

99 年人文教育革新中綱計畫
子計畫三 人文領域人才培育國際交流計畫

國內活動類
密集課程

十七世紀荷蘭與法蘭德斯的繪畫
Dutch and Flemish Painting in the 17th Century

期末成果報告

指導暨補助單位：教育部

指導單位：教育部顧問室人文領域人才培育國際交流計畫辦公室

執行單位：國立臺灣師範大學藝術史研究所

計畫主持人：曾曦淑

執行期程：99 年 1 月 1 日至 99 年 6 月 30 日

計畫編號：MOE-099-01-03-2-11-2-18

中華民國 99 年 7 月 26 日

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一、 計畫名稱

十七世紀荷蘭與法蘭德斯的繪畫

Dutch and Flemish Painting in the 17th Century

二、 計畫目標

十六世紀的宗教改革為西方藝術發展史開創嶄新的局面，其最顯著的結果為十七世紀荷蘭與法蘭德斯的繪畫上宗教主題銳減，風俗畫、靜物畫、風景畫興起，結合道德教化寓意，逐漸取代日漸流失之宗教訓誨，是西方藝術發展史上相當重要的一個轉捩點，也是文藝復興之後北方藝術大放光彩之時，名家輩出，留下許多不朽之作，尤以 Rembrandt (林布蘭)與 Rubens (魯本斯)這兩位風格截然不同，各自代表巴洛克時期的荷蘭與法蘭德斯的藝術大師，為北方藝術展開另一新的局面，成為十七世紀藝術的表徵，也是藝術史研究上最重要的課題之一。臺師大藝術史研究所特邀以研究巴洛克藝術著稱的波蘭籍德國藝術史教授 Prof. Dr. Sergiusz Michalski 來臺教授「十七世紀荷蘭與法蘭德斯的繪畫」這門課程，藉此提供國內研究生與國際重要學者對話之機會，並充實國內西方藝術史之教學。

三、 執行情形

Michalski 教授以 Rembrandt 與 Rubens 之藝術為主軸，講授十七世紀政治、宗教與文化之變革對尼德蘭南、北地區藝術發展之影響，針對十七世紀荷蘭與法蘭德斯繪畫之傳承與丕變、重要代表藝術家及其工作坊、藝術重鎮、藝術贊助、義大利巴洛克大師 Caravaggio 風格之影響，以及經常為人所忽略之次要藝術家等等問題進行深入講解，此外亦深入分析新近研究相關之走向，以圖像學為主要的研究者與以寫實主義為主要的研究者間之論戰等等。

(一)、 開課情形-講授課程

此本密集課程為期六週，三學分，上課時間由 99 年 3 月 1 日至 4 月 9 日，總共教授十八個單元課程(如下表)，每單元上課三小時，上午 10:00 至 13:00，開放跨校選修或選讀。共有 14 位學生選課，2 位老師旁聽，總共 16 位師生參與此課程。

Michalski 教授講課非常精彩，每回上課先作約 2 小時的講課(lecture)，針對每單元講解相關的歷史與文化背景以及藝術家的生平、畫風，佐以 Power Point 作豐富的藝術作品分析與比較。本課程全程以英文授課，每一單元學生的口頭報告(presentation)約進行 0,5 小時，繼之教師的補充以及共同討論(discussion)時間約 0,5 小時。除口頭報告外，學生亦須撰寫 10-15 頁的書面報告(paper)。因為有臺師大藝術史研究所中國藝術史專長及輔仁大學比較文學研究所比較文學專長的教師參與旁聽此課程，使討論更為熱烈。

學生成績評量方式

1. 口頭報告：30%
2. 書面研究報告：60%
3. 隨堂討論：10%

所有選課學生在五月底已經繳交書面報告，Michalski 教授批閱之後，已經評分完畢，成績已經繳交至本校教務處成績股。

「十七世紀荷蘭與法蘭德斯的繪畫」教學目標：

The aim of this series of 18 lectures with supplementary seminars is to provide Taiwanese students with a good knowledge and understanding of one of the most important epochs of European artistic creativity. Dutch and Flemish painting in the 17th century is to this day epitomized by the outstanding oeuvre of Rembrandt and Rubens. No doubt these two great artists deserve to be analyzed in greater detail. The aims of my lecture series are however more ambitious, since I would like to present a comprehensive picture of Netherlandish art and culture of the 17th century, starting with the stylistic and iconographic legacy of the 16th century and showing then the consecutive strands of stylistic and thematic innovations. Trying to provide a balanced and extensive overall picture, I shall present also local and provincial schools and cover some often overlooked fields (f.e. Dutch Classicism, or the so called period of decline at the end of the 17th century). The course will also discuss some recent developments in the study of Netherlandish art, as f.e. the controversy between an iconographic (de Jongh) and „realist“ interpretation (Alpers), the new studies concerning the influence of religion and iconoclasm or the recent preoccupation with frames and pictorial space and the problems of pictorial illusionism.

A supplementary aspect might be provided by the Dutch expansion in Taiwan which took place in the years 1622-1662, that is almost exactly in the „Golden Age“ of Dutch painting (1620-1670). By way of comparison – no Dutch paintings pertaining to Taiwan having survived – some related Dutch „colonial paintings“ from Brazil and Batavia shall be shown.

十七世紀荷蘭與法蘭德斯的繪畫課程單元

	Date	Lectures
1	3月1日 (星期一)	The Northern and Southern Netherlands in the 17th century – political, religious and cultural aspects
2	3月3日 (星期三)	Problems of interpretation of Dutch art: Recent art-historical debates
3	3月4日 (星期四)	Genre, still life and landscape painting in the end of the 16th century
4	3月8日 (星期一)	Late Mannerism around 1600 and the impact of Caravaggio
5	3月10日 (星期三)	Prerembrandtists and the young Rembrandt
6	3月11日 (星期四)	Rembrandt till 1642
7	3月15日 (星期一)	Rembrandt's work 1642 – 1669
8	3月16日 (星期三)	Rembrandt and his followers
9	3月18日 (星期四)	Dutch landscape painting
10	3月22日 (星期一)	Dutch genre painting
11	3月24日 (星期三)	Vermeer and the School of Delft
12	3月25日 (星期四)	Dutch still-life painting
13	3月29日 (星期一)	Rubens till 1622
14	3月31日 (星期三)	Rubens 1623-1640
15	4月1日 (星期四)	Rubens and his workshop
16	4月5日 (星期一)	Anthonis van Dyck
17	4月7日 (星期三)	Jordaens and lesser Flemish painters
18	4月8日 (星期四)	Dutch and Flemish painting in the last third of the 17th century.

作業與研究題目：

Suggested themes for the seminar

1. Netherlandish landscape painting 1550-1620
2. The birth of Dutch still life painting around 1600
3. Caravaggism in Utrecht (Terbrugghen, Baburen, Honthorst)
4. Rembrandt – life and career
5. Rembrandt: the early paintings (1625-1632)
6. The formation of Rembrandt's style in the 1630-ies
7. Rembrandt: *The Night Watch*
8. Rembrandt and the Bible
9. Rembrandt as an etcher
10. The pupils and followers of Rembrandt
11. Rubens – life and career
12. Rubens and Italy
13. Rubens – paintings of Christ
14. Rubens – the *Medici Cycle*
15. The portraiture of Anthonis van Dyck
16. Jacob Jordaens and the Flemish plebeian tradition
17. Vermeer and the poetics of space
18. Pieter de Hooch
19. Jan Steen and Dutch genre painting
20. Dutch landscape painting – Jan van Goyen
21. Dutch landscape painting – Jacob van Ruisdael
22. Dutch flower painting
23. Animal painting and still lifes (Fyt, Snyders) in Flemish art
24. The rendering of space in Dutch interior painting

讀資料及參考書目：

Literature

The following, not very extensive list of publications (only in English) is meant as a basis for the lecture course and as literature for most of the seminar themes.

1. General works

Bob Haak, *The Golden Age. Dutch Painting of the Seventeenth Century*. New York 1984

Erik Larsen, *Flemish Seventeenth-Century Painting*, Freren 1985

Simon Schama, *The Embarassment of Riches. An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*. New York 1987

Seymour Slive, *Dutch Painting 1600-1800*. New Haven & London 1992

Hans Vlieghe, *Flemish Art and Architecture 1585-1700*. New Haven & London 1992

Gods, Saints, Heroes. Dutch Painting in the Age of Rembrandt. National Gallery of Art, Washington 1980

David Freedberg, Jan de Vries (ed.) *Art in History, History in Art. Studies in*

Seventeenth-Century Dutch Culture. Getty Center 1991
Ger Luitjen et.al. *Dawn of the Golden Age. Northern Netherlandish Art 1580-1620*. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam 1994
Judijke Kiers, Fieke Tissink (ed.) *The Glory of the Golden Age. Dutch Art of the 17th Century. Painting, Sculpture and Decorative Art*.

2. The controversy between „realist“ and iconographic interpretations

Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing. Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*. Chicago 1983
Oscar Mandel, *The Cheerfulness of Dutch Art: A Rescue Operation*. Doornspijk 1996
Wayne H. Franits, *Looking at Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art: Realism Reconsidered*. Cambridge 1997
Eddy de Jongh, *Questions of Meaning: Theme and Motif in Seventeenth-Century Painting*, Leiden 2000

3. Monographs and Special studies

Rubens

Frans Baudouin, *Peter Paul Rubens*, Simsbury 1987
Christopher White, *Pieter Paul Rubens. Man and Artist*. New Haven & London 1987
Michael Jaffé, *Rubens and Italy*. Oxford 1982
Lina Vergara, *Rubens and the Poetics of Landscape*. New Haven & London 1982
Peter C. Sutton (ed.) *The Age of Rubens*. Boston 1993
Svetlana Alpers, *The Making of Rubens*. New Haven & London 1995
Jacques Thuillier, Jacques Foucart, *Rubens' Life of Marie de Medici*. New York 1967
Ronald Millen, Robert Erich Wolf, *Heroic Deeds and Mystic Figures: A New Reading of Rubens' Life of Maria de Medici*. Princeton 1982

Rembrandt

Bob Haak, *Rembrandt. His Life, His Work, His Time*. New York 1969
Christopher White, *Rembrandt*. New York 1984
Gary Schwartz, *Rembrandt: His Life, His Painting*. New York 1984
Christopher Brown, Jan Kelch, Pieter van Thiel, *Rembrandt. The Master and His Workshop. Painting*. New Haven & London 1991
Christian and Astrid Tümpel, *Rembrandt. Pictures and Metaphors*. London 2006
Egbert Haverkamp-Begeman, *Rembrandt: The Nightwatch*. Princeton 1982
Cynthia Schneider, *Rembrandt's Landscapes*. New Haven & London 1990
H. Perry Chapman, *Rembrandt's Self-Portraits*. Princeton 1990
Albert Blankert, *The Impact of a Genius: Rembrandt, His Pupils and His Followers in the Seventeenth-Century*. Amsterdam 1983

Monographs

Artur K. Wheelock (ed.) *Van Dyck. Paintings*. National Gallery of Art,

Washington 1990

Christopher Brown, Hans Vlieghe, *Van Dyck 1599-1641*. Royal Academy, London 1999

R. –A. d’Hulst, *Jacob Jordaens*. London 1982

Albert Blankert, *Vermeer of Delft. Complete Edition of the Paintings*. Oxford 1978

Artur K. Wheelock, *Vermeer and the Art of Painting*. New Haven & London 1995

Artur K. Wheelock, *Gerard ter Borch*. New Haven & London 2004

Peter C. Sutton, *Pieter de Hooch 1629-1684*. New Haven & London 1998

H. Perry Chapman (ed.) *Jan Steen. Painter and Storyteller*. New Haven & London 1996

Mariet Westermann, *The Amusements of Jan Steen. Comic Painting in the Seventeenth Century*. Zwolle 1997

Seymour Slive, *Frans Hals*, 3 vol. New York & London 1970-74

Seymour Slive (ed.) *Frans Hals*. exh. cat. Washington 1989

Neeltje Köhler, Koos Levy-van Hahn, *Frans Hals. Militia Pieces*. The Hague 1990

Seymour Slive, H.R. Hoetink (ed.) *Jacob van Ruisdael*. New York 1981

John Walford, *Jacob Ruisdael and the Perception of Landscape*. New Haven 1991

Special Studies

Wolfgang Stechow, *Dutch Landscape Painting of the Seventeenth Century*. London 1966

Christopher Brown, *Dutch Landscape: The Early Years: Haarlem and Amsterdam 1590-1650*. London 1986

Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting 1600-1720*. New Haven & London 1995

Michiel C.C.Kersten, Danielle H.A.C. Lokin, *Delft Masters, Vermeer’s Contemporaries*.

Martha Hollander, *An Entrance for the Eyes. Space and Meaning in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art*. Berkeley 2002

Wayne Franits (ed.) *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting: Its Stylistic and Thematic Evolution*. New Haven & London 2002

國立台灣師範大學藝術史研究所九十八學年度第二學期
密集課程 跨校選課公告

十七世紀荷蘭與法蘭德斯的繪畫
Dutch and Flemish Painting in the 17th Century

- 一、課程名稱：十七世紀荷蘭與法蘭德斯的繪畫
- 二、授課教師：本課程由國立台灣師範大學藝術史研究所聘請德國圖賓根大學藝術史學系主任 Prof. Dr. Sergiusz Michalski 教授開授，採密集授課方式實施。
- 三、上課日期：自 98 年 3 月 1 日至 4 月 9 日止，共六週。
- 四、上課地點：青田街大樓 4F 藝術史研究所 406 教室
- 五、學分數：3 學分
- 六、選修人數上限：每班 20 人。
- 七、授課語言：英文。
- 八、報名資格：(一) 本所研究生。
(二) 本校與外校研究生：相關科系研究所碩士班以上學生。
- 九、報名文件：(一) 個人履歷、連絡資料
(二) 學生證影本
(三) 成績單影本
(四) 英語能力證明
(五) 修課動機 (一頁，A4 紙張格式)
- 十、報名日期：暫訂 99 年 1 月 4 日起 至 99 年 2 月 5 日止。
- 十一、報名方式：採通訊報名或網路報名，於報名截止日前，請將相關資料寄至
106 台北市青田街五巷六號 4F
國立台灣師範大學藝術史研究所
電子郵件：hoart@deps.ntnu.edu.tw
- 十二、遴選結果公布：暫訂 99 年 2 月 9 日。(以選課學生的主修科目與語言能力為依據，其次參酌修課動機與歷年成績單。)
- 十三、修課方式：
 - (一) 本校學生選修辦法：同一般課程。(需先至網路選課系統登錄)
 - (二) 外校學生選修流程：備齊原就讀研究所之所長簽可文件後，送至師大藝術史研究所，依跨校選課規定辦理。

十四、課前說明會：暫訂於 98 年 2 月 15 日。

十五、其他：修課學生須參加課前說明會，領取講義與書單，進行課前研讀。課程以教授講授、共同討論為主，學生須發表口頭報告，並須於課後繳交英文書面報告。

十六、聯絡方式：國立台灣師範大學藝術史研究所
地址：106 台北市青田街五巷六號 4F
洽詢電話：(02) 7734-5606
傳真：(02) 2395-9886
電子郵件：hoart@deps.ntnu.edu.tw
網址：www.ntnu.edu.tw/arthistory

十七、本辦法如有未盡事宜，請依據最新公告為準。

(二)、 學術活動舉辦情形

Michalski 教授來台授課期間適逢本所舉辦「現代性的媒介—藝術史與跨領域研究的視野」研討會，於2010年3月27日(週六)假國立臺灣師範大學圖書館國際會議廳舉行。Michalski 教授為大會發表一場專題演講，講題為：

『古典時期到現代歐洲智識傳統中的蜘蛛與蛛網』(The spider and its web in the European intellectual tradition from Antiquity to modern times)。這場研討會共舉行六場專題演講，為藝術史、歷史、哲學等跨學科的研討會，Michalski 教授在會議的綜合討論座談中擔任主要回應人，總計有225人出席參與研討。

學術活動名稱	時數	參與人數									
		校內人數				校外人數				其他	合計
		教師	博士生	碩士生	大學生	教師	博士生	碩士生	大學生		
「現代性的媒介—藝術史與跨領域研究的視野」研討會	3	15	20	80	25	15	10	30	20	10	225
總計	3	140				75				10	225

(三)、 參與人數統計

密集課程參與人數統計

講授課程名稱	時數	參與人數									
		校內人數				校外人數				其他	合計
		教師	博士生	碩士生	大學生	教師	博士生	碩士生	大學生		
十七世紀荷蘭與法蘭德斯的繪畫	54	1	0	13	0	1	1	0	0	0	16

五、 執行成果分析與檢討

- 「十七世紀荷蘭與法蘭德斯的繪畫」為西方藝術史上相當重要的一個課題。Michalski 教授以 Rembrandt 與 Rubens 倆人的繪畫為主軸，針對十七世紀荷蘭與法蘭德斯繪畫的傳承與丕變、重要風俗畫畫家及其工作坊，如：Vermeer, Pieter de Hooch, Jan Steen 與 Delft 畫派，或 Anthonis van Dyck, Jacob Jordaens，或重要的風景畫家如 Jan van Goyen, Jacob van Ruisdael，或花卉、動物等等新興的繪畫類別及其發展史進行深入講解與討論。這門課程的開授除奠定藝術史本科學生對十七世紀荷蘭與法蘭德斯藝術的研究基礎，激勵研究生對於此領域的研究興趣與熱忱之外，更因為有多位大專院校的教師，中國藝術史教師及比較文學教師之參與旁聽，而促進跨界研究與對話的風氣。
- Michalski 教授為北方藝術史之專家，對於宗教改革與藝術圖像之關係、公共紀念碑、政治與藝術之關聯等議題見解獨到。其訪臺期間適逢本所主辦：「現代性的媒介—藝術史與跨領域研究的視野」研討會，由藝術史、歷史與哲學三個領域探討現代性的綿延與影響，Michalski 教授為大會發表一場精闢的專題演講，演講為：「古典時期到現代歐洲智識傳統中的蜘蛛與蛛網」(The spider and its web in the European intellectual tradition from Antiquity to modern times)，引發與會學者與來賓熱烈的討論。
- Michalski 教授來臺期間數度參觀國立故宮博物院，對於：《失落的疆界：清季西北邊界變遷條約與圖特展》相當感興趣，特為撰文報導，題目為：〈Anmut contra Präzision. Eine Ausstellung in Taipeh erinnert an russisch-chinesische Grenzabkommen〉，2010 年 3 月 24 日以全版刊登在歐洲三大德文報紙之一，瑞士《新蘇黎世日報》(Neue Zürcher Zeitung)，增進臺灣以及故宮博物院在國際上的能見度。
- Michalski 教授為著名藝術史學者，近年來陸續獲選為波蘭藝術科學院、瑞典皇家學院、哥廷根科學院等重要國際學術院之院士，深受國際學界之肯定與敬重，其來臺授課大大提升國內西方藝術史之教學與研究，提昇本國藝術史學界之國際能見度。藉著此次短期聘邀，也建立起本所與圖賓根大學藝術史學系之間良好的交流管道。在此基礎上本所今後將與此一歷史悠久的德國著名大學進行更多的國際交流與合作。

六、 結論與建議

國際重要學者往往不易邀約，更無可能到臺灣長期任教，短期邀約、密集授課乃是較可能邀請到這些學者的方式。藉全英文的授課，參與學習的學生不僅專業英文能力有長足的進步，也增長許多國際觀。希望教育部今後能繼續支持這種專精的密集課程，尤其是國內師資匱乏的專題研究，以提升國內西方藝術史的教學，促進國際學術交流，培養更多優秀的研究者。

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(一)、 Sergiusz Michalski 教授簡介

Sergiusz Michalski 教授出自波蘭外交官世家，1981 年取得波蘭華沙大學藝術史學博士學位，為著名藝術史家 Prof. Jan Bialostocki 的得意門生。曾於德國 Leipzig, Kiel, Braunschweig 等地大學任教，於瑞士 Fribourg, Zürich 大學以及波蘭 Torun 的 Kopernik 大學兼課，2001 始任教於德國圖賓根大學 Eberhard-Karls University, Tübingen 藝術史學系，兼任系主任多年，學問淵博，於教學與研究上皆極為精進卓傑。

Michalski 教授為十六、十七世紀西方藝術史專家，對於宗教改革與藝術圖像之變遷、矯飾主義、尼德蘭與荷蘭繪畫、十八世紀法國繪畫、二十世紀藝術、公共紀念碑、藝術理論、藝術史方法學等範疇皆極為專精，著有專論近二十本，主編及研究論文近兩百篇，見解獨到、分析精闢，多本著作一再再版，翻譯成多國文字，備受西方學界所敬重，尤其以 *The Reformation and the Visual Arts. The Protestant Image Question in Western and Eastern Europe*. Routledge, London-New York 1993. *Neue Sachlichkeit. Malerei, Graphik und Photographie in Deutschland 1919-1933*, Taschen Verlag, Köln 2003. *Public Monuments. Art in Political Bondage 1870-1997*, Reaktion Books, London-New York 1998. *L'art de l'Europe Centrale* (mit Pierre Brullé, Marketa Theinhardt), Paris, Mazenod-Citadelles 2008 等著作獲得學術界廣大迴響，許多學者相繼為之撰寫書評。延續其師 Bialostocki 對於藝術史方法學的貢獻，Michalski 教授其最近即將出版藝術史研究導論一書：*Einführung in die Kunstgeschichte*. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft (Darmstadt 2010)，將集其藝術史研究之大成，對西方藝術史界必定有另一重大的貢獻。

Michalski 教授榮任多個國家重要學術院的院士：2002 年獲選為波蘭藝術科學院院士 Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (Polska Akademia Umiejetnosci - PAU)；2005 年獲選為瑞典皇家學院院士 The Kungl. Vitterhets, Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, Sverige (The Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, Sweden)；2009 年獲選為哥廷根科學院院士 The Göttingen Academy of Sciences，這些榮銜是對其學術成就最高的肯定。



Curriculum Vitae

Born 07.04.1951 in Warsaw, Poland. Married, two children.

