Pieter De Hooch's *Courtyard of a House in Delft* and Jan Vermeer's *Little Street*

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In Pieter De Hooch's *Courtyard Of a House in Delft,* and Vermeer's *Little Street,* both depict similar versions of 17th century cities. They were quiet, crowded places that were orderly, with calm weather that had bright, blue skies and white clouds, cobbled streets and buildings made out of wood, glass, and brick. In cities, the idea of privacy formed and citizens started feeling like their domestic areas were private and the outside world, like streets, were public places. Their doorjikens, which are open, connecting spaces that were a common feature in Dutch architecture, represented the in-between space. It was the space where visitors entered and left, the space where people would interact with one another and gossip. They also depicted similar ways of how women should behave, which was to take care of the house and do domestic chores. However, they showed different relationships between the figures and their environments such as the buildings and other people, the proportions of the figures to the buildings, and the symbolism. De Hooch used some symbolism, while Vermeer used less symbolism that was not as obvious as De Hooch's. There was also some speculation from scholars about whether the house in Little Street was a figment of the artist's imagination or was a real place.

During the New Naturalism period in Dutch art, depictions of the city were common and very popular. One of the earliest examples is Jan van Eyck's *Madonna with Chancellor Rolin (fig.1)*, also called *Chancellor Rolin and the Blessed Virgin*, was made in 1432 and located in the Musee du Louvre. The city is extremely naturalistic because of the amount of detail in it. In the city, there are large, green hills on either side and has a number of buildings of differing sizes and heights. There is a large body of water with a large bridge connecting two sides of the city that allows citizens to walk back and forth on it. The city is not known, but it has been suggested to

be Bruges, London, Autun, Prague, Maastricht, and Geneva. There are also resemblances to settlements by the Meuse, which is the region the artist was from. One important detail is the bridge, which is similar to the Pont des Arches in Liege and the bridge in Maastricht.[1] One scholar believes the painting was for the Prince- Archbishop of Liege until 1418, and has a theory that van Eyck's vantage point was located by the hill of Saint Barthelemy. It has also been considered to be Jerusalem, which was considered a heavenly place.[2] However, the work is still considered to be a generalized idealization of a Netherlandish village because of landmarks taken from Utrecht, Maastricht, and Liege. The time of day might be morning, because the sky is pale and appears to be clear.[3] In the landscape itself, there are religious ideas. There is a small enclosed garden, which includes a hortus conclusus, which is a symbol of Mary's virginal status and her purity. In the garden, there are also lilies among thorny roses, reinstating her virginal attribute, and how beautiful and sweet her chastity is.[4] There are peacocks perched on the garden wall, which represent the role of the Madonna as the eternal queen of heaven. In the landscape, the countryside is seen and there is a vineyard, which has significance. They have personal significance to the patron,but they also represent the sacrifice of the Eucharist. Another religious feature found in the city is that the Christ Child holds his fingers up and they touch the bridge that connects the two sides, perhaps representing unification of two different groups by religious means. The two sides could also be unified religiously because the people on the left side of the bridge move towards the right to cross the bridge, suggesting that they go from the

[1]James Snyder, "Jan Van Eyck and the Madonna of Chancellor Nicolas Rolin." *Oud Holland*, vol. 82, no. 4, 1967, pp. 163–165.
[2]Anne Hagopian Van Buren, "The Canonical Office in Renaissance Painting, Part II: More about the Rolin Madonna." *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 60, no. 4, 1978, pp. 619-620.
[3]Note 2 Van Buren, p.622.
[4] Note 3 Van Buren, p. 618.

countryside to the secular side. The landscape is also separated geographically by the river. [5] Another early example of a city is Claes Jansz Visscher's *Road towards Leiden (fig.2)*. This drawing details the path Visscher would take from Haarlem to Leiden. The idea of this work is to avoid imagination and to draw what was in front of him. He wanted to get back to natural based observation instead of creating fake landscapes and cities and then putting ideas on paper. The buildings appear to be from the 1550s due to their pitched roofs, multiple, small windows, and rectangular blocks. There is a vast amount of open land and is a rustic version of a city. There are some everyday people working and strolling, and they have a calm, idyllic mood. It also used mark making techniques like the curved ones to represent the grooves or grass in the hills, and the short stipples in the rooftops of the buildings. In most of the cityscapes, there are some people shown and the crudeness of the figures varies based on the artist.

