bandit

folk-hero, social bandit
non-violent, or abhors violence
considerate, self-possessed,
contained
noble figure
heroic, often good-looking
cheerful
modernized version
gentleman-robber/thief
freedom-fighter³⁶

positive counter-society
idealized social order
locations in the woods, i.e.
in 'free nature'
wild = innocent, in harmony with nature,
no social constraints
leader as an efficient organizer =
a just ruler
feasts with plenty to eat and drink;
poverty is shared
free love; or women absent or idealized
no regular work = a free existence
exotic customs and oaths

Clearly the two series do not form just a list of random characteristics. On the contrary, internally each series consists of related items, and logically both together form a consistent whole, organized by the principle of opposition and inversion. The two series form almost exact mirror images of each other. They seem to reflect and form part of one cultural idiom, with which the various authors (and their public) were apparently familiar.

II. Contrasts and inversions

But what does this tell us about the self-image of established West-Europeans? Especially in this connection I have found the work of the anthropologists Edmund Leach and Anton Blok inspiring. Trying to unravel the meaning of the sets of characteristics ascribed to the

bandits – which together form the positive and negative stereotypes of robbers – we may have a closer look at the combination of the various elements.

The first group of contrasting features (indicated with A) consists of clearcut oppositions, like bloodthirsty/non-violent, depraved rascal/noble figure, monstrous/heroic, ugly/good-looking, sombre/cheerful, etc. Paradoxically, in the second group (B) we find almost identical characteristics on both the negative and the positive side – but they are very differently evaluated. For instance, the 'efficient bandcaptain' is seen in the negative perception as an autocratical tyrant, but in the positive one as a just ruler. An abundance of food and drink is seen as an excess on the one hand, but as 'festive' on the other. Likewise, the location ascribed to the robbers is the same in both cases: they live outside, in the woods. Yet, in

the negative image the woods become inhospitable wilderness: in the positive version they are regarded as 'free nature'. The main clue lies in the image of a *counter*-society, which plays a central role in each column. It indicates that *both* stereotypes are inversions of a third image: that is, the stereotypical self-image of established, bourgeois society.

Both counter-societies – the savage and brutal one as well as the idealized, almost idyllic one – stand for the *unusual* and *extraordinary*, as opposed to the usual and ordinary. *Both* are inversions of the established order. And *both* are equally far removed from the collective representation of a well-ordered, pacified, 'civilized' society. This can be seen in all their aspects. In the first place it is expressed in a very literal way: by relegating the bandits to the remote corners of the inhabitable world. They are located in the countryside in general – outside ordinary human settlements – and particularly in forests, mountain areas and other 'wild' regions.³⁷ Symbolically, they are thus relegated to the margins of humanity. This also appears from other qualifications. Both the heroic Noble Bandit and the monstrous Ignoble Bandit occupy *liminal* positions: they stand between the 'normal' categories – the hero between men and all-powerful gods, and the monster between men and animals. Neither is completely human.³⁸

In his study *Savagism & Civility* Bernard Sheehan has described and analyzed how the 'doctrine of savagism' distorted and moulded the ideas of 17th-century European explorers, traders and colonists about American Indians; in Sheehan's words "the character of the savage was defined by the absence of the modes of life familiar to Europeans".³⁹ In this context too, on the one hand a paradisiac, harmonious world was imagined – full of fertile lands, beautiful rivers, precious stones, and especially gold – in which the 'savages' were "men like Adam before he ate the apple".⁴⁰ On the other hand, the inhabitants of the New World were depicted as "the antiprinciple to humane existence" and identified with the Devil, while savagism was equated with bestiality: "as a consequence the image of the native people tended to slip out of the human category".⁴¹

The related stereotypes of Noble/Ignoble Bandit and Savage fit in very well with the observations of Edmund Leach on the way in which human perception of the world is organized. In his opinion some of the basic distinctions made in most human societies are those between men and animals, and between 'men like us' and 'the others'. Often the main criteria used to distinguish human beings from animals also serve to distinguish between 'we, civilized people' and 'the others, who are uncivilized' – creating a conceptual link between 'outsiders' and 'animals' by describing them in the same idiom. In many societies these criteria have something to do with three fields of activity which concern the human body: the preparation and consumption of food, the regulation of sexual relations, and the ways of decorating the body.⁴² A fourth often plays an equally important role: the regulation of physical violence.

In his essay on infamous people in pre-industrial Western Europe, Anton Blok is dealing with precisely this distinction between established *Bürger* and those whom they considered less civilized, and accordingly less human. To this category belonged for instance prostitutes and barbers, actors and jugglers, skinners, executioners, undertakers, and the removers of nightsoil. Many of these infamous people had a relatively mobile way of life, which in itself was seen as dangerous, because it implied a lack of social control. But it was mainly their (often professional) involvement with marginal aspects, unusual states and extraordinary postures of the human body that made them infamous, marginal, and consequentially dangerous in the eyes of the established citizens. Bandits – that is, criminals in general – equally belonged to the infamous people.⁴³

Physical aspects were certainly stressed in both the positive and the negative stereotype of bandits. Their strange rules (or lack of rules) governing eating, drinking, relations with women, physical cleanliness and dress, and the use of violence, play an important part in many stories. On the negative side there is sexual licence and excessive eating and drinking. Sometimes basic rules are broken which distinguish between what may be eaten and what

may not, because it is considered taboo (in the sense of either sacred or dirty/impure)⁴⁴: in some stories the bandits drink from a chamber-pot, or they go as far as the consumption of raw meat. There is often excessive violence in these tales, including rape, torture, random killing and plundering. On the positive side we find the absence of women or a relatively respectful, courteous attitude towards them. Large amounts of food and drink are consumed at festive banquets, which are of course extraordinary too. During the periods between feasts, poverty is shared by all bandmembers, including the captain. And many noble bandits show an unusual aversion to violence. The physical appearance of the bandits also receives some attention in the stories. Here too we find opposing extremes: unwashed, unkempt men in rags on the one hand, and beautifully attired, swaggering bandcaptains looking like rich gentlemen on the other hand.