1957-1961 Elementary school in East-Berlin (former GDR)

1961-1964 Elementary school in Warsaw

1964-1966 Secondary school in Warsaw

1966-1968 Robert Academy, Istanbul, Turkey.

June 1968 A-Level exams, Robert Academy, Istanbul

1968-1973 studied History of Art at Warsaw University

October 1973 M.A. (M.A. thesis on „Tobias Fendt and Silesian Mannerist Painting“)

1973-1977 doctorate student in the Institute of Art History, Warsaw University

**1978-1984 assistant and senior assistant in the Institute of Art History, Warsaw University,
Chair for Early Modern Art and art Theory**

4.12. 1981 public defence of Ph.D. thesis „The Protestant Image Controversy 1517-1618“

written under the supervision of Prof. Jan Bialostocki

1984-1989 worked as a „scientific collaborator“ at the Institute of Art History, Augsburg University, Germany

1990 habilitation scholarship (10 months) by Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft

1992 research scholarship, Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel

1993 research scholarship, Augsburg University
1995 submission of habilitation thesis „Tableau and Pantomime. Painting and theatre in France between Poussin and David“. On 12th July 1995 named Privatdozent Dr. habil.
at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt a.M. From 1995 to 2001 each year cumulative seminars at the Goethe-University, Frankfurt a.M.

1993/1994 - Vertretungsprofessor, (Replacement Professor), Leipzig University

1994/1995 - Vertretungsprofessor, Kiel University

**1996-2001- Vertretungsprofessor and acting director of the Institute of Art History,
Technical University, Braunschweig**

1994 –96 and 1998- 2001 each year continuous lectures (Lehrauftrag) at Fribourg University (Switzerland), every second week

1996-1998 - continuous lectures (Lehrauftrag) Zürich University, Switzerland (every second week)

1998-2001 courses (every fourth week) at Kopernik Torun University, Poland

1.10. 2001 - Professor for Art History at the Eberhard-Karls University, Tübingen (tenure)

22.6. 2002 – elected corresponding member, Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (Polska Akademia Umiejetnosci - PAU)

1.02. 2005 – elected foreign member of the Kungl. Vitterhets, Historie och Antikvitets

Akademien, Sverige (The Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, Sweden)

24. 1. 2009 elected corresponding member of the Göttingen Academy of Sciences

Prof. Dr. Sergiusz Michalski

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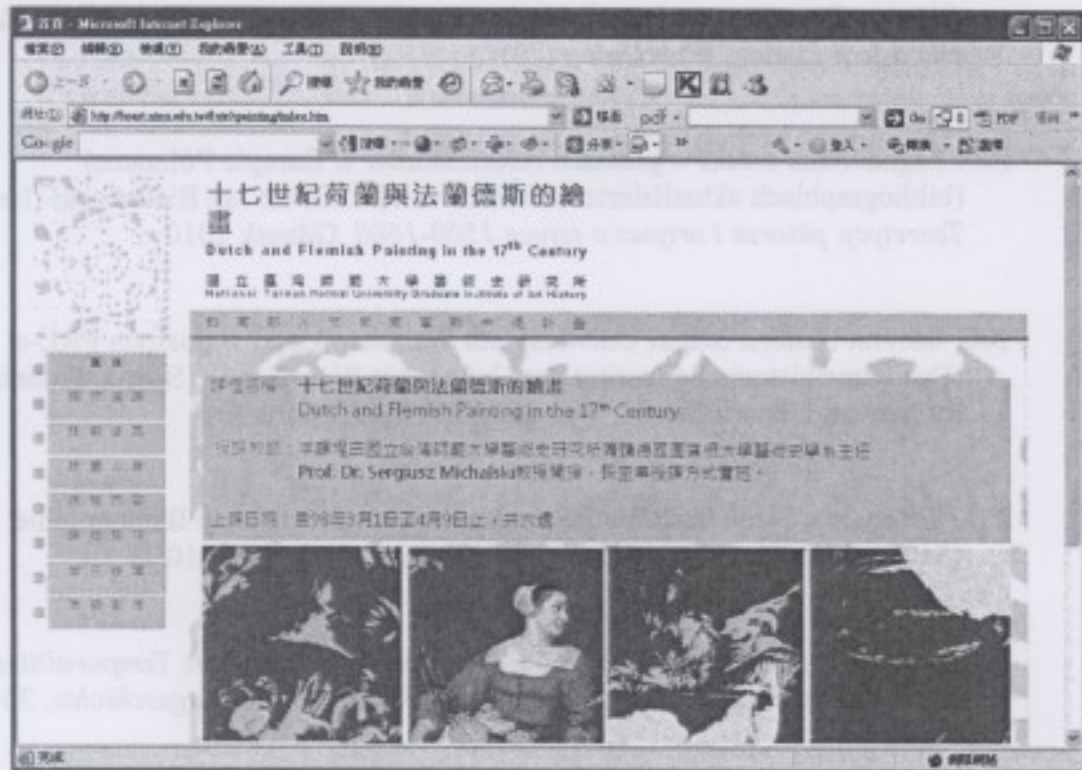
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(二)、 密集課程網頁

<http://hoart.ntnu.edu.tw/dutchpainting/index.htm>



十七世紀荷蘭與法蘭德斯的繪畫

Dutch and Flemish Painting in the 17th Century

密集課程
跨校選課
中英文授課



國立臺灣師範大學藝術史研究所

九十八學年度第 2 學期課程

本課程特請

德國杜賓根大學藝術史學系

Sergiusz Michalski 教授 開授

授課日期：99 年 3 月 1 日至 99 年 4 月 9 日，每週一、週三及週四下午 2 時至 5 時，
課程內容：

日期	單元
3 月 1 日 (一)	The Northern and Southern Netherlands in the 17th century - political, religious and cultural aspects
3 月 3 日 (三)	Problems of interpretation of Dutch art: Recent art-historical debates
3 月 4 日 (四)	Genre, still life and landscape painting in the end of the 16th century
3 月 8 日 (一)	Late Mannerism around 1600 and the impact of Caravaggio
3 月 10 日 (三)	Pre-Rembrandtists and the young Rembrandt
3 月 11 日 (四)	Rembrandt till 1642
3 月 15 日 (一)	Rembrandt's work 1642 - 1669
3 月 16 日 (二)	Rembrandt and his followers
3 月 18 日 (四)	Dutch landscape painting
3 月 22 日 (一)	Dutch genre painting
3 月 24 日 (三)	Vermeer and the School of Delft
3 月 25 日 (四)	Dutch still-life painting
3 月 29 日 (一)	Rubens till 1622
3 月 31 日 (三)	Rubens 1623-1640
4 月 1 日 (四)	Rubens and his workshop
4 月 5 日 (一)	Anthony van Dyck
4 月 7 日 (三)	Jordaens and lesser Flemish painters
4 月 8 日 (四)	Dutch and Flemish painting in the last third of the 17th century



報名資格：本校與外校研究所相關科系研究所碩士
以上學生

報名日期：99 年 1 月 4 日至 99 年 2 月 10 日

學分數：3 學分

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現代性的媒介 Agent of Modernity

藝術史與跨領域研究的視野

9:30-9:50 報到

9:50-10:00 開幕式

10:00-11:00 第一場 主講人：Sergiusz Michalski (德國杜賓根大學藝術史系)
講題：古典時期到現代歐洲智識傳統中的蜘蛛與蛛網

11:00-12:00 第二場 主講人：鄭永常 (國立成功大學歷史系)
講題：殖民地代理人：十九世紀東南亞傳統在現代化中失落

12:00-13:00 午餐時間

13:00-14:00 第三場 主講人：鎌田康男 (日本關西大學大學院文學研究科/
關西學院大學大學院綜合政策研究科)
講題：傳統與實驗－近現代日本社會變遷中的藝術認知

14:00-15:00 第四場 主講人：黃蘭翔 (國立臺灣大學藝術史研究所)
講題：非西方國家・日本近代住宅的誕生

15:00-15:30 中場茶點

15:30-16:30 第五場 主講人：曾嘯淑 (國立臺灣師範大學藝術史研究所)
講題：戰前林玉山的長篇小說插畫與現代性的體現

16:30-17:30 第六場 主講人：Valentin Nussbaum (國立臺灣師範大學藝術史研究所)
講題：“古典 = 現代”：回顧電影的現代性

17:30-18:00 綜合討論

報名日期：

2010年2月23日(週一)起

報名方式：

http://ntnu.wmcc.edu.tw/art-history/
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協辦單位：

國立臺灣師範大學藝術學院

研討會語言：

研討會全程以中英文進行

研討會時間：

2010年3月27日，週六
March 27th, 2010 (Saturday)

研討會地點：

國立臺灣師範大學圖書館
國際會議廳
台北市中華路一段120號 (國父紀念館)



(五)、 密集課程修課學生名單

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吳馥安	藝史碩	二
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(六)、 學生作業

學生姓名	報告主題
陳珈瑩	Irreconcilable Existence: Men and Animals in 17th Century Paintings
吳馥安	The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp: Rembrandt's invention
吳品慧	The Changes of Compositions on Ruben's Christ subjects
劉怡萱	The reference between De Hooch and Vermeer
陳紀吟	Peter Paul Rubens, His Life and Career
張佳穎	Jacob Jordaens a portrait painter: Portrait of His Family
劉玉雲	On Rembrandt's The Descent from the Cross
謝佩君	The rendering of space in Dutch interior painting: The Anatomy of household by Nicolaes Maes, The Eavesdropper
郭珮妮	Dutch and Flemish Painting in the 17th Century Final Report
陳軒儀	The Dutch Flower Painting in 17th Century
林雅雯	Jan Steen (1626-1679) and Dutch genre painting

Irreconcilable Existence: Men and Animals in 17th Century Paintings

Chen Chia-Ying

This article tries to explore the meaning of animal groups in seventeenth century's Flemish paintings and attempt to interpret the relationship between man and Nature at that time. Except for drawings for research¹, according to the states of animals and environments in which animals exist, I divided Flemish animal paintings in 17th century into six types: *hunting scene*, *still-life games*, *goods in market or kitchen*, *the trap*, *the Garden of Eden*, and *after civilization*. Each of them tells variable viewpoints of animal depiction.

The main meaning of *hunt scene*, *still-life games* and *goods in market or kitchen* is bragging about human power and showing off ruthless pleasure of conquering Nature. *Hunt scene* often focus on the moment hunters catching quarries, but the existence of masters is usually hidden (figure 1).² It seems like that there is a 'invisible hand' controls all attack. Ironically, beside the attack, natural surrounding is still as peaceful as nothing happened.

In still-life paintings, the chief function of dead game is triumphal decoration. Weak games are usually putted together with another ornaments, such as flowers and porcelain³. Comparing still-life games and the dead men in Classical and Christian images is interesting. There are so many dead games hang overturned. However, dead people, especially those divined, are seldom portrayed as upside down. No matter how much pain Christ suffered, his head would never be painted under foots, and his bended head signifies deep pity for human beings. (figure 3) By contrast, weak animals sometimes posed as lecherous prostitute (figure 2)⁴. Samuel van Hoogstraten Said that "a perfect picture is like a mirror of nature which makes things that are not appear to be and deceives in a permissibly pleasing and praiseworthy fashion."⁵ Even if the posture of dead games in still-life paintings in origin are employed only to express a kind of pure beauty, it remains a question that people in 17th century would give still-life animals moral meanings or not. Maybe it just symbolizes *vanitas* as collapsed architecture.

The form of *still-life games* is similar with *goods in market or kitchen*, but there

¹ Most of them lack of narration, contrast to those I classify.

² Peter C. Sutton with the collaboration of Marjorie E. Wieseman ... [et al.] , *The age of Rubens*, Boston : Museum of Fine Arts in association with Ghent : New York : Distributed by Harry N. Abrams, c1993. p. 568- 569.

³ Ibid, p. 547.

⁴ See the central bird's supine and open foots. I can not recognize the Salamander at left ground means special significance or not.

⁵ Ibid, p.76. This sentence immediately refers from the original book.

is a decisive difference between them: the former remains intact corpse, and the latter is cut. Spilt meat shows an new interest in anatomy. The role of the vendor is like the doctor who shows anatomized bodies on the table (figure 4). Even though a number of animals could be uninjured in market, the only reason is appealing to customers for its fresh.

Above-mentioned images are parading human power, but *the trap* would demonstrate how human wisdom conducts or takes advantage of animals. Men and animals can coexist, while all is decided by man. In *the bird trap* (figure 5), a lonely owl is tied on middle rod, and other birds roost on bushes both sides. In the back ground, there is a men who carries a basket walks leisurely. This iconography adopts from Aesop's fable: the owl acts at night so that people and other birds think owl is evil and lazy.⁶ Whenever owl appears, other birds would gather around and ridicule it. Afterward hunters utilize this habitual behavior to catch birds. Huntsmen employ owl as allurement to invite other birds while spread birdlime on branches. S. Koslow deems that the composition of *the bird trap* and *last judgement* (figure 6) is common: the right birds are fallen and the left ones are standing.⁷ However, this association is strange since it is hard to separate different moral character from the left and right birds.

The compositions of *the bird trap* and *Concert of Birds* are alike. But in *Concert of Birds* (figure 7)⁸, the owl is no longer a trap, and other birds are neither dead nor fallen. The owl leads a chorus of happy birds sing together.⁹ The guide for them, is a music score. It suggests that men should reorganize undisciplined animals through the civilized order.

Next *the Garden of Eden* (figure 8) and *after civilization* (figure 9) would quest for the value of progress. In these types, people finally confess that animals surpass Men, even though it only exists in dreamlike wonderland other than in real or present life. In *the Garden of Eden*, every immortal creature which stand for individual species are harmonious with each other. All of them are lack of the concept of food chain. There is no massacre or exploitation, and this fairytale image represents a forever-lost happiness of *naïve*. Even if there are some sports, it is funny that each species rarely interacts with others. Adam and Eve, too, just plays with each other.

In *after civilization*, there are ruins coiled by plants. It depicts a anti-civilization scene contrast to *the Garden of Eden*. The dressed people who carries bow and

⁶ Ibid, p. 563-564.

⁷ Ibid, p. 564.

⁸ Arthur K. Wheelock Jr, *Flemish paintings of the seventeenth century* Washington : National Gallery of Art ; New York : Distributed by Oxford University Press, c2005. p. 204.

⁹ At the beginning of middle 17 century, scientist gradually became interested in bird's cry, and translated them into music notation. See Desmond Shawe-Taylor, Jennifer Scott, *Bruegel to Rubens : masterpieces of Flemish painting*, London : Royal Collection Publications, c2007. p.128.

arrow seems like dancing, not tracing games.

What does animals symbolized? Could we identify them with Nature? After Renaissance and the new discovery of geography, numerous new species were discovered, hence people started to re-estimate the relationship between man and Nature. They gradually found that physical substance is as fascinating as spirits and were interested in anatomy. The representation of art progressively focused on precise observation. In 17th century, Europe princes, nobles and new rich merchants collected unusual foreign playthings to flaunt their wealth and built numerous gardens to exhibit unique creatures; thereupon painters were invited into earthly paradise and drew still-life animals 'from life'. Besides, for making the best use of exotic animals, people would use them to ornament cages and gardens during their lifetime and dissect them for scientific study. Comparing with personality, men concern much about animal typicalness. Painters portrayed animals in Baroque vividness in which there is no chaos. Maybe animal groups in fantastic landscape shows an ideal of communal harmony of society and politics in Baroque Europe governors' dream¹⁰, while people are curious about but not esteem of animals.

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Illustrations

Figure 1 Frans Snyders, *Hounds Bringing down a Boar*, Oil on canvas, 208 x 344 cm. Private collection

Figure 2 Philipp Ferdinand De Hamilton, *Dead Game*, 1718, Oil on canvas, 49 x 61 cm. The Hermitage, St. Petersburg

Figure 3 Frans Snyders, *The Pantry*, Oil on canvas, 170 x 290 cm. Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels

Figure 4 Harmenszoon Van Rijn Rembrandt, *The Anatomy Lecture of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, 1632, Oil on canvas, 169,5 x 216,5 cm. Mauritshuis, The Hague

¹⁰ Ibis, p. 114.

Figure 5 Frans Snyers and Jan Wildens, *The Bird Trap*, 1620, Oil on panel, 64.5 x 106.5cm. Städtisches Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum, Aachen

Figure 6 Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Last Judgment*, 1537-41, Fresco, 1370 x 1220 cm. Cappella Sistina, Vatican

Figure 7 Frans Snyders, *Concert of Birds*, 1630s, Oil on canvas, 137 x 240 cm. The Hermitage, St. Petersburg

Figure 8 Jan Brueghel the elder, *Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden*, 1610s, Oil on copper, 48,6 x 65,6 cm. Royal Collection, Windsor

Figure 9 Roelandt Savery, *Landscape with Wild Beasts*, 1629, Oil on wood, 35 x 49 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Figure 10 Matthias Grünewald, *The Crucifixion*, c. 1515, Oil on wood, 269 x 307 cm. Musée d'Unterlinden, Colmar

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The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp: Rembrandt's invention

Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp* (Mauritshuis, The Hague) (Fig.1) was one of his youthful masterpieces; it was finished in 1632, at that year Rembrandt was at most 26 years old¹¹. This painting was Rembrandt's first large group portrait, and was commissioned by Dr. Tulp and the other figures in the painting, who were members of Amsterdam Surgeon' Guild. With this painting Rembrandt built his reputation on moving from Leiden to Amsterdam. The painting shows Dr. Tulp, who was a prelector of the Amsterdam Surgeons' Guild, demonstrates the muscles mechanism of the forearm of a corpse with the help of the famous textbook by Vesalius, while the guild members listen and observe the demonstration. The eight figures compose an inclined triangle, with the apex figure in the left upper part of the image. On the other hand, the corpse is diagonally placed on a dissection table, with a drapery on and the text book near his feet. Moreover, the lesson is held in a space built by strong *chiaroscuro*; by the heavy dark on the two sides and relatively bright middle background with tones change gradually, Rembrandt depicted a vaulted space with depth. More dramatically, Rembrandt casted strong light on the foreground, especially on the body, made the figures to stand out of the image.

