

The Banished Scholar

Beverland, Sex, and Liberty in the Seventeenth-Century Low Countries

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Abstract

Scholar Hadriaan Beverland was banished from Holland in 1679. Why was this humanist exiled from one of the most tolerant parts of Europe in the seventeenth century? This article argues that it was Beverland's singular focus on sexual lust that got him into such great trouble. In his studies, he highlighted the importance of sex in human nature, history, and his own society. Dutch theologians disliked his theology, exegesis, and his use of erudition to mock their authority. His humanist colleagues did not support him either, since Beverland threatened the basis of the humanist enterprise by drawing attention to the sexual side of the classical world. And Dutch magistrates were happy to convict the young scholar, because he had insolently accused them of hypocrisy. By restricting sex to marriage, in compliance with Reformed doctrine, secular authorities upheld a sexual morality that was unattainable, Beverland argued, and he proposed honest discussion of the problem of sex. This article shows that by exposing the gap between principle and practice, Beverland highlighted the hypocrisy of a deeply conflicted elite at a precarious time, since the Dutch Golden Age had started disintegrating by the late-seventeenth century. Positioning Beverland's fate in this context of change, his story and scholarship provide a fresh perspective on the intellectual environment of the Low Countries in this period.

Keywords: Hadriaan Beverland, humanism, original sin, history of sexuality, lust, sexual liberty

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In 1679 humanist Hadriaan Beverland (1650-1716) was banished from the province of Holland. At the time of his conviction, Beverland was establishing himself as an ambitious scholar of the classics at the University of Leiden. He was almost ready to commit his master thesis ‘*De Prostibulis Veterum*’ to print, he counted established humanist scholars like Nicolaas Heinsius, Isaac Vossius, and Jacobus Gronovius among his closest friends, and he was enjoying all that Dutch student life had to offer, in- and outside the academy.

The Dutch Republic boasted a favourable environment for learning in the seventeenth century. By 1650, the booming economic market and influx of immigrants had created an innovative cultural and intellectual climate. The Dutch school of textual criticism, characterized by the work of scholars like Hugo Grotius, Gerardus Joannes Vossius, and Daniël Heinsius was renowned in Europe for producing high-quality philological, historical, and chronological studies of pagan and sacred texts. The young Republic fostered some of the best universities in Europe, where humanist scholarship, Reformed Protestant thought, natural philosophy and the mathematical sciences flourished. The small state was also renowned for its tolerance of radical scholarship and philosophy. The Frenchman René Descartes, the Englishman Thomas Hobbes, and the Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza had all published their unorthodox works in Holland in the decades preceding Beverland’s arrest without many difficulties.² Why then was this young, talented, and well-connected scholar expelled from the University of Leiden and exiled from Holland? Why did his life and career take such a drastic turn for the worse? How did Hadriaan Beverland manage to get himself into so much trouble?

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² Modern scholarship on the Low Countries in the seventeenth century is enormous. Good introductions are given in: Prak, *The Dutch Republic*; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*. For more on the Dutch intellectual climate in this period, see for example: Goldgar, *Impolite Learning*; Van Bunge, *From Stevin to Spinoza*; Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, 157-328.

The literature on Beverland to date has failed to address these basic queries surrounding his banishment from a historical point of view. Specialized studies on Beverland and his writings, first and foremost the scholarship of classicist Rudolf De Smet, have provided in-depth analyses of his Latinity and classical studies, yet these works have not situated Beverland's scholarship and troubles in their contemporary intellectual and social context.³ One does find Beverland's story in a number of historical narratives, typically devoted to the early or 'radical' enlightenment or to the early modern history of sexuality. Discussing Beverland's ideas in relation to Dutch scholarship in this period, Wiep van Bunge and Jonathan Israel, for example, have characterized his works as Spinozist.⁴ Inger Leemans concluded that his views were inspired by pornographic works and Faramerz Dabhoiwala called Beverland one of the most extreme exponents of sexual freedom in Europe.⁵ These expert historians, who situated Beverland as a case study in their broader studies, all based their conclusions on secondary sources however. Beverland's banishment, therefore, remains poorly understood. Specialist studies of his works have failed to place them in their historical context, while studies on the historical context have failed to engage closely with his scholarship.

This article will fill the void by positioning Beverland's sexual studies and banishment in the intellectual, social, and religious context of the Low Countries in the late-seventeenth-century.⁶ By the last decades of the seventeenth century, the economy had stopped expanding and the dominant position of the Dutch in world trade was threatened. In addition, the Dutch population stopped growing, urbanization halted, and prices dropped.⁷ The stagnation of the economy coincided with important political changes: due to the wars with many of its European and colonial neighbours, William III was elected Stadholder in 1672. His appointment and departure for England in 1688 heightened tensions between supporters of the federal system of government, the Republican party, and supporters of the Stadholder and a more monarchical system of government, the Orangists and, in the end, gave rise to a political eclipse.⁸ Tensions within the Dutch Reformed Church were also palpable, with orthodox and liberal factions fiercely debating how to deal with the emergence of new heresies, novel philosophies, and biblical criticism that challenged the position of the clergy and theologians in Dutch society as a whole and in the academic context in particular.⁹ New philosophies

3 The most important of these studies are: De Smet, *Hadrianus Beverlandus*; Elias, 'Het Spinozistisch erotisme'; Wauters, 'De onuitgegeven Latijnse correspondentie'.

4 Van Bunge, *From Stevin to Spinoza*, 158-159; Van Bunge, *Spinoza past and present*, 135, 155-156, 206-207; Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, 63, 83-96, 103, 116, 131, 153, 186, 206, 311, 432, 435, 451, 633-634, 654; Israel, *Enlightenment Contested*, p. 33-34, 43, 165, 183, 377-378, 580-586, 607, 665.

5 Leemans, *Het woord*, 250-56; Dabhoiwala, *The Origins of Sex*, 139. Also Van Bunge and Israel commented on his sexual argument: Van Bunge called him a pornographer while Israel stated that Beverland was one of the first enlightenment scholars who promoted the radical idea that all people should enjoy sexual freedom, postulating an 'erotic revolution' (see the works in footnote 4).

6 This article is based on my PhD thesis, completed at the University of Oxford in 2016. See: Holleward, *The Banishment*.

7 For more on this decline, see: Jacob and Mijnhardt, *The Dutch Republic*; Kloek and Mijnhardt, 1800.

8 Panhuysen, *Rampjaar 1672*; Reinders, *Gedrukte chaos*.

9 Van Eijnatten, *Liberty*; Goldgar, *Impolite Learning*.

of science, knowledge, and truth slowly destabilized traditions of scholarship: developments in especially biblical criticism and (natural) philosophy gave birth to radically new methods and perspectives that challenged age-old hierarchies in and approaches to learning.¹⁰ The hegemony of humanist scholarship, which had already been affected by theological strife, was now challenged by the philosophies of thinkers like Descartes and battling with the influence of radical philosophers like Spinoza. A new generation of scholars, who exchanged textual criticism for rationalism and empiricism, was slowly gaining ground.

Placing Beverland's fate in this context of change does not only contribute to a better understanding of his scholarship and banishment, but also provides a fresh perspective on the Dutch intellectual environment in this period. Despite its high standing in Europe, humanist scholarship in the Low Countries was not as critical in its approach to the biblical manuscripts and ancient works as often claimed. Beverland's studies demonstrate that, in the end, not a return to the original text but upholding the exalted status of classical works guided humanists when studying the ancient world. By discussing the omnipresence of sex in the Bible, the classics, and his contemporary society, Beverland provoked not just his humanist colleagues but also religious and secular authorities and he soon experienced that, despite its relatively tolerant intellectual climate, there were boundaries to what was acceptable to study and publish in the seventeenth-century Low Countries. Beverland might have anticipated that his ideas on sex and sin would cause a stir, yet when he published his first works he got into much more trouble than he ever imagined.