Another early example of a city landscape is Jan Van Goyens *The Pelkus Gate near Utrecht (fig.3)*, c. 1646, in the Metropolitan Museum . This painting shows the Pelkus Gate, which is a freestanding tower on the Vecht river.[6] There are buildings on the right hand side of the riverbanks, which have small windows, a squat building, and sloping roofs that look similar to ones seen in *Road towards Leiden.* Both works show pastoral cities and an abundance of greenery mixed in with citylife. There was no hidden symbolism; only depictions of what was in front of the artist was seen. They also both have slightly political undertones; the Dutch were fighting with the Spanish in Dutch territory. A second painting reminiscent to *Road towards Leiden* is Van Goyen's *A View of The Hague from the Northwest, (fig.4),* c. 1647, in the

[5] J. Snyder, "Jan van Eyck and the Madonna of Chancellor Nicolas Rolin." *Oud Holland, 82*(4), 163-171. P. 116.
[6] "The Pelkus Gate near Utrecht."[Jan Van Goyen.] The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Metropolitan Museum.[7] These two works have many things in common such as the portrayal of pastoral land and horse and buggies, the town in the background which makes the viewer feel like they are going on a journey, and the amount of open space. They were concerned with nationalism and their country, as seen with the portrayal of familiar landmarks viewed from a distance.

In *View Of Delft*, (fig. 5), c. 1661 by Vermeer, located in Mauritshuis, the buildings were detailed and showed varying perspective effects but the figures on the land were simple and not elaborate. This does not mean that the figures were not carefully psychologically treated. For example, in Jan Steen's *Burgher of Delft and his Daughter, (fig.6),* 1655, there is a complex psychological situation. Adolf and Catharina Croeser, a successful grain merchant and his thirteen year old daughter are sitting outside on their stoop, while a poor woman and her young son beg for alms. Located in the RijksMuseum, the family's vanity is represented in the daughter's expensive clothes and the vase of flowers on the windowsill. The flowers could also represent the fragility of life. Their charity is represented in the symbol of the Vanitas, which is seen on the upper right hand corner of the tower. The Vanitas represents eternal values.[8] The piece of paper in Adolf's hand singles out individuals as beneficiaries of social altruism even before they approach him.[9] The sitter wanted to refer to his charity and kindness in this piece. Steen is conveying that the sitter is not carrying out his Christian duties, which is to perform good deeds in order to save your soul. Behind the family, there is Amsterdam's Oude Kerk. Its presence underscores spirituality and hints at a moral dilemma happening in the painting. The family will not give the beggars money, because the daughter is avoiding eye contact with the

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[7] " A View of The Hague from the Northwest." [Jan Van Goyen.] The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

[8] Jan,Steen, *A Burgher of Delft and His Daughter*

[9] https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-8365.1989.tb00359.

beggars and the father looks at the beggars with disgust.This wealthy family with an abundance of riches and goods are contrasted with the beggar family, who is asking for their help.[10]

The earliest depiction of Delft was *View in Delft, with a Musical Instrument Seller's Stall* by Fabritius, (fig.7), c. 1652, located in the National Gallery. This is important to include because it shows another example of a cityscape and also includes the idea of solitariness, being alone with your own thoughts, and privacy, which is an idea that is just beginning to form. In the painting, there is a man with a musical instrument on his left, and the city on his right. The man is looking downwards and appears to be in deep thought because his thumb is on his chin as if he is thinking and he looks like he is alone, emphasizing the idea of solidarity and privacy. The city is showing the New Church and the Nieuwe Kerk in Delft on the left, and on the right hand side there is a tree and a row of houses. The streets are empty, except for the music instrument seller, a woman standing in front of the canal, and two people at the left end of the bridge who look like they are going to cross it. Fabrititus portrayed the view as if the viewer was looking through a wide angle lens. Due to the angle, the buildings are dramatically curved. The site looks similar to when the artist painted it, but the street on the left, known as the Oude Langendijk, is wider because the canal is not filled in. The bridge is also lower and wider, but the artist may have made it more steeply pitched than how it was during the 17th century. The second building on the right can still be seen today, and the one new addition is the spire on the Nieuwe Kerk, which was built in the 19th century.[11] He may have used a camera obscura, which would explain how lifelike this image is. A camera obscura was a box with a small hole in it on one side which let