According to Aloïs Riegl, the main invention of Rembrandt in *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp* is that it is the first time the figures were unified not merely by their gestures and glances but by their common interest in an event taking place within the composition.¹² Before *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp*, the earlier Surgeons' Guild group portraits were more symbolic than historic. For example, in Aert Pieters's *Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Sebastiaen Egberts* of 1603, (Fig.2) the arrangement of figures was similar to that in a military-company banquet painting, only substituted the banquet table with the corpse.¹³ (Fig. 3) The figures were arranged according to the principle of iso-cephaly, showing the guild members all the same height in each row. Another example is *Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Sebastiaen Egberts with a Human Skeleton*, (Fig. 4) which is attributed to Thomas de Keyser. In this painting, six figures occupy the two sides of the painting, with the skeleton in the center of the image. Dr. *Egberts* seems to watch and explain the structure of the skeleton to the guild members while most of them listen attentively except one of

¹¹ Aloïs Riegl and Benjamin Binstock, Excerpts from "The Dutch Group Portrait", in: *October*, Vol. 74 (Autumn, 1995), pp. 4-5.

¹² Ludwig Munz, *Rembrandt*, New York, 1967, pp.8.

¹³ Julie V. Hansen, Resurrecting Death: Anatomical Art in the Cabinet of Dr. Frederik Ruysch, in: *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 78, No. 4 (1996), pp. 665.

them looks at the beholder and points to the skeleton, but no dissection is in progress.

The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp, on the other hand, is a fusion of both symbolic and narrative elements. It is a group portrait, but it is also a historical painting, at least it is intended to be one. Whether the painting represents an actual public anatomy was a curious point of art historical investigation. In Netherlands anatomical study of human corpse was not legal until 1555, and the Dutch municipal government regulated that anatomy lessons should not be held only by the surgeons' guilds. Instead, the government appointed one doctor to the position of "city anatomist" (Praelector Chirurgiae et Anatomie). The city anatomist had the legal right to dissect a number of corpses each year, and at least one of these dissections was required to be open to the public.¹⁴ Public anatomy lessons were sponsored and performed annually in Amsterdam, Leiden, and Delft. Besides magistrates and members of the surgeons' guild, the general public was welcome to purchase tickets to see the dissection in the surgeons' guild theater.¹⁵ (Fig. 5)

In Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp*, however, the spectator can only distinguish a vaulting chamber where the confined space hardly suggests it is a surgeons' guild theater. Besides, the eye sight of Dr. Tulp and other members concentrate almost exclusively on the dissection itself, this attitude inferring that the dissection is not performing in front of the public. Besides, in the painting Dr. Tulp was the only man with a medical degree, and within the other figures only two of them, Adriaan Slabraen and Jacob de Wit, were foremen during 1631-1632, thus the painting must have been commissioned privately by Dr. Tulp and those who were portrayed.¹⁶ C.E. Kellett suggested that the scientific knowledge was mainly advanced at those private dissections, which were allowed prior to or following the public ones.¹⁷ By contrast, the open dissection was more like a ritual of symbolic punishment of the criminal and performance that enhance and affirm the praelector's professional status in the surgeons' circle.¹⁸ Furthermore, Schupbach has argued that Rembrandt did not depict an open anatomy lesson because in public dissection the surgeons regularly begin with the opening of stomach, not a dissection of an arm.¹⁹ Also it has been suggested that the dissected arm may had

¹⁴ See Hansen, pp. 663.

¹⁵ See Hansen, pp. 666.

¹⁶ J. Richard Judson, Review: Rembrandt's Anatomy of Dr. Tulp; an Iconological Study by William S. Heckscher, in: *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 42, No.4 (1960), pp. 306.

¹⁷ C.E.Kellett, Review: Rembrandt's Anatomy of Dr Nicolaas Tulp by William S. Heckscher, in: *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 101, No. 673 (1959), pp. 151.

¹⁸ See Hansen, pp.667.

¹⁹ David A. Levine, Review: The Paradox of Rembrandt's 'Anatomy of Dr. Tulp' by William Schupbach, in: *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 68, No. 2 (1986), pp.338.

been painted from an engraving rather than from the actual corpse.²⁰ After above discussion, it may be concluded that Rembrandt staged a historical event. Similar to the illustrations of history text book, Rembrandt painted an idealized narrative painting, rather than documented a true moment. We may say this is a group portrait cloaked with narrative elements, and this combination prefigured that in Rembrandt's later group portrait *the Night Watch*. (Fig. 6)

The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp also contains rich iconographical meanings in different levels. First of all, in the scientific level, the flayed arm may symbolize Vesalius, who was a 16th-century physician and famous for having perfected such anatomies.²¹ Heckscher argues that Tulp requested Rembrandt to portrait him as Vesalius reborn (*redivivus*).²² Apparently Dr. Tulp occupies a major part of the painting; this implies that he was the main patron of this painting. He is somewhat isolated from the other figures, besides, his broad rim hat and different collar and cuff indicates that his particular status. Besides, the "concha" behind Dr. Tulp that "frames" him not only emphasizes him but also serve as the source of all wisdom according a long iconographic tradition beginning with classical antiquity.²³

Another level of iconographical meaning of this painting may be the *vanitas*, which suggests the vanity of earthly things and man's fragility. In Leiden there was a local painting tradition in *vanitas* still-life, which often contained symbolic objects concerning death and decay.²⁴ For example, this genre was often incorporated by skulls, bones, hourglasses, extinguished candles, and so on. (Fig. 7) In *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp*, at first the beholder may not see a symbolic object mentioned above, as the skeleton in *Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Sebastiaen Egberts with a Human Skeleton*, but the towering figure in the background who points to the corpse is as if telling us the mortality and the vulnerability of human.²⁵ In my opinion, this is not only because of the connection between a corpse and death; it is also because of the identity of the corpse. The corpse has been identified as that of Aris Kindt, who was convicted and hung for grave assault, endangering the life of a man, and taking away the man's cloak.²⁶ In seventeenth century, the bodies used in the Anatomy lessons in Netherlands were most bodies of criminals and occasionally that of transients.²⁷ The dissection of a corpse, especially a public one, therefore at some

²⁰ Ludwig Munz, *Rembrandt*, New York, 1967, pp.8

²¹ See Levine, pp.338.

²² Dolores Mitchell, "The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp": A Sinner among the Righteous, in: *Artibus et Historiae*, Vol. 15, No. 30 (1994), pp. 145.

²³ See Judson, pp.309.

²⁴ See Hansen, pp. 668.

²⁵ See Mitchell, pp.152.

²⁶ See Mitchell, pp.145.

²⁷ See Hansen, pp.667.

degree states a moral meaning, as mentioned above. The criminal behaviors again prove the vulnerability of human: people cannot avoid death, just like they cannot avoid making mistake. From this point of view, the *vanitas* iconographical meaning may be furthermore extended to Christian iconographical meaning.

William Schupbach in his research maintains that the deepest lesson of the painting concerns the nature of man and his relationship to God.²⁸ Moreover, he argues that this meaning is expressed in the form of a paradox. The main point is that Schupbach linked anatomical exploration to the aspiration of self-knowledge. In Christian doctrine, man was made in God's image, so "know-thyself" could be interpreted as "know that you are like God". Although human is fragile, at the same time human is full of divinity, because human is a mirror of God.²⁹ Thus, Schupbach suggested that *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp* is meant to teach us to recognize the mortality of man at the same time to appreciate man's divinity. In addition, some art historians compare the setting of the corpse with that in a religious painting with such subject as martyrdoms or the lamentation of Christ, because the representations of people congregated around and acting upon a passive body often appeared in these religious subjects.³⁰ From this point of view, Aris Kindt may symbolize Christ, who had dual nature; on the other hand, Dolores Mitchell suggested that Dr. Tulp might be read as a false Christ because "the doctor's mechanical manipulation of muscles is almost a parody of Christ's miracle", compare to Rembrandt's *Raising of Lazarus*.³¹ (Fig. 8) Finally the strong light put on the body could also be interpreted iconographically religious, since it usually symbolized the Grace of God: human is sinner lost in darkness, hoping for the gift of Grace.³² The artificiality of the "spot light" in the image strengthens the theatricality of the scene, and the impression of supernatural.

To go further, Mitchell suggested that *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp* conveys ironic message. The historian mentioned:

In the context of Calvinist ideology, "coarse and lifeless appearance" need not be a negative signifier, nor need "vital energies" always be a positive one--- sinners and elite members of a community may be valued in paradoxical ways.³³

Calvin believed that an outcast sinner was more likely to receive grace than a proud, wealthy, educated man. Tulp and members of the Surgeons' Guild, who owns high social status and medical knowledge, just in the shoes of elite members, in addition,

²⁸ See Levine, pp. 338.

²⁹ See Levine, pp.338.

³⁰ See Mitchell, pp.151.

³¹ See Mitchell, pp.148-151.

³² See Mitchell, pp.155.

³³ See Mitchell, pp.155

the dead man Aris Kindt, who was a criminal, was in the role of a sinner. This view denotes that the honored position of Dr. Tulp and the Surgeons will not last forever. Some historian connected Calvinist beliefs and works by Rembrandt, because Rembrandt may have been influenced by Calvinist concept concerning man, God, and Grace.³⁴ We do not know if Rembrandt really try to convey this “ironic” idea, since this was a work commissioned by Dr. Tulp and the other members in the Surgeons’ Guild. However, some of Rembrandt’s other works also pass on an “ironic” atmosphere. For example, Rembrandt used to portray himself as a bagger, may reflect his belief to Calvinism.

Dolores Mitchell also analyzed the form of *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp* and argued that the concept of “contrast” presents in the whole painting.³⁵ For example, the contrast idea is not only represents in the strong *chiaroscuro*, but also represents in the composition and the costumes of the living and dead figures. Contrast to the near horizontally arranged corpse, the living figures shows verticality; besides, the body is near naked while the guild members dress up with delicate garments. However, these contrast ideas did not cause a disintegrated image, on the contrary, these oppositions produce unity. Riegl mentioned that a complete external unity, which connecting the represented figures with the beholder, could be reached only when the internal unity, that is, the subordination of the figures within the picture, had first been achieved.³⁶ He connected the “internal unity” to Italian painting, and the “external unity” to Dutch painting. Italian paintings show figures physically subordinated to each other while Dutch paintings depict figures “as separate from and “coordinated” with one another in space, looking out of the picture to establish a subjective “external unity” with beholder.”³⁷

Rembrandt, according to Riegl, converted Italian principle into his own language. Like in *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp*, Dr. Tulp delivers a lecture and the guild members concentrate in this event. That means the picture contains an internal unity, because the figures in this painting interact and subordinate to each other through psychological attention.³⁸ We can compare it to the more typical Dutch group portrait, Aert Pieters’s *Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Sebastiaen Egberts*, in which all the members watch out of the painting to the beholder, but do not have any interaction with each other. In *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp*, the guild members subordinate themselves to Dr. Tulp through their attention, but each in a different way. The three surgeons placed just above the head of the corpse were most attentive to the lecture; all of them lean forward in order to see the dissection or the text book better. The doctor in the left end also listens to Dr. Tulp with concentration, but not as agitated

³⁴ See Mitchell, pp.155

³⁵ See Mitchell, pp.147.

³⁶ See Riegl, pp.3-4

³⁷ See Riegl, pp.4-7

³⁸ See Riegl, pp.5.

as the three just mentioned. The remained three figures, on the other hand, have diverted their attention to the beholder. So the internal unity in Rembrandt's painting is different from that of Italian painting, which is coming from physical subordination in the painting. At the same time, the eight figures in *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp* establish an external unity with the spectator. This external unity is not only from the towering figure who points to the corpse and look at the beholder, but also from the second figure to the right who looks at the spectator and holds the letter that records the names of the figures, and from the second figure to the left who slightly turns his head toward the spectator. Through the delicate psychological depiction of each figures, Rembrandt achieved an inventive unity and coherence.

In conclusion, many historical paintings did not document the true moment of the event, and most of them were based on text sources or patron's opinion. In this level, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp* was not an exception. Rembrandt's invention is that he blurred the boundary between group portrait and a narrative painting. The painting is still symbolic, but more than symbolic. Maybe the audience of the surgeons' guild theater was not the emphasis from the beginning. Rembrandt close up the image, so to achieve the effect he wanted, especially the psychological state of each figure. In addition, with the actions of the individual in the image, Rembrandt express a dynamic and vigorous moment. Rembrandt fused past and future, historical and emblematic, and Italian and Dutch tradition. With these ambiguities, Rembrandt created his baroque, and his generation.

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Fig. 1



Fig. 2

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Fig. 3



Fig. 4

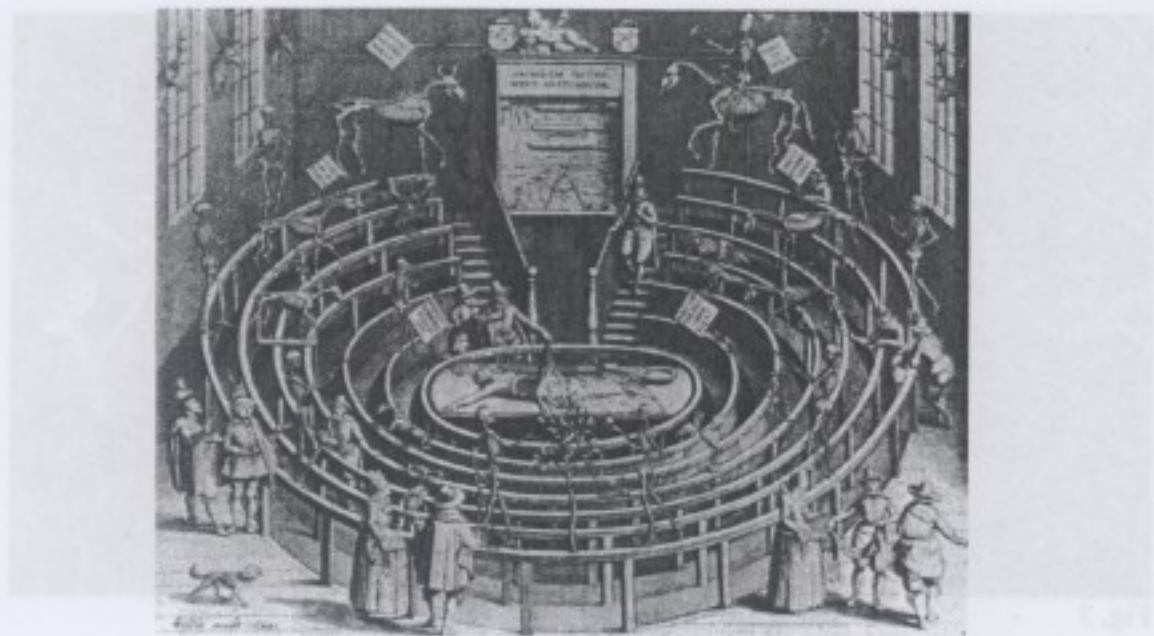


Fig. 5



Fig. 6

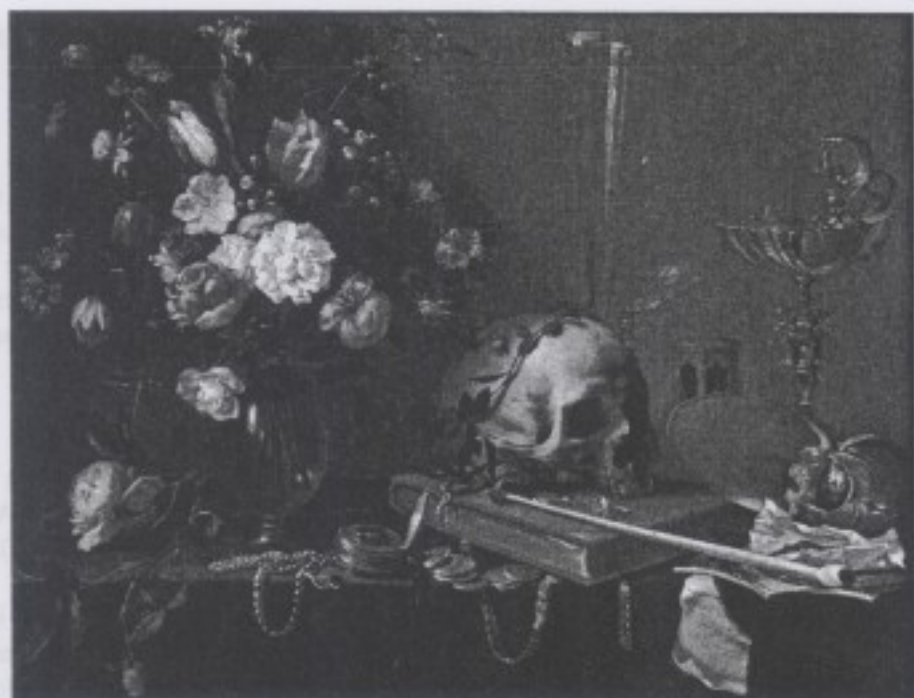


Fig. 7



Fig. 8

The Changes of Compositions on Ruben's Christ subjects

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Preface

Rubens is a prolific artist. He had painted lot of subjects about Christ's story. In many Christ's subjects, Rubens especially likes two parts of Christ story, *Adoration of Magi* and *Christ's Passion* (which is traditionally including *Raising of the Cross*, *Descent from the Cross*, *Lamentation*... and so on). Therefore, in this report, I will focus on paintings of these two subjects respectively, analyzing and compare their compositions in same subjects.

Adoration of Magi

According to Peter C. Sutton, Rubens painted the Adoration of Magi at least 15 times. For clear compare, in this report, I would only use two paintings, *Beaux-Arts Adoration of the Magi*(fig.1), and *Koninklijk Adoration of the Magi*(fig.2). The former one was executed on 1618-19, the later one was executed on 1624.

In the *Beaux-Arts Adoration of the Magi* (fig.1), the most conspicuous is Virgin Mary, she is dressed white clothes. Her face seems melancholically that may because she knows her child's fortune. Christ has to be crucified on the cross. Follow Virgin Mary's sight, the little Christ's foot is kissed by the old Assyrian king. The man stands next to the old king is the second king. He is absorbed in the sacred moment. And the youngest king is standing at the back. Three kings were depicted as three colors of skins. The old king is western human race. The second, the middle-aged, his beard and scarf seems that he comes from the Middle East. The youngest one that me think he may have African ancestry.³⁹

Look at all composition, there are two triangles (fig.3). The apex of small triangle is Virgin's head, following her dark cloak to the margin of the painting, and the base line of the small triangle is wooden table which Jesus is standing at. Finally, go along the old king's right arm going back to Virgin's head. The second triangle, its apex is poles in the background. The right side of triangle comes from people's head to Virgin's cloak on hand. The triangle's base line is from the horizontal leg of the wooden table to step which the youngest king is standing at. The left side of triangle is from the youngest king's white turban and left arm to the servant at the left corner.⁴⁰

Two triangles have different functions. The small one frames the circle group to highlight their importance. The big one is used to compress all people for a unified effect. Beside, people at the two sides, their bodies are not all in the picture. This situation responds to the big triangle's two sides which go beyond the picture just like people at the picture's border area.

