



# Western Civilization from 1650 to the Present

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## TOPIC 3.3. PRIMARY SOURCES: EVERYDAY LIFE

### EVERYDAY LIFE

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, artists throughout Europe depicted scenes of everyday life. However, Dutch artists of this period took a special interest in this subject matter. One of the first painters to represent daily life memorably was Pieter Bruegel the Elder. Take a look at his [Peasant Wedding](#) to see an example of his fascination with peasant life and the style he developed to represent it. Now look at a few works by prominent Dutch Baroque artists: [Young Man and Woman in an Inn](#) (1623) by Frans Hals; [The Milkmaid](#) (1660s) by Johannes Vermeer; and [The Dissolute Household](#) (c. 1665) by Jan Steen.

**How do these paintings resemble and differ from Bruegel's "Peasant Wedding"? How do they resemble and differ from each other?**

**What do the three seventeenth-century paintings suggest about each artist's attitude toward his subject?**

**Consider the fact that these paintings were produced mainly for wealthy middle-class and aristocratic patrons. Why do you think members of these classes would be so interested in scenes such as these?**

Adapted from [Humanities in the Western Tradition](#) by Marvin Perry