[10] "Summaries." *Bulletin Van Het Rijksmuseum*, vol. 56, no. 3, 2008, pp. 375–386.
[11] Arthur K Wheelock, "Carel Fabritius: Perspective and Optics in Delft." *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (NKJ) / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art*, vol. 24, 1973, pp 71-72.

light in reflected from the scene in front of it. The reflected light then can be focused on a white surface, and it can be traced or drawn from. Fabritius may have used a camera obscura *in View of Delft* because there are small dots of paint, which are oddly clear for reflections which are supposed to be unclear.[12] The artist had an interest in portraying the city with accurate perspective effects and also wanted to portray a loner who was alone with his thoughts.

In Dutch city landscapes, the weather, lighting, and relationships between figures and buildings are important. For example in *View Of Delft,* all three are needed to create the successful illusion of weather. Delft is being looked at from the south, and is a recognizable location. The body of water in the piece is the River Schie, which flows into the Rhine at Schiedam, close to Rotterdam. Vermeer painted reflections of the clouds onto the water to give the painting depth, and by creating a little bit of sunlight that hit the rear buildings, it gives a three dimensional effect to the buildings. The lighting is towards the right hand side of the painting. The small scale of the buildings, the even smaller scale of the figures, and the enormous size of the sky compared to them helped create the feeling of weather that is constantly changing. The shadows of the buildings reflected onto the water and added to the moodiness and stillness of the painting. The weather portrayed in the painting is common in Holland, where rain and sunshine quickly change and clouds are often large and clear. Their whiteness contrasts with the blueness of the sky[13]. He uses a non naturalistic device, which is a white line in the sky that can be seen above most of the roofs, particularly the Schiedam Gate.[14] He also portrays the

[12]Mariët Westermannt, *A Worldly Art: the Dutch Republic, 1585-1718*. Yale University Press, 2016. p.81-82.
[13] Seymour Slive, "Dutch painting, 1600-1800." New Haven, London,Yale University Press, Pelican History of Art.1995, P. 145.
[14] Arthur K. Wheelock, and C. J. Kaldenbach. "'Vermeer's View of Delft' and His Vision of Reality." *Artibus Et Historiae*, vol. 3, no. 6, 1982, p. 15.

changing weather conditions with the dark cloud in the foreground, and the white clouds in the background. This indicates a storm will happen or a storm has just passed. Vermeer is an artist who many historians question if he had used a camera obscura to capture the lifelike essence of the city and the weather in his pieces. In *View Of Delft*, he applied pointilles, which are small dots, in the shadows in the hulls of the boats. He was trying to mimic reflections of the water onto the hulls, but this would not have been seen in a camera obscura because the reflections could only be seen in direct sunlight.[15] Another painting technique he used is applying thick paint to certain areas. The artist applied a heavy, lumpy layer of yellow lead tin paint to the sunlit areas of the tower, but then painted different highlights that used less paint and less pressure, seen in the Rotterdam Gate. Another technique he used was to diffuse highlights and then paint brighter ones over them, which were applied using the wet on wet paint method. Vermeer also used physical textures to help achieve a realistic atmosphere. In this piece, he used fine silica or sand in an underpainting in the roofs and walls of the townscape, which made them sparkle and contrast against the dark windows.[16] Another example of weather in Dutch city views is *The Sentry*, (fig.8), by Fabritius, c. 1654, located in the Staatliches Museum. This painting shows a sleeping sentry who is supposed to be watching over this area. Next to him, there is a black dog. There are three main architectural structures; a wall, a column, and an arch. Above the archway, there is a relief sculpture of St. Anthony, who is the patron saint of farmers. He is recognizable by his pig.[17] It emphasizes weather because it shows bright light which shines on the sentry, and is further emphasized by the backlit shadows. There is also a hint of grey sky in the right hand corner, between the wall and the arch. That implies that the weather is not sunny and idyllic, and

[15] Franits, Wayne Franits. "Vermeer, Johannes." 2003.
[16] Nicola Costaras, "A Study of the Materials and Techniques of Johannes Vermeer." *Studies in the History of Art*, vol. 55, 1998, p. 160.
[17] "Carel Fabritius Artworks & Famous Paintings." *The Art Story*.

combined with the dark shadows, the weather seems overcast and gloomy. There were different ways artists of the 17th century integrated figures into urban spaces.

