

# Magdalena Baga - The Otherness of the Dutch Ethnic through Fashion in Washington Irving's Works

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## 4 **The Otherness of the Dutch Ethnic through Fashion in Washington Irving's Works**

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**Abstract.** The perception and evaluation of fashion originating from a certain ethnic or cultural group may appear peculiar and comical when observed and assessed by others from different cultural backgrounds. In the realm of classical literature, this phenomenon typically manifests itself through depictions that reflect the cultural perspective of the author, despite the utilization of a narrator within their literary composition. The objective of this study is to elucidate the categorization of Dutch New York's ethnic fashion in literature as the "other." The literary compositions authored by Washington Irving, an early American writer, revolve around the theme of Dutch New York. Through the medium of novels and short stories, Irving skillfully incorporates humorous observations from the narrator, which subtly suggest that individuals belonging to different ethnic backgrounds, such as the Dutch, are perceived as distinct due to their contrasting appearance. The present paper employs the theoretical framework proposed by Michael Ryan et al. to elucidate the process of targeting a certain ethnic group using the concepts of identification and differentiation. The process of identification and differentiation is evident in the work through the use of representation. The approach of dismantling texts that align literary works with what happened in society and history that establish connections between literary works and historical events demonstrates that the creator of classical literature, whether consciously or unconsciously, portrays ethnicity as the "other" through their descriptions.

**Keywords:** Fashion, the Other, Identification, Differentiation, History

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## 1 Introduction

Ryan, Ingram, and Musiol (2019) proposed that the process of targeting a specific ethnicity can be achieved through two distinct mechanisms, namely identification and differentiation. The process of identification and differentiation are achieved through the use of representation. The aforementioned representations exhibit a combination of accuracy and inaccuracy, or imperfection. This situation carries inherent risks when the portrayal of a certain culture is depicted via the fictitious lens of a different culture. The act of representing the world, as per their perspective, involves interposing an image as an intermediary between ourselves and the world (representing the world entails placing an image as an intermediary between oneself and the world). This situation becomes highly precarious when the portrayal is predominantly fictional rather than factual, particularly when it is linked to a certain ethnic group.

The portrayal of Dutch ethnicity in New York as depicted in the narrative *A History of New York* and other literary works by Irving is achieved through the utilization of mechanisms of identification and differentiation. The portrayal of New York's Dutch ethnicity is consistently characterized by stereotypical imagery, wherein their depiction is limited to specific traits that are predominantly negative. Furthermore, this ethnic characteristic remains unaltered in Irving's literary works, which are set within the historical context spanning from the 17th century to the early 19th century. The portrayal of this stereotypical attribute is conveyed through language that is both ambiguous and ambivalent. Specifically, humor is employed as a linguistic tool, wherein praise is seemingly exaggerated, yet simultaneously undermined to generate a comedic effect. Hence, this situation becomes precarious when considering its implications in relation to Irving's conceptualization of the nation. Irving's depiction of the Dutch ethnicity diverged from his overarching views concerning the inclusivity of the American country, which posited that America is a land intended for individuals of various ethnic backgrounds.

According to Ryan, Ingram, and Musiol [1], ethnicity encompasses two primary aspects, including physical performance and cultural creation. Individuals with similar physical attributes congregate within a group to establish a sense of cohesion and identity, as they are influenced by their surroundings, circumstances, and temporal context. In this context, ethnicity refers to a collective including individuals who possess a specific genetic lineage and exhibit distinctive physical traits resulting from enduring marital customs. Certain conservative intellectuals with racist inclinations have attributed external physical traits of individuals as indicative of inherent mental disparities. For instance, there exists a perception among certain racist thinkers that individuals of Asian ethnicity have a greater propensity for industriousness compared to individuals of African descent, which is attributed to inherent characteristics. In contrast, proponents of liberal ideology do not yield to the aforementioned conservative perspectives. The assertion posits that success is predominantly influenced by

factors such as economic status, access to educational resources, and the cultural environment in which an individual is nurtured, rather than being primarily determined by one's ethnicity. However, as Ryan argued once more, the issue arises when cultural differences are disregarded, leading to the loss of significance in ethnic distinctions. According to Ryan, there exists a correlation between specific economic groups and the differential access to opportunities among ethnic groups. Moreover, the cultural impact exerted by specific social strata is exclusively tied to financial considerations.