Hadriaan Beverland and His Studies

An anonymous poem was dedicated to Adriaan Beverland in 1679. The poet of this *Lof-Digt* argued that in Beverland's work, *De Peccato Originali*, a neglected subject was elevated 'from deep oblivion into the light'.¹¹ The author was not alone in his praise of Beverland and his erudition. The poet Ernst Baders had dedicated a poem to the same scholar a year earlier, in which he defended this 'most learned young man' who had been blessed with the most illustrious character and a genius mind.¹² Not everyone held Beverland in such high regard however. Johannes Le Fer, an acquaintance of Beverland, designed an inscription for his grave, which betrayed a more critical view: 'Here lays the Lord of Beverland / caught by a higher Hand / Because he made our best Mother / out to be a filthy Whore.'¹³ A similar judgment was presented in a poem by physician and poet David van Hoogstraten:

¹⁰ Van Bunge, *From Stevin to Spinoza*, 26-137; Van Ruler, 'The Shipwreck of Belief; Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, 157-328.

¹¹ J.V.B., *Lof-Digt*.

¹² Baders, 'Doctissimo Iuveni Hadriano Beverlando'.

¹³ 'Hier leid de Heer van Beverland. Gevangen door een hoger Hand. Omdat hij onse beste Moer. Gemaect heeft tot een voule Hoer.' In: Le Fer, Freytag, *Analecta Litteraria*, 95.

To Beverlant
 How rich you were endowed,
 with heavenly radiance and beams
 That descended upon you, like the dew of May;
 If only you had not, playing with your wise intellect,
 kicked against the gifts of God's hand.
 What is erudition, without piety?
 A splendid base, to breed snakes on.¹⁴

Hadriaan Beverland (fig. 1), whose studies and scholarship were at the same time championed and criticized in the late 1670s, was born in Middelburg in 1650, where he was enrolled at the Latin School in 1663.¹⁵ He commenced his academic studies at the University of Franeker in July 1669 and studied at different Dutch universities in the next decade. He also spent a year in Oxford in 1672.¹⁶ Beverland was awarded a doctorate in law by Utrecht University in March 1677, but he had been preoccupied with a different subject for many years. He spent most of his time studying classical literature and concentrated on one topic in particular: sex. What might have started as youthful play gradually turned into to a more serious endeavour: in 1678 he offered a first glimpse of his sexual argument by printing his *Peccatum Originale* (*Original Sin*).¹⁷ A year later Beverland published not only the second edition of his work on sex and sin, titled *De Peccato Originali* (*On Original Sin*)¹⁸, but also a study on female lust: *De Stolatae Virginitatis Iure* (*On the Law of Draped Virginitas*).¹⁹ His published works were only previews of a much larger thesis he was completing at the time, however. In his three-volume 'De Prostibulis Veterum' ('On the Prostitution of the Ancients'), he planned to disclose the results of his sexual studies in great detail.²⁰

In his different works Beverland argued that sexual lust was the original sin. Adam and Eve had engaged in sexual intercourse in the Garden of Eden, were expelled from Paradise, and their descendants had consequently been punished by God: due to the sin of the first mortals sexual desire had become a universal and dominant characteristic of human nature after the Fall. Beverland described the overbearing power of lust in all human beings, young and old, male and female, pagan and Christian, by focusing on sex in history. A humanist

14 'Op Beverlant. Hoe rijk waert gij verzien van hemelglans en stralen. Die als een meidau op u neder quamen dalen; Zoo gy niet, spelende met u geleerd verstand, Had met den voet geschopt de gaven van Gods hand. Wat is geleertheid, van Godsvruchtigheid verstenen? Een kostelyck vertrek, om slangen op te queken.' In: Van Hoogstraten, 'Op Beverlant'.

15 Vogler, *De leerlingen*, 22.

16 For his enrollment in these different universities: Fockema Andreae and Meijer, *Album Studiosorum Academiae Franekerensis*, 203, 205; De Rieu, *Album Studiosorum Academiae Lugduno Batavae*, 585; Beijers and Van Boekhoven, *Album Studiosorum Academiae Rheno-Traiectinae*, 71; Ketner, *Album Promotorum Academiae Rheno-Traiectinae*, 33. Beverland attests to his time in Oxford in different documents (see for example: Beverland, *Although my innocency*, 4; Beverland, *De Peccato Originali*, Letter to Bernard de Gomme) and his registration was recorded in: Wood, '1672, Creations'.

17 Beverland, *Peccatum Originale*. This work is henceforth referred to as *PO*.

18 Beverland, *De Peccato Originali*. This work is henceforth referred to as *DPO*.

19 Beverland, *De Stolatae Virginitatis Iure*. This work is henceforth referred to as *DSVI*.

20 Today only an unfinished copy of the first book, which he handed over to the University of Leiden as part of his sentence, has been preserved (Leiden, Library of the University of Leiden, *De Prostibulis Veterum*, BPL 1994). This work is henceforth referred to as the *DPV*. For more on this manuscript, see: De Smet, *Hadriani Barlandi*.



Fig. 1 Ary de Vois, Painting of Hadriaan Beverland, c. 1670-1680, oil on panel, 35,2×27,6 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

in heart and soul, he focused in particular on the Roman Republic and Empire (200 BCE to 200 CE approximately), which coincided with early Christianity. From the naked depictions of emperors to the explicit texts of Roman poets, he described in great detail how the dominance of sex exhibited itself in everything: in Greek sculptures, on Roman coins, in the peculiar sexual morals of Gnostic sects, and in the great variety of sexual acts and preferences one encountered in ancient times, from masturbation to bestiality.

Beverland's publications on sex and sin were heavily criticized by both friends and foes. Religious, secular, and academic authorities in the Low Countries soon became involved in the controversy. In September 1679 the States of Holland approved a request, submitted by deputies of the Dutch Reformed Church, in which the clergy had asked the secular authorities to prohibit and repress Beverland's publications to conserve God's Word and to protect young people in Dutch society.²¹ The States ordered the University of Leiden,

²¹ Beverland and his works were discussed during Synods of the Dutch Reformed Church of South-Holland in 1679, 1680, and 1684. See: Knuttel, *Acta der particuliere synoden*, v, 283, 321-322, 495. For the approval of the request of the Synods by the States of Holland, see: The Hague, National Archive, 3.01.04.01, Gedrukte resoluties van de Staten van Holland, B.1.1, 112, 12 September 1679.

where Beverland was enrolled as a student at the time, to look into the case and to advise them on the appropriate course of action.²² The academic court of the University of Leiden arrested Beverland on 26 October 1679 and he spent the next five weeks in prison.²³ Waiting for his trial to start, he did manage to get a third edition of his work on sex and sin printed, with the title *Poma Amoris (The Fruits of Love)*.²⁴

In November 1679, the university court convicted Beverland of writing godless, profane, and perverse works. In addition to a series of minor punishments, *De Peccato Originali* was censured, he had to hand in the manuscript of 'De Prostibulis Veterum', was expelled from the University of Leiden, and banished from Holland and Zeeland.²⁵ After his release in December, he travelled to Utrecht, where he was allowed to stay without violating the terms of his punishment. Francois Halma (1653-1722), bookseller and printer in Utrecht at the time, stated that Beverland 'with his acquired skill in debauchery, in the company of unruly youth and in taverns, threw his weight around in a peculiar way, boasting about his burned manuscript [...]'.²⁶ Whether due to his own behaviour or the gossip of his critics, Utrecht became increasingly dangerous for Beverland. He realized that if he would be arrested again in this city, whose magistrate was profoundly influenced by an orthodox group of Dutch theologians at this time, he might never be set free again.²⁷ Thus in March 1680, he crossed the Channel to England.