Pieter De Hooch's *Courtyard of a House in Delft,(fig.9),* made in 1658, and Jan Vermeer'*s Little Street,(fig.10),* made between 1657-1658, are examples of how there is privacy in domestic scenes and how artists placed figures in public places. The paintings are set in Delft and are very similar because they both consist of everyday scenes of idyllic, calm cityscape days, featuring large, brick houses with passageways allowing viewers to see the other side, courtyards and streets made up of cobblestones, and household servants, children, and others enjoying the day. There were no signs of business or traffic, making the pieces even more serene due to the lack of movement. They are different because of the interactions found in the different paintings, the complexity of the characters, and the symbolism.

Pieter De Hooch's *Courtyard of a House in Delft* is an oil painting made in 1658 that depicts a Dutch courtyard on a mild day. The weather appears to be calm and the climate looks temperate based on the sky. On the right hand side of the painting, there is a servant and a child walking down some steps and appear to be coming out of a building made of brick and wood with an ajar door that is at the back of the house. It could possibly be a room for storing food or other goods. That part of the house appears less well kept than the courtyard to the left because the wooden roof of the building is overgrown with vines and the brick wall has white decay, particularly towards the bottom, and has cracks. It appears that there is construction due to a long, thin piece of wood that is left leaning and connects to another piece of wood above it; and because there is a crudely constructed wooden crate on the ground that appears to hold building materials such as stone. The young servant woman has tied back brown hair, and is wearing a

white bonnet. She has on a light colored top and a white shawl, a long blue skirt with a short dark colored apron, and brown shoes. She holds a plate in one arm, and the child's hand in the other. The child, wearing a white bonnet, a grey long sleeved shirt, a light colored sleeveless shirt, and a mustard skirt, is carrying a piece of cloth and is smiling as she looks up and holds the servant's apron. The two appear to be in content conversation. De Hooch carefully treats the figures in the same way he treats the building. The figures that the viewers see are realistically painted. You can see all their facial features, have a realistic light peachy skin tone, and even have a red flush in their cheeks that can be seen on some very pale people. The figures are not idealized; the maid has a long, sharp, hook like nose, small lips, frizzy brown hair that is pulled back to reveal a large forehead, and has a pink flush to her cheeks. She looks like a normal woman, which adds realism to the painting. The figures also have realistic folds in their dresses. In the foreground, there is a bucket. To the right and leading off canvas, is a dirt patch with some blue flowers that could be weeds. Diagonal to the flowers, there is a mop that rests on the stone courtyard floor. Above the crate is a slanted brick wall that has white decay on the bricks as it goes downwards and gets closer to the ajar door towards the right side of the servant. In the background, there is the top of a dark green tree, and to the left hand side there is the top of a light brown building. There is also a small amount of blue sky and some white clouds. To the left, there is the mother of the child, and the lady of the house, under an archway made out of brick and stone. This view, which is through a door to another space, is called doorkijkje.[18] She is wearing a long sleeved black blouse with a white shawl red skirt, but her expression is unknown due to her back being towards the viewer. She appears to be looking at a courtyard that is diagonal from hers, and does not appear to be engaging with the child and servant. This is strange because she is the lady of

[18] K. Murphy. "A Delft Touch." *Apollo, 190*, 102-103.

the house, and so she should care about the way the house looks and how it is perceived by others. She could also be thinking, as being alone with ones thoughts and privacy are new and important ideas during this time period. There are a range of different domestic and private behaviors that could be happening, and there are various scenarios going on in the piece. Above the archway, there is an oval shaped window and a plaque. To the left hand side of the plaque, there is the border of a window and a red panel, which covers most of the left hand side of the archway. Vines coming from the left hand side partially cover the plaque, the border of the window, and the oval shaped window, but the words on the plaque are visible enough to read. The plaque was originally over the entrance of the Hieronymusdale Cloister in Delft. It was then removed and was placed onto a wall of a garden behind the canal. It says"Dit is in sint hiëronymus daele / wildt v tot pacientie en lydtsaemheijt begeven / vand wij moeten eerst daelen / willen wy worden verhoeven 1614". This means "This is in Saint Jerome's dale / please be patient and meek / for we must first descend / if we wish to be raised."[19] One meaning of this quote is that it is commenting on the way the maid treats the young girl with kindness. However, another meaning is that the meek, domestic life will lead one to heaven. De Hooch uses a close color palette to unify the painting. The light brown color of the floor, contrasted with the earthy red color of the bricks, creates a sense of light. The artist has a convincing perspective, as one can see with the carefully rendered geometric tiles that go back in space, the perspective of the wooden crate, and the angle of the brick wall on the right of the canvas. The use of correct perspective adds to the idea that there is natural light and shadows cast outside and that there is use of building materials like wood, glass, stone,