The assertion made by Ryan et al. [1] highlighted the significance of acknowledging cultural differences in order to appreciate physical performance and cultural creations. By disregarding cultural distinctions, the significance of ethnic variations in relation to disparities in physical performance and cultural creations would likewise be rendered insignificant. They posit a direct correlation between the ethnicity targeting mechanism and its connection to the economic domain, specifically pertaining to eligibility criteria for individuals. The physical performance referred to by Ryan et al. [1] pertains to biological attributes, including skin tone. Skin color serves as a marker of ethnic identity and differentiation. The cultural significance of this physical performance is noteworthy. While the text does not explicitly acknowledge the significance of eye and nose shapes as indicators, it can be inferred that these features are encompassed under the biological category, which serves as a marker for ethnic distinctions.

The phenomenon of targeting individuals or groups based on their identity and differentiation can be observed in Irving's literary works that explore the ethnic heritage of the Dutch population in New York. The physical attributes of the Dutch population, such as skin color, hair color, eye shape, and other similar characteristics, are comparable to those observed in other European populations. However, it can be observed that the portrayal of physical performance is not an accurate representation of reality, but rather an exaggerated depiction intended to evoke amusement and convey implied messages. Furthermore, within the context of the tale, the comical physical portrayal is intricately linked to cognitive and behavioral aptitude, thus imbuing it with a pejorative connotation.

Ethnicity, because of its association with cultural productions, is likewise subject to processes of identification and differentiation. Examining these cultural creations will provide insight into the relative standing of different cultures. Irving meticulously depicts Dutch culture in his literary works, providing comprehensive descriptions of various aspects pertaining to this ethnic group. These encompass not only the physical manifestations such as attire, adornments, and cuisine. But also, extends to the architectural elements of Dutch households. The portrayal of these cultural artifacts is perceived to be characterized by a combination of reverence and mockery. This essay aims to analyze the process by which the fashion of a particular ethnic group can contribute to practice identification and differentiation of another ethnicity.



## 2 Method

This article employs the sociological perspective on literature, specifically utilizing literary works as the primary focus of investigation, in order to examine the societal aspects depicted within these works of literature. Subsequently, the social context is employed as a means to observe and comprehend the prevailing social actuality. The presence of socio-cultural history in the work may be observed in the real world beyond the realm of literary works Laurenson and Swingewood [2]; and Wahyudi [3]. Irving's literary works pertaining to Dutch New York appear to offer insights into the culture and attire of 17th-19th century Dutch New York, specifically within the context of Dutch influence. He provided a comprehensive examination of the culture and practices prevalent in Dutch New York. However, the clothes worn by the Dutch not only depicted some cultural elements, but also conveyed additional connotations, specifically those of mocking or disparaging other cultures. Hence, it is imperative to employ the sociological approach to literature in order to ascertain the true significance of costumes within a given culture. This entails examining the portrayal of costumes in literary works and comparing them to their manifestation in actuality.

## 3 Result and Discussion

### 3.1 Fashion of Men's Clothing

In Baga's scholarly research [4] on Dutch New York, it is observed that Washington Irving's literary works concerning Dutch New York continually focus on the depiction of clothes as it relates to social class. The depiction in question can be construed as a form of mockery against Dutch culture, as the clothing worn by the Dutch authorities does not conform to the anticipated norms appropriate for their positions as leaders. Although the primary purpose of this exaggerated depiction of clothing is to generate amusement, it is important to acknowledge that one of the main characters in the narrative of *A History of New York*, who is credited with exploring Manhattan, earned the nickname "*Harden Broek*" or "Tough Breeches" as a result of his distinctive attire. He regularly wore a pair of weathered deerskin trousers. The depicted image evokes pleasure as a result of the individual's nickname being derived from the clothing he was wearing. Parody encompasses the utilization of a genealogical surname originating in the 17th century, devoid of any connection to the clothing or traditions commonly connected with that lineage.

