"Passie, Hartstocht": Painting and Evoking Emotions in Rembrandt’s Studio

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Passie, hartstocht

Painting and Evoking Emotions in Rembrandt’s Studio

Thijs Weststeijn

Focusing on Rembrandt’s studio, this chapter explores the theory and practice in the depiction of the passions. It argues that the central importance allotted to portraying and evoking emotions in rhetorical theory inspired painterly experiments in the 1630s and theoretical ideals that were first written down by Franciscus Junius (1638) and elaborated by Samuel van Hoogstraten (1678). Allegedly, an image’s power to transport the viewer into a virtual reality was greatly enhanced by its emotional appeal. This view inspired the ideal of the artist as “pathopoios,” capable of experiencing the passions without letting them disturb his own state of mind.

Rembrandt, Junius, and Van Hoogstraten

“Who among the great Italian or Netherlandish masters has not had […] something particular as his speciality?“ According to Samuel van Hoogstraten, who asked this question in his Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst of 1678, Albrecht Dürer focused on draperies and Caravaggio on „naturalness“. As for the Netherlandish masters, in his opinion „Rubens [concentrated on] rich compositions, Anthony van Dyck on grace, [and] Rembrandt on the passions of the soul.“1 The present chapter will argue that although Van Hoogstraten based his remarks on rhetorical commonplaces, he made a careful choice when he praised his former master for depicting emotions. Van Hoogstraten’s classification of Rembrandt as focused on the lijdingen des gemoeds (→ gemoet) first caught the attention of Jan Emmens, though his 1964 overview study Rembrandt en de regels van de kunst largely overlooked contemporary views about the passions.2 To Emmens, Van Hoogstraten rejected Rembrandt’s concern for „merely“ depicting emotions and thus put his master, together with Caravaggio, in the camp of the despicable „Naturalists“, to use the term developed at the time by Giovanni Pietro Bellori.3 But if Emmens paid little attention to Van Hoogstraten, he portrayed Franciscus Junius, another theorist who wrote about the passions, as entirely irrelevant.

1 „Wie ook der Italiaensche of Nederlandsche groote Meesters is er oit geweest, die of in’t geheel der konst, of in eenich deel, niet iets byzonders als eygen gehad heeft? […] Rubens [was fixed] op rijkelijke ordinantien, Anthony van Dijk op bevalligheyt, Rembrandt op de lijdingen des gemoeds, en Goltzius op enigne groote Meesters hand eigenlity na te volgen“. Samuel van Hoogstraten: Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst, Rotterdam 1678, 75.
3 Gianpietro Bellori: Le vite de’ pittori, scultori e architetti moderni, ed. by E. Borea, Torino 1976 (1672), 215.
to the Dutch situation. While Van Hoogstraten’s importance is now more fully recognized, the scholarship on Junius has not yet recovered from this criticism. This is in contrast to the fact that Junius’s treatise was read widely in the seventeenth century and Van Hoogstraten can be called his most faithful student. As his contemporaries noted, the painter depended on Junius’s ideas to structure his treatise; following his

predecessor’s lead Van Hoogstraten’s theory gives pride of place to the depiction of the passions as the central element connecting illusionism, visual story-telling and the ultimate ethical aims of painting.5

5 On Van Hoogstraten’s debt to Junius see Willem Goeree: *Inleyding tot de practijck der algemeene schilderkonst*, Middelburg 1697, 65; cf. how Goeree refers to Junius to state that a “true artist” must “above all” focus on the passions (“de Passien des Menschelüken gemoeds”), “since the greatest power of painting consists in the lifelike expression of the passions.” Willem Goeree: *Natuurlyk en schilderkonstig onterworp der menschhunde*, Amsterdam 1682, 69. Van Hoogstraten mentions Junius in *Inleyding* on pages 72, 75–76, 79, 93, 179, 184, 193, 245, 289, 305–306 and 332. His borrowings are explained more fully in chapter IV of my *The Visible World: Samuel van Hoogstraten’s Art Theory and the Legitimation of Painting in the Dutch Golden Age*, Amsterdam 2008.
Van Hoogstraten may have first been confronted with Junius’s ideas in Rembrandt’s studio. The inventory of Rembrandt’s library does not mention his book, *The Painting of the Ancients*, published in Dutch in 1641, but the quarto-sized volume may have been among the „fifteen books of various sizes“ that were not identified.⁶ Both Joachim von Sandrart and Constantijn Huygens for example, some of the early critics of his work, were well acquainted with the treatise, had visited Rembrandt’s studio and had probably met the author.⁷ Junius had written his book in England in a community of Dutch artists working for the Earl of Arundel, whose famous collection included several works by Rembrandt, and in 1642, when Van Hoogstraten arrived in Rembrandt’s studio, Von Sandrart and Junius were in Amsterdam, too.⁸ Although Van Hoogstraten’s descriptions of discussions in Rembrandt’s studio do not involve Junius, it is possible that his learned treatise, which had just been published, was the subject of much debate: it was only the second book on painting written in Dutch.⁹ Dutch authors of art literature needed Junius’s book first of all because it developed a consistent theoretical system, based on classical rhetorical theory. Van Hoogstraten, for example, derived formulations by rhetoricians like Quintilian and Cicero, who had stated that the perfect orator should be as lifelike and captivating as a painter, from Junius’s *Painting of the Ancients*. Junius unscrupulously adapted rhetorical theory to his pictorial aims, often simply by changing the word „orator“ to „painter“. He defended this method by asking,