There is an obvious contrast with the stereotypical, well-ordered and unspectacular way of life of established citizens. In their own view these kind of people are neither heroic nor monstrous, neither social rebels nor purely self-interested, unscrupulous brutes, neither continually cheerful nor sombre. The key-concepts of their self-image have mainly to do with composure and a well-regulated existence, with the avoidance of excess. In every respect they are the opposite of the stereotypical Noble and Ignoble Bandit. An established citizen must have a fixed residence, preferably in town, but certainly not out in the wilderness. He should have a family, work hard and try to better himself. He is expected to behave in a civilized way under any circumstances and to treat women with respect, although from a distinctly superior position. In fact, his life is curtailed by all kinds of social constraints.

Public and authors

Now we have some idea of the (stereotypical) self-image of non-marginal West-Europeans. But can we find some historical evidence that these people were indeed the kind of public to whom these bandit-stories appealed; and what do we know about the authors? In fact, quite a few of the terms used in the previous para-

graphs – like *Volksbücher*, *Bibliothèque Bleue*, *Bänkelliedern*, *volksbibliotheken*, folk-hero, burlesque, etc. – immediately evoke the notion of *popular* culture.⁴⁵ And many of the tales about the bandits will indeed have reached literate (and by reading aloud and re-telling also quite a large number of illiterate) members of the working population of town and countryside, such as artisans, shopkeepers, peasants, etc. Yet, although the elasticity of the concept ‘popular’ is well known, it would be hardly credible to categorize all publications on banditry which have been discussed before as ‘popular literature’. In the first place these publications include bulky novels directed at a more leisured public of practised readers, and philosophical dialogues referring to concepts and discussions which cannot have been common knowledge at the time. Moreover, there are good reasons to assume that some of the publications usually denoted as popular literature – such as the *Bibliothèque Bleue* edition of Cartouche’s biography, the burlesque poems and the songs (*Bänkelliedern*) – were mainly read by a public best described as *intermediate* in cultural interests and social position.

As Jean-Luc Marais suggests, the readership of the *Bibliothèque Bleue* and other publications of this type expanded since the 16th century, extending its boundaries downwards – from clerics and the less cultured nobility to the urban middle classes and parts of the lower social strata – and from the towns to the countryside. Only the elite, comprising parts of the urban higher middle classes, seems to have turned away gradually from this kind of literature in the course of the 18th century.⁴⁶

We know rather less about the readership of the Belgian and German bandit-literature. But considering the variety of genres – including *Bänkelliedern* as well as four-volume novels, and newspaper accounts as well as moralizing poems – it seems probable that this public too covered a broad social spectrum, ranging at least from the literate peasants and artisans to the urban bourgeoisie, and possibly even further. From Müller-Fraureuth’s study of the German romantic plays and novels about knights and robbers it is clear, that an enormous market for this genre existed between

about 1780 and the early 20th century.⁴⁷ And although he does not offer very detailed information about the social background of the readers, many of them certainly belonged to the middle strata, and especially to the petty bourgeoisie. This public had access to a huge stock of novels in the libraries. The Leipzig library catalogue, for instance, offered in 1836 more than 6000 novels of which at least 1700 were described as “Ritter- und Räuberromane”. As in 18th-century France, only a part of the higher middle class public seems to have looked down upon the more sensational novels of this genre – although they did appreciate Vulpius’ and Schiller’s bandit-stories.⁴⁸

Thus we find that the distinction between ‘popular’ and ‘elite culture’ is not really applicable or illuminating in this case. As a whole, the readership of the bandit-tales could perhaps best be described as a mass-audience, which excluded at most parts of the lower social strata and the intellectual and cultural elite.

Turning to the authors, it will be obvious that many of them have remained anonymous. Of the others, quite a few can be characterized as (semi)professional writers of a bourgeois background. This was certainly the case with some of the 18th- and 19th-century German authors of novels and ‘official’ accounts about the bandits.⁴⁹ But it is perhaps even more important to note that quite a large proportion of the authors belonged to a kind of intermediate or transitional zone in a social and cultural sense. They could, in fact, very well be regarded as cultural middlemen or mediators.⁵⁰ I am thinking for instance of the professional actor and play-wright Marc-Antoine Legrand (1673–1728), who wrote one of the first comedies about Cartouche, and of his German colleague C. H. Spiess – whose publications include more than 40, extremely moralizing novels and a number of plays. Both men started their careers as members of actor’s companies touring the provinces. Both went on writing and directing plays; and both reached the top of their profession, obtaining royal patronage and directing plays at respectively the *Comédie Française*, and the national theatre in Vienna.⁵¹