Similarly, another guy in Manhattan who exhibited acts of heroism faced criticism as a result of his clothing selection. The person in question was identified as *Ten Broek*. The English version can be interpreted as "Ten Breeches" or "Ten Layers Trousers" without any limitations. Within this section, the narrator known as Knickerbocker, who is employed by Irving, affirms that the narrative being presented has been derived from the prosperous Dutch community. Ten Broek is widely recognized as the one who first introduced and promoted the traditional Dutch dress, generally known as "the high Dutch" among the settlers. This position is widely endorsed by

scholars, who attribute it to his pioneering role in introducing the ancient Dutch fashion of wearing ten pairs of breeches to the town [5]. Nevertheless, there is a suggestion that Ten Broek's socioeconomically disadvantaged upbringing exerted a substantial influence on the formation of his personal identity. The portrayal of Ten Broek's journey from destitution to being a national attire model is occasionally perceived as derogatory, given that the narrative is often presented in a comedic fashion. This implies that the costume design drew inspiration from the apparel worn by those belonging to lower socioeconomic backgrounds who had restricted availability of garments. Nevertheless, the clothing held considerable importance in the context of the ancestors of the Dutch population and was also worn by the favored social class. The present investigation seeks to investigate the representation of Dutch culture through the use of satire, while also delving into the underlying criticism on socioeconomic class embedded within these portrayals. The initial adopters of this particular type were primarily those from the lowest socioeconomic strata. However, over time, it garnered widespread appeal and emerged as a prominent fashion trend within the Dutch ancestral community. In the 17th century, it was a prevalent practice among Dutch men to don multiple layers of undergarments as a protective measure against low temperatures [4].

The utilization of Ten Broek's trouser model conveys a connotation related to social stratification. The attire was initially donned by those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, afterward evolving into a representative style of the traditional Dutch national trousers. This observation implies the possibility that the Dutch population may have experienced economic hardship. Furthermore, it generates visual representations of the depicted civilization. The culture was being transmitted or conveyed from the lower strata <sup>10</sup> socio-economic stratum of society. The recurring portrayal of socioeconomic class in *A History of New York* underscores its significance in the depiction of prominent individuals.

According to Elisabeth Paling Funk [6], Knickerbocker, the narrator in Irving's stories about Dutch culture, extensively portrays the dress of Dutch-Americans. The initial depiction commences with a witty and elaborate bilingual play on words. Irving deviates from the toponym "Ten Broeck" in his writing. While *Broeck* can indeed refer to "trousers" or "breeches," in this context it signifies low-lying ground, typically characterized by lush grassy areas adjacent to rivers or streams. The term "ten" (in Dutch) is used to represent the preposition "at" (in English). Irving, in a light-hearted manner, playfully interprets the significance of *Ten Broeck* as "Ten Breeches". The practice of donning multiple layers of breeches is commonly associated with the virtue of bravery. Irving's contentious reference is historically accurate. According to Paul Zunthor in Funk [6], it can be observed that Dutch buildings in the seventeenth century were commonly characterized by insufficient heating provisions. In order to optimize fuel consumption while also safeguarding oneself against low temperatures, the Dutch population, particularly those with limited financial resources, adopted the practice of wearing multiple layers of clothes. This particular behavior evolved into a prominent national attribute, prompting the renowned English novelist, Oliver Goldsmith, of the eighteenth century to remark. "The true Dutchman cuts the strongest figure in the world [wearing]...no coat but seven waistcoats and nine pairs of trou-

sers". The tradition likely persisted among the Dutch-American population in the Hudson Valley until the era of Irving, affording him the chance to employ the truth for comic effect.

In her article, Funk substantiated the assertion made by Irving regarding the 17th-century Dutch men's clothing model. Specifically, it is confirmed that during this period, Dutch men would indeed wear layered pants and shirts to endure the cold weather, as the Dutch houses of that era were not adequately heated. Subsequently, this particular tradition evolved into a prominent characteristic of Dutch men's attire during the 17th century, and it is probable that Dutch towns in the Hudson Valley continued to employ it during Irving's era.

In the book *Nationale Kleederdrachten* by Livestro-Nieuwenhuis [7], it is also stated that around 1600 to 1700s Dutch men wore pants with a wide pipe shape, the part below the knee was joined by a tire or ribbon. Then, they wore a vest or camisole with lots of buttons to cover the upper body, sometimes even with a jacket. At the bottom they put on socks and shoes, then they put on a hat with a wide brim.

#### Men's Pants Model (Fishermen)



**Fig.1.** B000741: Valentijn Bing (1812-1895), Jan Braet von Uberfeldt (1807-1894), Ruurt de Vries (1813-1874) - Provincie Noord-Holland. Eiland Marken, 1850-1857. Zuiderzeemuseum, Enkhuizen, the Netherlands.