22 One of the privileges that students of Dutch universities enjoyed in this period was that, when in trouble with the law, they were tried before a special court. In Leiden this academic court was titled the 'Academische Vierschaar', in which members of the Senate of the University of Leiden as well as members of the city government were represented. For more on the Vierschaar, see: Otterspeer, *De vesting*, 95-107, 161-178; Zoeteman, *De studentenpopulatie*, 43-48, 404-10.

23 Beverland described his arrest in a letter to Heinsius, see: Beverland to Nicolaas Heinsius, 20/11/1679, in: Leiden, Library of the University of Leiden, Beverland's Correspondence with Nicolaas Heinsius, Burm. F 6a, letter no. 2. This collection of letters will henceforth be referred to as EH. On *Early Modern Letters Online*, an online union catalogue of sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century letters, the metadata of 305 of Beverland's letters has been published. See: Hollewand, 'The Correspondence', <http://emlo-portal.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/collections/?catalogue=hadriaan-beverland> (Accessed on 23 June 2017).

24 That he printed the work while in prison was asserted in: Beverland to Jacob de Goyer, 11/1679, in: Leiden, Library of the University of Leiden, *Epistolae Tullianae*, BPL 204, letter no. 17. This collection of letters will henceforth be referred to as ET. See also: EH 1, 11/02/1678; EH 2, 15/10/1678; ET 20, Beverland to Jan Beverland, 11/1679. See: Hollewand, 'The Correspondence', <http://emlo-portal.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/collections/?catalogue=hadriaan-beverland> (Accessed on 23 June 2017). No copies of the *Poma Amoris* were preserved: the work was most likely destroyed by the authorities during Beverland's trial.

25 Beverland's conviction is described in the documents of the Vierschaar, preserved in: The Hague, National Archive, Vierschaar der Universiteit te Leiden, *Crimineele klachtboeken*. 1631-1810, deel 13, Litt. E, 1647-1695, folio 115-116d, November-December 1679. Beverland sent a number of letters to friends and family during his trial, which are preserved in the ET collection. See also: De Smet, 'Epistolae Tullianae'.

26 'met zijne ingezogte kundigheid van ontucht, in gezelschappen van onbandige jongelingen, en herbergen, wonderlijk den baas speelde, breedt opgaf van zijn verbrandt handschrift [...]'. In: Halma, *Toneel*, 135.

27 In Utrecht many conflicts between the theologians took place in this period, with the followers of the orthodox theologian Voetius being most influential. It is likely that, if Beverland had been arrested by the town government, this group of theologians would have made sure he received a more severe punishment than exile. See: Benedict, *Christ's Churches*, 332; Kaplan, *Calvinists and libertines*. Beverland referred to his troubles in letters written at the time, see: ET 32, Beverland to Jan Beverland, 12/1679; ET 34, Beverland to Uchtman, 12/1679; ET 35, Beverland to A. Matteus, 01/03/1680; ET 36, Beverland to Jacobus Gronovius, 03/1680; ET 37, Beverland to Jan Gelder, 03/1680.

Sex, Sin, and Scripture: Beverland and the Theologians

The ruling of the academic court of the University of Leiden was directly related to the distinct thematic focus of Beverland's early works. Although a great number of thinkers introduced different radical ideas in the Low Countries in the seventeenth century, Beverland was unique in his persistent attention to the problem of sexual lust. While following the traditional structure of the biblical Book of Genesis, his version of what happened when Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden differed from authoritative interpretations of Scripture.²⁸ Recounting the events in great detail, Beverland described that God had allowed Adam and Eve to do whatever they wanted, yet sexual intercourse was forbidden to them. Shortly after their creation, however, the devil entered Paradise in the body of a snake. The devil seduced Eve and she was overcome by desire. Then Eve spotted Adam:

the young girl with devouring eyes, to whose side the lethal weapon clung, fixed her eyes on the stiff, exceedingly desirable wood, suitable to and desired by her private parts, and while she approached her husband with a mischievous face and invaded her husband's neck with an embrace, overloading him with kisses, which he did not resist, with her piercing bite tormenting now his legs now his arms, with sinful hand and soothing words, which possessed fingers, she solicited his most innocent part, she laughed and by pulling with sinful hand his manly parts, the stolen love gave them pleasure, 'husband', she said, 'use the gift that nature has given: I am not so strict to condemn the fire that I feel.'²⁹

Although he followed the original text of Genesis, Beverland changed the tale into one dominated by sex. The foundation of his reinterpretation of the story of Adam and Eve was his textual criticism of Scripture. Beverland argued that the orthodox interpretation of the Bible was fundamentally flawed, since it was based on the assumption that the sacred text was infallible. Attentive to the ideas of other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century biblical scholars, like Louis Cappel, Isaac Casaubon, Claude Saumaise, and Isaac Vossius,³⁰ Beverland concluded that the original text of Scripture had been lost. The biblical manuscripts therefore needed to be reinterpreted via close philological study to recover and understand their true and divine meaning. His conclusion that Adam and Eve had sexual intercourse, and that this was the original sin, was mainly based on his interpretation of euphemisms in the Bible.³¹ Thus: "The tree that was forbidden to the first mortals by the Highest Legislator,

²⁸ PO, in particular chapters V-IX; DPO, in particular chapters V, VI, VII, IX, X; DPV, book 1, chapter II.

²⁹ 'Donec devorantibus oculis virguncula, cujus lateri haerebat lethalis arundo, arborem tentam, summopere desiderabilem, sexui suo aptam gratamque contemplata, protervaque fronte maritum petens, ejusque cervicem amplexu invadens, & non repugnanti oscula fingens, ferratoque morsu nunc crus nunc lacertos vexans, manuque improba & blandis, digitos habentibus, dictis innocentissimam sollicitans partem, Risit & immunda tractando virilia palma, His quoque furta placent, conjux ait, utere donis, Quae natura dedit: nec sum tam tetrica, quales Sensi ignes, damnem.' In: DPO, chapter VI, 29-30. See also: DPV, book 1, chapter II, lines 237-250. Quotation from Barclay, *Euphormionis*, 442.

³⁰ He referred to these scholars throughout his DPO (in particular in chapters XIX and XX). For his comments on Cappel, see for instance: DPO, chapter XIX, 123-124.

³¹ Beverland criticized the biblical text throughout in his early studies, but he concentrated on the subject in most detail in chapters XVIII and XIX of his DPO.

was not a particular tree or branch bearing fruits [...]'³², but 'this tree [is] a symbol for the genitalia and the fruit for embracing the coitus [...]'³³. Other parts of the Bible underlined his conclusion; for instance the word 'flesh' often referred to the human private parts³⁴ and 'We know that the word to enjoy is abundantly used for the sexual act, [and] also the word fruit for the pleasure itself and for offspring.'³⁵

Beverland anticipated that the clergy of the Dutch Reformed Church would not appreciate his works on sex, sin, and Scripture and it is not surprising that he blamed Dutch theologians for his banishment.³⁶ Yet when we position Beverland's ideas in the context of the history of ideas on sex and sin, it becomes clear that he did not present a greatly original or radical argument. His theory can be positioned in a long tradition of thought on the relationship between sex and sin, from authorities like Saint Paul and Saint Augustine to less-mainstream thinkers like Robert Fludd, Jan Baptist van Helmont, and, above all, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim.³⁷ And despite his harsh criticism of the text of the Bible, Beverland stressed that the divine truth of Scripture could still be rediscovered by detailed studies of the history and especially of the language of the biblical texts, rejecting the most unorthodox conclusions of radical critics in this period.³⁸ What seems to have bothered Dutch theologians above all else was the defiant tone of his studies. Beverland argued that theologians condemned his argument and refused to acknowledge the truth of his theory on sex and sin because they were ignorant or hypocritical. He emphasized that most theologians were well aware of the important place of sex in human nature yet chose to ignore, conceal, or deny its significance.³⁹

His refutation of Dutch theologians concurred with the publication of other radical works in the Low Countries, which also criticized the Dutch Reformed Church. In contemporary heresies and philosophies, from Socinianism to Spinozism, the Dutch Reformed Church was attacked for its ignorance of the Bible, blatant hypocrisy, and political ambition. Many unorthodox writers, like Adriaen Koerbagh, Lodewijk Meijer, and Baruch Spinoza, condemned the ignorance of theologians, concerning Church doctrine and the interpretation of Scripture, and accused them of deceiving the public. With his

32 'Arbor itaque à Summo Legislatore primis mortalium interdicta, non fuit proprie frutex aut ramus [...]'. In: DPO, chapter VII, 33.