While some authors thus bridged the gaps

between provincial and metropolitan culture, and between the lower middle social strata and the aristocracy, others formed links between peasant and (urban) middle class culture. Many of the Flemish priests and schoolteachers who wrote moralizing tales about Bakelandt and Jan de Lichte, were of peasant stock. And the brother of P. D. Cracco (author of one of the more famous novels about Bakelandt and at least 10 other *volksboeken*) was a professor at Aalst, who had published translations of Homer and Milton.⁵² It seems that in Germany too, clergymen and schoolteachers were among the most productive authors of romantic ghost- and bandit-novels.⁵³ And even the two men who composed the song for Bakelandt’s execution may not quite have been the straightforward representatives of ‘popular tradition’ which they appear to be. Unlike many of their colleagues, they did not publish their songs anonymously, and they were known at the time as *the* professional song-writers and occasional poets of their part of Flanders.⁵⁴

Despite their links with popular and oral traditions, there is good reason to think that most of the authors wished to regard themselves as educated, respectable, established citizens – as men who were just a cut above ‘the common people’. The intermediate position which many of them occupied in a cultural and social sense may indeed have strengthened their identification with the norms, codes of behaviour and categories of the established bourgeois – especially when they were in fact of ‘lower class’ background. (Certainly none of the publications was written from the standpoint of a ‘marginal person’.⁵⁵) Concluding, we may say that a major part of this literature represented the ideas and ‘worldview’ of the established – non-elite and non-marginal – citizens, and appealed to a mass public covering a broad social spectrum.

In this connection it is important to remember that the bandit-stories belong to an essentially *written* culture. They seem to have been influenced only slightly by oral traditions. Judging from the Belgian case-studies of Bakelandt and Jan de Lichte, the only elements

which the written versions may have borrowed directly from oral traditions were the magical-satanic or ghostly traits and trickster-like qualities accorded to some robbercaptains. And even here, we do not really know whether these elements – which were indeed part of 19th-century Flemish oral tradition – had not themselves been influenced by written texts. On the whole, the German, Flemish, and French material presented in the preceding paragraphs confirms one of the conclusions of the French authors Blanc and Fabre: “Ainsi, depuis le milieu du XVIIIe siècle, le bandit ne prend place dans le discours local que lorsque’une pluralité d’inscriptions le met en scène”.⁵⁶ As far as bandit-tales are concerned, literary representations seem to have had more influence on oral tradition than vice versa.

Heroes and villains

Having found how most of the bandit-stories reflect norms and ideals of established groups in Western Europe, it is easier to understand why both Cartouche and Schinderhannes were seen as heroes from the start, while the other two bandcaptains were almost immediately given a place among the dangers threatening human society. Jan de Lichte remained a villain from 1750 until 1953, when Boon reversed his image. Bakelandt was ‘recreated’ as a villain after about half a century of oblivion, and – apart from Cracco’s version of 1860, where he figured as a social bandit and a rebel – his image remained negative until well into the 20th century.

There was, of course, some connection between a bandit’s image and his historical activities – but the nature of this ‘link’ can hardly be called simple or direct. Briefly reviewing the four ‘literary careers’, we find that Cartouche was not only admired by the *menu peuple* of Paris; he was also used by some intellectuals to symbolize their criticism of the existing social and political order. These people from very different backgrounds had their hatred of the French regime in common. Yet, the historical deeds of Cartouche and his colleagues do not really point to any revolutionary or even just political motives among the bandits – unless

one would consider the operating of the band in the proximity of Paris in itself an act of rebellion. Schinderhannes too was appreciated by the members of more than one social category. Especially his role as an enemy of Jews and Frenchmen appealed both to the rural population of the Rhineland and to the more conservative part of the German provincial bourgeoisie. Schinderhannes did indeed rob *some* Jews and French soldiers; but more often he robbed and extorted money and products from the German rural population of the Rhineland. The choice of his victims seems not to have been inspired by any political or ideological motives; he was almost exclusively interested in the amount of booty, and his so-called attacks on French soldiers usually took the form of stealing their horses – which may have been re-sold to the French a few days later.

However, there is even less reason to regard Bakelandt as a rebel against the French occupiers of the Southern Netherlands. The operations of his band were mainly directed against the rural inhabitants of Flanders, while Bakelandt’s role during the trial of his band was marked by cooperation with the French and detailed denunciations of his fellow-bandmembers. It is not really surprising then, to find him in his first literary appearance as a pro-French enemy of religion and traditional Flemish values. His modern role as a gangster and hired killer continued this negative image – although in these stories Bakelandt has lost the extreme, ‘inhuman’ characteristics which were accorded to him in the 19th century. The case of Jan de Lichte is similar. Until the 1950s, his image remained that of a dangerous subversive element: instead of fighting the French, he had made use of their occupation of the Southern Netherlands during the 1740s to threaten and rob the respectable inhabitants of the Flemish countryside and towns. There was no point of contact between his activities and the ideals and interests of established ‘burgers’. And of course exactly for this reason he was an excellent candidate for Boon’s book about a social rebel who defended the cause of the ‘poor and oppressed’.

Thus it appears that a bandit’s image remained predominantly negative as long as he

was considered a threat to the norms and the well ordered existence of established citizens and to the authorities with whom these people could identify. A negative image was reversed – into that of the social bandit or rebel – only by authors who were in favour of a radical change of the existing social and political order. None of the bandits could have acquired a lasting ‘positive’ reputation unless established *Bürger* could in some way identify with his (presumed) historical activities and personal qualities. His image would become particularly positive when the bandit had opposed (or was seen as opposing) groups which the lower as well as the middle strata perceived as enemies.