Rubens didn't like to stick to the same arrangement on the same subject. He pursued change. In *Koninklijk Adoration of the Magi* (fig.2). Christ and the Virgin Mary are still at the right side. But the kneeling man is not the old king but the second king. The distance between he and Christ is not as close as former picture's (fig.1) distance between Christ and the old king.⁴¹

There is a triangle in this painting (fig.4). The apex is the bareheaded man on the top

³⁹ Peter C. Sutton, Marjorie E. Wieseman and Nico van Hout, *Drawn by the brush : oil sketches by Peter Paul Rubens*, New Haven, CT ; London : Yale University Press, c2004, p.106-109.

⁴⁰ See Sutton, Wieseman and Hout, p.106-109.

⁴¹ Charles Scribner, *Peter Paul Rubens*, New York : Abrams, 1989, p.86-87.

background. From him to Virgin's shawl is the right side of triangle. The base line of triangle is the cow's chin to the old king's feet, and his red mantle going to the camels become the left side of triangle.

This triangle is more vertical than the former one (fig.1). Besides, observe people who surround the main characters are very concentrating on the holy moment. Beholders can feel more powerful visual effect from people's expressions of the painting and the vertical triangle's composition. Rubens used the vertical triangle composition and people's sights to bring miraculous scenes. Compare these two paintings (fig.1 and fig.2), certainly the late one is more vivid than the former one. In the following paintings, we can also find out how Rubens was interested in different arrangements of the same subjects.

Christ's Passion

Because there are many scenes of this part, for effective analyzing, I will only choose three scenes (Raising of the Cross, Lamentation, and Descent from the Cross) of which Rubens's paintings are worthy.

(1) Raising of the Cross

Rubens used vertical and oblique elements to make the pictures lively. Such method also appears on the subject, *Raising of the Cross*. Between 1609 to 1610, Rubens executed two different paintings of *Raising of the Cross*. The former one which is collected on Louvre Museum was painted from 1609 to 1610 (fig.5). The later one was finished on 1610 now in Antwerp (fig.6). At the first sight, viewers could feel these two paintings haven't many too many difference. Indeed, both paintings have many similar elements, for example, people's arrangements. The most obvious repetition of people's arrangements is the man who is back to us and very close to the frame. Besides, the other evident example is the bareheaded man who is supported the cross on the central side. Through these two paintings indeed have common points, their also have very different sides. That's us look them respectively again.⁴²

At the first, in Louvre *Raising of the Cross* (fig.5), Christ is crucified on the cross. He looks at the sky sadly. He seems have no pains, no fear, and no resentment. The background is open. The roman general and soldier are walking toward to the foreground. And at the right side, there is a criminal who is crucified on the cross already. The sky is dark and gloomy, which seems to echo to Christ's sufferings.

Christ's body and the cross are dominant of whole composition (fig.7). The cross and his body form a line which is across the picture and cuts the painting into two parts. One part is full of people who are raising the cross, and the other part is distant background. This line not only defines painting into two worlds, but also tells the viewer the direction of raising the cross. People surround Christ, and we can find Rubens put more people at right side (Christ's body and feet) than the left side (Christ's head and hands). With such arrangement and people's motion, viewers can feel this cross is going on being erected.⁴³

Now that's see the other *Raising of the Cross* (fig.6). Christ is situated at the central part. He also looks at sky, and his facial expression is sorrowful and more helpless. The background is not a open view but a little mountain and a piece of sky at the right side. Rubens didn't put many attentions on the little mountain, because its function is used to contrast foreground group.

⁴² Peter C. Sutton, Marjorie E. Wieseman and Nico van Hout, *Drawn by the brush : oil sketches by Peter Paul Rubens*, p.248-251.

⁴³ See Sutton, Wieseman and Hout, p.248-251.

In this painting, Christ's body and the cross also form a line (fig.8). But this line is more oblique than the former painting (fig.7). The line (Christ's body and the cross) is almost the diagonal line of the picture. In addition, it severs the painting to two parts.⁴⁴ But the effect is not as clear as the former one. Rubens might notice the empty space at the left foreground in the Louvre *Raising of the Cross*. So, in the later painting, he drew a dog to fill the picture at the left foreground.

This painting (there are nine people), is only more one people than the former painting. But on the visual effect, it seems more than nine people taking part in the affair. Why viewers have such illusion? That's because Rubens zoom in the scene, and the line of Christ and the cross is very rapid. The last but not the less important reason is arrangement of people. The distance between people to people is close, and the arrangement at the up side, middle side, and the down side is equal and full of the picture. Therefore, the group is more solid and the all picture is more dramatic than the former one.

(2) Lamentation

Lamentation is one of important theme in the Christ's Passion story. Rubens had painted this subject for two versions. The earlier one which is now collected on Kunsthistorisches Museum was painted on 1614 (fig.9). The later one is produced during 1617 to 1618, which is now on the Koninklijk Museum (fig.10). The size of two paintings and people's arrangements are different. But the main figure's (Christ) position has similar point which is worthy viewers to compare carefully.⁴⁵

In Kunsthistorisches *Lamentation* (fig.9), Christ's pale and spiritless body lies on the bosom of Virgin Mary. Rubens used foreshortened skill to depict Christ's lifeless body. Virgin Mary is behind him to prop up Christ's body, and closing his eyes. The color of Virgin Mary's face is grey and dark. Indicate she is the most sorrowful person. For her, Christ is not just only the Savior, but also her son. There is no mothers don't feel grieved for lost their children. Mary Magdalene, the blonde who is at the Virgin Mary's right side dressed different from the other women in the pictures to imply she had been a dissolute woman. Her facial expression is also grieved. Young John stands next to Virgin. He wore traditional red cloak and trying to support Virgin in case she is too sad to faint. Besides the main group, at the painting's right side, the three crying people seem to become a little group. Over half part of background is dark, and the remaining part is rocks. In addition, the nails and crown of thorns on the foreground respond to Christ's Passion and suffering. Moreover, the ears of wheat are symbolic of the Catholic Eucharist.⁴⁶

In the Koninklijk *Lamentation* (fig.10), the picture is upright. Christ's bloody and weak body is occupied of almost half of the picture. He is also lifeless and limp, and he seems paler than the earlier one. Virgin Mary is going on putting a cover over Christ's face and she looks at the upward seeming to ask God "Why my son has such the misfortune? Why my son is the Savior?" At the Virgin's right side, the blonde woman may be Mary Magdalene. There doesn't have too much room for background, because Rubens wanted his viewers to focus on the Christ's sacrifice, and the dark background

⁴⁴ See Sutton, Wieseman and Hout, p.248-251.

⁴⁵ Johann Kraftner, Wilfried Seipel, Renate Trnek, *Peter Paul Rubens, 1577-1640 : the masterpieces from the Viennese Collections : the pictures in the collections of the Prince of Liechtenstein, the Kunsthistorisches Museum and the Gemaldegalerie der Akademie der Bildenden Kunste in Vienna*, Vienna : Christian Brandstatter, c2004, p.86-91.

⁴⁶ See Kraftner, Seipel, and Trnek, p.86-89.

contrasts Christ's obviousness. There are also the ears of wheat under the Christ's body, which are symbolic of the Catholic Eucharist.⁴⁷

To compare these two paintings, viewers can discover the gradient of two Christ's is really different. The earlier one is foreshortened, and there is a line from Christ's head to his left leg (fig.11). The line is almost a diagonal line of the picture. In the other hand, the later painting, Christ's body also composes a diagonal line of the picture (fig.12), but the visual effect is different with the other one. Viewers can feel the later one is more dramatic than the earlier. There are two reasons to explain this phenomenon. The first reason is that because Rubens zoomed in the scene, Christ and his people are very close to the viewers. It seems that the misfortune is just coming on in front of viewers. The second reason is about the formats of pictures. The *Kunsthistorisches Lamentation* is a horizontal format, and *Koninklijk Lamentation* is a vertical format. Therefore, these diagonal lines of two rectangles would have different gradient. The diagonal line of vertical one is more oblique. Moreover, the vertical picture can include vertical and close Christ. Its visual effect is better than the other one, and viewers' attentions would not be distracted. Rubens enlarged the scene and adjusted the oblique of diagonal lines to achieve totally different impressions.

(3) Descent from the Cross

There are three versions of this subject. The earliest one which was produced during 1612 to 1614 is the central panel of the Harquebusiers altar (fig.13). The second one which was executed between 1616 to 1617 is stored up on Beaux-Arts Museum (fig.14). And the latest one was continuously executed from 1617 to 1618 now in St. Petersburg (fig.15). The intervals of paintings' dates on these three paintings are close. But their visual impressions are totally dissimilar. Let us have more careful looks.

At the first, Harquebusiers *Descent from the Cross* (fig.13), Christ is situated at the central part of the picture. Though the curves of Christ's body and muscle are strong, he is pale and dead. His blood continuously sheds from his wounds. Christ's posture is transformed from *Laocoön* Group statues (fig.16), which Rubens had practiced on the paper (fig.17). The man standing on the ladder in black clothe is similar to the big son of *Laocoön*. From this, we can know Rubens also try to find the epic elements from traditional art works.⁴⁸

There are eight people surround Christ. Two men stand on the top to release him from the cross. The other two men are at the middle side to balance the image. Young John is dressed red clothes, and he is holding the Christ. There are three women at the left side. The one who is dressed blue clothe with black scarf is Virgin Mary. She looks at her son with anxious and heartbreaking facial expression. She raises her hands wants to touch her son. The other two women are kneeling in front of the Christ. The one who is close to the Christ is Mary Magdalene. Her motion which is putting Christ's foot on her shoulder responds to her story of New Testament. At right corner of the foreground, there is a golden basin and Christ's crown of thorns. And the background is full of dark and heavy clouds which is symbolic of the death of Christ. However, at the left side of the background, there is light like dawn. It indicates Christ's resurrection.

There is an interesting point viewers can find in the other woman who kneels next to Mary Magdalene. What is she looking at? She is not looking at the Christ's descent. Her attention seems being drawn out by the other thing. Maybe we can find the answer from the right panel, *Circumcision*. At the right panel St. Simeon holds the infant Christ

⁴⁷ See Kraftner, Seipel, Trnek., p.90-91.

⁴⁸ See Scribner, p.62-63.

and stares at the up side. Besides him, there is a woman at the right side. She is also gaze above. The sights of St. Simeon and the woman are echoing to the kneeling woman at the central panel. Their faces are light and clear. Moreover, they also look the upper side. Why Rubens arrange this composition? Is it a symbol or just a coincidence? There is no more evidence to answer this question. But, in my opinion, maybe, at that the moment, these three persons they feel the God's existence.

Beaux-Arts *Descent from the Cross* (fig.14) is the second painting. Its composition is similar to the earlier one, for example, two men on the top, and the left side is a crowd of women. The most apparent is Christ. His body is changed into reverse direction. And he is paler than the earlier one. Rubens would like to emphasize his lifelessness to bend his body to express that Christ is dead and unable to support himself. Moreover, his body is not as strong as the earlier one. Young John is standing beneath the Christ and bears the weight of Christ. His posture may remind viewers the bareheaded man of *Raising of the Cross* (fig.5&6). It shows Rubens's talent to repeat the same posture on different subjects. In this painting, there are four women. One is Virgin Mary and the other three is mentioned on the New Testament that there are three Mary appear on the scene of descent from the Cross.

Again, on this painting, Rubens left the mystery to his viewers. Everyone in the picture is focus on the Christ's descent, except the man who stands on the left ladder. His face in profile is not as clear as the other people. Who is him? Why Rubens wanted to depict such kind of man? Did he want to imply something or just to balance the picture? Again, there are no solutions.

The third painting, St. Petersburg *Descent from the Cross* (fig.15), Rubens simplified its composition. There are not many people on the picture, and Rubens zoomed in the scene, so viewers are closer to the stage. Christ is also weak and limp, but his posture seems a little rigid and stiff, especially the relation his head and body. Besides, there is an interesting point in this painting, Christ's body seems light. That's because on the other paintings, there are always young St. John to be main force to support Christ's body. But in this painting, young St. John doesn't stand beneath the Christ. He only uses his arms to bear Christ's back. No one is really supporting Christ's body. It seems Christ is weightless and floating in the air.

Virgin Mary is still on the left side. But her facial expression is changed. She seems being full of peace and motherliness, which is different with the other two. Rubens used the higher aspect to depict Virgin Mary. In this painting, Virgin Mary has accepted Christ's fortune. Therefore, she can look at Christ calmly, and raise her hands to embrace her son.

According to my observations, if we juxtapose the three paintings (fig.18&19&20), we can find out the trunks of three compositions are Christ's body. In the Harquebusiers *Descent from the Cross* (fig.18), the man standing on the right top, his hand pulls Christ's left hand. The connection which is from his hand and Christ's left hand to Virgin Mary's left hand becomes an oblique line. Such oblique linear composition is appeared in the other paintings. But Rubens in the following paintings used not the same method to design paintings. In the Beaux-Arts and St. Petersburg *Descent from the Cross* (fig.19& 20), are a different method. At the first, in the Beaux-Arts *Descent from the Cross*, though Christ is still on the central part, there is not a single oblique linear composition. There is a line being consisted of man's left hand (at the right top) and Christ's left hand. And there is a curved line from the man at the left side along the white cloth to Christ's feet. Two lines are across on the Christ's left hand. Therefore, I infer boldly that there is a different kind composition between these three *Descent from*

the Cross. But, there are not sources to explain and confirm why my inference. We can only know is that Rubens really wanted to create touching visual effects.

Conclusion

From, above art woks, we know Rubens is an ambitious artist. He is not satisfied with present achievement, so he would like to try to another ways to interpret the same subjects. He would like to use more oblique composition and enlarge the scenes even transform the oblique linear composition which is the most common method of his design into cross composition. But because now there are not many materials can give the resolution to his cross composition, people still don't know too much about this cross composition. Wish in the future people can have more clues about his cross composition to get the answer. On the art history, there are too many unsolved secretes like the Rubens's cross composition. What we can do is keeping on searching.

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Illustrations:



(fig.1) Peter Paul Rubens, Adoration of the Magi, 1618-19, oil on canvas, 245 x 325 cm. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon.



(fig.2) Peter Paul Rubens, The Adoration of the Magi, 1624, oil on panel, 447 x 336 cm. Koninklijk Museum voor Schone, Antwerp.



(fig.3)



(fig.4)



(fig.5) **Peter Paul Rubens, Raising of the Cross, 1609-10,**
oil on wood, 68 x 107 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



(fig.6) Peter Paul Rubens, Raising of the Cross, 1610, oil in panel (central), 68 x 107 cm. O.L.Vrouwekathedraal, Antwerp.



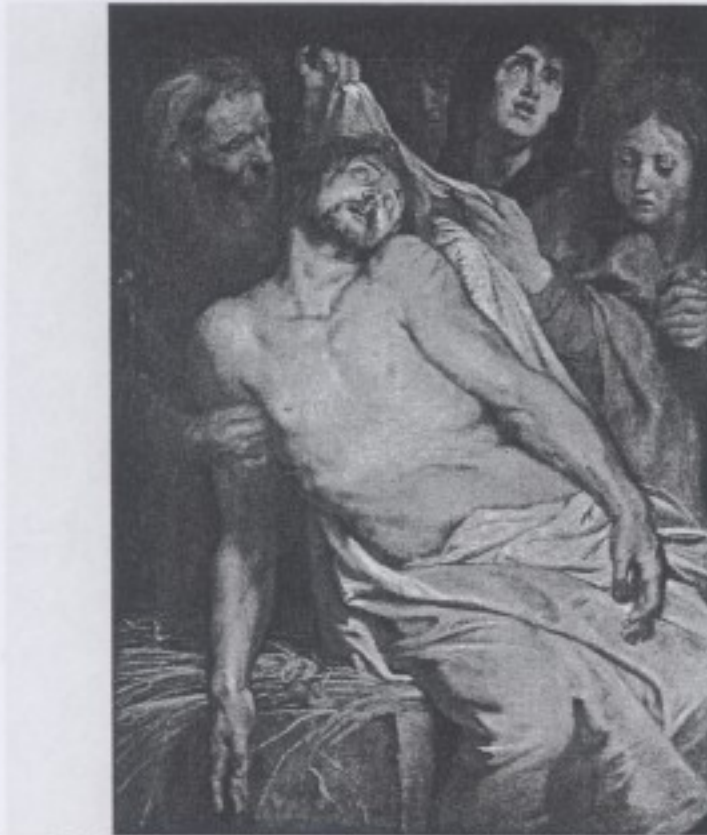
(fig.7)



(fig.8)



(fig.9) **Peter Paul Rubens, The Lamentation of Christ, 1614**
Oil on wood, 41 x 53 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

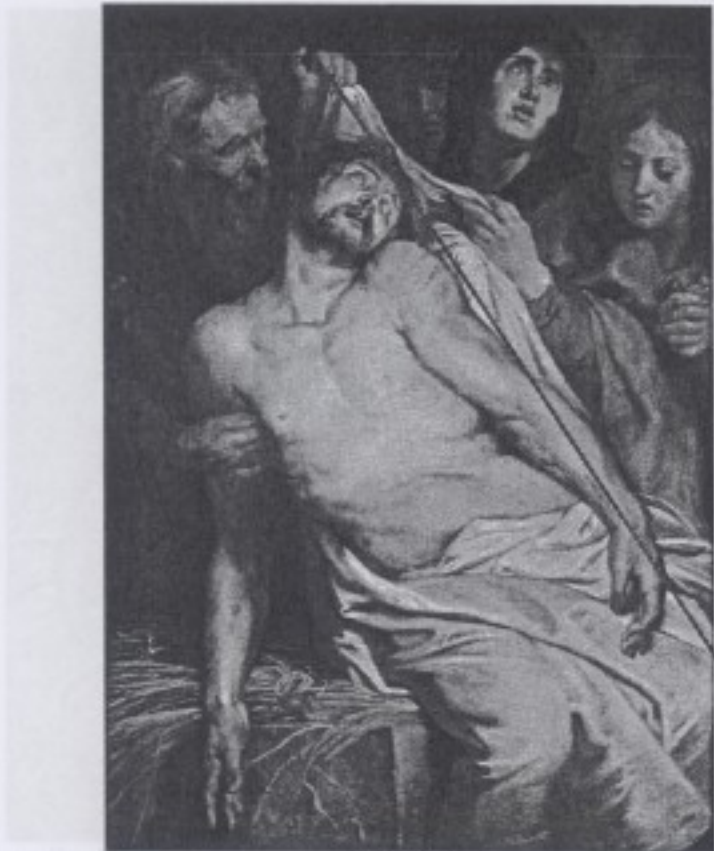


(fig.10) Peter Paul Rubens, Lamentation of Christ, 1617-18, oil on panel, 138 x 98 cm (central panel), Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp



(fig.11)

(fig.11) Peter Paul Rubens, Lamentation of Christ (left panel), 1617-18, oil on panel, 138 x 98 cm, O.J. Vandenbroeck, Antwerp



(fig.12)



(fig.13) Peter Paul Rubens, Descent from the Cross (centre panel), 1612-14, oil on panel, 421 x 311 cm. O.-L. Vrouwekathedraal, Antwerp.



(fig.14) Peter Paul Rubens, Descent from the Cross, 1616-17, oil on canvas, 425 x 295 cm. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille.



(fig.15) Peter Paul Rubens, Descent from the Cross, 1617-18, oil on canvas, 297 x 200 cm, The Hermitage, St. Petersburg.



(fig.16) *Laocoön* group Statues, white marble. Vatican Museum, Vatican.