„Who […] will take it upon himself to disparage [my book], because by means of slight verbal change, I have applied passages of Cicero, Horace, and Quintilian from oratory and the art of poetry to the visual arts? Surely such a person has little comprehension of the close affinity which joins these arts one to another“.¹⁰

Van Hoogstraten, like his master Rembrandt, may have had some formal training in rhetoric, which was considered an indispensable skill for all social activities in the Dutch Republic.¹¹ It was widely taught, and both painters probably attended „Latin

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⁸ The incomplete inventory made in Amsterdam in 1655, listing only works Arundel had taken with him from England, mentions a „small head of a man“ and „an old man drawing“ by Rembrandt; document in the Public Record Office in London, I/7, 693r–705v; described in Mary Hervey: *The Life, Correspondence and Collections of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel*, Cambridge 1921, 473–500, esp. 487.
⁹ Van Hoogstraten talks about discussions in Rembrandt’s studio in *Inleyding*, 11, 12, 95, 181.
school in preparation for a further education at a university. The title page of the second chapter of Van Hoogstraten’s treatise depicts Polymnia, the Rederijkster or the Muse of rhetoric, instructing two young men, probably aspiring painters, on how to speak about the artwork at their knees. The boy on the right holds a small book, possibly a treatise on rhetoric or a work of art theory, which may suggest that the vocabulary and structure provided by rhetoric are necessary to speak sensibly about art.

„Hartstocht“, „lijding“, „roersel“ and „beweging“

Dutch art theory closely follows rhetorical theory when it states that the passions are, in Van Mander’s words, the „kernel and soul of art“ (kern en ziel van de kunst). Van Hoogstraten calls them „the most noble part of art“ (alleredelste deel der kunst), and

13 Van Mander calls the affects „rechte Kernen oft Siele die Const in haer heeft besloten“, with the scholium „D’Affecten uytbeelden, Siele der Consten“; Karel van Mander: „Grundt der edel vry schilderconst“, in: Het schilder-boeck, Haarlem 1604, VI/55, 27r.
Junius states that the successful depiction of emotion is the best imitation of ancient art. However, Van Hoogstraten and Junius use neither the same terminology nor the international term affect which is preferred by Van Mander. In their efforts to find vernacular variants for Latinizing terms, the Dutch authors develop a variety of terms that cover more or less the same semantic field.

Van Hoogstraten speaks about hartstochten and sometimes – literally translating the term „passions“ – lijdingen. The word hartstocht was widely used in the seventeenth century, denoting the tocht – the movement or urge – of the heart, the seat of human emotions. It occurred for the first time in Dirck Volkertsz Coornhert’s handbook of moral philosophy, Zedekunst, dat is wellevens kunste (1586), modelled on the examples of Cicero and Seneca. Later the term also appeared in medical textbooks like Johan van Beverwijck’s Schat der ongesontheyt (Amsterdam 1642). It might be possible that Van Hoogstraten’s terminology is borrowed in part from Van Beverwijck’s Schat, for which he provided illustrations.

Junius, by contrast, speaks about roersel, or „movement“, and uses the related verbs ontroeren and beroeren (to stir the mind) that are still in use in modern Dutch. Both Van Hoogstraten and Junius use derivations of the verb bewegen, a more common term for „to move“, to describe various aspects relative to internal affective movements and the external bodily actions that are seen as their counterparts. Thus Junius speaks about ziel-woeghende beweghingen or „movements that perturb the soul“, the inwendighe beweghingen ones ghenoedts or „internal motions of our mind“. A specific term used both by Van Hoogstraten and Junius is beweeglijkheyt or „moving quality“ that is discussed below.

Both authors use different words to adapt the passion theory of international humanism to the Dutch situation. It was Junius’s special concern to find adequate translations for Latin-root terms that had not previously been used in Dutch.

The Rhetorical Ideal of Moving the Audience

The central position that early modern rhetorical theory allots to the passions stems from its adherence to Roman authors in particular (in contrast to the Greek rhetoricians), who had stated that the most important function of rhetoric was not to teach or to delight, but to move an audience. According to their view, not arguments or facts, but emotions are the strongest form of persuasion. This view appears to be...
corroborated by modern aesthetics, which states that, in contrast to the fiction of art, emotions are real experience and therefore make a longer lasting impression. But early modern art theory does not claim that emotions appeal to a different level of consciousness than art does. As will be argued here, Junius and Van Hoogstraten suppose that the spectator who is affectively stirred by the image is completely, that is, mentally and physically, transported into the painting’s virtual reality.

A central idea is that hartstochten are nothing more nor less than movements of the heart, and they should first of all be understood in this physical sense. Junius’s vocabulary, in particular, closely follows the physiological notion that, when the heart is stirred, the blood warms and rises to the head, changing the colour of one’s face and ultimately leading to gestures and other physical movements. When another person beholds these movements and colour changes, the reaction occurs in reverse: the sense impression acts as a stimulus warming the blood, which translates into a movement of the heart echoing the original passion. This is why actions are more eloquent than words, and why painting may be more rhetorical than rhetoric itself.