[19] Pieter De Hooch (1629 --1684)the courtyard of a house in Delft. (2016). In E. Langmuir, *The National Gallery companion guide* (2nd ed.). The National Gallery.

and brick. The courtyard area is considered to be an in-between area of public and private sectors, because it is an outdoor area between a domestic, private setting and the public streets. Courtyards were a typical feature of 17th century houses due to the lack of space and the narrow houses. They became a space for outdoor chores, entertainment, and privies. Courtyards served as a way to extend space. Some were placed in the side or back of the house, like De Hooch's painting shows.[20]

Vermeer's *Little Street in Delft*, made between 1657 and 1658, located in the Gallery of Honour at the RijksMuseum, portrays a street view of two offcentered houses that are joined together and both go beyond the canvas. Zumthor confirms this theory by saying " The Dutch town contained very few large houses. Relatively few small structures were preferred, separated from each other… although the gap between the houses was sometimes only an inch or two. A house was usually designed for only a single family."[21] Using an X radiograph, it is determined that Vermeer painted the composition in an orderly fashion; the houses were blocked in, and then the sky was established using a layer containing lead. [22]The house on the right hand side takes up most of the picture plane, and only the window of the left house is visible. Roofs of other houses can be seen on top of the arch, showing how populated this town is and also shows Vermeer's mastery of perspective and his ability to use

[20] Martha Hollander, "Public and Private Life in the Art of Pieter De Hooch." *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (NKJ) / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art*, vol. 51, 2000, pp. 272-275.

[21] Paul Zumthor. *Daily Life in Rembrandt's Holland*. Stanford University Press, 1994.

[22]Nicola Costaras, "A Study of the Materials and Techniques of Johannes Vermeer." *Studies in the History of Art*, vol. 55, 1998, p.156.

atmospheric perspective. The street appears serene and quiet, because the four people are spaced far apart and are focused on their individual tasks. There are also no horses, buggies, or other forms of transportation seen. All three women are wearing similar outfits consisting of a bonnet, a white shawl, and long dresses of varying colors. The clothing has some draperies and indication of fabric flowing up close, but from a distance the small amount of details are not clear. The colors are flat with almost no shading. There is a man dressed in brown clothing and a brown hat who is helping the women in the middle. The woman on the right hand side appears to be sewing, the male and female child in the middle appear to be looking at something or playing with something, and the woman to the left is bending down, as if to pick up the broom next to her. Infrared reflexology shows that the artists placed a sitting figure at the entrance to the alley, but then painted it over. The adult figures are doing domestic chores, such as sewing and beginning to clean, which subtly hints that women should be performing household chores and watch over children. Sewing and sweeping are considered appropriate activities for women during the 17th century, and signify cleanliness and doing Christian activities. It also shows femininity and the right behavior to follow. [23] The people have little details, as seen with the only figure facing the viewer, who is to the right hand side. The woman has no facial features and her face is colored the same, flat skin tone color.The figures are very nonrealistic and look rushed, because there is little attention placed on them. The figures are very small compared to the buildings. All of the building is shown with the large amount of sky, which goes back in the distance, and dwarfs the figures.

[23] H. Perry Chapman, "Women in Vermeer's Home: Mimesis and Ideation." *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (NKJ) / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art*, vol. 51, 2000, pp. 238, 243.