**Fig.2.** 13796\_ZZM01\_008403\_48: Valentijn Bing (1812-1895), Jan Braet von Uberfeldt (1807-1894), Ruurt de Vries (1813-1874) - Provincie Noord-Holland, Eiland Marken, 1850-1857. Zuiderzeemuseum, Enkhuizen, the Netherlands

In the two pictures above, we can see the traditional Dutch trouser model which has wide pipes, then narrows at the knees. In the two pictures above, it can be seen that these men are from different classes. The first picture shows the lower classes, apparently, these are fishermen because they are illustrated near the sea. The standing man carries a spear next to the seated man in a basket. Both men wore *mutts* knitted hats from wool, then wore *klompen* (wooden sandals) as footwear. The second image shows a man traveling with his family, apparently from the middle class. The man wore a leather hat, then wore shoes as footwear. The two pictures above show that the lower and middle classes wore this model of trousers. In general, these pants were worn in layers in the Netherlands in the 17th century to keep out the cold.



According to Davlatova [8], Lobacheva emphasized the significance of multiple factors in the development of traditional attire, including natural elements, domestic practices, philosophical beliefs, cultural influences, artistic expression, religious convictions, and national customs. The growth of clothing and the diversification of its varieties have been influenced by various variables, including lifestyle, occupation, climate conditions, cultural development, and aesthetic preferences. Based on that citation, it can be inferred that the development of traditional garments was impacted by a multitude of factors. Consequently, the evaluation of these traditional garments should not be approached through the lens of another culture, but rather be examined within the context of its own culture and circumstances for instance climate conditions, occupation, and so forth.

One intriguing aspect of Dutch men's clothing is the absence of wooden footwear, known as *klompen*, among Dutch men in New York. As noted by Charlotte Wilcoxon [9], "The tradition of wooden shoes in Holland is deeply rooted, yet no historical records have been discovered listing wooden shoes in New Netherland inventories." The aforementioned footwear possesses distinct Dutch characteristics, serving as a prominent symbol of Dutch cultural artifacts. The Dutch settlers in America showed a profound appreciation for their native culture, resulting in the extensive transplantation of their cultural practices and traditions to the New World. Nevertheless, a conspicuous characteristic of their civilization is absent in seventeenth-century America. These clogs are utilized by individuals of all genders and age groups, including both men and women, as well as youngsters. Wilcoxon [9] posited that certain conjectures suggested a disparity between the American soil type and the agricultural soils found in the Netherlands, characterized by their muddy composition, which consequently dissuaded the Dutch from transporting them to the former location. While the majority of agricultural regions in Albany do not exhibit muddy soil conditions, there are instances where muddy soil can be found. Nevertheless, no documentation pertaining to this type of footwear was discovered in the United States. In Irving's literary works pertaining to one of the European nationalities, there was a conspicuous absence of any reference to this particular type of footwear. The figures portrayed by Irving were commonly depicted as wearing shoes.

### 3.2 Fashion of Women Clothes

Irving, through Knickerbocker, described the New York Dutch women's fashion models in the seventeenth century, focusing on their character traits. According to popular belief, it is commonly asserted that they lead a tranquil and compliant existence, with even the female members of their community adhering to a code of silence and integrity. During that period, Dutch women led a predominantly domestic lifestyle characterized by a calm and solemn demeanor, often engaging in activities such as reading the Bible. Nevertheless, their attire is parodied for comedic effect in some scenes. Consequently, the dissemination of information pertaining to it assumed an anomalous nature.

The physical attributes of a New York Dutch woman are delineated, first with her hair that is coated with wax and concealed by a diminutive headwear, sometimes referred to as a cap. Knickerbocker's assessment posited that the length of skirts worn by Dutch women was deemed insufficiently long, as they typically fell past the knees. There is a potential for exaggeration in Irving's statement, as there exists evidence depicting seventeenth-century Dutch women in both New York and the Netherlands who often wore skirts of shorter length, extending just below the knees. The aforementioned skirt, characterized by a length extending below the knees, is predominantly worn by women residing in rural regions engaged in agricultural and animal husbandry occupations, as well as those involved in fish vending.

5 Even the female sex, those arch innovators upon the tranquility, the honesty, and gray-beard customs of society, seemed for a while to conduct themselves with incredible sobriety and comeliness, and indeed behaved almost as if they had not been sent into the world 6 to bother mankind, baffle philosophy, and confound the universe.