The overarching importance of the passions as the domain where one can directly study and influence human behaviour may have been most comprehensively expressed in Thomas Hobbes’s view that „[n]either in us are there anything else but diverse motions; for motion produces nothing but motion.“ Art literature obeying contemporary ideas about emotion regards the passions as the medium connecting mind and body as well as „internal“ and „external“ aspects of reality. The depiction of the passions hence determines the painter’s purported role in society. Ancient theories about the importance of the imagination are in this case only strengthened by the views developed by René Descartes, an author well known to Van Hoogstraten. This philosopher saw the passions as the mediating instance between on the one hand res extensa, or the visible world, and on the other res cogitans, or thought. Descartes’s contrast between reason and imagination appeared to be of central importance to the painter: while the former may venture freely in the realm of pure thought, the latter is necessarily linked to the passions and therefore to the body, and apprehends its surroundings by analogy to the individual body in which it is confined.

As the passions are construed as the domain linking inside and outside, or ethics and natural philosophy, they relate both to specific prescriptions for pictorial representation

22 Junius speaks about the „heat“ caused by „stirred passions.“ Junius, Painting, 180; cf. Junius, Schilder-

23 Cf. „he is the best Historian that can adorn his Narration with such forcible figures and lively colours of Rhetorike, as to make it like unto a Picture.“ Junius, Painting, 50.


and to general guidelines for the painter’s moral standards. They often do so in the context of Stoic attitudes that place great stress on knowing how human behaviour is determined by affects. In the following, the ways in which the painter uses his knowledge of the passions to bridge the inside and outside are discussed, as well as the way in which he may use them to transform an artwork into an alternative reality that becomes the meeting place for artist, spectator and depicted figures. From the perspective of the artist, the epitome of painterly skill, namely the depiction of the passions as part of a narrative, of changing emotions, is explored. Secondly, as the beholder’s internal passions are supposed to be stirred by the movements and colours shown on the painting, the artistic experience of beholding art is studied as a distinct category of emotional response. Finally, we address the way the passions are related to the imagination and to the affective state associated specifically with the making of art.

„Hartstochten“ in History Painting

The passion theories of Van Hoogstraten and Junius share a central tenet: as the passions are to a large extent physical reactions to sensory perceptions, the painter can move his public by simply depicting figures in various emotional states. To quote from Van Hoogstraten’s book:

„It is not enough for a picture to be beautiful, it must have in it a certain moving quality (beweeglijkheyt) that has power over those who see it; as Horace sings about poetry: „A beautiful poem will not easily move me, But kindness can transport heart and soul. One smiles, or weeps, the viewer follows the trail: So if you want me to cry, you must cry first.”

Van Hoogstraten concludes: „and so it is with Artists, they do not stir the mind if they omit this moving quality“.

A high theoretical aim in classical poetics consists in a conjunction of the concepts affectus and varietas. Authors who are able to conjure up a vision of a multitude of persons showing their individual emotions are praised highly. Indeed, Van Hoogstraten cites Rembrandt in this respect: „I recall having seen in a certain characteristically composed piece by Rembrandt, representing John the Baptist preaching, an admirable attentiveness in the listeners of different moods: this deserves the highest

27 Willem Goeree underpins the usefulness of his Menschhunde, which deals with the human passions as well as anatomy for the artist, by pointing out that „Knowledge of human nature is not only of great importance to Drawing and Painting, but also contributes to a civilized society and enhances social intercourse. [...] Indeed, is the knowledge [of the affects] not also necessary in one’s everyday dealings with our fellow human beings?“ Goeree, Menschhunde, 5v.
28 „t Is niet genoeg, dat een beelt schoon is, maer daer moet een zeekere beweeglijkheyt in zijn, die macht over d’aenschouwers heeft; Gelijk Horatius van het dichten zingt: „Een schoon gedicht zal mij niet licht beroeren./ Maer vriendelijkheyt kan hert en ziel vervoeren./ Men lacche, of ween’, d’aenschouver raekt op’t spoor:/ Dus wilt gy dat ik schreye, schrey my voor: ‘Zoo is’t ook met de Schilders, zy beroeren ’t gemoed niet, zooze deeze beweeglijkheyt overslaen.” Van Hoogstraten, Inleyding, 292.
29 Cf. Junius, Schilder-konst, 220.
praise.” This description probably refers to the grisaille *John the Baptist Preaching*, now in Berlin. In a similar vein, Constantijn Huygens praises Rembrandt for his qualities in depicting the passions and in moving the beholder. He also cites what was seen as the epitome of painterly skill in antiquity: the complex display of multiple emotions within one figure. Huygens mentions Rembrandt’s painting of *Judas Repentant* in this context, and he writes that Rembrandt, by focusing on the “liveliness of the passions” (*affectuum vivacitas*) in his depiction of Judas torn apart by the conflicting emotions of hatred, anger and sorrow, has surpassed the ancients and the Italians.

The classical orators attach great importance to the representation of one moment in a narrative with such force that the audience sees it as if it were happening before its eyes. If the orator manages to conjure up a scene that will involve the spectator, he will have the audience on his side and ready to believe his arguments. The concept

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30 „’t Gedenkt mij dat ik, in zeker aerdich geordineert stukje van Rembrandt, verbeeldende een Johannes Predicatie, een wonderlijke aendacht in de toehoorderen van allerleye staaten gezien hebbe: dit was ten hoogsten prijšelijk.” Van Hoogstraten, *Inleyding*, 183.