Changing images

Besides providing clues to the stereotypical images of the Noble and the Ignoble Bandit, the ‘literary history’ of Cartouche, Schinderhannes, Bakelandt, and Jan de Lichte also reflects some long-term developments in the way in which ‘marginal people’ were perceived by established West-Europeans. Schinderhannes and Cartouche, who were heroes from the start, have remained heroic figures. But the images of Bakelandt and Jan de Lichte have gradually become somewhat less negative in the course of the 20th century. And this seems to fit in with a more general trend (which can be observed in comic strips, television series, films, historical novels, etc.) to depict bandits as ‘positive’ figures, as folk-heroes. Of course, as we have seen, the image of the Noble Bandit has existed for centuries, but it seems to have become more prevalent in the course of the 20th century – as the recollection of real confrontations with bandits slipped away from the collective memory of the established citizens. In former times, the (literary) attitude towards bandits had been much more ambivalent.

We may perhaps compare the use in literature of the ‘Noble Bandit’ and the concept of a paradisiac counter-society of outlaws – living happily in the woods, sharing food and drink, forming a community of equals, led by a just ruler – to the pastoral romances and plays which were very much en vogue among the 16th century French court nobility. As Norbert Elias has shown, the “*Spielwelt*” of shepherds

and shepherdesses – who belonged in real life to the lowest social strata – appealed to this part of the French aristocracy precisely because it was among the first social categories to experience a sharp increase in social constraints: from a position of relative ‘freedom’ to a lifestyle ruled by court-etiquette.⁵⁷

Likewise, public and authors of the bandit-stories must have felt the strains of living up to their stereotypical self-image: that of the hard-working, well-mannered, self-possessed, and considerate citizen, who exactly knows his place in the social hierarchy. It is not difficult to imagine that these strains may easily have led to a romantic longing for a different way of life, for an escape from ‘structure’ – as Victor Turner has called it – into ‘*communitas*’, where status and hierarchy have disappeared and all men are equal.⁵⁸ In Turner’s opinion “all social classification of living humans means existential deprivation for those classified, and the resulting loss and frustration are compensated for by symbols of reversal...”⁵⁹ To me this seems to epitomize what the positive stereotype about bandits – an idealized community – is all about. As Turner has pointed out, three aspects of culture “are exceptionally well endowed with ritual symbols and beliefs of a non-social structural type”: liminality, outsiderhood, and structural inferiority.⁶⁰ We have already seen that bandits were conceived of as liminal beings, standing between men and gods, or between men and animals. As outlaws they were “by ascription set outside the structural arrangements of a given social system”, as Turner describes outsiderhood.⁶¹ And even before becoming bandits, many robbers already were structurally inferior, that is, occupying very low positions in a system of social stratification.

It seems highly probable then, that the appeal of the literary image of the Noble Bandit – which increased especially during the late 18th century and the 19th century – indicates a widespread longing for ‘*communitas*’; a longing which may be understood in the context of the rapidly increasing hold of ‘structure’ (in the form of the modern nation-states) over more and more facets of the lives of established citizens.

On the other hand, the image of a savage and subversive counter-society (which equally lacks the constraints of 'normal' social existence) has for a long time been at least as powerful. And in all likelihood it appealed to members of more or less the same social strata. Roger Chartier has shown that the concept of a ('negative') counter-society of rogues, beggars, and bandits was used already in the middle of the 15th century. It was developed and formalized in the course of the 16th and 17th centuries, and seems to have been most fully elaborated in the beginning of the 18th century by Sauval. Recurring elements were the use of a special language (argot) and the hierarchy or organization of the counter-society along the model of the corporations or that of the state; in the latter case there was, of course, a ruler or king, sometimes called the *Roi des Ribaux*.⁶² The origin – that is, the emergence in writing – of this concept indicates, according to Chartier, a clear break with medieval ideas and traditions. These had been characterized by a more positive attitude towards poverty in general, while 'marginal' groups had been less excluded from the ranks of human society.⁶³

Following Chartier's line of reasoning, we may perhaps regard the conceptual setting aside of bandits, thieves and other 'marginal' people in a negative counter-society, as the literary expression of a process of social expulsion which gained momentum during the 15th and 16th centuries. Again, a connection with state-formation, and with the earlier phases of administrative and legal centralization is plausible. For the notion of a negative counter-society expressed in one eloquent image the direct threat of 'marginal' people both to the authority of the state and to the norms and basic categories of law-abiding, established citizens. But it did more than that. It both expressed and helped create the distinction between 'we, civilized people' and 'the others, who are uncivilized'. It was instrumental in redefining the moral order by drawing new social and conceptual boundaries, thus creating new categories. By relegating certain people to the margins of humanity, it helped organize and define the collective identity of the established citizens.

The exclusion of 'marginal' people facilitated the identification of established *Bürger* with the state, which, after all, protected their peaceful and well-ordered existence. As Renato Rosaldo has pointed out, the negative stereotype formed part of the "rhetoric of control": by reducing certain people to 'not quite human beings', it offered those who tried to establish or increase their control over a certain area, a moral justification to use even very hard measures to 'pacify' and subdue these people.⁶⁴ From Sheehan's study it is equally clear, that almost as soon as the English became colonists and started to "establish their own version of order" in North America, the paradisiac image of the New World was replaced by the negative image of "native society as an ignoble threat".⁶⁵ Both Rosaldo and Sheehan are speaking of the relations between indigenous populations and the representatives of Western powers involved in colonization and 'pacification'. But the same mechanism applies to the relation between West-European authorities and those whom they considered dangerous and marginal in their own countries.⁶⁶