It places the attention on the building rather than the relationship between the figures and their environment. This is evidence that the artist wants the viewer to focus on the relationship between the figures and their environment, even if it was not the first thing the viewer noticed due to its subtlety. There is a similar color palette of varying shades of red ochre, lead tin yellow, azurite, smalt, lead white, and three shades of ultramarine throughout the painting.[24] Azurite and the lead tin yellow created the green color of the shutter on the left hand side of the house towards the right. Azurite can also be found in the underpainting for the light brown shutters found on the same house as the green shutter. Lead tin yellow was also in the tree on the left hand side of the picture plane.[25] The same color palette throughout the work unifies the painting and gives the feeling of brick, stone, and glass throughout the building and street. Vermeer conveys the eroded nature of both buildings by slightly altering the colors of the brick and mortar, and shows repairs to cracks, missing tiles above passageways, and the dilapidated doorways of the buildings. On the building to the left, there are vines growing. The vines can represent love, fidelity, marriage, and could also refer to domestic virtues. However, due to the lack of symbolism in Vermeer's work, they are most likely just vines in this piece. It is a symbolic interpretation of the image that is not supported by the artist's work or artistic style. The large house depicted goes off canvas, as one can see with the continuation of the windows on either side, and the greenery on the left side of the canvas. There is evidence of a convincing brick like pattern on the top of the canvas, due to the dark shading and the highlights around the bricks. The cobblestoned street is less

[24] Vermeer Catalog
[25] Nicola Costaras, "A Study of the Materials and Techniques of Johannes Vermeer." *Studies in the History of Art*, vol. 55, 1998, pp. 157-159.

carefully rendered, as one can see with the messy zigzag lines representing the cobblestones and the blurring of those lines. The physical form of the painting is decaying. There is cracking of the paint all over, but it is most noticeable on the upper left side where the sky is. It is more noticeable there because the paint is such a light color and goes through the painted clouds. The cracking can also be seen on the bottom part of the painting, and is most visible where the black door is on the left hand side, and all over the building to the right hand side.

There are many similarities between Pieter De Hooch's *Courtyard of a House in Delft*, and Jan Vermeer's *The Little Street.* The works both have the same elements within such as a dark green tree, a view of the cobblestone street and the exterior of the building servant figures, and an archway involved in the building, allowing the viewers to see through and not show the building's interior. Both feature quiet streets where no business is taking place, which is unusual in this time period. Individual streets were places for particular businesses, with the goal to promote traffic[26]. There are no buggies or horses seen on the streets, showing just how serene the streets are. Similarly, both focus on domestic life. A woman's place was to be at home, doing chores or taking care of children. Both scenes are very orderly, hinting at the proverb that cleanliness is close to godliness, which was important in Dutch culture.[27] In the De Hooch painting, you can see the maid taking care of the child, which is considered a domestic chore and in the Vermeer painting, there are two servant women sewing and cleaning while looking after the two children playing. However, in De Hooch's work, the

[26] Paul Zumthor. *Daily Life in Rembrandt's Holland*. Stanford University Press, 1994.

[27]Paul Barolsky, "DE HOOCH'S ILLUMINATION." *Source: Notes in the History of Art*, vol. 17, no. 1, 1997, pp. 15–17.

back of the mother of the young child is seen. This would have been considered strange, because she was not looking after her child and was supposed to be supervising the servant. She was not paying attention to what was happening and instead, her back was turned to the situation. She is different from the other women in the paintings because she wears no head garment, no white shawl, and her clothes look to be slightly more elaborate. Both buildings look to be made out of the same material.Thirdly, the women are wearing the same costumes. All of the women in both paintings are wearing long dresses, white head garments, and a white head covering. Finally, they both feature the light blue sky and the fluffy, white clouds which supports the idea of ideal, fair weather They are made out of brick and stone, and some wood is featured Both artists showcase their mastery of painting textures with their use of light. The varying color of bricks, the white cracks, and the highlights and the use of perspective with the street and cobblestones also adds to the illusion. Both paintings have a small color palette, which unifies the work and prevents the work from being too chaotic. Lastly, there are elements of a Dutch city seen in both pieces. According to Zumthor, in Dutch cities, “new buildings was all done in brick…”. Zumthor listed characteristics of typical houses in Dutch towns, and mentioned that the newer buildings were done in brick, which both buildings in the painting are made out of. He also said that larger houses were infrequent, confirming that the arch in *The Little Street* was connecting two different houses. During this time period, the idea of public and private spaces were coming to fruition. Domestic values was something that fueled the idea that there should be behaviors that are appropriate both publicly and privately at home. Both have communal spaces, known as doorjiken . Doorjiken was a way the artists could represent the transition between public life