31 Constantijn Huygens: *Fragment eener autobiographie*, ed. by Jacob Adolf Worp, s.l., s.a., 77. Huygens composed the manuscript in the period 1629–1631.
that captures a complex of stylistic virtues related to the representation of this moment is the Greek term *enargeia*. Cicero translates this to *evidentia* or *perspicuitas*.\(^3^2\) Again, Junius and Van Hoogstraten suggest different translations; Junius uses *uytdruckelickheyd* and Van Hoogstraten speaks about *oogenblikkige beweeging*. Junius explains in English as follows:

„Energeia [...] Tully [Cicero] calleth it Evidence and Perspicuitie [...]. This vertue seemeth to shew the whole matter; and it bringeth to passe, that the affections follow us with such a lively representation, as if we were by at the doing of the things imagined.“\(^3^3\)

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33 Junius, *Painting* 265. The Dutch edition speaks about „uytdruckelickheyd of duydelickheyd.“ Junius, *Schilder-konst*, 291. Junius’s term conflates the meaning of the two Greek terms, which are etymologically not related; see Weststeijn, *Visible World*, chapter IV.
Van Hoogstraten transposes the concept of *energia* to his own art theory, in stating, with a quotation from Horace, that the painter should focus all his attention on a critical moment in a story:

"Whether one wants to paint just one event in an image, or a couple of events, one must take care only to show an instantaneous movement (oogenblikkige beweeging) which in particular expresses the action of the History [...]. So that the work will delight the viewer, as if he were one of the bystanders, with one voice, terrify him with a violent act [...] or else he is moved to compassion by an injustice done." 34

Rembrandt’s studio experimented with the selection of appropriate moments from a narrative. This practice is exemplified by the many images that were made of Abraham’s sacrifice: in the painting now in St Petersburg, the master seems to have used such a fast shutter speed for his „snapshot“ that the knife falling from Abraham’s hand has been captured in mid-air. The story of Abraham and Isaac is described by Junius as especially applicable to emotionally move (bewegen) the beholder: „Saint Gregory Nyssen after an ample and most pathetically (beweghelick) relation of Isaac his sacrifice, hath added these words; I saw often in a picture‘, sayth he, „the image of this fact, neither could I looke upon it without teares, so lively did Art put the historie before my eyes.“ 35

As quoted above, Junius writes that the „affections“ should „follow us with such a lively representation, as if we were by at the doing of the things imagined“; this may have prompted Van Hoogstraten to state that the viewer should become „one of the bystanders“ in the narrative in order to experience the strong emotions of horror or pity. This notion that the beholder feels as if he is present at the evoked scene is central to what Junius’s art theory takes from rhetorical theory. He is of the opinion that an art lover must appraise paintings as if he were confronted with the things themselves rather than with painted objects; he states

„that wee should not onely goe with our eyes over the severall figures represented in the worke, but [that] we should likewise suffer our mind to enter into a lively consideration of what wee see expressed; not otherwise than if wee were present, and saw not the counterfeited image but the reall performance of the thing“. 36

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36 [italics mine, TW], Junius, *Painting*, 300 („dat wy de bysondere figuren, die ons in’t werck zijn voorgestelt, niet alleen met onse ooghen haestiglijk behooren t’overloopen; maer dat wy de selvighe insgelijcks door den gantschen aendacht onses Konst-lievenden ghemoeds moeten insien, als of wy met de levendighe teghenwoordighed der dingen selver, ende niet met haere gekontruyte verbeeldinghe te doen hadden.“ Junius, *Schilder-konst*, 335).
Another example where the selection of a “snapshot” may make the beholder think he is “present” at a “reall performance” is Belsahazzar’s Feast. Here, the close grouping of figures round a table seemingly leaves a space open for the beholder to join as a personal guest in Belshazzar’s supper. On the right, Rembrandt applies the virtue of *oogenblikkige beweeging* in the woman who spills her drink: he paints the moment that the wine soaks into the woman’s velvet sleeve, creating a dark stain.
Junius stresses that the confrontation with one powerful image transports the beholder into a complete narrative context, with more conviction than a long-winded speech. He concludes: „Our outer senses need present only the beginning of any historical narrative to our mind, and our active wit will soon readily comprehend the entire story, as a sequence of events“.

This is based on the early modern idea that the imagination is an essentially visually oriented faculty. Again Hobbes’s words may be

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Rembrandt: *Belshazzar’s feast*, ca. 1635, 167 × 209,5 cm
enlightening: „the imagination is able to fly from one Indies to another […] and to penetrate the hardest matter and obscurest places, into the future and herselfe, and all this in a point of time“. Apparently, one strong visual perception may give rise to a string of imaginative associations.

In the context of the aim of evoking „the reall performance“ of the narrative, we should also take account of the practice, common in the seventeenth century, of hanging paintings behind curtains that were opened when the scene was presented to a spectator (→ aenschouwer). This practice, described by Poussin, would add to the virtue of instantaneousness or oogenblikkige beweeging. Junius describes how the opening of curtains in front of a narrative moment captured in paint may, for further drama, be accompanied by a sound effect, such as the sound of a clarion when the image concerns a scene of military action. Huygens describes how the „sudden terror“ produced by revealing an image in this way contributes to the effect of lifelikeness.