33 'Sed arborem symbolice de membro genitali et fructus de venereo amplexu [...]'. In: DPV, book I, chapter II, lines 287-288.

34 DPO, chapter III, 10-11; DPO, chapter IV, 16.

35 'Etiam apud Hebraeos, ita comedere pro adulterari [...]. Ut autem frui κατὰχρηστικῶς de Rebus Venereis, ita fructus pro ipsa delectatione et liberis sumi scimus.' In: DPV, book I, chapter II, lines 521-525.

36 See for his comments on Dutch theologians for example: DPO, Letter to De Goyer; DPO, chapter XX, 151-152 [161-162]; DPO, Pia Meditatio, N6r; ET 4, Beverland to Johann Georg Graevius, 1679; EH 3a, 08/07/1679; EH 7, 15/19/1679. He also commented on his bad relationship with Dutch theologians in letters to Jacobus Gronovius, see for example: Beverland to Jacobus Gronovius, 28/08/1694, from: Munich, Library of the University of Munich, Beverland's Correspondence with Jacobus Gronovius, 2e Cod. Misc. 627, letter no. 33. This collection of letters is henceforth referred to as EG. See: Hollewand, 'The Correspondence', <http://emlo-portal.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/collections/?catalogue=hadriaan-beverland> (Accessed on 23 June 2017).

37 Hollewand, *The Banishment*, 75-95.

38 Hollewand, 118-146.

39 Hollewand, *The Banishment*, 95-103.

attack on the ignorance and hypocrisy of the clergy Beverland also positioned himself in an age-old tradition of anti-clericalism.⁴⁰

In addition to his defiant tone, Beverland's studies of sex and sin were harshly criticized by Dutch theologians because he discussed the creation of humankind, the characteristics of the original sin, and the texts of the Bible outside the realm of theology, in a work that was not focused on religion but on sex.⁴¹ In the end, however, his exegesis, theology or disregard for this powerful group in Dutch society alone cannot explain why he received such an exceptionally harsh punishment. His publications must have raised eyebrows, but were neither radical nor original enough for him to be banished from Holland.

The Expurgation of the Classics: Beverland and the Humanists

If it was not his theology on original sin nor his criticism of the Bible that got him exiled, could Beverland's classical scholarship have instigated his troubles? Beverland's studies were distinctive of the late-Renaissance tradition of high scholarly humanism: his life and writings were characterized by his adoration of classical literature and the philological study of ancient texts. Like his sources, style, and the content of his works, his social network was also profoundly humanist in character. He was surrounded by the so-called *Initiati*, a close circle of humanists including Jacob de Goyer (1651-1689), Nicolaas Heinsius (1621-1681), Isaac Vossius (1618-1689), Jacobus Gronovius (1645-1716), and Johann Georg Graevius (1632-1703).⁴² Despite his familiar contact with the leading Dutch humanists of his age, to whom he turned for personal as well as professional backing, their support of Beverland and his scholarship slowly declined after the publication of his first works. Although his humanist colleagues seemed perfectly happy to discuss the sexual antics depicted in classical writings with him in private, when Beverland revealed he was planning to publish on the subject, his colleagues openly criticized his writings, warned him against printing them, and pleaded with him not complete his *magnum opus*.⁴³

As every reader of the classics knew full well, ancient Greek and Roman writers openly discussed, explicitly described, and clearly relished a wide range of sexual practices. From erotic poetry to historical treatises, from elegies to rhetoric, from epic poems to natural

⁴⁰ For more on (radical) thinkers and their relationships with Dutch theologians, see: Israel, *Enlightenment Contested*, 95-114; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 918-931; Van der Wall, "The religious context"; Douglas, *Spinoza*.

⁴¹ He was criticized during Synods of the Dutch Reformed Church between 1679 and 1684 (see footnote 21) and a refutation of Beverland's *DPO* was published by theologian Leonard van Rijssen (1636-1716) in 1680, titled *Iusta Detestatio Sceleratissimi Libelli Adriani Beverland*. See: Hollewand, *The Banishment*, 104-109.

⁴² Beverland often used the term *Initiati* when speaking about his close friends, referring not only to their friendship but also to them sharing certain secrets (they knew his true argument on sexuality). His wider social network was also profoundly humanist in character: he corresponded with English and French scholars, like Edward Bernard, Arthur Charlett, Pierre Bayle, and Ismael Bouilliau.

⁴³ The history of his contacts with Graevius, Heinsius, and Gronovius is particularly revealing of this abandonment. See the complete EH, EG, and ET collections, for example the following letters: EH 2, 15/10/1678; EH 3a, 08/07/1679; EH 4, 09/1679; EH 6b, Heinsius to Beverland, 12/09/1679; ET 5, Beverland to Graevius, 1679; ET 36, Gronovius, 03/1680; EG 14, 10/01/1684; EG 18, 25/5/1699; EG 19, 25/05/1699; EG 23, 10/12/1708.

philosophy: sex was commonly commented upon without boundaries. The accepted place of sexual desire in ancient times stood in stark contrast to the strict sexual morality in Christian ideology from the first centuries onwards. Christian theologians rejected classical literature, yet ancient works that represented Greek and Roman views on sexual morality did not disappear during the Middle Ages. By selecting, altering, or reinterpreting certain (parts of) ancient texts, they could be 'Christianized' or 'moralized': Christian virtues were highlighted or, when pagan vices were unavoidable, classical stories were explained as tales of warning or conversion.⁴⁴

Despite their rejection of medieval scholasticism, the majority of early modern humanists agreed, like their medieval colleagues, that pagan obscenities should be adapted or avoided. A particular strategy with regard to classical paganism was developed, which Harrison and Stray have termed 'the expurgation of the classics'.⁴⁵ Humanist editions of or commentaries on classical literature were published to educate, instruct, and advise the members of the upper classes and humanists therefore excised, ignored, or toned down the often-explicit insights into the classical treatment of sex, even when expressed by well-respected writers. Despite their aim to return to the unspoiled classical texts, scholars expurgated their material in many of the same ways as medieval editors had done.⁴⁶

Among humanist scholars Beverland was an exception: resisting the expurgation of the classics, he concentrated on the very passages his colleagues tried to avoid. While other humanists judged that the obscene texts of classical authors were unworthy of serious examination, something to read only during private leisurely hours, with the relative sexual freedom of the classical period an ancient flaw to conceal or reject, he chose exactly this element of the classics as the main object of his scholarly endeavours. After establishing the origins of sexual lust in his reinterpretation of the Fall, Beverland turned to history to display the universal power of desire. 'Passing by the tragedies of the ancients and not omitting to quote [in my favour] names known through the ages [...] I am not ashamed to challenge the whole assembly of humanity to give their sworn testimony.'⁴⁷ Pointing out well-known as well as obscured sexual connotations, Beverland concentrated on the Greek and Roman past, ancient culture, and classical literature in particular. Especially in his 'De Prostibulis Veterum' he offered a broad overview of sexual topics, from the sexual conduct of the Christian clergy in the first centuries to obscene images displayed in ancient temples.⁴⁸

44 See for more on this topic for example: Carver, *The Protean Ass*; Wallace, *Virgil's Schoolboys*; Mack and North, *The Afterlife*.