With this in mind we may come to view the large number of publications in which European bandits were represented as cruel, ignoble savages and licentious brutes from a slightly different perspective. Continuing and elaborating the imagery of the 15th- and 16th-century notion of the 'counter-kingdom of rogues', these stories about bandits helped to impress the 'moral idiom' of the increasingly powerful nation-states on a very large part of the population. In a sense these tales helped to mould their readers into well-behaved subjects of a pacified nation-state. The last great robberbands disappeared from North-West Europe around 1815. But only when the bandits were no longer perceived as a threat to the stability of the West-European states, and when 'bourgeois' standards of behaviour had begun to penetrate far into the 'lower classes', the negative stereotype of bandits started to disappear gradually from literature. This only happened in the course of the 20th century. The positive, idealized counter-image of the Noble Bandit on the other hand – living with his companions outside 'structure' with its hier-

archy and constraints – has persisted, thereby indicating the fundamental ambivalence of established citizens about their pacified, well-ordered and unspectacular existence.

Notes

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I would like to thank Anton Blok, Wayne te Brake, Peter Burke and Kitty Verrips for their comments and suggestions.

1. The iconography of West-European banditry deserves a study by itself. Cf. the beautifully produced catalogue of the exhibition (June–November 1984) on Italian brigandage at Naples: *Brigantaggio Lealismo Repressione nel Mezzogiorno, 1860–1870* (Naples, 1984).
 2. E. P. Thompson, *Folklore, Anthropology, and Social History* (Studies in Labour History Pamphlet, 1979), esp. pp. 7–11.
 3. I have refrained here from discussing the case of the still more famous Robin Hood. Partly because there are still many doubts about his 'historicity', but mainly because of the important differences in context. A detailed comparison of the long term development of his image with that of other, 'Continental' bandits – which might be illuminating – would require a separate essay.
 4. See especially Edmund Leach, "Anthropological Aspects of Language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse", in E. H. Lenneberg (Ed.), *New Directions in the Study of Language* (Cambridge Mass., 1964); *idem*, *Culture and Communication. The Logic by which symbols are connected. An introduction to the use of structuralist analysis in social anthropology* (Cambridge, 1976); and *idem*, *Social Anthropology* (Glasgow, 1976). Of Anton Blok's essays, see especially: "Wie waren de Bokkerijders?", *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis*, 14 (1979), pp. 168–200; "Infame beroepen", *Symposion*, III (1981), nr. 1/2, pp. 104–28; and "Rams and billy-goats: a key to the Mediterranean code of honour", *Man*, XVI (1981), nr. 3, pp. 427–40. Cf. also Henk Driessen's inspiring contribution "Heroes and Villains. Images of Bandits and Banditry in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Andalusia", in G. Ortalli (Ed.), *Bande armate, Banditi, Banditismo e Repressione di Giustizia negli Stati Europei d'Antico Regime. Atti del Convegno – Venezia 3–5 Novembre 1983* (Roma, 1986), pp. 179–95.
- Together with his comments on a second version of this article, Peter Burke very kindly sent me his essay 'Perceiving Rogues', dealing with (ster-

eotypical) images of beggars and other marginal people in 16th-century Italy, which will appear in his *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, 1987).

5. For a comprehensive study on French 18th-century literature regarding crime and criminals, see Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, *Kriminalität und Literatur im Frankreich des 18. Jahrhunderts. Literarische Formen, soziale Funktionen und Wissenskonsituenten von Kriminalitätsdarstellung im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* (München/Wien, 1983). Cf. for instance, Maurice Keen, *The Outlaws of Medieval Legend* (London, 1961); P. J. Buijnsters, *Levens van beruchte Personen. Over de criminele biografie in Nederland* (Utrecht, 1980); *Feit en Fictie in Misdaadliteratuur (ca. 1650–ca. 1850)* (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 1985); C. Müller-Fraureuth, *Die Ritter- und Räuberromane* (Halle, 1894; repr. Hildesheim, 1965); and various essays by S. Top and E. I. Strubbe on specific Belgian criminal figures (as mentioned in notes 14 and 22).
- On picaresque literature, see Alexander A. Parker, *The Picaresque Novel in Spain and Europe, 1599–1753* (Edinburgh, 1967); and Barbara Babcock, "Liberty's a Whore: Inversions, Marginalia, and Picaresque Narrative", in Barbara Babcock (Ed.), *The Reversible World. Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society* (Ithaca/London, 1978), pp. 95–116.
6. See Lüsebrink, *Kriminalität und Literatur*, pp. 15–38. On the comedies, see Mary Scott Burnet, *Marc-Antoine Legrand. Acteur et auteur comique (1623–1728)* (Paris, 1938), pp. 65–78. About Dutch and German translations and other works on Cartouche, see M. Buisman J. Fzn., *Populaire Prozaschrijvers van 1600 tot 1815* (Amsterdam, 1960), nrs. 1361–72 and 2644; and Müller-Fraureuth, *Ritter- und Räuberromane*, pp. 92–93. To mention one more example: around 1860 a four-volume novel was published both in Germany and in Holland which offers a description in almost one thousand pages of the "historical and romantic scene of Cartouche and his robberband".
7. See Lüsebrink, *Kriminalität und Literatur*, pp. 15–16.
8. See Burnet, *Marc-Antoine Legrand*, pp. 65–78, where she also describes how the première of *Cartouche ou l'Homme imprénable* was planned at a time when Cartouche was still at liberty. The censors accordingly prohibited any performances because of the slight upon the reputation of the police. After his arrest, however, performances were allowed. The author, Marc-Antoine Legrand, immediately made use of the opportunity to visit Cartouche in prison. He rewrote his play slightly, inserting some argot provided by the bandit himself.
9. See Lüsebrink, *Kriminalität und Literatur*, pp. 21–33; and for 19th-century images of Car-