Both Abraham’s Sacrifice and Belshazzar’s Feast depict moments when a protagonist is confronted with a sudden turn of events. Abraham realizes that he does not really have to sacrifice his son; Belshazzar sees the writing on the wall predicting the downfall of Babylonian rule and knows that he will be punished for using the silverware that his father stole from the Temple. This state of affairs makes it all the more plausible that the pictorial notion of oogenblikkige beweeging was developed on the basis of ancient poetical theory. The theory of tragedy states that the notion of „putting things before the eyes“ of the public was needed for the moment when the true outcome of a story is recognized. In a moment of „tragic recognition“, the protagonist on the stage becomes aware of the fatal flaw that, in effect, makes him or her a tragic character.

The rhetorical scope of the depiction of this moment of recognition is in accordance with the notion that the passions form a bridge between inside and outside: the beholder is expected to be so personally affected by the image that his close involvement in the narrative changes and purifies his character. This notion also appears in Van Hoogstraten’s treatise that states that the beholder can be moved to the two emotions of terror or pity, as quoted above.

These two reactions were developed by Aristotle in his Poetics, which was actualized in the seventeenth century in the works of Daniel Heinsius. Van Hoogstraten de-
scribes how viewing images of people who change their minds may lead to a sudden emotional change in the spectator; he speaks about *schrik en verandering*, a moment of „shock and change“.

A painter Van Hoogstraten praises for his choice of subject matter is Dirk van Baburen:

> “[D]e staetige Schilderye van Polemo, een man, die [...] op een wonderlijke wijze was bekeert [...] ’t Meysje, dit staetich gezicht beschouwende, kreeg zulk een schrik en verandering, datze haer omkeerende weer dadelijk nae huis liep. Wat rechtschappen man zou niet wenschen zulk een Schilderye gemaakt te hebben?” Van Hoogstraten, *Inleyding*, 350–351.

44 Ibid., 257.
representation of Pero who visits Cimon, her imprisoned father. Because Cimon is starv-
ing he is breast-fed by his daughter. This scene is described by Junius as such a cathartic picture that it can inspire young girls to change their reckless behaviour and become pious daughters. Besides inspiring this kind of repentance, painterly „shock and change“ may also lead to other emotions: the buyer of a painting that depicted an act of vengeance may end up enacting a similar violent deed, as a play by Thomas Kyd recounts.

The Beholder’s Share (→ aenschouwer)

To elaborate further on the involvement of the viewer in a work of art, Junius borrows from ancient rhetorical theory. He was one of the first authors in the tradition of art theory to systematically elaborate on „the beholder’s share“. According to his treatise painters should, just like orators, involve the spectator so forcefully that he forgets he is confronted with a work of fiction or art and thinks it is reality itself that he experiences. The work of art is, in this rhetorical view, no more than a trigger for a train of associations on the beholder’s side:

„[I]t is [...] required, that all those who meane to enter into a judicious consider-
eration of matters of art, must by the means of these Images accustome their mind to such a lively representation of what they see expressed in the picture, as if they saw the things themselves and not their resemblance only“.

As the passions are seen as internal physical movements, eventually all senses are supposed to be taken over by the art object: the spectator sees the depicted figures moving, wishes to touch them, smells the painted flowers or enters into a conversation with a portrayed individual. Junius’s suggestion that paintings go accompanied by sounds was discussed above; the importance of smell and movement is attested in an admonishment by Van Hoogstraten that artists should depict Venus’s „most enchanting elegance“ by imagining „a divine fragrance like ambrosia wafting from her hair, her robe trailing behind her, and her tread that of a true goddess.“

The personal involvement of the spectator, who is expected to be immersed in a virtual reality, is the aspect of Junius’s theory that most appealed to the Dutch authors

46 Junius, Schilder-konst, 45; after Gregory of Nazianzus, Carmina moralia 1.2.10, 793–807.
48 [italics mine, TW]. Junius, Painting, 303 („Want het den ghenen, die de konstighe werecken met een rijp oordeel soecken t’overweghen, niet ghenoegh en is, datse de rechte verbeeldinghe van ’t afgebeelde argument met de Schilder-beelden selver vergelijcken, ’t en sy saecke datse ich ’t afgebeeld met eenen oock voorstellen als of het voor gheen bloote afbeeldinghe maer voor de saecke selver was te houden.“ Junius, Schilderkonst, 341).
49 This is elaborated in full in Weststeijn, Visible World, chap. III.
50 „[W]ie zal zich geen allerbehaaglijkste zwier inbeelden, als hy van Venus by Virgiel deze woorden leest? Zoo spreekende; gingze heene, blonk over haeren roosverwigen nek, het hair gaf een god-
delige locht, als ambrosie, van zich, het kleet sleepte na, en haer tret wees wel uit, datze waerachtig een godinne was.“ Van Hoogstraten, Inleyding, 296.
quoting from his treatise. They included not only Van Hoogstraten but also Willem Goeree and Gérard de Lairesse. On the one hand, the theory recovered by Junius from antiquity states that the artist should make himself “present” at the narrative that he wants to evoke. Junius gives several descriptions of the way in which the painter or writer becomes wholly absorbed in the image he conjures up in his mind’s eye, where the artist “has noted from the beginning to the end every particular ac-