(fig.17) Peter Paul Rubens, *Laocoön and sons*, 1605-08, chalk on paper. Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.



(fig.18)



(fig.19)

Illustration List



(fig.19)



(fig.20)

Illustrations Lists:

- (fig.1&3) Peter Paul Rubens, Adoration of the Magi, 1618-19, oil on canvas, 245 x 325 cm. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon
- (fig.2&4) Peter Paul Rubens, Adoration of the Magi, 1624, oil on panel, 447 x 336 cm Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp
- (fig.5&7) Peter Paul Rubens, Raising of the Cross, 1609-10, oil on wood, 68 x 107 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris
- (fig.6&8) Peter Paul Rubens, Raising of the Cross, 1610, oil in panel (central), 68 x 107 cm. O.L. Vrouwekathedraal, Antwerp
- (fig.9&11) Peter Pauwel Rubens, The Lamentation of Christ, 1614, oil on wood, 41 x 53 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
- (fig.10&12) Peter Pauwel Rubens, Lamentation of Christ, 1617-18, oil on panel, 138 x 98 cm (central panel), Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp
- (fig.13&18) Peter Pauwel Rubens, Descent from the Cross (centre panel), 1612-14, oil on panel, 421 x 311 cm. O.-L. Vrouwekathedraal, Antwerp.
- (fig.14&19) Peter Pauwel Rubens, Descent from the Cross, 1616-17, oil on canvas, 425 x 295 cm. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille.
- (fig.15&20) Peter Pauwel Rubens, Descent from the Cross, 1617-18, Oil on canvas, 297 x 200 cm, The Hermitage, St. Petersburg.
- (fig.16) *Laocoön* group Statues, white marble. Vatican Museum, Vatican
- (fig.17) Peter Paul Rubens, *Laocoön and sons*, 1605-08, chalk on paper. Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

The reference between De Hooch and Vermeer

I-Hsuan Liu

1. Introduction

First of all, I'll introduce delft school; it's also the basement why I mention the reference between De Hooch and Vermeer. Because both of them followed delft school. Second, I'll introduce the style of De Hooch and Vermeer. Third, I'll connect the reference between De Hooch and Vermeer. Also I'll compare the differences of them.

2. Delft school

Name given to the Dutch painter's active in Delft in the second half of the 17th century who specialized in either realistic architectural paintings or genre scenes. Before *c.* 1650 there was no coherent group of painters in Delft; each artist specialized in his own genre. However, in the late 17th century, the city became the centre of a remarkable artistic flowering that included both these genres, each of which attained special distinction. Gerrit Houckgeest, Hendrick van Vliet and Emanuel de Witte concentrated from 1650 onwards on the depiction of the interiors of Delft churches, frequently taking the mausoleum of William of Orange, in the Nieuwe Kerk, or the grave of Piet Heyn in the Oude Kerk as their subjects. In most of these works the vanishing-point is no longer located on the central axis, but instead to one side, thereby creating a more natural viewing angle. There is a more illusionistic character to these paintings than is found in those of Pieter Saenredam, who had first introduced the genre. De Witte, in particular, excelled in his control of chiaroscuro effects.

Carel Fabritius, who settled in Delft *c.* 1650, after a period of study with Rembrandt, was also expert in the use of perspective, with sensitivity to atmosphere and light effects. Although he was killed in the great gunpowder explosion of 1654 at Delft, his work can be considered as the basis for the Delft school genre painters, who are

exemplified in the work of Pieter de Hooch and Johannes Vermeer. De Hooch came to Delft in 1653 and worked there until 1661; during this period he produced the best and most characteristic work of his career. His work centers on scenes of daily life: burghers in and around their houses against a carefully composed background of views reaching through to the distant background. Like Fabritius, de Hooch strove for a subtle use of well-observed, natural light, combined with the expert use of perspective. Johannes Vermeer came to Delft in 1632, probably after studying with the Utrecht Caravaggisti. Although he began by producing narrative pieces, from 1656 until his death in 1675 he specialized primarily in interiors containing only one or two figures, in which the interior itself is an important element of the composition. A typical feature of the Delft school is the use of a camera obscura in order to create the most realistic scene possible.

3. De hooch

Hooch was one of the most accomplished 17th-century Dutch genre painters, excelling in the depiction of highly ordered interiors with domestic themes and merry companies and pioneering the depiction of genre scenes set in a sunlit courtyard. The hallmarks of his art are an unequalled responsiveness to subtle effects of daylight, and views to adjoining spaces, either through a doorway or a window, offering spatial as well as psychological release.

De Hooch's paintings of guardrooms and peasant interiors are not as accomplished in terms of design and technique nor so sophisticated in their exploration of the expressive effects of light and space, although they often include a nascent interest in views to adjacent spaces.

By 1658 de Hooch was a leading practitioner of the so-called Delft school style, the sources of which are still open to discussion; the style is characterized by a light tonality, dramatic perspective effects and an exceptional responsiveness to natural light. Delft's greatest painter, Johannes Vermeer, who is also associated with this school, began painting carefully composed, light-filled interior genre scenes with couples and single figures at almost the same time as de Hooch. The two artists undoubtedly knew one another, but in the early years de Hooch was probably the

first to master the illusion of space and subtle lighting effects; Vermeer's only dated painting from the 1650s is *The Procuress*⁴⁹ —a life-sized genre scene in the tradition of the earlier Utrecht Caravaggisti. However, Vermeer went on to refine de Hooch's ideas, reducing the elements of his art to a single, still, three-quarter-length figure in the corner of a light-filled room. By the time that de Hooch painted his *Woman Weighing Coins*⁵⁰ in the mid-1660s, it was in deliberate emulation of, possibly even in competition with, Vermeer's *Woman Holding a Balance*⁵¹ of several years earlier.

4. Vermeer

Vermeer is considered one of the principal Dutch genre painters of the 17th century. His work displays an unprecedented level of artistic mastery in its consummate illusion of reality. Vermeer's figures are often reticent and inactive, which imparts an evocative air of solemnity and mystery to his paintings.

The Procuress can be considered a crucial transitional work as its subject shares many features with genre paintings, the type of work that is most frequently associated with Vermeer. Most of the paintings of the middle period are genre paintings, that is, scenes of everyday life.

Vermeer's first genre pur is his *Girl Asleep at a Table*⁵². Its comparatively large scale, spatial ambiguities and palette recall *The Procuress*, suggesting that it should be dated c. 1657. This and related works reflect Vermeer's response to the revolutionary formal and iconographic developments in Dutch genre painting around 1650. The raucous scenes painted in earlier decades declined in popularity in favor of subjects such as elegantly attired figures engaged in a wide variety of leisure activities. Accompanying this shift in subject-matter were stylistic changes

⁴⁹ Vermeer Johannes, *The Procuress*, 1656, Oil on canvas, 143 x 130 cm, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden

⁵⁰ Pieter de hooch, *Woman Weighing Coins*, 1664, Canvas, Kaiser Friedrich Museum-Verein, Berlin

⁵¹ Vermeer Johannes, *Woman Holding a Balance*, 1662-63, Oil on canvas, 42,5 x 38 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington

⁵² Vermeer, Johannes, *A Woman Asleep at Table*, 1657, Oil on canvas, 87,6 x 76,5 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

as well: individual paintings exhibit reduced numbers of figures whose dimensions are enlarged in relation to overall space. The newer generation of artists, such as Gerard ter Borch, and Pieter de Hooch, remained sensitive to the renderings of textures and stuffs but also focused on the subtle, natural evocations of light and shadow on figures and objects firmly planted within the confines of carefully constructed spaces. Their superbly balanced, dramatic works contrast strongly with the evenly lit, monochromatic interiors of their predecessors.

The stimulus of de Hooch, who lived in Delft between c. 1652 and c. 1661, must explain Vermeer's growing interest in the placement of figures within solidly constructed, light-filled spaces. Vermeer's next four paintings, a closely related group, all differ considerably from the artist's previous work and reflect in varying degrees the influence of de Hooch. *Soldier with a Laughing Girl*⁵³, *Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window*⁵⁴, *The Milkmaid*⁵⁵ and the *A Lady Drinking and a Gentleman*⁵⁶ were probably painted between 1658 and 1661. In contrast to the paintings of his early period, Vermeer reduced the size of the figures in relation to the overall space, and his application of paint became thicker as he modeled the figures and objects to display a tremendous tactility. He also paid scrupulous attention to the naturalistic effects of light within the interiors of these works. The *Soldier with a Laughing Girl* is considerably accomplished in this respect: the superb rendition of the myriad effects of light and shadow within this brightly illuminated interior reveals Vermeer's great technical mastery and introduces a heretofore unseen level of realism in Dutch art. The distortions in size and scale between the soldier (silhouetted in stark *contre-jour* in the foreground) and the woman (seated in the middle ground), along with the unfocused look of such motifs as the lion-headed finial on her chair, her hands and the wine glass she is holding, provide the earliest evidence of Vermeer's interest in optical devices. Vermeer replicated the unfocused appearance of the motifs that he would have seen through an optical device by applying his famous *pointillés* (small dots of paint employed to

⁵³ Vermeer Johannes, *Soldier with a Laughing Girl*, 1657, Oil on canvas, 50,5 x 46 cm, Frick Collection, New York

⁵⁴ Vermeer Johannes, *Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window*, 1657, Oil on canvas, 83 x 64,5 cm, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden

⁵⁵ Vermeer Johannes, *The Milkmaid*, 1658, Oil on canvas, 45,5 x 41 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

⁵⁶ Vermeer Johannes, *A Lady Drinking and a Gentleman*, 1658, Oil on canvas, 66,3 x 76,5 cm, Staatliche Museen, Berlin

yield the effect of broken contours and dissolved forms in light).

Pointillés are used in *The Milkmaid* to impart an extraordinary tactile reality to such objects as the chunks of bread. The chunks are encrusted with so many *pointillés* that these dots of paint seem to exist independently of the forms they describe. This tactility is also detected in other works of this phase: the carpets on the table of the *Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window* and the *Glass of Wine* have a palpable knobby quality that is completely different from the broad, general planes of the carpet in the early *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha*.

5. The conclusion

The composition of *soldier's playing card* is similar to *Officer with a Laughing Girl*. For example, both of them have a window on the left side. And the scene included soldiers and woman at tables. Although they have the same composition, but Vermeer's conception of the scene is quite different from De Hooch.

Vermeer brought his figures very close to the picture plane. He heightened the contrast of scale between the two figures and intensified contrasts of light and colors.

The architecture of the room is constructed according to the laws of linear perspective. The perspective is designed to reinforce the bond between the two figures. The vanishing point of the window is located midway between the eyes of the soldier and the woman.

Vermeer did make one modification in the perspective scheme; he drew the man's chair so that its orthogonal recedes to a higher horizon than that of the rest of the room. By doing so, he enhanced the contrast in scale between the soldier and the girl. The light that enters through the window sparkles across the table, the girl and the chair. What technique Vermeer used here is incredible; he used the technique of painting with small dots. The scene's freshness also comes from the appearance of the light flickering off the surface of the table.

Vermeer achieved this quality by placing the pale green and yellow side by side that comprised the color of the table cloth. He also increased the density of the soldier's red jacket to intensify the dark outline of his body.

Vermeer maybe the first artist who examined how light reflects off objects and tried to devise an equivalent in painting.

But Hooch is different from Vermeer. He depicting an actual scene his figures didn't distort overly than Vermeer's. Why their figures size is different? What Hooch want to tell is narrating a story? And Vermeer wants to reinforce the relationship between these two figures. That is to say, Vermeer painted the state of the minds between these two figures. Vermeer specialized mainly in interiors containing only one or two figures in which the interior itself is an important element of the composition. Take another painting for example — The Procuress.

The presence of the elegantly dressed young man on the left, holding a lute and glass. The contrast of this figure type with the soldier in red was undoubtedly intentional, and Vermeer probable intended his painting to depict an episode from the story of the Prodigal Son.

The theme of the prodigal son was extremely common in Dutch art, and the artists often portrayed themselves as the son. In this painting, the self-conscious appearance and direct gaze of the figure on the left characteristics of a self-portrait. The figure on the left remains isolated from the others. Spatial effects are ambiguous and confusing. The position and the shape of the table on which the pitcher is resting are uncertain and the division of the composition by the rug is awkward.

Compared with De Hooch, the idea they want to express is also different. In Hooch's painting, you can see they are several persons on the background. The gestures are also different. What he want to express is a whole story about the prodigal son. In his painting, the woman standing behind the man. In Vermeer's, the interaction is changed, the man standing behind the woman, and the woman became passive. Vermeer use the different gesture to express how the figures interact with each other.

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Peter Paul Rubens, His Life and Career

Stephanie Chen

Early life

Peter Paul Rubens was born on June 28, 1577, at Siegen in the German province of Westphalia. He is the sixth child of Jan and Maria Rubens. Nine years earlier before he was born, Peter Paul's parents had fled their native city of Antwerp to escape religious prosecution. Jan, though originally a Roman Catholic, had openly supported Protestant doctrines of John Calvin and this was dangerous heresy in a land controlled by the Catholic King of Spain. After fleeing to Germany, the Rubens family had settled first in Cologne where Jan became a diplomatic agent and adviser to the Protestant princess Anna of Saxony, second wife of William the Silent, who led the resistance to Spanish rule of the Netherlands. However, an unfortunate pregnancy revealed the intimate extent of the relationship between the princess and Peter Paul's father, therefore, Jan and his family were placed under house arrest at Siegen where Peter Paul was born.

In 1578, a year after the birth of Peter Paul, Jan was granted a full pardon and allowed to return to Cologne with his family. As an infant in Siegen, Rubens had been baptized in a Lutheran church; but in Cologne he was raised a Catholic by his mother. His unwavering faith in Catholic and exuberant quality of his art would later lead him to become the favor artist of Antwerp churches. When Peter Paul was not quite ten years old, his father died in 1587 which left his mother and Rubens family in a foreign land with their own supports. Soon after that, Maria decided to take her children back to Antwerp.

Antwerp training

At the age of eleven, Rubens was enrolled with his brother Philip in a Latin school of Rombont Verdonck in Antwerp. There he received a solid classical grounding in Latin and Greek literature. In 1590, because shortage of money and the need to provide a dowry for his sister Blandina, it forced Rubens' mother to break off his formal education and sent him as a page in the household of Marguerite de Ligne-Arenberg, the widow of Philip, count of Lalaing. We may assume the year at service of the household of countess of Lalaing taught him valuable lessons in the

etiquette and diplomacy of serving noble patrons which would be essential in his later career.

Soon tired of courtly life, Rubens was allowed to become a painter. Rubens' formal artistic training began in 1591, he was sent first to his kinsman Tobias Verhaecht, a painter of landscapes. Having quickly learned the basics of Tobias' profession, Rubens was apprenticed for four years to another master, Adam van Noort, and subsequently to Otto van Veen who was one of the most distinguished painters of the Antwerp Romanists. The Romanist was a group of Flemish artists who had gone to Rome to study the art of antiquity and the Italian Renaissance. He combined a sober style influenced by Barocci, Michelangelo, and Raphael with adherence to the principles of Renaissance humanism. Van Veen was also famous for his knowledge of symbols which those abstract ideas could be visually expressed. Undoubtedly, he made a contribution to Rubens' early style, development, and knowledge of symbols.

In 1598, Rubens had been admitted into the Antwerp guild of St. Luke, the association for artists and artisans. Although he was now entitled to set up his own studio, he still worked with van Veen for another two years. Officially, he could have his own pupil now, and he did have one – Deodat van der Mont. Being apprenticed to van Veen for so many years, Rubens must be influenced by the Romanist master who had studied in Italy and devoted his skills to Renaissance art. For a future master in art realm like Rubens, the journey to Italy was a must, and it would become the nutrient for his dynamic, exuberant and humanistic creativity.

Italian period

In May 1600, almost at the age of twenty-three, Rubens set out with his first pupil, for the visual and spiritual adventure of Italy. By June 1600 he was in Venice. We could imagine young Rubens was amazed by the rich hangings, monumental tombs, gilded ceilings and the glowing works of the Venetian masters of the previous century.

Titian, one of the greatest masters in Venice, had died in 1576, the year before Rubens was born. His fame which had reached all Europe while he lived was still bright. The admiration that Rubens felt for him was to increase as the painter matured. He assimilated Venetian color, light, and loose application of paint and penetrated the inward meaning of Titian's art as the years went by. He also acquired nine paintings

by Titian for his own collection and made copies of more than thirty others. The parallels between Titian and Rubens do not end with their artistic style. In addition to that, both mingled freely with the nobles and intellectuals of their time, and each had an extremely rich and successful career. But as a young man seeing the splendors of Venetian paintings for the first time, Rubens was more influenced by the works of Tintoretto and Veronese. Rubens might visit Tintoretto's studio which was then captained by his son, Domenico, since Tintoretto died six years ago. The sketches of the older master might give him ideas for his later works. Rubens was no less attracted by Veronese who had enriched the church of San Sebastiano which might provide him with the inspiration when he came to decorate the ceiling of Jesuit church of Antwerp years later.

Rubens' stay in Venice was cut short by an offering employment by Vincenzo I Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua. His chief duties were to make copies of Renaissance paintings, especially portraits of court beauties for the pleasure-loving Duke. The Duke and his ancestors held one of the largest and finest collections by Italian artists, such as Titian, Correggio, Raphael, Giulio Romano who served as chief court painter of Vincenzo's grandfather and Mantegna, all of these allowed the young artist to absorb essence of Renaissance spirit. More than that, the Duke soon gave Rubens permission to make his own choice of masterpieces worth copying for the collection; the young painter could travel all over Italy to see the best pictures. During the eight years in the service of Vincenzo, Rubens had opportunities "to study the works of the ancient and modern masters" which was a rare chance for a young painter at that time.

In October, Ruben accompanied the Duke to Florence to attend the marriage by proxy of Marie de' Medici to King Henry IV of France. Decades later, his vivid memory of the event was to be useful when he decorated the Queen of France's life story. In Florence, he visited Michelangelo's Medici tombs, which he later recalled in *Samson and Delilah* (fig. 1), and he may study copies of Leonardo's unfinished *Battle of Anghiari* fresco for the Palazzo Vecchio, known today through his pen-and-wash drawing in the Louvre (fig. 2).

In August 1601, he arrived in Rome to to paint copies of pictures for the Duke. A year before Rubens' arrival, Annibale Carracci's monumental fresco ceiling (fig. 3) in the Palazzo Farnese had been unveiled. The spatial illusion, grisaille sculpture-in-paint and fictive architecture were amazed by Rubens. At precisely the

same time, Caravaggio was completing his lateral wall painting of *St. Matthew's life* for the Contarelli Chapel in S. Luigi dei Francesi, the using of his dramatic chiaroscuro also left remark on Rubens. The direct influence from Caravaggio could be seen from the master's *Entombment* (fig. 4) now preserved in Vatican and the same topic of painting from Rubens now is in National Gallery of Canada (fig. 5). The composition of the dead Christ, the lifting man on its right side and the board are much alike. The other drawings could reveal his reverence for the Renaissance master Michelangelo, such as his *Ignudo* (fig. 6) after Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel fresco.

There, not only copying and studying the masterpieces, he also obtained his first public commission for the church from Netherland's Archduke Albert to paint *three altarpieces* (fig. 7) for the chapel of St. Helena in Santa Croce in Gerusalemme.

After the Santa Croce commission, Rubens returned to Mantua, and in 1603 he was entrusted with his first mission to take costly presents from Mantua to Philip III of Spain and the Spanish court. This mission gave him a first view of the royal collections in Madrid. His resourcefulness in dealing with the temperamental regular Mantua representative to the Spanish court raised him in the duke's estimation and helped him prepare for future diplomatic missions.