- touche, see Burnet, *Marc-Antoine Legrand*, pp. 76–77.
10. Especially in the *Entretien des Ombres aux Champs-Élysées* (1723) by Antoine-Augustin Bruzen de la Martinière, in which Cartouche discusses various subjects with the minister of Police D'Argenson and with a mythical Spartan legislator. See Lüsebrink, *Kriminalität und Literatur*, pp. 25–28.
 11. See Lüsebrink, *Kriminalität und Literatur*, pp. 33–35.
 12. See Lüsebrink, *Kriminalität und Literatur*, pp. 22–33; cf. Burnet, *Marc-Antoine Legrand*, pp. 76–77, who mentions that in all plays about Cartouche but one, his image was positive. In the only 'negative' play, a 19th-century melodrama, he was represented as an *incarnation du mal*.
 13. See Stefaan Top, *De Bende van Bakelandt in de geschiedenis, de literatuur, het volkslied en het volksverhaal*, Vol. I: *Lodewijk Bakelandt en zijn bende. Bijdrage tot de studie van de groepsriminaliteit rond 1800 voornamelijk in het Leiedepartement* (Kortemark–Handzame, 1983).
 14. See Stefaan Top, "Bakelandt in de geschiedenis en de volkskunde", *Jaarboek voor Westvlaamse Volkskundigen*, I (1975), pp. 7–15, especially pp. 12–14; and E. I. Strubbe, "De metamorfoses van de Bakelandt-figuur (1803–1961)", *Volkskunde*, 63 (1962), pp. 158–173, especially pp. 163–65.
 15. See Strubbe, "De metamorfoses", p. 165.
 16. See Top, "Bakelandt", pp. 13–14; and Strubbe, "De metamorfoses", pp. 165–70.
 17. Strubbe, "De metamorfoses", p. 167, summarizing Huys.
 18. On *social bandits* see E. J. Hobsbawm, "The Social Bandit", in his *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Manchester, 1959), pp. 13–29; and *idem*, *Bandits* (London, 1969; revised ed. New York, 1981). Hobsbawm's representation of social banditry shows very clearly the strength of the stereotypical image of the 'Noble Bandit'. In "The Peasant and the Brigand: Social Banditry reconsidered", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, XIV (1972), pp. 494–503, Anton Blok has pointed out the mythical and stereotypical qualities of the image of the 'Noble Bandit'. After a short and rather unconvincing reply (*ibidem*, pp. 503–05), Hobsbawm has again reacted on Blok's critique in his *Postscript* to the 1981-edition of *Bandits* (pp. 138–64). Here the distinction between stereotype and reality has become even more vague (esp. p. 141).
 19. See Strubbe, "De metamorfoses", pp. 169–70.
 20. For the various novels about Bakelandt, see Strubbe, "De metamorfoses", pp. 171–73. Top mentions a questionnaire which was sent out probably during the late 1960s or early 1970s and answered by about 1000 librarians, who indicated that Bakelandt was the best known Flemish bandit ("Bakelandt", p. 14, n. 15). On volksbibliotheken see A. Viaene, "De Bende van Salembier, 1796–1798. Geschiedenis en Legende". *Biekorf*, LXXIII (1972), pp. 257–70, who also indicates a number of bandit-novels which could be found in the *Katholieke Boekerij* between 1855 and 1858 (p. 269).
 21. See Strubbe, "De metamorfoses", pp. 172–73.
 22. See Paul Maes & Stefaan Top, "De bende van Jan de Lichte. Een vergelijking tussen historische en volksliteraire bronnen", *Volkskunde*, 83 (1983), pp. 9–27.
 23. See Maes & Top, "De bende van Jan de Lichte", pp. 13–27.
 24. *Ibidem*, pp. 13–15.
 25. It seems only fitting that in this novel Jan de Lichte – who is an expert at disguises – dresses like a nobleman, a member of the real elite. His goals match this outfit: he wants to equal Cartouche, to supplant the French, and to become king of a new parallel society. See Maes & Top, "De bende van Jan de Lichte", pp. 15–17.
 26. *Ibidem*, pp. 13–15.
 27. See B. Becker, *Actenmässige Geschichte der Räuberbanden an den beyden Ufern des Rheins*, Vol. I (Köln, 1804; repr. Leipzig, 1972), pp. 69–152. Cf. Manfred Franke (Hrsg.), *Schinderhannes, Kriminalgeschichte voller Abentheuer und Wunder und doch streng der Wahrheit getreu 1802* (Berlin, 1977), pp. 71–76, 87–99, and 103–07.
 28. See Franke, *Schinderhannes*, *passim*. In this essay I have not been able to make use of an older study by Franke on Schinderhannes. Recently Heidrun Frieze was kind enough to send me a copy of this unpublished dissertation, which contains among other things an extensive bibliography of popular and other literature on Schinderhannes. See Curt-Manfred Franke, *Der Schinderhannes in der deutschen Volksüberlieferung. Eine volkskundliche Monographie* (Frankfurt am Main, 1958; unpubl. dissertation).
 29. *Kriminalgeschichten voller Abentheuer und Wunder und doch streng der Wahrheit getreu* (Vol. I Hamburg und Mainz, 1801; Vol. II *ibid.*, 1802). As Franke indicates, the anonymous author of the *Kriminalgeschichten* clearly felt that his book too could use some extra publicity and presented it as a posthumous work of C. H. Spiess, one of the famous German authors of the period, who had published about 40 novels and a number of plays. See Franke, *Schinderhannes*, pp. 22–23, 97, and 109. For a discussion of the works by Vulpius, Spiess, and others, see Müller-Fraureuth, *Die Ritter- und Räuberromane*, pp. 38 ff.
 30. See Franke, *Schinderhannes*, pp. 21–76, especially p. 23.
 31. See Becker, *Actenmässige Geschichte*, Vol. I, pp. 73–76 and 146–48; cf. Franke, *Schinderhannes*, pp. 77–112.