9
Rembrandt: The Raising of the Cross, ca. 1633, 96 × 72 cm

This was indeed deemed the strongest kind of persuasion: you believe more easily in an eye-witness account, especially if the speaker manages to convince you of his affective sincerity, his good intentions, and his affinity to your own ethical position. It is this rhetorical convention which Rembrandt seems to allude to when he includes an image of himself in his Passion-series, not only a spectator, but even an actor in the narrative (→ verhalen), here the central part of the group raising Jesus’s cross. In a letter to Huygens, Rembrandt claims that he has tried to depict „the greatest and most natural movement“ in this series, and here his term beweechgelickheijt may refer to this direct emotional involvement of the beholder. The moment of recognition, of identification with the actors in a narrative, is supposed to facilitate the resonance of the depicted passion in the beholder’s consciousness. Van Mander relates the idea that the painter should include an Assistenzfigur, an advice first formulated in the Italian tradition, directly to ideas stemming from Aristotle’s theory of tragedy. He states that pictures aimed at the arousal of terror or pity should contain one figure with his face „directed at the spectators“, who thus „presents them a perspicuous (druckich) scene“. Van Hoogstraten states that especially in the depiction of Christ’s passion, the painter should try his utmost to work on the spectator’s emotions („de grootste beweeging, die ons mogelijk is“). In his Raising of the Cross, Rembrandt appears to deploy his full range of rhetorical tricks: he „makes himself present“ in the narrative and establishes a direct relationship with the beholder through the eye contact of the figure in oriental dress in the background. In another image of the series, he repeats the depiction of oogenblikkige beweeging, as the sword of one of the guards of Jesus’s grave is again shown falling from his hand.

Concluding these remarks on „the beholder’s share“, it must be noted that the public’s reaction to painting is explained by Junius and Van Hoogstraten as a specific emotion.

52 Junius states that Ovid’s account of Phaeton’s fall had only been possible because the painter has „made himself present“ in the events he describes, „stepping with Phaeton in the chariot“: „Als Ovidius den roeckelozen jongelingh, die sijnes Vaders vierighen waeghen verlanght hadde te betreden, nae ’t leven beschrijft, dunckt u dan niet dat hy selfs mede met Phaeton op den waeghen ghestapt sijnde het selvige ghevaer van’t begin tot het eynde toe uyt ghestaen heeft? want het en hadde hem andersins niet moghelick gheweest de minste schaduwe van soo een vreeselick verwerde noodts-praeme door ’t verbeelden t’achter haelen, ’t en waer saecke dat hy sich selven aldaer in maniere van spreken, ver-terghenwoordight hadde.“ Junius, Schilder-konst, 49. Cf. Junius, Painting, 56.


55 „Ten gheeft d’History oock gheen cleyn vercieren/ Als een der bootsen ghewent nae de lieden/ Is gheordineert/ op sulcker manieren/ Als wilde hy hun/ met neerstigh bestieren/ Medelijich eenich jammer bedienen/ Of yet dat schrickelich staet te gheschieden/ En doet schier t’ Ghemhaels beschouwers toevloeyen/ Door zijn aenwijsen/ een druckich bemoeyen.“ Van Mander, „Grondt“, V/38, 18r.

56 „[W]yl Schilders [zijn] gewoon [...] in het bitter lijden Christi, de moeder Maria, als den Zalichmaker aldernaest, met de grootste beweeging, die ons mogelijk is, uit te beelden.“ Van Hoogstraten, Inleiding, 110.
Ideally, the artist is not alone in the scenes he depicts: the consummate artistic experience places artist and spectator in the same imagined artistic realm. This idea may be understood in a strongly literal and physical sense. On the one hand, the onlooker is expected to physically „incorporate“ the image when he gives it „life“ through his or her own affective involvement. This is exemplified by seventeenth-century poems on paintings that express how the beholder’s „enflamed“ heart relates to the „burning“ beauty of a depicted figure. On the other hand, the onlooker’s senses are deemed to be totally captivated by the artist’s original imagination. Then painting becomes „action at a distance“ – when objects set things in motion without touching them. This is why artworks are expected to elicit reactions in animals such as dogs that start barking or goats that attack paintings, as Van Hoogstraten describes, or in humans, who stretch out their hands from the desire to touch the painted body, taste the painted fruit, and even speak to the depicted figures.

In this context one can understand a well-known remark from Roger de Piles’s *Cours de peinture par principes* (1708). Discussing Rembrandt’s skills in the lifelike depiction of people, it mentions a portrait of his maidservant which, placed in a window sill, deceived various passers-by. This proved the author’s observation that a painting lacking in design but made with powerful chiaroscuro, „does not leave its viewers in peace, it calls out to them, and makes them stop for some time“. De Piles, who was well acquainted with Junius’s treatise, concludes, „A true painting must draw in the viewer by the force and great truth of its imitation (→ naevolgen), and […] the surprised viewer must respond, as if entering into a conversation with the figures that it depicts."

The „dialogical“ relationship between artwork and viewer that De Piles supposes is also described in De Lairesse’s *Groot schilderboek*. When this author discusses how artworks are able to transport the beholder into a virtual reality, he quotes directly from Junius’s treatise: „We notice that Artists […] apply their shadows thus […] that the figures come forward with more power, and seem to meet the spectator’s eyes outside.