Early in 1604 Rubens returned to Mantua and was soon at work on the commission for the Jesuit Church of SS. Trinità: *The Baptism of Christ* (Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp), *The Transfiguration* (Fine Arts Museum, Nancy), and *The Gonzaga Family Worshipping the Holy Trinity* (fig. 8). In 1606, he signed the contract for "the finest and most splendid opportunity in all Rome," the commission for the high altar of *Chiesa Nuova altarpiece* (fig. 9).

Toward the end of 1605, Rubens left the Duke of Mantua to continue his studies in Rome. There he shared a house with his brother Philip. His contact with Philip, who was a brilliant student of the famed Flemish humanist and classical scholar Justus Lipsius, added Rubens personal discovery of the antique world.

On October 27, 1608, Rubens received word from Antwerp that his mother was critically ill. He dashed off a letter for the Duke to explain his sudden departure for home. When Rubens arrived in Antwerp, his mother died before he could reach her. In eight-year Italian period, Italy had become Rubens' spiritual home and he considered returning for good, but his success in Antwerp was so immediate and great to make him remain there. And in spite of his extensive travels later in his career, he never saw

Italy again.

Return to Antwerp

When Ruben's mother took her children back to Antwerp in 1587, the situation in the Netherlands had stabilized on a basis of division between the independent United Provinces in the North, where Protestantism in the Calvinist form was a strong force, and the Spanish-controlled largely Catholic South. There was almost continuous war on the frontier between them. The destructive city was gradually revived by the governance of Spanish rules. Until Rubens came back from Italy, he was then in the service of the Spanish Habsburg regents of Flanders, Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella.

Settling permanently in Flanders, Rubens in October 1609 married the nineteen-year-old Isabella Brant, daughter of a leading Antwerp humanist, and celebrated their happy union in his famous double portrait under a honeysuckle bower (fig. 10).

In January 1609 Rubens' brother Philip was appointed secretary of Antwerp. Negotiations for the Twelve Year's Truce were being concluded between the United Provinces and Spain, which raised the prospects of lasting peace and economic recovery for war-torn Flanders. The Twelve Year's Truce prompted a full-scale refurbishing of Antwerp, especially of many churches, and major commissions immediately fell to Rubens. His altarpieces of *Raising of the Cross* (fig. 11) (1610) for St. Walburga's in Antwerp and *Descent from the Cross* (fig. 12) (1611-14) for Antwerp Cathedral established Rubens as the leading painter of Flanders. His biggest commission in Flanders was for the decoration of the Jesuit Church St Charles Borromeo in Antwerp. He was also the master decorator for its interior and provided oil sketches as designs for the ceiling paintings, on which he was assisted by the talented young painter, Anthony Van Dyck, and others. However, due to the fire almost his works there were destroyed in 1718.

Rubens' international reputation spread partly because of the large number of works produced in his workshop, which came to employ a great number of assistants and apprentices. He also collaborated with established artists, like Jan Brueghel the elder, van Dyck, Jordaens, Snyder, and others. Many of the large-scale pictures that issued from his studio were in fact painted by these assistants, though the underlying

design and certain key areas of paint were done by Rubens himself. To present models of prospective large-scale paintings to clients, Rubens might also sketch out the design beforehand on a small prepared wooden panel only few inches high. The demand for Rubens' work was extraordinary, and he was able to meet it only because he ran an extremely efficient studio. It is not known how many pupils or assistants he had because as court painter he didn't have to register them with the guild. He was a man of inexhaustible intellectual and physical strength, but it could not carry out all the works with his own hands.

Among Rubens' major works from the second decade of the century are the religious paintings *The Last Judgment* (fig. 13) and the mythological paintings *Battle of the Amazons* (fig. 14) and *Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus* (fig. 15). His pictures of wild animals culminated in the *Hippopotamus and Crocodile Hunt* (fig. 16) and similar hunting scenes.

Diplomatic career

In the period between 1621 and 1630, Rubens was increasingly used as a diplomat by the Spanish Habsburg rulers. His contact with the leading political and intellectual figures of Europe, as well as his gracious manner, made him the ideal political agent. Furthermore, as a painter, he could often act as a covert diplomat or observer. His first important diplomatic functions were in connection with the attempt of Spain to renegotiate the Twelve Years' Truce between the Habsburg-controlled area of Flanders and the Dutch Republic to the north. After Archduke's death in 1621, Rubens became an adviser to Archduchess Isabella. Rubens' widespread fame as "the painter of princes and prince of painters" permitted him to travel freely among royal courts. On her behalf, Rubens tried to intercede with the Dutch, but war soon broke out again in the Netherlands between the Protestant Dutch and the Catholic Flemish and continued for the rest of Rubens' life.

Early in 1622, Rubens was summoned to Paris by Marie de' Medici, now she was the widow of Henry IV and mother of the king of France, Louis XIII. She commissioned him to paint series of paintings for her newly constructed Luxembourg Palace. The cycle of twenty-one pictures which represents episodes from Marie's life now hang in the Louvre Museum, while the other proposed series of pictures, dealing with the life of Henry IV, was never completed. Also, Rubens was present at her

wedding by proxy in Florence in 1600 which might help him to render the series. After six weeks of discussion and arrangements about the Medici cycle, Rubens returned to Antwerp, where he worked for two years on this, his most artistically important secular commission. He returned to Paris in 1625 to install the Medici cycle.

In 1623, his eldest daughter, *Clara Serena* (fig. 17) died. Few years later in 1626, his wife Isabella Brant died in June. After his beloved wife and daughter's death, he painted portraits for his sons *Albert and Nicolaas* (fig. 18) to take down the fleeting youth.

In 1628, Rubens traveled to Madrid, where he tried to lay the groundwork for peace negotiations between Spain and England. There he was made an envoy by King Philip IV and sent on a special peace mission to Charles I of England in 1629. Philip IV gave Rubens the title "Secretary of the King's Privy Council of the Netherlands," along with a diamond ring, in order to elevate the standing of his painter-envoy at the foreign court. It was to Rubens' personal diplomacy that the peace treaty between England and Spain in 1630 could largely be attributed. In reward for his services, he was knighted and given an honorary degree by Charles I. In return, Rubens presented the King with his *Allegory of Peace and War* (fig. 19), a spectacular diplomatic achievement. Charles I also commissioned him to decorate the ceiling of the royal Banqueting House in Whitehall Palace (fig. 20). The Whitehall commission offered Rubens an opportunity to revive as well the Venetian Ceilings of Tintoretto and Veronese. It represents the first successful translation of monumental Italian decorative painting into England. Finished in 1634, the nine huge panels allegorized the reign of James I, the father of Charles I.

Late years in Flanders

Having been a widower for four years, Rubens on December 9, 1630, married the sixteen-year-old H el ene Fourment, whose charms recur frequently in the paintings as *The Garden of Love* (fig. 21), *The Three Graces* (fig. 22), and *The Judgment of Paris* (fig. 23), as well as in *H el ene Fourment with Fur Cloak* (fig. 24). The marriage was as fruitful as it was blissful, producing five children – the fifth, a daughter was born eight months after Rubens' death. After his marriage, Rubens was rewarded by the Archduchess with exemption from further diplomatic missions. The peace Rubens

had worked for nearly ten years to achieve, however, did not last, and for most of the next twenty years Europe continued to be embroiled in the Thirty Years' War.

Another honor from royalty for his diplomatic career came in July 1631, when King Philip IV of Spain knighted Rubens. He was the only painter so honored by monarchs of England and Spain.

In December 1633 the Infanta Isabella died. Rubens had served her for almost twenty-five years. A new comer, Isabella's successor and nephew, Cardinal Infante Ferdinand, was to be welcomed with unsurpassed grandeur. His entry in Antwerp in January 1635 gave Rubens a most monumental commission in his career. He was asked to design a series of triumphal arches and stages to greet the new governor. The first six monuments glorifying the cardinal-infante and his imperial Habsburg family concluded with the *Arch of Ferdinand* (fig. 25), which immediately followed the *Stage of Isabella* as her personal memorial. The entry though originally planned for in January was postponed until April, and Rubens was too ill with gout to attend in person.

Rubens bought the Château de Steen in 1635. He not only enjoyed staying there, but also celebrated them on canvases. He spent much time there depicting the rural life and scenery outside of Antwerp. His long-established interest in landscape painting reached its grandest and most emotionally romantic expression in such late works as *Tournament in front of Castle Steen* (fig. 26), *Landscape with a View of Het Steen* (fig. 27), *Landscape with a Rainbow* (fig. 28), and *Return from the Fields* (fig. 29). Rubens' major commission during these last years, however, was to provide for King Philip IV of Spain models for about one hundred and twenty scenes from the writings of the Roman poet Ovid "Metamorphosis".

Suffering by gout for a period of time, Rubens knew death was approaching. The "prince of painters" made his last *self-portrait* (fig. 30) and *family portrait* (fig. 31) in memory of his life and family. In the former work, Rubens presented himself not as an artist but as a knight, wearing the sword that Charles I had given to him. Though Rubens was in the guise of a knight, his inner spirit was at the same time tortured by the physical pain. A pair of tiring eyes and his right hand covered by glove might both imply the suffering of illness. In the family portrait, Rubens saw his wife in a loving way, beside them was their newly born son which all showed his satisfying marriage with Hélène Fourment. However, following a severe attack of gout, Rubens died on

May 30, 1640. He was buried in the parish church of St. James in Antwerp. Over his tomb, in accordance with his wishes, was placed his last resonant sacra conversazione, the Virgin and Child with Saints (fig. 32).

Rubens had played different roles in his life. All of them were playing very well and successfully. He was not only a master of colors who gained praise by his followers, such as Watteau and Eugène Delacroix, but also a family man who loved his children and wife. He was also a loyal friend to the Habsburg regents of Flanders, and also Marie de' Medici, the Queen Mother of France. He was a negotiator to revive the peace between England and Spain. His ability to use time efficiently and to collaborate with other artists and assistants well earned him lots of commissions. He kept learning new things to assimilate as his own knowledge. He was a man with humanistic heart and Renaissance spirit. No wonder he had important position in the realm of art.

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2. RUBENS, Peter Paul, Battle of Anghiari, Chalk with pen and ink on paper, 1612-15, 45.2 x 63.7 cm, The Louvre, Paris
3. CARRACCI, Annibale, Ceiling fresco, 1597-1602, Palazzo Farnese, Rome
4. CARAVAGGIO, The Entombment, Oil on canvas 1602-03, 300 x 203 cm, Pinacoteca, Vatican
5. RUBENS, Peter Paul, The Entombment, Oil on wood 1611-12, 88 x 66 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa
6. RUBENS, Peter Paul, Ignudo after Michelangelo, Chalk on paper 1601-1605, 38.7 x 27.7 cm, Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum, London
7. RUBENS, Peter Paul, St. Helena with the True Cross, Oil on panel 1601-1602, 251 x 187 cm, Old Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Paris
8. RUBENS, Peter Paul, The Gonzaga Family Worshipping the Holy Trinity, Oil on canvas 1604-05, 430 x 700 cm, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua
9. RUBENS, Peter Paul, St. Gregory The Great and Saints, Oil on canvas 1607-08, 475 x 287 cm, Musée de Grenoble
10. RUBENS, Peter Paul, The Artist and His First Wife, Isabella Brant, in the Honeysuckle Bower, Oil on canvas 1609-10, 178 x 136,5 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich
11. RUBENS, Peter Paul, Raising of the Cross, Oil on panel 1610, 460 x 340 cm (centre panel), 460 x 150 cm (wings), O.-L. Vrouwekathedraal, Antwerp
12. RUBENS, Peter Paul, Descent from the Cross, Oil on panel 1612-14, 421 x 311 cm (centre panel), 421 x 153 cm (wings), O.-L. Vrouwekathedraal, Antwerp
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16. RUBENS, Peter Paul, Hippopotamus and Crocodile Hunt, Oil on canvas 1615-16,

- 248 x 321 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich
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 19. RUBENS, Peter Paul, Allegory of Peace and War, Oil on canvas 1629-1630, 203.5 x 298 cm, The National Gallery, London
 20. RUBENS, Peter Paul, The Whitehall Ceiling, Oil on nine canvases 1632-34, 33.5 x 16.9 m, Banqueting House, Whitehall, London
 21. RUBENS, Peter Paul, The Garden of Love, Oil on canvas 1633, 198 x 283 cm, Museo del Prado, Madrid
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 25. RUBENS, Peter Paul, The Arch of Ferdinand, Oil on canvas (transferred from panel) 1639, 104 x 72.5 cm, The Hermitage, Leningrad
 26. RUBENS, Peter Paul, Tournament in front of Castle Steen, Oil on wood 1635-37, 72 x 106 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris
 27. RUBENS, Peter Paul, Landscape with a View of Het Steen, Oil on wood 1636, 1526 x 250 cm, National Gallery, London
 28. RUBENS, Peter Paul, RUBENS, Landscape with a Rainbow, Oil on panel 1638, 136 x 236 cm, Wallace Collection, London
 29. RUBENS, Peter Paul, Return from the Fields, Oil on wood 1640, 121 x 194 cm, Galleria Palatina (Palazzo Pitti), Florence
 30. RUBENS, Peter Paul, Self-Portrait, Oil on canvas 1639, 109.5 x 85 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
 31. RUBENS, Peter Paul, Rubens, his wife Hélène Fourment, and their son Peter Paul, Oil on wood 1639, 203.8 x 158.1 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
 32. Rubens' Burial Chapel. Jacobskerk, Antwerp

Fig. 1



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Samson and Delilah, Oil on wood
1609, 185 x 205 cm, National
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Fig. 2



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Battle of Anghiari, Chalk with pen
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Fig. 3



CARRACCI, Annibale,
Ceiling fresco, 1597-1602,
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Fig. 4



CARAVAGGIO, *The Entombment*,
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Fig. 5



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Fig. 6



RUBENS, Peter Paul, *Ignudo* after
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Fig. 7



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Fig. 8



RUBENS, Peter Paul, The Gonzaga
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Fig. 10



RUBENS, Peter Paul, The Artist and
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Fig. 14



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Fig. 17



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Fig.31



RUBENS, Peter Paul, Rubens, his wife Hélène Fourment, and their son Peter Paul, Oil on wood 1639, 203.8 x 158.1 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Fig.32



Rubens' Burial Chapel.
Jacobskerk, Antwerp

Jacob Jordaens a portrait painter: Portrait of His Family
Chia-Yin CHANG (Janet)
698670156

Preface

The names of Rubens, van Dyck, and Jacob Jordaens, the triad of painters who conferred luster on seventeenth century Antwerp. Unlike Rubens and van Dyck, Jacob Jordaens was not a court painter, he was never a diplomat like Rubens, nor a habitu  of court like van Dyck.

In this article, I'll focus on his portrait painting, especially portrait of his family. Because Jordaens worked instead mostly for the local Netherlandish bourgeoisie and clergy, his portrait paintings are different from Rubens and van Dyck: for instance: dressing style, gesture and so on.

1. Biography of Jacob Jordaens

Jordaens was born into a middle-class family in Antwerp, was one of eleven children, and he was also married and died in Antwerp. Jordaens spent his whole life there, apart from a few short trips in the southern Netherlands and the united provinces. And Jordaens was fluent in French, had a good knowledge of the bible and mythology, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

Jordaens was a pupil of Adam van Noort. The master-pupil relationship was reinforced by Jordaens marriage to van Noort's eldest daughter: Catharina on fifteen May, 1616. They have three children, Elisabeth, Jacob and Anna Catharina.

2. Portrait of his family

Jordaens' portraits depicted members of his family or his immediate circle, the Antwerp bourgeoisie. Rubens and van Dyck also painted members of this class, but their subject also included reigning princes and the high aristocracy, who were outside Jordaens' range. However, Jordaens had a style of his own depicted those paintings. In the following paintings, Jordaens showed that his ability of portrayed his family, and then chose one of the family members into religious painting.

The first painting , is a group portrait *Portrait of the Jordaens family* (Fig. 1). This painting has a long time been known as one of the distinguished works of Jordaens. However, there're two questions about this painting: who are the persons

portrayed, and in what year was it done? In this paragraph, I'll try to figure out who are the persons in this painting.

In *Portrait of the Jordaens family*, what year was done? There are many versions, but the date 1615 which may be corrected, because this year was important in Jordaens' life. Jordaens was born in 1593, at fourteen he entered the studio of van Noort. At age twenty-two (1615), he received the freemastership in the Guild of St. Luke. At the same year, he painted this painting, perhaps he wanted to prove his ability.

With focus on the identity of the family, there're three scholars: Buschman, Haberditzl and van Puyvelde believed that the group portrait was that of Adam van Noort (Jordaens' teacher and father-in-law).¹ However, the identification of figures is not correct. First, it's impossible to account for all the other figures as member of van Noort's family, and secondly, this theory fails to identify the persons in this work (those scholars only righted that the young man in the left foreground was Jordaens himself).

Then again, we have to identify of the family. First, two persons that is much older than others, perhaps are parents, the man in the left with the wineglass is the father, the woman in the right foreground with the baby on her lap is the mother. Second, the woman in the right background, her dress is much simple than that of others, seem to be a maidservant. Third, there're eight persons whom would have to consider as the children of the couple. In the left side, three of them are boys. However, a child in the center of the picture, next to the father, might be either a boy or a girl. And the rest are girls.

If the group portrait is Jordaens' family, we have to identify their identity. We know that Jordaens' parents had eleven children.² But in this painting only have eight children. However, we didn't take into account the three little angels which hover right above the heads of the family. Their appearance in a group portrait of a family is a bizarre figure to us, it is usual to depict that little angels representing the souls of the departed children in the seventeenth century.³ For example, a painting by J. Ovens (Fig. 2), one of living children points towards the three deceased children. Both Jordaens and Ovens' painting wanted to show a natural expression of piety and parental love.

We knew that actually eleven children in family portrait. Then, I'll try to point out each person's name. First, in the list the names Anne and Elisabeth each appear twice.

¹ Julius S. Held, "Jordaens' portrait of his family," *Art Bulletin*, 22, 1940, 71.

² There were: Jacob, the painter, born 1593; Anne, born 1595; Marie, born 1596; Anne, born 1597, Catherine, born 1600; Madeleine, born 1603; Elisabeth, born 1605; Abraham and Isaac, twins, born 1606; Susanne, born 1610; Elisabeth, born, 1613.

³ R. A. d'Hulst, *Jacob Jordaens*, Ithaca, N.Y., 1982, p.266.

There can be one explanation that the custom of the time to give the name of a departed child to the next born of the same sex:⁴ Anne (born in 1595) had died before 1597, when Anne II was born ; Elisabeth (born in 1605) had died before 1613, when Elisabeth II was born. But only have one departed child that we didn't know his or her identity. According to d'Hulst, we can have enough resources of the later life of Jordaens' brothers and sisters to establish that Anne II, Catherine, Madeleine, Abraham and Isaac, Elisabeth II lived at least beyond the middle of the 1620's,⁵ beyond the time when the picture was painted. So the children of whom no later records exist are Marie and Susanne. Marie (born in 1596), none of the girls born later was given her name, we suggested that Marie survived the dangerous of childhood, at least beyond 1613. Finally, only Susanne remains of whom we know nothing, so perhaps she died early. Next, I'll try to point out their position in the painting. If we have followed the birth of those children, it's easy to identify. First, the youngest, on the mother's lap, would be Elisabeth II, the two boys in front, Abraham and Isaac. Then, a girl looking up to angels must be Anne II and her glance would be particularly justified, as she bears the name of one of the departed. The young women beside the mother would be the oldest daughter, Marie, and the girl who looks over her mother's shoulder would be Catherine. Second, the child in the middle, next to the father, whose sex was hard to determine from the painting alone, perhaps would be Madeleine. Finally, the young man with the lute on his knee, looking towards the spectator would have the self-portrait of Jacob Jordaens.