32. See Franke, *Schinderhannes*, pp. 89–112; and pp. 85, 95–96, and 111 about allusions in the German press to a political background of Schinderhannes' activities. A further attempt by Becker (in 1804) at deflating Schinderhannes' by then heroic image produced an excellent study of his robberband in which only a slight overemphasis of the bandit's wildness and lack of 'noble' qualities is recognizable. But this book equally did not succeed in changing his reputation. See Becker, *Actenmässige Geschichte*, Vol. I, pp. 69–152.
33. See Franke, *Schinderhannes*, pp. 108–09. Cf. Müller-Fraureuth, *Die Ritter- und Räuberromane*, *passim*. On the image of the 'Noble Savage' and its influence on the perception of North-American Indians by 17th-century English explorers and settlers, see Bernard Sheehan, *Savagism & Civility. Indians and Englishmen in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge, 1980).
34. See Franke, *Schinderhannes*, pp. 116–46. Cf. Müller-Fraureuth, *Die Ritter- und Räuberromane*, p. 91.
35. See Franke, *Schinderhannes*, pp. 116–46; Strubbe, "De metamorfoses", pp. 166–73; Maes & Top, "De bende van Jan de Lichte", pp. 22–27.
36. It might be interesting to have a closer look at a modern set of terms: freedom fighter – terrorist. These terms, too, seem to refer to strongly positive and negative stereotypical images with their respective 'heroic' and 'inhuman' connotations.
37. And this does not only apply to bandits like Bakelandt, Jan de Lichte and Schinderhannes – who were indeed usually active in the countryside (though not exactly in the 'wilderness') – but also to the more urban Cartouche, and of course to many purely fictional bandits. Cf. Schiller's description of a journey to the 'lair' of the bandits, passing through woods which become "immer abschüssiger, unwegsamer und wilder", in his *Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre* (Stuttgart, 1983), p. 19.
38. On 'liminality' see Leach, "Anthropological Aspects of Language", *passim*; *idem*; *Culture and Communication*, *passim*; and Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca, 1969), especially pp. 94–130.
39. Sheehan, *Savagism & Civility*, p. 21 and *passim*.
40. Sheehan, *Savagism & Civility*, pp. 21–22, quoting John Donne; see the whole chapter 'Paradise', pp. 9–36.
41. Sheehan, *Savagism & Civility*, pp. 28 and 64; see the chapters 'Ignoble Savagism' (pp. 37–64) and 'Bestiality' (pp. 65–88).
42. Leach, *Social Anthropology*, pp. 116–21; and *idem*, *Culture and Communication*, pp. 55–64.
43. Blok, "Infame beroepen", pp. 116–17 and *passim*.
44. For Edmund Leach's theory of taboo, see his "Anthropological Aspects of Language", pp. 37–39, where he states that "whatever is taboo is a focus not only of special interest but also of anxiety. Whatever is taboo is sacred, valuable, important, powerful, dangerous, untouchable, filthy, unmentionable. (...) The general theory is that taboo applies to categories which are anomalous with respect to clearcut category oppositions".
45. On popular culture see Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London/New York, 1978). In his chapter 'Heroes, Villains, Fools' (pp. 148–77) he discusses the outlaw/brigand as one of the popular heroes, though he rightly points out that "attitudes to the outlaw are sometimes ambiguous or ambivalent" (p. 167).
46. See Jean-Luc Marais, "Littérature et culture 'populaires' aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles. Réponses et questions", *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest (Anjou, Maine, Touraine)*, Vol. 87 (1980), pp. 65–105, especially pp. 83–85 en p. 85 n. 115.
47. See Helmut Gaus, *Pers, kerk en geschreven fictie. Groeiproblemen en conflicten in een democratiseringsproces (Gent 1836–1860)* (Brugge, 1975). From Gaus' study it seems clear that in the period under discussion most of the fiction available through newspapers and *leeskabinetten* (libraries associated with various clubs and organizations) reached a definitely middle-class public (pp. 89 and 171–80). About Germany see Müller-Fraureuth, *Die Ritter- und Räuberromane*. It is striking that in Germany the stories about knights and robbers belonged to one genre. This raises the question whether this 19th-century public also regarded knights as liminal figures, and whether there existed positive as well as negative stereotypical images of knights.
48. See Müller-Fraureuth, *Die Ritter- und Räuberromane*, pp. 103–05.
49. Many authors of 'official' accounts – like Becker, Schwencken, and others – had public functions with the police and the judiciary. Christian August Vulpius – the author of *Rinaldo Rinaldini* and 60 more novels and tales, 35 plays and 5 other works – was Goethe's brother in law. See Müller-Fraureuth, *Die Ritter- und Räuberromane*, p. 77 and pp. 104–05.
50. Cf. Burke, *Popular Culture*, especially pp. 68–75 on 'mediators'; and Geneviève Bollème's remarks on character and authors of the French Bibliothèque Bleue in general, in "Littérature populaire et littérature de colportage au 18me siècle", in G. Bollème, J. Ehrard, F. Furet, D. Roche, J. Roger, *Livre et société dans la France du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris/Den Haag, 1965), pp. 61–92, especially p. 67.
On cultural middlemen or brokers linking peasant and urban life, local and national community, sophisticate culture and folk culture, see