58 The supposed mutual dependence of artwork and spectator is exemplified in Shakespeare’s *The Rape of Lucrece* (1598) when the heroine, contemplating a wall painting of figures in mortal agony „lends them words, and she their looks doth borrow“: on the one hand Lucrece’s imagination infuses the painting with life, on the other hand she is physically influenced by the depicted passions.
61 Roger de Piles: *Cours de peinture par principes*, Paris 1708, 10-11; cf. „Un tableau dont le dessin et les couleurs locales sont médiocres mais qui sont soutenues par l’artifice du clair-obscur, ne laissera pas passer tranquilllement son spectateur, il l’appellera, il l’arrêtera du moins quelque temps.“ Ibid., 301.
62 „La véritable peinture doit appeler son spectateur par la force et la grande vérité de son imitation, et […] le spectateur surpris doit aller à elle, comme pour entrer en conversation avec les figures qu’elle représente.“ Ibid., 4. De Piles refers to Junius on pages 139–148.
the picture plane". De Lairesse’s remark has been connected to Rembrandt’s paintings which suggest that the depicted figure comes out of the frame, such as in the *Portrait of Agatha Bas*: her fan is shown falling over the picture frame, and she is grasping the frame with her right hand. The painting may demonstrate the notion that the spectator and the depicted figure, appearing on the verge of starting a conversation, „seem to meet“ and encounter each other in the alternative reality of the artist’s original experience.

The Affected Artist

According to Junius, artists should, like orators, be of a certain emotional disposition; their working process should likewise involve a specific artistic emotion.65 Painters should endeavour to experience the emotions they want to represent. As was recorded by Arnold Houbraken, Van Hoogstraten encouraged his pupils to perform plays in his studio in order to provide them with experience in representing emotion.66 The ideal artist would pair a great imagination and memory with an ability to experience the passions – without, however, letting them disturb his Stoic state of mind – and to represent them on canvas:

„The [imitation of actors] will also be useful in the expression of the passions of the person you have in mind, in particular in front of a mirror [that allows you] to be actor and spectator at the same time. But here a Poetic spirit is required in order to imagine another man's role. Anyone who does not feel this spirit [...] will never master the thing unless some God or Poet lends him a helping hand.”67

Van Hoogstraten makes clear that practicing this most noble part of painting heavily encumbers the artists’ imagination, and may result in serious fits of melancholy.68 The dangers apparently involved in the artist’s mental re-enacting of the things he represents explain the topical nature of Poussin’s remark that he does not succeed in painting Christ’s passion, because it makes him physically ill.69 Junius describes the specific nature of artistic frenzy by harking back to the vocabulary he uses for the arousal of the passions in general: the heating of the blood, which rises upwards and seeks a way out of the body. He states that artists are „impelled

65 Cf. Junius's opinion that poets and painters „wanneer haer ghemoedt eenes gaende ghemaeckt is, soo en is het hun niet mogelich de hitte haerder beroerder sinnen langher te bedwinghen, maer sy worden door ick en wete niet wat voor een onwederstaenelicke kracht aen gheport om haere swanghere herssenen als met den eersten onlasten, en haeren vryen Gheest door vreemde om-weghen, door den eenen of den anderen dienstbaeren Godt, door verscheyden fabulachtighe grepen overvloedighlick uyt te storten.“ Junius, Schilder-konst, 49.
67 „Dezelve baet zalmen ook in’t uitbeelden van diens hartstochten, die gy voorhebt, bevinden, voor-namelijk voor een spiegel, om te gelijk vertooner en aenschouwer te zijn. Maer hier is een Poëtische geest van noode, om een ieders ampt zich wel voor te stellen. Die deeze niet en gevoelt [...] en zal de zaek niet machtich zijn; ten waer hem eenich Godt of Poet de hulpige hand bood.“ Van Hoogstraten, Inleyding, 109–110; cf. ibid., 200.
68 Cf. „in’t ordineeren moetmen zich vooral van zwaermoedichheid wachten.“ Ibid. 178. Cesare Ripa likewise stresses that the painter who „overloade“ his imagination will be afflicted by melancholy, since he „gestaedigh de fantasien van de sichtelijcke wercken in’t hoofd hebbe. En hier door verkrijght hij veel sorge en swaermoedigheyt, ‘t welck daer nae eene aenbrandinge veroorsaeckt, gelijck de Medicijns verhaelen, waer uyt dat natuurlijcker wijse in den Menschen, neffens veele andere toevallen, dese besondere voortkomt.“ Cesare Ripa: Iconologia of nijtbeeldingen des verstants, Amsterdam 1644, 452.
by the sudden heate of a thoroughly stirred Phantasie [...] their minds being once in agitation cannot containe themselves any longer [...] it is not possible for them to rest, untill they have eased their free spirit of such a burden".70 "This is why creativity may sometimes be restrained by too much rhetorical affectation. The vocabulary of the passions is also relevant to the advice, common in texts on art theory, to work in an unaffected way, close to one’s nature. Hence Van Mander closes his chapter on the passions with a reference to the painter Eupompos, who supposedly said that one ought not to follow the example of the ancients but rather study the people around one.71 Junius describes the perfect painter as someone who derives his knowledge of the passions from diligent observation of nature, not from theory:

“To a learned and wise imitator every man is a booke: he converseth with all sorts of men, and when he observeth in any of them some notable commotions of the minde, he seemeth then to have watched such an opportunitie for his studie, that he might reade in their eyes and countenance the severall faces of anger, love, fear, hope, scorn, joy, confidence, and other perturbations of our minde."72