Their hair untortured by the abominations of art, was scrupulously pomatomed back from their foreheads with a candle, and covered with a little cap of quilted calico, which fitted exactly to their heads. Their petticoats of linsey woolsey, were striped with a variety of gorgeous dyes, rivaling the many coloured robes of Iris -- though I must confess these gallant garments were rather short, scarce reaching below the knee; but then they made up in the number, which generally equalled that of the gentlemen's small clothes; and what is still more praiseworthy, they were all of their own manufacture -- of which circumstance, as may well be supposed, they were not a little vain [5, p. 483].

[...] I cannot say much in vindication of the shortness of the petticoats; it doubtless was introduced for the purpose of giving the stockings a chance to be seen, which were generally of blue worsted with magnificent red clocks -- or perhaps to display a well-turned ankle, and a neat, though serviceable foot; set off by a high-heel'd leathern shoe, with a large and splendid silver buckle. Thus we find, that the gentle sex in all ages, have shewn the same disposition to infringe a little upon the laws of decorum, in order to betray a lurking beauty, or gratify an innocent love of finery [5, p. 484].

The portrayal of the Dutch female characters, characterized by their piety and obedience, is juxtaposed with the introduction of the short skirt, which first lacks a clear explanation for its purpose. The primary focus was really on the production of skirts, given their prevalence as handcrafted garments. This indicates that skirts held significant cultural and sartorial importance as a traditional and characteristic element of Dutch women's attire in New York. However, in a subsequent paragraph, Knickerbocker rendered a critical assessment of the utilization of a skirt that possessed insufficient length. The current evaluation appears to be experiencing a tendency towards underestimation, thus prompting an exploration of the potential link between piety and the wearing of shorter skirts. According to Knickerbocker, the primary purpose of wearing short skirts is to exhibit the stockings that are being worn. The stockings typically worn have a mostly blue hue, are crafted from woolen fabric, and feature embellishments of red embroidery. Knickerbocker posited an alternative perspective



about the utilization of short skirts, suggesting that one potential purpose is to expose attractive heels and meticulously maintained legs. Knickerbocker subsequently posited that women consistently transgress the norms of etiquette.

In this instance, Irving offers his interpretation of the attire worn by Dutch ladies during the seventeenth century as a means to elucidate their societal representation. The assessment of the Dutch culture brought to America was approached from a distinct standpoint. The adoption of short skirts by women residing in rural regions of the Netherlands can be attributed to their engagement in agricultural activities. Furthermore, the presence of damp and muddy soil in the Netherlands necessitated the adoption of skirts that were slightly elevated above ground level. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that in the context of seventeenth-century Dutch paintings, ladies of high social standing are seen wearing length dresses that extend all the way to the heel. The portrayal of the short skirt might be understood as a manifestation of stereotyping, wherein the distinctive attribute of Dutch women is diminished and presented in a negative light.

In Wilcoxon's writings [9], it is stated that Dutch women in Albany in the seventeenth century wore a top (chemise) with a corset over it, then wore a skirt slightly shorter than the petticoat, which was usually light in color. This is done to show the lighter-colored inner skirt. There is no mention of the skirt length, but Wilcoxon's images demonstrate that Dutch women in Albany typically wore long skirts that ended just below the knees. Then they put on an apron. This apron was used by all women, even if they were not working in the kitchen or had a household assistant. The use of this apron<sup>12</sup> only added to their status as housewives. Married women wore a cap (a small hat)<sup>14</sup> in the early eighteenth century, the use of this hat disappeared, only to reappear in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Albany. These women generally wore leather sandals, and when it was winter, they wore leather boots.

Other attributes of women's clothing were hilariously narrated by Irving as well. He failed to describe the function of a large bag carried by Dutch women in the 17th century, but he threw jokes like mockery. These pockets were depicted as very large, decorated with patchwork (hand-embroidered patchwork). This bag was like a symbol for women at that time that they were good housewives. To this symbol of a good wife, Irving, through Knickerbocker, directed his jokes. Knickerbocker said that the women of Dutch New York in the 17th century wore this pocket wherever they went. Inside the big pocket, all kinds of things women needed were there to show that they were good wives. Knickerbocker was actually joking here. He laughed at the relationship between the symbol of the pocket and the sign of being a good wife.

In fact, to corroborate his joke he recounted an anecdote that once circulated, but Knickerbocker added that it may have been exaggerated. Here we see that Knickerbocker actually felt funny about the function of the pocket and its relationship with a good wife. The anecdote related to Governor Wouter van Twiller's wife had once emptied her pocket to find a spoon. Nevertheless, the contents of the pocket turned out to be three baskets of corn even though the item she was looking for was already piled up with other rubbish. This joke shows that the pocket that the Dutch woman always wore has nothing to do with the meaning of a good wife, because it turned out that the contents did not always match the situation when it was needed.