There're several portraits of the Jordaens that presented him at different age. First, it's a Portrait of the Jordaens family in 1615 (Fig. 1), then it's also a family portrait: *The Family of the Artist* (Fig. 3). In this painting, Jordaens and his wife, with their first child: Elizabeth. His wife seated on a chair, at her side is the mischievous-looking daughter. And behind them, stands a maid holding a basket of fruit. All four of them are looking at the spectator as if draw us into their company.

In *The Family of the Artist*, we also can found the similarity feature of the artist, such as: same large, dark eyes, high brows, the short nose, the square chin and both of them holding a lute. And in this painting, Jordaens seem more mature than *Portrait of the Jordaens family*.

However, the picture is not just a group portrait and a representation of daily life, but had a symbolic meaning. By depicting himself and his family in a garden,

⁴ Held, "Jordaens' portrait of his family," *Art Bulletin*, 22, 1940, 74.

⁵ Anne II married in 1625, Catherine became a Sister , Madeleine became Beguine, Abraham joined the Augustinian order of monks, Isaac married in 1625, Elisabeth II became Beguine in 1632.

Jordaens uses the long tradition of the medieval “jardin d’amour”, this subject is also appear in Rubens’s painting *Garden of Love* (Fig. 4) which Rubens bring it to an apotheosis. The subject is frequent in the Netherlands and especially in the south. In this picture shows a complete interaction between reality and allegory that have lots of symbolic meaning: the fountain was a common feature in the “jardin d’amour”, symbolizing the fount of love; Cupid and dolphin: Cupid was the son of Venus, who was born of the sea-foam; Jordaens holding a lute, quite possibly he was musical and was fond of playing this instrument, but here the instrument has further meaning whose strings were played on by a woman’s love, it’s a symbol of love; the apple held by Elizabeth, this fruit is an ancient symbol of love; a dog behind Jordaens, represented married love is based on trust, because dog is the faithful and vigilant animal. Jordaens and his wife against a background of intertwined greenery symbolizing the inseparability of husband and wife, this is found again in Rubens’s *Self-portrait with Isabella Brant*.⁶

Why Jordaens portrayed this picture not just a representation of daily life, but had a symbolic meaning. I think that all symbolism around comparison of human life – birth and death, light and darkness, good and evil – and thus in the last analysis points to another world beyond the present one, each object is transitory, not eternal. Jordaens wanted to that spectator to look beyond everyday reality to a world of deeper thought.

From those two paintings, we can see Jordaens’ family members. Jordaens also liked to depict his family as a model in religious painting and so on. First, his wife: Catherine van Noort, in *The Family of the Artist*, Catherine had narrow, oval face is dominated by a long nose; the eyes are small, and imbedded in a shallow field under high and well-rounded brows. The same face appeared in *The holy family* (Fig. 5), his wife became the Virgin Mary. Perhaps this picture represented a record of his early family life, because the couple had been married in 1616, their first child was born on 1617. Jordaens’ wife had radiant expression of the happiness of motherhood.

Except his wife often became his model, Jordaens’ daughter Elisabeth also appeared in his paintings. The traditional subject of the folly of love “Ill-Assorted Couple” (Fig. 6) that Jordaens tried to bring out the old subject to new feeling which he used the youthful charm figure of his daughter. In this picture showed an old man looking at the beholder with a sly grin, a young girl fed a plum to a parrot which the old man held on his hand.⁷ The young girl depicted with sympathy, perhaps we can

⁶ d’Hulst, *ibid.*, p. 270.

⁷ The girl originally held cherries, over which Jordaens later painted the plum, as can be seen in the painting. This painting, in Flemish metaphorical expression which called old men who are unduly interested in young girls “cherry-pluckers” (Kreekenplukker)

feel the love between old men and young girl. The same tenderness face, also appeared in *The King Drinks* (Fig. 7). Except Elisabeth, Jordaens had two children: Jacob and Anna Catherina, they all lived long enough to appear in their father's paintings.⁸ Jordaens' son also in his paintings, the picture (Fig. 8) showed Jacob the younger about five or six, holding a pomegranate.⁹ It obviously a family member as the most likely model, because no commission for a formal child portrait could have been filled by such work, for me, it's just the same impression that Rubens' work *Portrait of a Young Girl* (1615-16), both of them are depicted their child. Furthermore, the young Jacob also played a role of the Infant Jesus of the *Holy Family* (Fig. 9). But I only founded Jordaens' wife and eldest daughter and young Jacob's image in Jordaens' work. To sum up, Jordaens, like Rubens, was in the habit of choosing his model from his own family circle.

3. Conclusion

In Jacob Jordaens' painting, we can see a keynote: no matter what Subject that the painter painted, represented the simple instincts, the bourgeois morality, and wanted to present an ideal of the Flemish middle classes. Jordaens, like Rubens, liked to depict his family in the painting, but Jordaens different from Rubens or van Dyck, he showed the true self of the person. For example, Jordaens let the naïve son: Jacob to play a role of Infant Jesus, because child is very innocent; and let his wife to become Virgin Mary, showed maternal instincts, because his wife just became a mother. To sum up, Jordaens had careful consideration that let the right person in right position.

I think that Jordaens is succeeded in combining all the formal elements of the composition into a whole harmonious, those people give an impression of complete physical well-being and mental equilibrium, they do not convey a sense of irresistible vitality.

⁸ Elisabeth (born in June 26, 1618) unmarried and died in her father's house the same day as Jordaens himself, because an epidemic. Jacob (born in July 2, 1625) was alive in 1650, but it's not know when he died. Anna Catherina (born in October 23, 1629) married Jan Wierds, and resided with her husband in the Hague.

⁹ d'Hulst, *ibid.* , p. 280.

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(Fig. 1)



(Fig. 2)



(Fig. 3)



(Fig. 4)



(Fig. 5)



(Fig. 6)



(Fig. 7)



(Fig. 8)



(Fig. 9)



On Rembrandt's The Descent from the Cross

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Preface

Rembrandt Van Rijn(1606-1669) painted his painting *The Descent from the Cross* (figure 1) around in 1633. This painting quoted from Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) who also painted the same theme. But from the idea of “quoting”, it provides several questions. First, Rembrandt as a self-conscious artist, how did he transfer the nutrition form the older master? Then, these two artists lived in different regions. There were totally different religious atmosphere after the Reformation. The contrast of diverse point of views to the religious images also involves one important problem. How could Rembrandt quote Rubens’s painting which shows contradictory religious usage of images? Who did commission the painting? What is the purpose of commission of the painting? What did Rembrandt show his idea in the painting?

In my article, I would try to read the related document to see the context of the commission and then look at Rembrandt’s painting and compare it with Rubens’s version. Finally, I would like to have interpretation on Rembrandt’s *The Descent from the Cross*.

The Dutch Atmosphere and Rembrandt in 1630s

This painting *The Descent from the Cross* might executed in 1633. When Rembrandt started to paint this painting, the master in the southern Lowland, Rubens, had his own reputation for long years. When Rubens and his contemporary painters still could have commission from churches to paint large and religious paintings, Rembrandt who lived in the northern side, Holland, had face different situation. Holland was a great mercantile power and mostly found on Calvinism but the southern Lowland was Catholic. The Calvinists had no use for religious painting as ecclesiastical use for decoration.¹ But it did not mean that the people in Holland did not have the requirement of religious pictures. Different from Rubens and his school who were commissioned for large and baroque style religious paintings, the northern side artists, they did smaller art works with religious and moral edification for interior and private usage.

When Rembrandt painted this painting, he lived in Amsterdam. In 1632, he just finished *the Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp*, this work let Rembrandt won at least 500 guilders payment, and the painting also showed Rembrandt’s great ability as an artist who could deal with group portraits in a new way. The successful artwork made Rembrandt as a famous and celebrated artist in Amsterdam. But Rembrandt also wanted to demonstrate that he was not a portrait painter since he was trained by his

¹ Münz, Ludwig, *Rembrandt*, New York: Abrams, 1967, pp.7-8.

teacher Pieter Lastman (1588-1633) to be a history painter.

The Patron

The Descent from the Cross is one of the series paintings, *the Passion*. The serious were commissioned by Stadholder Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange. Rembrandt might be introduced to the Stadholder by Constantijn Huygens. Rembrandt wrote letters to Huygens for his help and intercession.²

Thought the taste of the court was strongly oriented in favor of Flemish art, particular Rubens and Van Dyck. Even Van Dyck made a portrait for Frederick Henry But Frederick Henry noticed young Rembrandt's talent. Before *the Passion*, Frederick Henry also commissioned Rembrandt one portrait of his wife, Amalia van Solms. Rembrandt painted her in bust length. Her face is in profile also in an oval frame. The frame is similar to the Frederick Henry's portrait which was made by a famous painter, Gerrit van Honthorst. It is imaginable that Rembrandt must be very self-aware of the competition with an elder and famous painter especially these two paintings were made to be hang together.³

There are seven paintings in *the Passion* series. According to the remain seven letters Rembrandt wrote to Constantijn Huygens and the inventory of Amalia van Solms, Frederick Henry ordered *The Descent from the Cross* at the very beginning and then ordered the other six paintings.⁴ *The Passion* series are:

1. *The Descent from the Cross* (1632-1633)
2. *The Raising of the Cross* (1632-1633) (figure 2)
3. *The Ascension* (1636)
4. *The Entombment* (1936-1639)
5. *The Resurrection* (1636-1639)
6. *Adoration of Shepherds* (1646)
7. *Circumcision* (1646)⁵

² White, Christopher, *Rembrandt*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1984, p.56.

³ Ibid., pp.55-56. Though the character in the portrait is what a celebrity, Rembrandt depicted her just like a normal person as Rembrandt's bourgeois portraiture. It is said that Frederick Henry was not so satisfied with the painting. So the wife's portrait did not hang together with her husband's for its original purpose.

⁴ 花亦芬，〈林布蘭特與聖經：荷蘭黃金時代藝術與宗教的對話〉，台北：三民書局，2008年，頁55。

⁵ This list comes from Hua, Yih-Fen's category. The last painting *Circumcision* is disappeared. In: 花亦

These serious of paintings brought Rembrandt quite a lot of income. Rembrandt cared about the commission very much. Not only the patrons was a important celebrity, but also he was trained as a history painter and he had a chance to demonstrate his ability and ambition to people in Amsterdam or even European art world. He charged each painting each painting from 500 to 1200 guilders.⁶ The first two paintings Rembrandt painted them in fast speed. He completed these two paintings in one year. But the left five paintings, it took Rembrandt almost ten years to finish them. When ordering the religious paintings, Frederick Henry was engaged in decoration his own residence. It is possible that these paintings were intended to adorn the Noordeinde Place in the Old court in The Hague.⁷

Close view on the two Pieces of *the Descent from the Cross*

Rembrandt's *The Descent from the Cross* is in dim space. There is only a dark and unclear building as the background. The departing Jews are lost behind either. The central is lightened. It forms a contrast to the back grounds. The subdued brightness guides the eyes to the center of the picture. In the middle of the panel, Christ's body is weak and his head is hung down. On the top of the cross, there is one figure gripping the white cloth from the rear side of the cross. The figure's gesture emphasizes the heaviness and descending movement of Christ's body. One the left foreground, Virgin Mary passes out. There is only faint light casts on her head and right hand. Two ladies are trying to hold on her body, but their faces are too gloomy to see their facial expression. But from the pose of their head can be realized their anxiety. On the left side of Christ, there is a man in blue standing on a ladder. Though his face is quite obscure, but the character of the curve hair and round nose all suggest that Rembrandt himself also plays a role in the painting.⁸ The blue figure is holding Christ's right hand, it seems that he tries to prevent Christ's body falling down to the ground suddenly. On the right side there is also one person raising his left hand and holding

芬·《林布蘭特與聖經：荷蘭黃金時代藝術與宗教的對話》，2008年。

⁶花亦芬·《林布蘭特與聖經：荷蘭黃金時代藝術與宗教的對話》，p.56.

⁷ White, Christopher, *Rembrandt*, p.56.

⁸ White, Christopher, and Buvelot, Quentin, *Rembrandt by himself*, London: National Gallery Publication Limited, 1999, pp.86-89. Painters in 17th century were accustomed to paint themselves as on character in paintings; Rembrandt was not the only one example. But Rembrandt most time played an anonymous member in his painting. Sometime it also conveys artist's interpretation about the theme of the painting. For example, in his *The Raising of the Cross*, the figure in blue who is almost in the central of the panel is also raising Christ's with the cross. This figure is considered as Rembrandt himself because of facial character. Here putting a temporary figure into a historical painting, it shows a common Protestant idea of Rembrandt's time. Since Christ died for human's sin, all humanity was guilty about Christ's Crucifixion. Though Rembrandt all plays a role in his painting with no name, but in these two painting of the series of *the Passion, the Descent from the Cross, and the Raising of the Cross*, Rembrandt painted himself all in blue and almost in the central position. The color and the position form an attracting contrast in these two paintings. It is hard for spectators to ignore the anonym.

Christ's arm. Christ's body is enclosed by white linen. Under the fabric, there are also two men supporting Christ. Christ is carried and supported by different forces. His body is so distorted to convey Christ's lifeless and invoke spectator's sympathy. The stain of blood on the cross also gives strong impact to have compassion with Christ's suffering. The details all help views to concentrated the suffering of Christ step by step form dark outside to bright center. The idea is very unlike Rubens. In Rubens, the sacrifice of Christ is surrounded by the grieved people. Their gestures all stress the torture of the Christ's physical body.

In Rembrandt's painting, there is one man standing with a crutch on the right side of Christ. He stands so still and his pose also makes a big to the other figures in this painting. He stands there so sober. His face seems illuminated by Christ's body. This is Nicodemus who is recorded in Bible.

It is said that Rembrandt quoted Rubens's composition. Rubens's painting, Rubens's *the Descent from the Cross* (figure 3), was for a large triptych of Antwerp cathedral. The painting which was commissioned by the Confraternity of the Arquebusiers is the central piece of the triptych. Rembrandt did not see Rubens authentic painting directly. Rembrandt's quoting composition is from Lucas Vorsterman's printing, one reproduction of Rubens's painting (figure 4). Though Rembrandt could not see the original Rubens's color, but Rembrandt still could see Rubens's design of the theme.

Different Interpretation on the Same Theme

Copying is not the central way of Rembrandt's procedure of creation new work. Rembrandt left quite plenty drawings, but only little part of these drawings is about the imitation of past masters.⁹ In Rembrandt's paintings are mostly hard to find the exactly source of figures or composition. But the painting, *the Descent from the Cross*, is obviously quoted Rubens's altarpiece. Thought there are also the other quotation examples, his quotation from Titian for his 1640 *self portrait* in London, and his repetition of Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*.¹⁰ If we compare Rembrandt's painting to Rubens, the quotation of Christ's pose is clear. The young artist was just very successful in his group portraits, and then commissioned the serious painting. It was a good chance for him to prove his own ability and to be compared with old masters.

Comparing Rubens's version and Rembrandt's painting on the same theme of the Descent, Rembrandt used the Christ's pose from Rubens though the figure is reverse

⁹ Alpers, Svetlana, *Rembrandt's Enterprise*, Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1988, p.72. According to the author Alpers' catalog, these copying drawings which Rembrandt copied are around fifteen in total.

¹⁰ Ibid. The author also mentioned other examples. Rembrandt also followed his teacher Lastman's work in his painting, *Balaam and his Ass*, 1626, Oil on panel, 63 x 46,5 cm, Musée Cognacq-Jay, Paris

form different direction. It is reasonable that Rembrandt only saw reproduction in print. Lucas Vorsterman's reproduction copied Rubens's chiaroscuro quite faithfully. In the printing, every figure is illuminated on each other's face as Rubens's painting. Though a print can not transcribe the color, it also does its best to capture textile in Rubens's painting. For example, smoothness and reflection is visible on the cloth of Mary Magdalene who is kneeling and kissing Christ's feet.

Because Rembrandt did not see Rubens's original color, it might mean that Rembrandt had much more room to have his own interpretation. Rembrandt changed the usage of light and shadow. In Rubens's painting, the light makes a vivid and sharp effect. Everyone is enlightened by light. But in Rembrandt's painting, some figures are resolved in darkness. But Christ is highlighted with his pale skin and white linen.

As to the composition, Rembrandt did not follow Rubens's example totally but he had his own idea after digestion. Thought Christ's pose is clearly derived from Rubens's. Rubens's dead Christ has strong muscles and tortured pose which recall Rubens's *Drawing of Laocoön* (figure 5). The sculpture also inspired Rubens the diagonal composition.¹¹ The tortured body with bleeding wound evokes spectators or worshipers' strong compassion. The figures in Rubens's painting, all extend their arms to carry Christ. Virgin Mary is on the left side and in blue. She raises her left hand and almost touches Christ's arm. Her slightly open mouth expresses the tension of a mother's anxiety. The two figures on the top of the cross are trying to putting down the white linen. The left one is leaning against the cross, his coat is flying in the wind. One is even gripping the fiber with his teeth.

As to Rembrandt's Christ, there is the same gesture to Rubens's version, but it does not make the big contrast of distorted muscle and movement of figures as Rubens's. It is more subtle in Rembrandt's painting. For example, Rembrandt's virgin is lying down in the left down corner, and she is almost swallowed by the darkness. Rembrandt reduces the movement and contrast of figures by the light and shadow. Beside the attitude of movement, there is difference from Rubens and Rembrandt. The composition also shows some Rembrandt's idea of altering. In Rubens's painting, Mary Magdalene is holding and kissing Christ's feet, and Virgin Mary is reaching Christ instead of being fainted out. It is very different from typical Italian tradition.¹² But in Rembrandt's version, Virgin Mary is unconscious in the corner of the panel according to the tradition composition. But this is against the decision of the council

¹¹ 花亦芬，〈林布蘭特與聖經：荷蘭黃金時代藝術與宗教的對話〉，頁 55-59。

¹² Białostocki, Jan, "The Descent from the Cross in Works by Peter Paul Rubens and His Studio", in *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 46, No. 4, pp.511-513.

of Trent who considers Virgin Mary's appearance is a legend from the Middle Ages.¹³ Mary Magdalene plays an important role in Rubens's composition but Rembrandt did not use the same plan.

Rubens's composition forms a diagonal line from top right side to left down side. The white linen and Christ's raised left hand enhances the tension and movement. In Rembrandt's painting, instead of quoting Rubens's movement, the cross is vertically and stably standing in the central of the picture plane. It conveys a solemn monumental moment of Christ's sacrifice for mankind.

According to Hua, Yih-Fen's statement, this difference within one theme but varied composition also shows diverse religious attitudes. In Catholic ritual, images have important role in tradition. It is also important for Catholic to transcribe Bible into images to the spectators vivid and lead them to a deeper and devoted atmosphere. The using of image is also related the celebration of the Eucharist. When the ritual is holding, the image of sacrificed Christ reinforces the holiness and monumental moment. So Rubens's painting provided a role in the Catholic Church. But the sacrifice in Rembrandt's painting is related to personal contemplation in Protestant Dutch.¹⁴

Though Rembrandt took much from the print after Rubens, Rembrandt did not regard its use as intellectual theft. For him and his work, it contains Rembrandt's creativity on his own right.¹⁵ After finishing the painting, Rembrandt also produced his etching as Rubens and Rubens's circle did. The printing is almost as large as Rubens's one. Rembrandt was clearly competing in the painting and printing.¹⁶ The print is also protected by a privilege granted by the State General.¹⁷

Conclusion

Rembrandt received the commission in 1632. He demonstrated his own ability and showed the ability to compare with old master. It also shows that Rembrandt could control the skill of Rubens from the composition, smooth brushwork, and plastic modeling.¹⁸ But in my opinion, Rembrandt's using of chiaroscuro is different from Rubens's. In Rembrandt's *The Descent from the Cross*, the contrast of light and dark

¹³ Tümpel, Christian, *Rembrandt: Images and Metaphors*, p.96.