45 Expurgation is defined here as the act of deliberately removing words, passages, or works because of their sexual, explicit, or obscene content, style, or vocabulary. The term has been adopted from the study of Harrison and Stray, *Expurgating the Classics*.

46 For more on the expurgation of the sexual, see: Harrison, Stray, *Expurgating the Classics*; Gaisser, *Catullus*; Veenman, 'Martialis'. For more on the general adaptation of ancient texts to the early modern context, see for instance: Bloemendal and Nellen, 'Philology'; Brown, *The return*; Houghton and Wyke, *Perceptions*, 256-267.

47 'Ne tragoedias veteres curem aut nomina seculis nota in partes citem, religiosa fide totum mortalium coetum ad testimonia proquirare haud erubescio [...]' In: DSVI, chapter 1, 2.

48 The subjects were to be discussed in the three books of the 'De Prostibulis Veterum'. The contents of the second and third book of the DpV, which were not preserved, were summarized at the time in: Leiden, Library of the University of Leiden, Goyeri Paralipomena ad Libros de Prostibulis Veterum, BPL 1716.

It is clear that Beverland did not reluctantly touch upon the subject of sex: in his own descriptive account of the Fall, as well as in the quotations he selected from other works, not the sin of sex but the joy of the act captivates the reader. He may have defined sex as intrinsically wicked and sinful, Beverland's focus on sexuality, his presentation of many explicit passages, and his views on human nature pointed his reader in a very different direction. He emphasized the pleasures of sex, presented detailed descriptions of sexual encounters, and cited many Roman writings that highlighted not the corruptive character but the joy of sex. This gives his studies a paradoxical quality: he regarded lust as the greatest evil yet at the same time glorified the sexual act. Despite his fascination with the subject, Beverland claimed he was not interested in imitating the sexual sins of the ancients. He did admire the greater openness with regard to sexual matters in the classical world, however, and turned against many of his contemporaries, who refused to face and deal with the undeniable presence of lust in their own society.⁴⁹

It is therefore not surprising that Beverland directly denounced his colleagues' expurgation of the classics. He lashed out, for instance, at the Jesuit scholar Matthaeus Rader (1561-1634), who published different editions of Martial's epigrams between 1599 and 1627. In the Preface of his expurgated edition of 1602, Rader stated that he had 'banished the shameful lust'⁵⁰ from Martial's text, with his honourable Christian readers in mind. Beverland, however, was of the opinion that Rader, who had 'castrated Martial, stuffed with wit and charm', should 'be deprived of his [own] testicles [...]'⁵¹ Underlining the importance of sexual lust in universal human nature, Beverland made no distinction between the classical and the Christian and fully rejected the presumption that Christian readers needed to be protected from pagan obscenities. Classical dealings with sexuality should be nothing but familiar to a Christian audience, who after all shared the same sexually-corrupt nature.

Beverland was by no means the only humanist who focused on sex in relation to classical literature. Most scholars agreed that by carefully editing classical works, the ideas of pagan writers could be made applicable to a Christian context, yet the obscene segments of ancient writings were not ignored across the board. Certain humanist scholars, especially those interested in poetry, singled out the sexual subject and composed erotic poetry and pornographic writings in which the classical past was regularly represented.⁵² Only a small number of humanists engaged in or endorsed these sexual studies however. In addition, Beverland's approach to (ancient) sexuality set him apart from the relatively small group of other scholars and writers who did discuss the subject. In the first place, his studies of sex were bold, unapologetic, and developed in great detail: he did not make excuses for (the obscenity of) his work, he did not distance himself from his subject matter, and he did

49 Hollewand, *The Banishment*, 197-199, 275-289.

50 'Quapropter improbum Cupidinem amandamus [...]' In: Rader, *M. Valerii Martialis, Praefatio*. See also: De Smet, *Hadriani Barlandi*, 747.

51 'Testibus autem privandus fuisset Raderus, qui Martialem sale ac lepore refertum castravit [...]' In: DPV, book 1, chapter IV, lines 2068-2069.

52 For more on these scholars and their works, see: Findlen, 'Humanism'; Talvacchia, *Taking positions*; De Smet, Ford, *Éros et Priapus*; Turner, *Schooling Sex*; Frantz, *Festum voluptatis*.

not strive to avoid but aimed to explain sex in all its shapes and forms. Secondly, unlike for example Antonio Beccadelli's *Hermaphroditus*, a long erotic poem written to entertain, ridicule, and excite its audience, Beverland discussed the topic in a serious study, a product of dedicated scholarship.⁵³

During his student years, as a young, talented, and ambitious scholar, Beverland felt supported and encouraged by his older, more established friends and colleagues in the field of classical scholarship. But his friends disapproved of his sexual studies and did not want to be affiliated with Beverland or his works when he persisted to publish on the subject in the latter 1670s. By choosing an ignored topic, Beverland desired to criticize the suppression of classical obscenities and to make an original and valuable contribution to humanist scholarship. Yet his choice to study sex negatively influenced his relationships with other scholars. His correspondence with Graevius, Gronovius, and Heinsius show that his love for the sexual impelled his friends to warn him, criticize him, and eventually to turn away from him, whether via silent condemnation or direct disapproval.⁵⁴ During his trial and after his banishment Beverland was gradually expelled from the scholarly network he had relied on for professional patronage and personal support. Far from rushing to his defense, Beverland's humanist friends were content to leave him to his fate. At the time, the young scholar underestimated how significant the rejection of his studies by senior humanists would be. Later in life, however, Beverland did connect his troubles to the predicaments of his early publications and concluded that his studies on sex had determined the course of his life. He was greatly disappointed by the attitudes of his humanist colleagues, whom he argued chose their reputation and financial position over publicly discovering, discussing, and admitting to the truth. 'Those who diligently watch over their riches and reputation refuse to expose themselves to danger: but I have desired to make use of the mastery of my own free will and fate, and to tame the barbarity of the stupid.'⁵⁵

The tradition of Christian humanism descending from Erasmus was predicated on the notion that the classics, and the ancient culture they elevated, were a fit subject for elite education, a model of ethical behaviour and civilized culture. The cultural ascendancy of humanism depended on a willingness on the part of successive generations of humanists to expunge from their editions and commentaries innumerable passages, which were irreconcilable with Christian sexual mores. Conversely, Beverland concentrated precisely on those passages from which his more responsible colleagues sought to hide. By defying the traditional method of expurgation in his singular focus on sexuality, he denounced not only the supposedly critical approach of other classical scholars to ancient texts but he also threatened the foundation of humanist scholarship at a sensitive time. By the last decades of the seventeenth century, humanism and classical scholarship were increasingly

53 Beccadelli, *Hermaphroditus*; Findlen, 'Humanism', 83-87. For more on Beverland's more serious approach, see: Hollewand, *The Banishment*, 191-207.

54 See the full ET, EH and EG collections, for example the following letters: EH 3a, 08/07/1679; EH 5, 05/08/1679; EH 6a, 10/09/1679; EH 6b, Heinsius to Beverland, 12/09/1679; ET 3, Beverland to Jacobus Gronovius, 01/06/1679; ET 4, Beverland to Johann Georg Graevius, 1679; ET 8, Beverland to Isaac Vossius, 1679; ET 17, Beverland to Jacob de Goyer, 11/1679.