11 These were the honest days, in which 3 every woman stayed at home, read the bible and wore pockets – aye, and that too of a goodly size, fashioned with patch-work into many curious devices, and ostentatiously worn on the outside. These in fact, were convenient receptacles, where 13 good housewives carefully stored away such things as they wished to have at hand; by which means they often came to be 2 incredibly crammed -- and I remember there was a story current when I was a boy, that the lady of Wouter Van Twiller, having occasion to empty her right pocket in search of a wooden ladle, the contents filled three corn baskets, and the utensil was at length discovered lying among some rubbish

in one corner -- but we must not give too much faith to all these stories; the anecdotes of these remote periods being very subject to exaggeration [5, p. 484].

In addition to Knickerbocker's story of multifunctional pouches, he also told that New York Dutch women at that time also wore scissors and pincushions (needle pads) hanging from their waist belts. For women who come from high society using brass and silver chains, these accessories were signs of frugal wives and diligent virgins. Irving described these Dutch women's accessories in a mocking tone that they always show off symbols of good women through funny and strange accessories.

Beside these notable pockets, they likewise wore 3 scissors [sic] and pincushions suspended from their girdles by red ribbands, or among the more opulent and shewy classes, by brass and even silver chains – indubitable tokens of thrifty housewives and industrious spinsters [5, p. 484].

These cultural creations acquire an air of unfamiliarity when observed from an alternative standpoint. Simultaneously, this phenomenon serves as an indication that the particular ethnicity in question does not align with a collective identity, or that they occupy a position as an "other." While Irving provided an explanation regarding the purpose of the features donned by Dutch women, it is evident that he embellished his narrative in order to elicit amusement. In this context, Irving's perspective becomes evident 9 as he expresses a strong aversion towards these cultural inventions.

Irving's style in *A History of New York* always depicted everything related to Dutch ethnic cultural creations beautifully. However, at the end of the descriptions, the images were exaggerated for humorous effect, yet it seemed mocking and condescending. Finally, we do not get the actual function 9 of the accessories for Dutch women's clothing in the early 17th century from the story of *A History of New York*, because the humorous and condescending impression that arises from this description of the Dutch women's clothing model was seen from a different perspective.

All the information about Dutch women's clothing in the 17th century was to be both amusing and peculiar in Knickerbocker's view. Additionally, he provided a de-

tailed account of the dissimilarities between the sartorial choices of women <sup>15</sup> in the early days of the colony and the contemporary fashion trends prevalent during Knickerbocker's own time in the 19th century. Those women hobbled about in dozens of dresses in layers, even in summer, so that they looked radiant like sunflowers and majestic like cauliflowers in bloom. This is a mockery of the Dutch women's clothing model. Irving's intention was to demonstrate the divergence in sartorial preferences between ladies during his day and those of the 19th century. However, due to his unique perspective, the portrayal of this apparel model took on a humorous quality. Irving's tone exhibits a lack of neutrality since it tends to promote stereotyping and racial categorization in relation to the cultural works they generate. The following citation is cited from Irving's work.

<sup>1</sup> From the sketch here given it will be seen, that our good grandmothers differed considerably in their ideas of a fine figure, from their scantily dressed descendants of the present day. A fine lady, in those times, waddled under more clothes even on a fair summer's day, than would have clad the whole bevy of a modern ball room. Nor were they the less admired by the gentlemen in consequence thereof. On the contrary, the greatness of a lover's passion seemed to increase in proportion to the magnitude of its object -- and a voluminous damsel, arrayed in a dozen of petticoats, was declared by a low-dutch sonneteer of the province, to be radiant as a sunflower, and luxuriant as a full-blown cabbage [5, p. 484].

Wilcoxon [9] mentioned that seventeenth-century Dutch women in Albany did not have much clothing despite their affluent origins. At that time, they had to sew their own clothes by hand. In addition, there was a ban on weaving in New Netherland in which all textile materials were imported, so clothing materials became expensive. Generally, Dutch houses in Albany were small so they did not have a wardrobe (closet), even large houses did not have one, so their clothes were stored in chests or hung on hangers.