and private life, the transition between city life and domestic, intimate, home life. There was an idea that the home was seen as private and that it was a distinct, different place from the public city and streets. There was a separation from the civic life and into the home life, which created emotional closeness and guided self identity. [28] The doorways also allow different households to easily communicate with each other. Because of the limited space, and the open doorways, it was easy for information to spread and for there to be gossip.[29] This could explain why the woman in De Hooch's painting has her back to the viewer; she is trying to communicate with the household across from hers. In Vermeer's work, there is no gossiping seen, and the figures are spread out. The artist might be warning the viewer about gossiping and that it is better to mind one's business and keep to oneself; domestic life is more important than gossiping with neighbors.

The differences between the two pieces are mainly about the interactions between figures, the proportions of figures to the buildings, and the relationship between the figures and their environment. In *Courtyard of a House in Delft,* there are fewer figures than *The Little Street*; there are three figures in De Hooch's work and four in Vermeers. The maid and the child have a kind, loving, intimate interaction because the child is holding on to the woman and her apron. They have an obvious relationship with each other consisting of love, respect, and one of a caring nature. They could possibly be in mid conversation, while the mother is

[28] Martha Hollander, "Public and Private Life in the Art of Pieter De Hooch." *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (NKJ) / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art*, vol. 51, 2000, p.286.
[29] Linda Stone- Ferrier, "Glimpses, Glances, and Gossip: Seventeenth-Century Dutch Paintings of Domestic Interiors on Their Neighbourhood's Doorstep." *RACAR: Revue D'art Canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2020, pp. 25–46.

distant from them and appears to be separate. This shows that the mother might be emotionally distant from the child, but the maid is closer to the child and she feels loved by her compared to her own mother. It is a juxtaposition between what a motherly figure should be, and what she was acting like towards her child. Instead, the servant woman was stepping into a motherly, loving figure for the young girl. In Vermeer's work, the figures are more spread out from each other and the servants are working on their tasks individually, far away from each other. There is no interaction between the figures, except between the children, who are in the middle of the picture plane. They are kneeling on the ground hunched over something, and could be playing together. It is not known if they are talking to each other, because their backs are turned from the viewer. Vermeer suggests the lack of relationships between the figures due to their position, body language, and abstracted nature. The proportions of the figures to the buildings are very different. This could be because the Vermeer work is less focused in this aspect while the De Hooch piece is more closely focused. The figures in the De Hooch work look taller and bigger, and makes the building look shorter because the proportions of the building and the zoomed in angle makes the figures look taller and the building look smaller. But in the Vermeer piece, the figures look very small and the buildings look massive. This is because the painting shows more of the building and the street than the De Hooch one, and therefore the figures have a different proportion to the building. Finally, there is symbolism in the De Hooch piece but none in the Vermeer piece. In the De Hooch piece, there is a plaque with meaning and two different kinds of symbolism. In the Vermeer piece, there is no symbolism in the work while the De Hooch piece has many examples of symbolism and is not disputed by scholars.

According to a museum , *The Courtyard of a House of Delft* shows the artists skills in both portraying interpersonal relationships and in architecture. They suggest that there is symbolism in the askew broom, and in the plaque above the archway. They think that the shift from doing business at home to doing it elsewhere made the home the women's priority. There were common ideas about marriage, family life, and the home that De Hooch placed in his art. Similarly, the museum says "In Delft, however, a milder tone evokes the modest virtues of domesticity, the homely sphere of burgher women, their children and maidservants. They pass their lives in surroundings as neatly kept as they are meticulously defined by the artist…"[30]This shows that there is a common thread of ideas about how people, particularly women, should behave that were popular in the Netherlands. By including it in his works, De Hooch is saying that he agrees with those ideas. De Hooch deliberately put symbolism in his work to express what he believed, but did not push his opinions onto the viewers.