Again, it is the theory of rhetoric that is enlightening here. By a surprising paradox, the orator who uses a minimum of eloquence is praised the most highly, as exemplified by the apostle Paul who persuades through his passionate speech, and not through skill or knowledge. Juan Huarte, the author of a courtiers’ manual well known in the Netherlands that is also cited by Van Hooogstraten, compares St. Paul’s speaking style to a „rough” manner in painting:

„Those that knew [...] said that his words and speeches were similar to a cupboard or painting, which looked on the outside very roughly and coarsely done; but when it was opened, one saw many splendid artworks and paintings [...] Paul, whose innate ability was not trained sufficiently to learn foreign languages, and to express them with refined polish [...] did he not say about himself: although I am coarser in speaking than the [other Apostles], I am no less in true knowledge and wisdom?"73


73 Van Hooogstraten, *Inleyding*, 73.

74 „[Z]y zeyden (die verstonden wat een wonder verstandt, en weeten in hem zat) dat zijne woorden en spreukken even eens waaren als een kas of taeferel, ’t welk van buyten heel rou, en plomp gewrogt daar uyt zag, maar dat oopen-gedaan zijnde, men daar binnen zag zulke oover-treffelijke werken, en schilderyen [...]. [Paulus, die] door zijne ingebooren kragt niet afgiergt genog en was om vreemde taalen te leeren, en die met treffelijke, en zuyvere nettieydhdt te kunnen utten, [...] had hy zelver aldus van hem niet gesproookken gehad? .Ik meen dat ik niet minder gedaan en heb als een van al de Apostelen; en schoon ik wel wat plomper als zy in het spreekken ben, in goede kennis, en weetenschap ben ik daarom by haar niet minder.” J. Huarte: Onderzoek der byzondere verneffens eigentijckhe abelheen, transl. by Hendrik Takama, Amsterdam 1659, 230.
When Rembrandt painted himself as the apostle Paul, he may have presented himself as someone with the mental disposition required for the affective arousal of the audience. This painting is done in the well-known "rough" manner for which Rembrandt's late work is famous. Part of Rembrandt's artistic persona was, of course, his reputation as someone "not suited to learn foreign languages", as Von Sandrart wrote. The rough brushstroke may hence be associated with the courtiers' virtue of "dissimulating":
simple demeanour which enables greater persuasive force. As with Huygens’s opinion of the painter Michiel van Mierevelt, whom he praises for his naturalness in both painting and speech, what is at stake is of course professed artlessness: Van Mierevelt „deliberately hides behind a mask of ignorance and in so doing makes it very difficult for experts“. When art theory thus turns against rhetoric in order to give free reign to the painter’s passions, it apparently uses a trope which itself stems from rhetorical tradition.

The Artist as „Pathopoios“

When Gerardus Vossius, a humanist well known to both Junius and Van Hoogstraten, published his painting treatise *De graphice* in 1650, he gave the painter the epithet *pathopoios*, maker or designer of the passions; a qualification subordinated to the painter’s abilities as *ethopoios*. Clearly this statement, derived from the ancient rhetoricians, was the highest form of praise: the ultimate scope of rhetoric being none other than moving an audience in order to effect a lasting change in character.

The overarching importance of the passions to Van Hoogstraten’s and Junius’s ideas suggests that many aspects of Dutch art theory, that have traditionally been interpreted as an overarching concern with techniques of illusion and representation, should rather be interpreted as a concern with persuading the public. The „motions of the mind“ are essential to this project: the belief that the viewer is not confronted by an artwork, but by a virtual reality, is highly catalyzed by the emotional appeal of the artwork. Thus the vocabulary of *beweeglijkheyt*, or movement, appears essential to Van Hoogstraten’s and Junius’s terminology of the suggestion of images that are close to life. While the term *beweghens kracht* denotes the power to move affectively or bring the image to life, the *beweghelickheyd onser gedachten* denotes the mind’s power to infuse life into art. Hence it is not surprising that one of the strongest words of criticism used by these authors is *onbeweghelick*, lacking in movement. Only artists who have the right mental *beweeghelickheyd* are able to invite the spectator to meet them in the alternative reality of the artwork, crossing the bridge between mental and corporeal aspects of reality.

75 According to Von Sandrart, Rembrandt could „nicht als nur schlecht Niderländisch lesen“, *Teutsche Academie*, 1/3, 326.
76 For some associations between loose brushwork, the ability to disguise one’s true intentions, and theories in courtiers’ literature about irony, cf. Valeska von Rosen: *Mimesis und Selbstbezüglichkeit in Werken Tizians; Studien zum venezianischen Malerdisкурс*, Emsdetten 2001, 331.
77 Huygens, *Fragment*, 75–76.
78 Gerardus Johannes Vossius: „De graphice, sive arte pingendi“, in: *De quatuor artibus popularibus, grammaticis, gymnasticis, musicis & graphice, liber*, Amsterdam 1690 (1650), § 19, 70, uses *Pathopoios* as a synonym for „Affectus effingens“: „Hinc Graphice Callistrato, ubi Aesculapii statuam describit, vocatur ηθοποιος τεχνη, ars mores effingens. Ac poterat similiter καθθανος (affectus effingens) dicere.“ Junius was Vossius’s brother-in-law and collaborated with him on many scholarly projects; Vossius’s treatise is based to a large extent on the quotations collected by Junius. Van Hoogstraten cites Vossius in the *Inleyding* on pages 43, 69, 280.
81 Ibid., 279.