55 'Qui divitiis honoribusque invigilant, nolunt se exponere periculis: at ego meae spontis et fortunae meo arbitrio uti volui et barbariem cicurare insubidorum.' In: ET 18, Beverland to Alexander de Munck, 11/1679.

scrutinized as novel ideas on knowledge, based not on the writings of ancient authorities but on Cartesian, empirical, and rational approaches, methods, and philosophies, had increased in importance. The *Querelle des anciens et des modernes* or *Battle of the Books* was only slowly emerging at this time, yet an attack upon the foundation and critical method of humanist scholarship was as unwelcome to classical scholars, and humanist scholarship in a more general sense, as it would be thirty years later.⁵⁶ Especially when this challenge was made by a young, arrogant, and abrasive scholar, who dared to focus on the most indecent subject of all.

Hypocrisy and Sexual Liberty: Beverland and the Dutch Authorities

If his friends, his humanist colleagues warned and abandoned him, if he knew that many powerful Dutch theologians denounced his scholarship, then why did Beverland continue to pursue his sexual subject so resolutely? It was his determination to expose the truth that explains this persistence. And he did more than highlight the importance of sex in the classics and in (ancient) history: he also ventured to address the problem of lust in his own contemporary society. His main argument on the dominance of lust coloured the content and style of his works: he mingled the pagan and the sacred, theology and pornography, erotic imagery and citations from the Bible to highlight the importance of sex in all genres, all periods, and all people. In doing so, he implicated all sections of society in his critique, including those who had the authority to punish him most severely. Beverland attacked Dutch magistrates for their hypocrisy: while sex was everywhere in Dutch society, he argued, instead of dealing with the grand problem of lust they censured his works for presenting the truth and for suggesting that greater sexual liberty might be the solution.

Sex outside the bonds of matrimony was forbidden not only by Christian churches in Europe but also by law in early modern states. Marriage had become a secular affair after the establishment of the Protestant Northern Netherlands in the course of the sixteenth century: it was no longer considered to be a sacrament and matrimonial affairs were placed in the hands of the secular authorities. Official standpoints on marital affairs were still firmly founded on Calvinist doctrine however: pre- and extramarital sexual relations were prohibited and should be legally prosecuted, because these sins brought dishonour not only to those involved but also to the larger community.⁵⁷ The many concerns raised by both secular and religious Dutch authorities in this period about premarital sex, adultery, and prostitution suggest however that men and women frequently ignored official regulations and Reformed doctrine. Modern scholars have outlined the tension between the formal restriction of sex to matrimony and the relative freedom to have sexual relations outside marriage in the seventeenth-century Low Countries, concluding that different States and especially the Dutch Reformed Church might have had the will but not the means to effectively supervise or control sexual behaviour. Premarital sex was tolerated

⁵⁶ For more on this topic, see: Levine, *The battle*; Norman, *The shock*. For its influence in the Dutch context, see: Mijnhardt, 'Dutch culture', 219-233.

⁵⁷ Van der Heijden, *Huwelijk*, 30-76; Van de Pol, *Het Amsterdams Hoerdom*, 75-76, 157-170.

in most places, the market for pornography flourished, and partly due to the economic prosperity, growth of trade, and expansion of Dutch cities, prostitution could be found everywhere in the Northern Netherlands in the late-seventeenth century.⁵⁸

‘Among the people from Holland and Zeeland women of evil life not only do not register their names before the magistrate’, Beverland stated in his work on female lust, ‘but they wander freely about in known neighbourhoods for whores, even everywhere else in the city...’⁵⁹. He often commented on the sexual conduct of Dutch men and women, attesting to the relative freedom of sexual relations: ‘Before legitimate marriage the life of juveniles is wont to be nomadic, with desires fixed first on one whoreson union, then on another.’⁶⁰ Students had a particularly bad reputation.⁶¹ Beverland noted:

The lustful desire of the stimulating sin has chiefly touched these descendants of Pallas and Minerva. [...] their thoughts run wild at home, in the city, and in sacred places, while in heat they break through blinded windows, bedrooms, and houses, so that they may prevail to restrain the untamed madness when the penis is released. [...] [they heed] whichever girl suits their temper. Like circus horsemen, they jump from one exhausted mare to a fresh one all the time.⁶²

According to Beverland, not the men but loose women were mostly to blame: ‘How wickedly those women make eyes all round at the young men, how immodestly they display their persons, how they laugh and wink with a leer in the eye and sucking with their eager lips they devour every young Priapus.’⁶³

By publishing his argument, Beverland endeavoured to construct a more honest and natural perspective on sexuality that explained not only the obscenities of the pagan past but also the sexual deviances of the Christian present. He often emphasized that he revealed the universal truth about lust. This truth might be obscene, indecent, and sinful, but needed to be confronted nonetheless and he did not hesitate to illustrate the inevitability of sex with reference to his own society, underlining the present-day importance of his argument. He berated the dishonest attitude of many of his contemporaries, who were very well aware of the importance of sex but who denied, ignored, or concealed its prominent presence. Above all, he blamed the Christian clergy of the Reformed Church, for

58 Van de Pol, *Het Amsterdams Hoerdom*, 163-181, 196-241, 343-355; Van der Heijden, *Huwelijk*, 11-32, 70-74, 142-164, 213-220; Leemans, *Het woord*, 13-32, 145-174, 233-241; *Mijnhardt*, ‘Politics’. For more on the attitude of the Dutch Reformed Church see also: Roodenburg, *Onder Censuur*, 135-141, 257-269, 280-291.

59 ‘Apud Batavos & Zelandos nomina sua non solent profiteri apud Aediles probrosae, sed passim in media Suburra & Summoenio, quin & tota urbe vagantur.’ In: DSVI, chapter XII, 201. See for instance also his statements on prostitutes in: DSVI, chapter XII, 199-203; DPV, book I, chapter III, lines 1108-1110.

60 ‘Ante legitimos thoros vaga solet esse praetextatorum vita, meretriciis amores nuptiis conglutinans.’ In: DSVI, chapter XIII, 213.

61 For more on the sexual (mis)behaviour of students, see for example: Wingens, ‘Deviant gedrag’; Wingens, ‘Jeugdige lichtzinnigheid’; Van de Pol, *Het Amsterdams Hoerdom*, 118-119, 127-134.

62 ‘Stimulantis hujus peccati urtica praecipue tetigit hosce Palladis Minervaeque nepotes. [...] horum cogitationes intra muros, domos & templa grassantur, subando caligantes fenestras, cubilia tectaque perumpunt, idque ut pene soluto indomitam rabiem sedare valeant. [...] quaeque puella iis facit ingenium. Ex fessa in recentem subinde transulant desultorii equam...’ In: DPO, chapter XX, 147-149 [157-159]. His description continues on page 150 [160].

63 ‘Quam improbe Juvenum circumspectatrices, quam immodice sui ostentatrices, rident argutoque oculo annuunt, & glubenti labello priapullos comedunt.’ In: DSVI, chapter IX, 117.

continuing to maintain that living a chaste life was actually possible. But also Beverland's close friends were not safe from his scrutiny. Despite the sexual misbehaviour of many scholars and their familiarity with the obscene writings of the ancients, they refrained from supporting his work publicly. The third group in Dutch society that Beverland singled out for their hypocrisy was the political and economic elite, the secular authorities of the Low Countries and the magistrates of the town of Leiden in particular. Prostitutes were roaming the streets, students were sleeping with a different maid every night, Dutch girls could not wait to lose their virginity, but instead of dealing with the problem of lust itself, they arrested him and censured his works for merely telling the truth.⁶⁴