- the seminal essays by Eric Wolf, "Aspects of Group Relations in a Complex Society", *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 88 (1956), pp. 1065–78, repr. in T. Shanin (Ed.), *Peasants and peasant society* (Harmondsworth, 1971), pp. 50–68; and Clifford Geertz, "The Javanese Kijaji: the Changing Role of a Cultural Broker", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. II (1960), pp. 228–49, especially pp. 228–31.
51. Besides mediating between provinces and capital, lower classes and aristocracy (i.e. part of his public and de Duc d'Aumont, whose family had long been patrons of the Legrands), Legrand also consciously tried to connect the French-style comedy of the *Comédie Française* with the popular dramatic tradition of the Italian *comedia dell'arte* and the theatric performances at the Parisian fairs. See Burnet, *Marc-Antoine Legrand, passim*. About Spiess, see note 29, and Müller-Fraureuth, *Die Ritter- und Räuberromane*, pp. 54–62.
 52. For biographical information about various Flemish authors of stories about Bakelandt and Jan de Lichte, see Strubbe, "De metamorfoses", pp. 163 ff.; Maes & Top, "De bende van Jan de Lichte", pp. 13 ff.; J. G. Frederiks & F. J. van der Branden, *Biographisch Woordenboek der Noord- en Zuid-Nederlandsche Letterkunde* (2nd ed. Amsterdam, 1888); and *Leven en Werken der Zuidnederlandsche Schrijvers* (le afl. Gent, 1900).
 53. See Müller-Fraureuth, *Die Ritter- und Räuberromane*, pp. 104–05; and Franke, *Schinderhannes*, pp. 134–44.
 54. One of these men, Angelus Adelof, lived at Gent. He usually wrote occasional festive and commemorative poems to the order of various societies. See *Leven en Werken*, p. 3. Cf. Strubbe, "De metamorfoses", pp. 163–64; and Top, "Bakelandt", pp. 12–13.
 55. This is even the case with Boon's novel about Jan de Lichte, which at first sight seems to represent the views of the bandits themselves. He interprets the brutal behaviour of the band-members as a sign of their revolutionary aspirations (for which no historical evidence has yet been found). By creating an opposition between poor, exploited and 'good' bandits on the one hand, and rich, exploiting and 'wicked' established society on the other, his position is about as far removed from the bandits' own standpoint as that of most other authors.
 56. Dominique Blanc & Daniel Fabre, *Le Brigand de Cavanac. Le fait divers, le roman, l'histoire* (La-grasse, 1982), p. 180.
 57. See Norbert Elais, *Die höfische Gesellschaft. Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Königtums und der höfischen Aristokratie* (Neuwied/Berlin, 1969), chapter VIII, 'Zur Soziogenese der aristokratischen Romantik im Zuge der Verhofung' (pp. 320–93), especially pp. 365–70.
 58. On *communitas* see Turner, *The Ritual Process*, pp. 131–65. Cf. Peter Burke's interpretation: "That outlaws were mythogenic in this way suggests that they satisfied repressed wishes, enabling ordinary people to take imaginative revenge on the authorities to whom they were usually obedient in real life" (*Popular Culture*, pp. 165–66).
 59. Victor Turner, "Comments and Conclusions", in Babcock, *The Reversible World*, pp. 267–96, quotation from p. 285.
 60. Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors. Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca/London, 1974), especially pp. 231–40; cf. *idem*, *The Ritual Process*, p. 128.
 61. Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*, p. 233.
 62. See Roger Chartier, "Les élites et les gueux. Quelques représentations (XVI^e–XVII^e siècles)", *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, Vol. XXI (1974), pp. 367–88; and *idem*, "la 'Monarchie d'Argot' entre le Mythe et l'Histoire", in *Les marginaux et les exclus dans l'histoire* (Cahiers Jussieu 5, Paris, 1979), pp. 275–311, especially pp. 281–94. Cf. Burke, 'Perceiving Rogues', *passim*.
 63. See Chartier, "Les élites et les gueux", p. 388; and *idem*, "La 'Monarchie d'Argot'", p. 276. Cf. Bronislaw Geremek, *Truands et Misérables dans l'Europe Moderne (1350–1600)* (Paris, 1980), especially pp. 71–95 and pp. 225 ff.
 64. Renato I. Rosaldo, "The Rhetoric of Control: Illegals Viewed as Natural Bandits and Wild Indians" in Babcock, *The Reversible World*, pp. 240–57. He discusses the case of the Philippine Ilongot.
 65. Sheehan, *Savagism & Civility*, p. 37.
 66. The difference in legal position and rights (which remained in existence until the French Revolution) between established, 'respectable' Continental European citizens and all 'infamous' people – comprising not only criminals and vagrants but also those involved in the so-called 'infamous occupations' – can only be understood as part of this process of European 'pacification'; see Blok, "Infame beroepen", p. 105. Cf. also Peter Burke's suggestion that "the 'myth of the rogue', as it might be called, was a means of legitimating the repressive measures against people who had been regarded as 'God's poor' but were increasingly seen as useless members of the commonwealth" ('Perceiving Rogues').