The RijksMuseum, which owns *The Little Street,* describes it as unusual, and that "the composition is exciting as it is balanced". They also say "The location is Vlamingstraat 40–42 in Delft. Vermeer's aunt Ariaentgen Claes lived in the house at the right, with her children, from around 1645 until her death in 1670."[31] The current state of the research is divided. Some historians believe that the location of the house in the painting is known, but others think it is a figment of the artist's imagination. Nina Siegal, from the New York Times, wrote that data was found on a 17th-century tax registry by Professor Grizenhout from the Delft archives, called *De*

[30] PIETER DE HOOCH (1629 --1684)the courtyard of a house in Delft. (2016). In E. Langmuir, *The National Gallery companion guide*
[31] "View of Houses in Delft, Known as 'The Little Street', Johannes Vermeer, c. 1658."

legger van het diepen der wateren binnen de stad Delft (The Ledger of the Dredging of the Canals in the Town of Delft) of 1667, also known as the *Register op het kadegeld* (Quay Dues Register). It was a record of the taxes houseowners in Delft had to pay for dredging the canal and maintaining the quay outside the door. It was so detailed, that it was accurate to within 15 centimeters, of the width of all the houses and of all the passageways between them that lined Delft's canals during the 17th century.[32] This helped historians determine that the house in *Little Street* is on the east side of town, near the main square at Vlamingstraat 40-42. The house was owned by Vermeer's widowed aunt, Ariaentgen Claes van der Minne.[33] This supports the RijksMuseum claim, and is very strong evidence towards the theory that Vermeer was familiar with the house he painted. However, one historian mentions the image could be derived from two separate buildings. Some historians thought he painted the image from a room on the second story of his house, and he might have been inspired by the Old Man's and Old Woman's Almhouse across the street from him. The Old Man's house, which would be the left building, had a slanted roofline and an adjacent will with an arched door that is extremely similar to the ones in the painting. This has been disputed because there is no building similar to the large house on the right side of *The Little Street*.[34] Arthur Wheelock, using a detailed map of Delft, concluded that that could not be correct, although he believes there are parts of buildings on site Vermeer could have drawn from life.[35] The reality of this image is that it is somewhere in-between a real place and one that the artist imagined. There is evidence for both sides, and although it looks like a typical building that would be seen in Delft, there might be touches of it

[32] "The Address of Vermeer's Little Street Discovered " [Johannes Vermeer] RijksMuseum, 2015.
[33] Nina Siegal, "Finding Vermeer on the Street He Left Behind: [Travel Desk]." New York Times Jul 03 2016, Late Edition.
[34] Vermeer catalog
[35] H. Perry Chapman, "Women in Vermeer's Home: Mimesis and Ideation." *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (NKJ) / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art*, vol. 51, 2000, pp. 236–271. *JSTOR*,.

that were not drawn from life. From Van Eyck to Vermeer and De Hooch, one can see that over time, the sense of being in a particular place and looking through or beyond via the doorjiken has become of greater importance to 17th century painters. Looking beyond allows the new ideas of public and private life to flourish, and are new principles that become associated with cityscapes.

The Little Street, by Jan Vermeer, an*d Courtyard of a House in Delft,* by Pieter De Hooch, are two paintings set in Delft depicting typical cityscapes. Typical Dutch cityspaces in the 17th century had blue skies and large, fluffy clouds to indicate the fickle nature of Dutch weather. Buildings were usually close together due to the lack of space. They both feature large houses on quiet, serene streets that would usually have activity and movement. They both have domestic figures, which allude to the idea that staying at home, doing household chores, and watching children were appropriate tasks to be doing in a woman's spare time. Both artists agree with this notion, because they use symbolism and placement of their figures to subtly add to this idea that a woman should be doing domestic chores. There are doorjiken, which refer to the budding idea of privacy in the 17th century. The home, particularly the interior of homes, were seen as a private place, while the streets were seen as a public area. The doorjiken were seen as a middle ground because they allowed people to come in and out of the private space. Both houses were made out of varying textures like wood, brick, and glass, and showed the different levels of decay the houses were experiencing. However, they were both clean and orderly, which was important in Dutch culture. There are also many differences between the two pairs of images involving the interactions and spatial locations between and of the figures, proportions of figures to buildings, and the lack of symbolism in the Vermeer piece compared to the multiple examples in the De Hooch piece. De Hooch's symbolism can be found within the mop on the floor, and the

plaque above the archway while there is less symbolism in Vermeer's work, and it is less important and obvious than De Hooch's. The location of the building in the Little House was also subject to curiosity, while De Hooch's was not, because it is well known by historians that his buildings are usually from his imagination.

fig 1

fig.2

fig.3

fig.4

fig.5

fig.6

fig.7

fig.8

fig.9

fig. 10

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