Beverland did not only attack the hypocrisy of his powerful contemporaries, he also presented them with a solution to the gap between idealized theory and actual practice, between exalted Christian morality and contemporary sexual customs: greater sexual liberty. He argued that humankind was completely and irrevocably lost to lust in mind and in body: 'Moral purity or respect for their parents could not lead people from the unchaste and criminal... not sacred pledges, not religion, not the harshest punishment of death could keep [people] away from the forbidden fruit of this branch.'⁶⁵ With desire defined as dominant and natural, he questioned the dismissive attitude of the Christian Church and suggested that if the sin of sex was an inevitable part of human nature, why could one not enjoy its pleasures? As he argued in his work on original sin, quoting from Ovid's *Amores*: 'That you should not err, since you are fair, is not my plea. He who is allowed to err, errs less.'⁶⁶ Beverland often used satire to advance his views on sexual liberty below the surface of his traditional argument on the dangers of sex. With his exaggeration of the negative features of sexuality, constantly reminding his reader in the midst of obscene descriptions of the evil, horrible, and hazardous features of the original sin and outlining the appalling consequences of lust, he actually suggested to the reader to consider the opposite point of view: that sex was a delight, a natural gift to all people.⁶⁷

In his work on women Beverland took a step further and offered practical solutions on how to deal with the problem of lust, touching for instance on prostitution. Observing seventeenth-century Dutch society, Beverland offered a simple answer to the problem of the impertinent lust of young men: they should be allowed to visit prostitutes. His stance on the legalization of prostitution resembles the regulation of prostitution in medieval Europe. Based on the idea that it was a necessary evil, prostitution was tolerated in many Dutch towns, as in many other states in the later Middle Ages, in certain streets or neighbourhoods, to strictly separate the honourable from the dishonourable and thus to safeguard respectable women. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation of the sixteenth century ended this era of regulation: not just in the newly established Northern

64 Hollewand, *The Banishment*, 267-275.

65 'Multos non sanctitas aut reverentia parentum ab incestis nefariisque abducere potuit [...] non vota sancte nuncupata, non religio, non poena mortis acerbissima à vetito hujus rami fructu arcere potuerunt.' In: PO, chapter x, 46.

66 'Non ego ne pecces, quum sis formosa recuso. Cui peccare licet, peccat minus.' In: DPO 1679, chapter XII, 61. Quotation from Ovid, *Amores*, book 3, poem 4, line 1.

67 For more on Beverland's satirical style of writing, see: Wauters, 'De onuitgegeven Latijnse correspondentie'; De Smet, *Hadrianus Beverlandus*, 87-97; Hollewand, *The Banishment*, 157-165, 277-279.

Netherlands but in the majority of both Protestant and Catholic countries prostitution was strictly forbidden.⁶⁸ Beverland criticized the puritanical stance of the Calvinist doctrine, arguing in line with medieval regulations that the legalization of prostitution would give young men an outlet for their sexual urges and would therefore keep virtuous women safe.⁶⁹ Lust was sinful, without question, but denying, concealing or repressing its power, especially in young people, only made matters worse:

I admit that it is not for the good of young men as a class that those who have Venus in their blood see to their indignation that kind of life unmistakably branded, for, wherever Venus is repressed, lechery increases. But, where public consistories of lust are permitted, Venus has her ivy as much as Bacchus, and there a religious feeling of respect for the matron dictates her distinction from those who sell their persons for money. When that is so, swollen lust abates, and snares and nets can be avoided.⁷⁰

In his emphasis on honesty and his argument against hypocrisy, we can recognize in Beverland's criticism familiar features of the (radical) philosophies that came to determine scholarly debates in the second half of the seventeenth century. With the rise of a new world view, as scientific developments and new philosophical theories like Copernicanism and Cartesianism changed the academic landscape, came the critical assessment of traditional ideas. Influenced also by the advancement of biblical criticism, by the last decades of the seventeenth century the foundations of truth and knowledge were challenged from different directions. In the works of for instance Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Pierre Bayle, and Dutch thinkers Spinoza, Meijer, and Koerbagh we can recognize the same emphasis on honesty and castigation of hypocrisy as in Beverland's argument.⁷¹

Among early enlightenment writers Beverland was exceptional in his focus on sex, yet his views on the importance of presenting the truth about sexual lust can be aligned to a different early modern genre. In pornographic writings descriptions of sexual acts were often accompanied by harsh criticism of contemporary society. A large range of erotic and pornographic works, including Pietro Aretino's *Ragionamenti* (1534) and *Vénus dans le cloître, ou la Religieuse en chemise* (1683), was not only inherently anti-clerical but characterized by the same emphasis on exposing hypocrisy with regards to the significance of sexual lust.⁷²

In the decades after Beverland published his early writings, ideas on sexual liberty developed in the midst of theological and philosophical debates on knowledge, truth, and (human) nature. In relation to their new perspectives on reason versus revelation, early

68 Van de Pol, *Het Amsterdams Hoerdom*, 151-160.

69 DSVI, chapter XII, 195.

70 'Nullus inficias eo, non e saluta sigulatae pubis esse, si certa indicia vetitae vitae tremulis intueretur oculis Veneris nepotulus: nam ubi Venus punitur, gliscit libido. Verum ubi publica libidinum consistoria permittuntur, Venus aequae suam hederam habet ac Bacchus, ibidem sacratus matronarum honor dictat, ut decernatur ab iis, qui venalem formam suam prostituunt. Tum distenta libido detumescit, & nassae cassesque tutius vitari possunt.' In: DSVI, chapter IX, 113.

71 A selection of works on this subject: Israel, *Enlightenment Contested*, especially 28-34, 95-114, 372-404; Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, especially 25-29, 301-327, 477-485, 550-575; Van Bunge, *From Stevin to Spinoza*, especially 44-64, 74-82, 149-170; Jorink, *Reading the Book of Nature*.

72 For more on this topic, see: Jacob, 'The materialist world of pornography'; Turner, *Schooling Sex*, 1-30; Lee-mans, *Het woord*, 127-144, 233-276; Mijnhardt, 'Politics'; Rosenthal, 'Introduction', xi-2.

enlightenment thinkers turned to traditional ideas and customs. The freedom of sexual relations, the idea that neither secular nor religious authorities should interfere with private sexual behaviour, was more broadly and seriously questioned and debated in the course of the eighteenth century, due to the rapid development and wide influence of enlightenment thought.⁷³ For instance, in his theory on human nature, the development of civil society, and the benefits of vice, Bernard Mandeville proposed, like Beverland, to permit public prostitution.⁷⁴ In accordance with their truthful stance on the lustful nature of all people and as a challenge to the hypocrisy of chastity, also authors of the pornographic genre presented sex as something good and useful, which should not be bound to moral rules but should be freely enjoyed.⁷⁵

Unlike many seventeenth-century pornographers and eighteenth-century philosophers, Beverland argued that the freedom of sexual relations should exclude women. Only educated men of the higher ranks of society could be trusted with the responsibility of sexual liberty. His views on greater sexual licence were not meant to be read or adopted by all: he presented his ideas only to the educated men of the elite who were responsible enough to enjoy the pleasures of sex or at the very least could be trusted to have an honest discussion about the problem of lust. For the other readers of his work, Beverland carefully obscured his line of reasoning below a thick blanket of satire, complex Latin, and obscure references, emphasizing constantly the evilness, wickedness, and dangerous features of the sexual sin.⁷⁶ His strategy backfired on both fronts however. The majority of educated men, his scholarly friends and colleagues, denounced his ideas and he failed to fool his less erudite readers with his negative argument, since they only had to look at the title page of his 'De Prostibulis Veterum' to understand its contents. According to Halma, the front page of Beverland's master thesis portrayed 'a temple of Venus, or the inside of a Brothel, full of obscene behaviour, with [Beverland] himself sitting in the foreground with a whore on his lap. [Beverland] showed this image regularly to his intimates, with titillating delight.'⁷⁷ His contemporaries rightfully spotted that underneath his negative assessment of sexual lust Beverland attacked and ridiculed the hypocritical façade of chastity that characterized Dutch society.