Irving stated that the absence of a wardrobe was related to the clothes in *A History of New York's* story through his perspective, so he also embedded the image of a Dutch woman in this work. Irving told through his narrator, Knickerbocker, that New York Dutch women did not have closets. Whoever had a large supply of skirts and stockings was the heiress. Irving likened the Dutch women to Kamschatka women who kept lots of bear fur and Lapland women who had lots of deer skins. He made this story funny. Dutch women are equated with women from remote areas. Thus, we get the impression that Dutch women in New Netherland were ancient and primitive.

But there was a secret charm <sup>7</sup> these petticoats, which no doubt entered into the consideration of the prudent gallant. The wardrobe of a lady was in those days her only fortune; and she who had a good stock of petticoats and stockings, was as absolutely an heiress, as is a Kamschatka damsel with a store of bear skins, or a Lapland belle with a plenty of reindeer. The ladies therefore <sup>2</sup> were very anxious to display these powerful attractions to the greatest advantage; and the best rooms in the house instead of being adorned with caricatures of dame nature, in water colours and needle work, were always hung round with abundance of homespun garments; the manufacture and property of the

females -- a piece of laudable ostentation that still prevails among the heiresses of our dutch villages. Such were the beauteous belles of the ancient city of New Amsterdam, rivalling in primæval simplicity of manners, the renowned and courtly dames, so loftily sung by Dan Homer -- who tells us that the princess Nausicaa, washed the family linen, and the fair Penelope wove her own petticoats [5, p. 485].

In fact, Irving implicitly conveyed that New York Dutch women like to show off. All clothes were worn in layers even in summer, or they were hung in the best rooms. This room is referred to as the "show room" or the sanctorum room. The room became full of hangers for women's clothes. Irving quipped that it was a piece of laudable ostentation, and this tradition had survived until the 19th century in Dutch villages in New York. Later, Irving compared these Dutch women to the Greek story from Homer in the *Odyssey* about Princess Nausica washing the family's clothes and Penelope weaving her own skirts. Irving instilled in the image of New York Dutch women that they were old-fashioned and show-off, unlike women who were supposed to do the housework.

The characteristics of the nature and behavior of Dutch women are related to the attributes they wear as a result of their cultural creations. This is an identification to pin ethnic differences. From this identification, we get the characteristics as well as the image of Dutch women. Because of this identification, Dutch women accept the stereotype of being happy to show off. Their properties are reduced to a trait that tends to have a negative connotation.

The description of the cultural background accompanied by different perspectives will result in different judgments. The setting serves to show that a fictional event occurred in that place. Even though the event does not exist, the setting does exist. Not only the setting, but also the social and cultural situation, so that the story binds the setting. *A History of New York* setting is so binding on the story, but at certain points related to Dutch culture, Knickerbocker seems to derail it to get a funny and strange picture. This influences the meaning and image of the culture that he narrates.

#### 4 Conclusion

Based on the aforementioned examination, it becomes evident that literary works have the capacity to portray a cultural representation solely through the depiction of the clothes and accessories. Through the application of the sociological approach to literature and the theoretical framework of identification and differentiation, it becomes evident that when a culture is portrayed through a particular mode of attire and subsequently evaluated from the vantage point of a distinct culture, the culture under scrutiny will appear unfamiliar and distinct. Based on this assessment, it may be argued that the act of identifying and differentiating individuals or groups might result in the perception of a particular culture as being distinct or apart from the norm. Consequently, the act of marginalizing a certain culture might manifest itself inside the



realm of literary discourse. Narration in literary texts has the capacity to confer identity and social status upon the culture being depicted.

It is possible that Washington Irving did not intentionally engage in cultural mockery through his literary works. The author may have intended to incorporate humor into his works, potentially resulting in readers forming assumptions or specific perceptions on Dutch New York. In the case of the short skirt, Irving made a subjective assessment of its length, deeming it to be excessively short, and therefore associated it with women who conform to societal standards of virtue. The reader may interpret a contrasting significance due to Irving's apparent emphasis on the extended tradition associated with the skirt. The standardization of the English language was influenced by its association with the individual's English heritage, whereas the prevalence of short skirts among Dutch women during the 17th century can be attributed to their occupational practices in their home nation. Therefore, it can be observed that the aforementioned style was prevalent in the Netherlands during the 17th century. Similarly, the narrative around 17th-century Dutch trousers, as depicted by Irving, effectively conveys the notion of social class disparities. Consequently, he ascribed identity and social status to Dutch New York.

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