Conclusion

Dutch theologians disliked Beverland's argument on sex and sin, his sexual interpretation of the Bible, and hated how he used his own erudition to mock their learning, morality,

73 For more on the development of these debates, see: Dabhoiwala, *The origins of sex*; Findlen, 'Humanism', 99-108; Jacob, 'The materialist world', 161-194; Turner, *Schooling Sex*, 1-30; Israel, *Enlightenment Contested*, 572-589; Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, 82-96; Leemans, *Het woord*, 233-276.

74 For more on Mandeville and his ideas, see: Primer, *Bernard*; Hundert, *The Enlightenment's fable*, 218-225.

75 Findlen, 'Humanism', 99-108; Jacob, 'The materialist world', 161-194; Turner, *Schooling Sex*, 1-30, 106-220; Leemans, *Het woord*, 233-276.

76 Hollewand, *The Banishment*, 286-289.

77 'De Tyteltekening hadde hy ook van dit werk bewaart, zynde een Venustempel, of Bordeel van binnen, vol ontuchtig gebaar, waar in hy zelf opden voorgrondt zat met eene hoer op zyn schoot: welke tekening hy dan menigmaal, met een kittelend genoegen, aan zyne vertrouwelingen onder d'oogen bragt.' In: Halma, *Toneel*, 135.

and authority. His humanist colleagues also rejected his studies, because they believed that drawing attention to the sexual side of the classics threatened the basis of the humanist enterprise. When theologians asked for his arrest and humanist professors left him to his fate, Dutch magistrates were happy to convict Beverland because he had insolently accused the political and economic, as well as the religious and intellectual elite, of hypocrisy. Beverland argued that by restricting sex to marriage, in compliance with Reformed doctrine, secular authorities upheld a sexual morality that was unattainable. He proposed honest discussion of the problem of sex and suggested that greater sexual liberty for the male elite might be the solution.

Beverland's crime was that he focused exclusively on sexual lust and exposed the gap between principle and practice in sexual relations in Dutch society, highlighting the hypocrisy of a conflicted elite. To make matters worse, though the young Beverland may not have been aware of it, his attempt to launch his career took place at a moment in which the balance of forces which had characterized the Northern Netherlands for a century was rapidly falling apart. The uneasy balance struck between Reformed orthodoxy, humanist scholarship, economic prosperity, and patrician politics, which had characterized the seventeenth-century Low Countries, was disintegrating, with unsettling consequences for all concerned. Furthermore, during the Dutch Golden Age, trade, commerce, and profit had undermined Calvinist doctrine, since magistrates and merchants favoured the market before upholding Christian morality. But by the time Beverland published his first works, small yet durable shifts forebode the end of the Golden Age.

By uncovering the ubiquity of sexual sins in Christian civilization and Dutch life and accusing the clergy, his intellectual peers, and the secular authorities of hypocrisy, Beverland's works hit a raw nerve. His banishment underlines that despite its open-minded appearance, the tolerant intellectual climate of the late-seventeenth century Low Countries knew clear boundaries. While the Republic of Letters promoted a shared ethos marked by honesty, reciprocity, and tolerance, when it came to the sensitive and sinful subject of sexuality, discussed in daring writings by an audacious scholar, learned men did not hesitate to step back and allow religious as well as secular authorities to get involved. Beverland's insolent studies, in which humanist scholarship gave birth to enlightened ideas, proved to be too radical to be tolerated. So when Dutch theologians accused him of atheism and reported Beverland to the States, humanist scholars abandoned him and did not come to his defence, and the magistrates of the town of Leiden arrested, tried, and banished him without difficulty.

Beverland spent the remainder of his life in exile in England. In the course of the 1680s, he set his hopes on returning to the Low Countries: he pleaded with the judges of the University of Leiden⁷⁸, composed a large apologetic work, titled *De Fornicatione Cavenda Admonitio* (*Warning about fornication which should be avoided*)⁷⁹, and sent several of his classical commentaries to Dutch friends, hoping that their circulation and possible

⁷⁸ The letter he sent to the judges was preserved in the correspondence of Jacobus Gronovius: EG 4, Beverland to the judges of the University of Leiden, 05/06/1685.

⁷⁹ Beverland, *De Fornicatione Cavenda Admonitio*.

publication might alter his reputation.⁸⁰ In the end, he received a pardon from King William III in 1693, after he had assisted the University of Leiden in acquiring the grand library of his patron Isaac Vossius after his death in 1689.⁸¹ Yet Beverland never returned home. He felt that the atmosphere in the Northern Netherlands was too hostile for him to return. Since it is questionable whether Beverland would have received such an unfriendly home-coming, his decision not to return to his fatherland seems to have been based on his own state of mind. He still believed in the argument he presented in his early works and realized that he would not be able to hold his tongue.⁸² In addition, after 1690 his financial situation deteriorated, as did his mental health.⁸³

Beverland died in London on 14 December 1716.⁸⁴ His story did not end with his death, however. His infamous *De Peccato Originali* was edited and translated by publisher Jean Frédéric Bernard in 1714, the first of many novel editions of Beverland's study on sex and sin that appeared in the eighteenth century. The work was reprinted in different popular versions in France and Bernard's French alteration inspired a large number of eighteenth-century German editions.⁸⁵ While Beverland's ideas were denounced across the board in the late-seventeenth century, after his death in 1716 debates on sexual freedom matured, with thinkers like the Marquis d'Argens, Alberto Radicati, Bernard Mandeville, and Denis Diderot exploring traditional sexual morals in relation to broader ideas on liberty and human nature. By the mid-eighteenth century, due to for example the fading grip of traditional Christian doctrine on intellectual thought, scholars and writers were openly discussing sexual freedom without having to fear for their lives and careers, even as they presented ideas that went far beyond Beverland's suggestion of sexual liberty.⁸⁶ At the time of his death most people had forgotten about Beverland and his studies. Yet by 1750, his ideas had been given new life in the midst of a prominent enlightenment debate.

80 His letters to Gronovius show that Beverland sent different works to him to be published, for instance his notes on Martial, on Juvenal and Persius, and on Justinian. See all letters in the EG sent after 1689.

81 The details about Beverland's exact involvement are unclear. In the Library of the University of Leiden many of the original documents have been preserved, see: Library of the University of Leiden, ubl002, AC1, Archief van Curatoren, 1574-1815, Bibliotheek, 164-169. Only a copy of the original pardon by William III has been preserved, see: Zeeuwse Bibliotheek Middelburg, Ms 1713. See also: De Smet, 'Traces of Hadriaan Beverland', 74-80.

82 Beverland's 'excuse work', *De Fornicatione Cavenda Admonitio*, already proved that he had not really changed his mind. The work argued against pornographic images, dirty jokes, and masturbation, but these 'most horrible things' were described in utmost detail in a satirical style. Also Beverland's letters written in this period emphasize that he still supported his infamous ideas on sex and sin.

83 The deterioration of his state of mind and his finances is exhibited in the letters and documents he composed in this period, for example in letters to Gronovius (EG 18, 25/05/1699; EG 20, 15/08/1699; EG 23, 10/09/1702; EG 31, after 1700). For the sale of his library and art, Beverland composed different catalogues (for example a catalogue of his library: 'Bibliotheca Hadriani Beverlandi', British Library London, Add Ms 61661, 77-116). He also mentioned the sale of his collections in the Perin Del Vago Correspondence: a series of letters written as if exchanged between Beverland and a man called Perin Del Vago, but actually wholly written by Beverland himself (these letters were published by Beverland in London between 1702 and 1710 under different titles).

84 He was buried on 18 December 1716, see: Boyd, *London Burials*.

85 See for example: Bernard, *Histoire de l'état*; Bertram, *Philosophische Untersuchung*; Fielding, *Ha-ets ha-da'at tov .ve-ra'*; Starcke, *Ets ha-da'at tov ye-ra'*.

86 Dabhoiwala, *The Origins of Sex*; Israel, *Enlightenment Contested*, 572-589.

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