¹⁴ 花亦芬, 《林布蘭特與聖經: 荷蘭黃金時代藝術與宗教的對話》, 頁 61-63。

¹⁵ Tümpel, Christian, *Rembrandt: Images and Metaphors*, pp.96-99.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* The size of Ruben's printing is 567x 430mm. The size of Rembrandt's is 530x 410mm. Rembrandt's printing is a little bit different from his painting. According to Tümpel's statement, the printing is made from earlier version of the painting. Instead of the latter painting Rembrandt painted faded Virgin Mary, there is a group of people preparing a shroud for Christ.

¹⁷ White, Christopher, *Rembrandt*, 1984, p.58.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.64.

not only sharpen the visual effect but also the inner psychology of figures. For example, Virgin Mary, Her sadness and faint transmit by the atmosphere not only by her pose in the subtle darkness. And the death of Christ, his sacrifice also transmits by his lightened body and strong whiteness. It seems that a strong spotlight only casts on Christ's dead body. Rembrandt wants viewers to have the compassion of Christ. The visual effect is very different from Rubens who lighted all of his figures' face.

After finishing the painting, Rembrandt also requested to remake his own painting as Rubens did. Rembrandt's intention of completion is clearly. But competition between two artists is not first time in Rembrandt's life. In his early life in Leiden, Rembrandt's challenge was from another young artist who was also Lastman's pupil, Jan Lievens. In their similar training from Lastman, their early style is in similarity especially in early years. According to one record of Frederick Henry's inventory, "A Simon in the Temple, holding Christ in his arms, done either by Rembrandt or Jan Lievens", the problem of attribution recorded in the inventory shows that it is hard to distinguish their style.¹⁹ About 1629/1630, both artists painted the theme of *Samson Betrayed by Delilah*. Which artist took the theme first is not clear, but at the end of the competition, Rembrandt was quite successful in the construction of space and sequence of action though they all used similar composition.²⁰

Only six years before Rembrandt painted the painting, *The Descent from the Cross*, the Flemish master Rubens had visited Holland. But there is no evidence to show the two artists met each other. But it is clear that Rembrandt saw Rubens's painting in a printing version and the young artists wanted to show his ability to the Patron who preferred the taste of Rubens. We also could imagine that the patron could recognize quotation and Rembrandt's new invention at the same time and saw Rembrandt's combination from Italian old tradition and his digestion from Rubens.²¹

Rubens quoted the sculpture of Laocoön to declare his idea of classical beauty. On the contrary, Rembrandt stressed on the quiet inwardness and serenity. Even he depicted the nature imperfect body of Christ. Rembrandt's painting reveals a new kind of beauty, far from classical one. We also can say that Rembrandt presented the spiritual representation though Christ's corpse. Rembrandt's painting invokes dramatic feeling also. But it leads to personal mediation than emotional impact.

In the process of imitation and transformation, Rembrandt demonstrated himself as an ambitious and intelligent artist.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp.14-15.

²⁰ Tümpel, Christian, *Rembrandt : Images and Metaphors*, pp.33-35.

²¹ White, Christopher, *Rembrandt*, pp.55-56.

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Plates:

1. Rembrandt, *The Descent from the Cross*, Oil on panel, 1632-34, 89,5 x 65 cm
Alte Pinakothek, Munich



2. Rembrandt, *The Raising of the Cross*, Oil on canvas, 1632-34, 95,7 x 72 cm
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5. Rubens, Drawing the Laocoön, drawing, 1600-1608, 47.5x 47.5 cm, Biblioteca dell' Ambrosiana, Milan



Topic:

The rendering of space in Dutch interior painting:

The Anatomy of household by Nicolaes Maes, *The Eavesdropper*

Course: Dutch and Flemish Painting in the 17th Century

Instructor: Professor Sergiusz Michalski

Name: Hsieh Pei-Chun

Number: 697670018

1. Introduction:

In my presentation of 'the rendering of space in Dutch interior painting,' I choose The Eavesdropper series by Nicolaes Maes as my main element of interpreting the domestic space in Dutch genre painting. My presentation is basically based on the book *An Entrance for the Eyes: Space and Meaning in Seventeenth Century Dutch Art* written by Martha Hollander. I am interested in the way he used the interior space to reinforce the comic drama of seduction in Dutch genre painting.

Hollander intelligently depicts how the interior space plays an important role in Dutch painting. It not only demonstrates the double space in Dutch genre painting as a playing of visual pleasure, but also shows that how artist like Nicolaes Maes used the interior space for rhetoric means to construct the story of the painting. I would arrange my into three parts, first I will try to provide a basic description of Maes' The Eavesdropper; secondly, I will interpret the traditional space composition in seventeenth century Holland. Finally, there is a further explanation about how

1. The comic drama in Maes's work: a seduction scene

In Maes' *Eavesdropper*, painted in 1657 and now in Dordrechts Museum (plate 1), we can see "In a spacious, well-appointed house, a young woman has come downstairs from the dinner table, looking for the maid to refill her empty wineglass, and has paused at the bottom of the staircase. She leans against the pillar as the dining party continues above. The maid is down the hall, walking into another room with a man who apparently intends seduce her. The young woman, who can hear but not to see them, raises her finger to her lips, looks at us, and smiles. ¹"

Moreover, the space of the painting is divided into six distinct areas: the staircase (the spiral stair), the corridor, two rooms: one of each side, a room upstairs with several people at a table; a garden, viewed through a window; and a neighboring house, viewed through the same window. The woman standing at the juncture point between the staircase and the corridor, is poised between the diners and the illicit couple below. The woman's position on the stairs underlies the important theme of Maes's *Eavesdropper*. She seems to be less interested in what happened around her, but more concentrated on the about to happen scandal.

Besides the woman in the front, we can see that in the small room of behind there are a man and a maid-like woman. Because the both of the man's hands are around her neck, it is pretty obvious that the man is seducing the maid. However, Maes also placed other symbolic stuffs to emphasize this motif. For example, the male coat and sword rest on a chair below a cabinet, these two things are likely that they belong to the maid's seducer. The coat suggests a visitor, and the sword evokes both military swagger and sexual freedom of a soldier.

Form the overhearing woman in the front picture: the juncture point of staircase and corridor and the seduction scene takes place in the backroom (background of the painting), *Eavesdropper*

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forms a pictorial dialogue between two domestic spaces associated and compared two activities between them: the plot and the eavesdropper. Concerning the two domestic-space composition, there are many questions could be aroused here about the use of this composition and when does this way of composition was being used in seventeen century Dutch painting? What does it function in the painting, and does it has any profound meaning behind the composition?

- Comedy-like domestic conflict which involved images like misbehaving maids and hence warnings about the potential breakdown of the domestic order. This is an established story in Dutch drama and literature: an eavesdropper spying and mocking commentary on a pair of lovers

- Maes experimented with household spaces more daring than any of his contemporary and thus offers a paradigm for the social construction of architectural space and the complex portrayal of woman in Dutch art. He used different spaces and domestic structure to tell a story: a domestic crisis, **the central figure is conspiracy with the viewer, they both witness this secret scene.**

2. An Entrance for the eyes: two domestic areas in the painting for visual pleasure.

Karel van Mander, a famous artist and art-theory writer in sixteenth century, writes the following recommendation in his book: *Het schilder-boeck* (the painters' book): "Our composition should enjoy a fine quality, for the delight of our sense, if we allow there a view [insien] or vista [doorsien] with a small background figure and a distant landscape, into which the eye can plunge. We should take care of sometimes to place our figures in the middle of the foreground, and let one see over them for many miles²."

Here van Mander wanted to emphasize penetration for an opening in the picture space by the following two key words: *doorsien*, (view though, a generic view far beyond the foreground) and

² Hollander, Martha. *An Entrance for the Eyes: Space and Meaning in Seventeenth Century Dutch Art*, Berkeley : University of California Press, 2002, 8

insien (view into). These two dynamic words are used to describe the ‘plunging’ movement of the eyes, *ploeghen*³, literally means, “to plow,” evoking the aggressive and even erotic nature of looking.

Van Mander’s tastes for visual reflects the general interest among seventeenth-century art theorists in spatial illusionism⁴. Most frequently they create two or more areas for their figures to inhabit, featuring smaller secondary scenes within larger ones. The secondary picture is introduced by various devices, for example, the secondary picture is revealed through archways, open doors, pulled back curtains, or the hairline grids of latticed windows, or appear within the frames of mirrors or pictures on the wall. By doing so, the artists can enhance the effect of spatial recession. The vista created an interesting opportunities for deep-space composition, in other word, it makes more space for the same plain by providing the painters with an economic means of narrative. Moreover, the two-space composition also invites the viewers to play with the spatial illusions.

Perhaps the most significant function of the *doorsien* is the Rhetorical usage. *Doorsien* is used as the narrative device. While an opening in the picture space allows the eyes to ‘plunge’ into the picture, the small background figures and the distant landscape inside it can be enhance the drama. So as in the case of Eavesdropper, the whole story of the painting cannot be complete without the narrative between the two areas put together. The interior space of Dutch presented by the artists not only for the allure for visual pleasure, but also become the important device for construct the story of the painting. The interior space in Dutch genre painting is a formal

³ Hollander, Martha. *An Entrance for the Eyes: Space and Meaning in Seventeenth Century Dutch Art*, Berkeley : University of California Press, 2002, 8

⁴ Hollander, Martha. *An Entrance for the Eyes: Space and Meaning in Seventeenth Century Dutch Art*, Berkeley : University of California Press, 2002, 136

structure shows a narrative situation and the comic dialogue between a central and an ancillary space.

3. The story in Nicolas Maes *The Eavesdropper*

Maes's comedies of domestic conflict have been invoked as images of misbehaving maids and hence warnings about the potential for household disruption. The comedy-like domestic conflict that involved images like misbehaving maids is an established story in Dutch drama and literature. An eavesdropper spying and mocking commentary on a pair of lovers is a theme used to warn about the potential breakdown of the domestic order.

Here it is interesting to mention that the interior space in Dutch domestic life also serves as the certain territories for different social status and required for certain behaviors. This is also called maid-and-mistress scene. The public middle class decorum of the housewife is contrast with the private license of the servant.

This theme of the maid behind-the-scene misbehavior is common to all the paintings in Maes's group regardless who the eavesdropper is. Though Maes is ostensibly drawing our attention to the maid's behavior, he also comments on the equally indiscreet employer. For instance, in *An Eavesdropper with a Woman Scolding* (plate 2), the smiling foreground figure in the downstairs is the maid herself. It looks like that she is expressing unseemly amusement at her mistress's anger.

It is interesting to discuss that what kind of the attitude Maes holds toward his figures in the painting. In other four pictures, the eavesdropper is a housewife or a young unmarried woman. Maes seems plays an illusion of equality between women and their maids. The similarity between the mistress and the maid suggests that their interchangeability and further invokes a social

inversion⁵ in the domestic life. Mocks the notions of feminine virtue so prevalent in the rhetoric of Dutch domestic literature.

However, Maes's attitude about the feminine virtues seems pretty ambiguous. We can see that from several details here. First, no matter the central figure is the mistress or maid, she doesn't act like a virtuous restraint but more like an energetic and amorous young girl. They are often showed in a mischief attitude. In *Eavesdropper*, the maid is smiling cunningly, and put her finger in front of her mouth. She looks like the com with the pair of secret lovers. She naughtily shares the secret with the lovers, and with no intention to condemn their behavior.

In addition to the mistress's facial appearance, Maes further shows his ambiguous attitude in the position of his central figure. Maes let his figure stands at the transitional zone: the juncture of staircase and corridor. The spiral staircase in Dutch house interior functions as connection between the public dining room and the private space. But beyond this practical purpose, the spiral staircase here also symbolizes as a transitional zone. The maid is in a position of choice making, she seems to be unsure about where she belong: the freedom in the private space or the restrict life in upstairs. The young woman is being poised between two alternatives, represented by two different areas of the house, she can choose one mode of behavior or the other, contrast of the pairing of public and private, maid and mistress, office and kitchen, and upstairs and downstairs suggests an experimental openness meaning. Moreover, she looks like be tempted by the desire of freedom. Whereas Cats insists on the transformative power of marriage to combat women's anarchic potential, Maes uses images of mischievous young housewives on the stairs to

⁵ Hollander, Martha. *An Entrance for the Eyes: Space and Meaning in Seventeenth Century Dutch Art*, Berkeley : University of California Press, 2002, 148

explore this potential and, hence to articulate the tension between these states of feminine order and chaos.

IX. Maes displays the anatomy of the household, and he records in the gleeful eavesdropper poised on the staircase, the transition from order to chaos.

4. Conclusion

In the series painting of *Eavesdropper* by Niclolaes van Maes, he experiments the household spaces more daring than any of his contemporary. The use of two spaces in his painting is more than the allure of visual pleasure; the front and the backspace both play significant roles in depicting the naughty scene of an eavesdropper and a pair of secret lover. The interior structures here not only serves as the practical housing device or as the two-space composition providing viewers the visual pleasure, but most importantly, it becomes the rhetoric mean to depict the story of the painting. The seduction scene between the eavesdropper and the pair lover is linked by the doorsien.

Moreover, when considering the social status between the mistress-and-maid and the society's expectation of feminine virtues in seventeenth century Dutch, Maes seems mock the conservative idea towards woman about the good behavior by placing the central figure in the juncture between the public area and the private space in the behind. This position offers a choice for the central figure, whether she wants be a well-behaved woman or listen to the desire of freedom. Maes uses different spaces and domestic structure to tell a story: a domestic crisis or even a social inversion.

5. Illustrations:



Plate 1. *The Eavesdropper*, 1657, Oil on canvas, 86.5*76 cm. New York, The Metropolitan Museum



Plate 2. *An Eavesdropper with a Woman Scolding*, 1655, Oil on panel, 45.7*72.2 cm, London, Guildhall Art Gallery

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Dutch and Flemish Painting in the 17th Century Final Report

The Cityscape Paintings of Jacob van Ruisdael

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The Cityscape Paintings of Jacob van Ruisdael

Preface

Netherland landscape paintings which mostly characterizes in reproducing the nature had already broke through the typical stereotypes of the Renaissance's and made itself outstanding by the way of a novel observation and depiction. It depicts the prosaic local scene rather than Bible, myth or panorama of laboring in the country. Even though they are more willing to illustrate the true colors of nature, the artists are engaged in painting indoors. These series of emblematic work become one of the national images, part of the participatory philosophy, remembrance and sensibility. "The similarity of natural selection" naturally recurs to the audience.¹

No old master or modern artist begins to match the astonishing variety of landscapes Jacob van Ruisdael depicted during the course of his career. His themes include identifiable sites, grain fields, woods and forests, rivers, bridges, sluices, rushing torrents, waterfalls, hills and mountains, views of the countryside with churches, ruins, lofty castles as well as modest cottages with ramshackle privies, dunes, country roads, beach and shore scenes, seascapes, winter landscapes , windmills, water mills and more.²

In the seventeenth century, the spread of the national consciousness in Europe, on the artists, their paintings to record as

¹ Yi-wang Wang, *Remarks on Landscape Paintings in Holland in Seventeenth Century*, in *Journal of Longyan University*, Vol.25, No.5, 2007, 65-67, here 67.

² Seymour Slive, *Jacob van Ruisdael: Master of Landscape*, (Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2005), 9.

much as possible with the prevailing social conditions, folk customs, and the reaction their inner state, city and country's image and care. For the cityscape, the artists have consciously chosen to mix and form elements, they imagine the real situation in the city's appearance. Ruisdael's cityscape paintings, has all the characteristics of this, and this image caught my attention. In particular, Ruisdael depicted the two cities: Haarlem and Amsterdam, respectively, the use of many symbolic landmarks and objects, reflecting the city's sights and Ruisdael himself on the city's observations, and Ruisdael presented to the audience how the city image was. These are all I want to discuss.

I. Jacob von Ruisdael (c.1628-1682)³

Jacob von Ruisdael was born in 1628 and lived in Haarlem. Ruisdael came from a painting family, his father Isaak de Ruysdael was a frame maker and also a painter; his uncle Solomon van Ruysdaely was a very famous landscape painter at that time. Ruisdael learned to paint from them and another landscapist Cornelis Vroom. Jacob von Ruisdael's early work was influenced by them a lot.

In 1648 Ruisdael became a member of the Guild of St. Luke in Haarlem. He began to have his own characteristics. Ruisdael streamlined his skills constantly and also traveled frequently around the Netherlands and visited western Germany.

In about 1655 he settled in Amsterdam and lived there for the rest of his life. In particular, there were many paintings depicting the cities Haarlem and Amsterdam; into much more cares of his hometown. As

³ About Jacob van Ruisdael's life chronology can read: Seymour Slive, *Jacob van Ruisdael: Master of Landscape*, (Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2005)

his paintings, we can realize that, Ruisdael put more attentions to paint the images of the two important cities in his life.

II. Ruisdael's Cityscape Paintings

(I) Haarlem

fig.1 View of the Plain of Haarlem with Bleaching Grounds (early 1660s. canvas, 36.2x45 cm, private collection)

fig.2 View of Haarlem with Bleaching Grounds (early 1670s. canvas, 55.5x62 cm, Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis, the Hague)

fig.3 View of Haarlem with Bleaching Grounds (about 1670-75. canvas, 62.2x55.2 cm, Kunsthaus Zuerich, Stiftung Prof. Dr. L. Ruzicka)

The emphatic horizontal layout, the relative lack of articulation into depth on the left, and the thick grainy paint place the excellently preserved picture in the early sixties. In this view Ruisdael has taken more than usual delight in the patterns created on the bleaching grounds by the long strips of linen and smaller pieces of it.⁴

From the elevated position of sand dunes in north west Harlem, our eyes caught sight of the red color of the city roofs, strong structure, and other St. Bavo church, city hall, and the edge of the city, the walls of many windmills. In the cloudy sky, reaching from low vision, reflected in the interaction of units in rural areas with light and shadow. Long linen was spread out the prospect of bleached grass - at the time of the painting was an important industrial town of flax

⁴ Seymour Slive, *Jacob van Ruisdael: Master of Landscape*, (Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2005), 46-47.

production. Ruisdael accorded the bleaching of linen an important place.

The skies accounts for more than two thirds of the canvas, but the feeling here was the vertical height of the format, but the main part of the tall, strong air play in modeling cloud stern area. Plain saw the prospect of a very distant and elevated point of view. The result was a decrease both in size and overlap of water sand dunes, forest, large tracts of land. The great achievement of the cohesion in the cloudy sky from its quality and significance of the relationship between the form of short stature. We can explore the vast land rich in different levels of hierarchy in alternating light and shadow stretching toward the horizon taut tendon.

At that time, Haarlem was an important city of linen bleaching, Ruisdael depicted the economic activities of Haarlem, the prospects of staffage in the bleaching linen scene, let us know when the Netherland economic prosperity, even the villagers engaged in processing business. In addition, Ruisdael depicted also on behalf of the Dutch windmill, disappearing in the distant horizon, not only allowed us to see that in portraying the Netherlands, a large number of windmill symbolizes the strength of the Dutch economy. Screen distant church, to our sense of peace of mind. Ruisdael conscious of commercial activities combined with religious beliefs, even in the competitive business environment, peace of mind was the desire by people with sustenance.

(II) Amsterdam

Fig.4 The Dam with the Weigh House at Amsterdam. (late 1670s, canvas, 54.2x66.3 cm. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemaeldegalerie)

Fig.5 Panoramic View of the Amstel Looking towards Amsterdam. (About 1675-81, canvas, 52.1x66.1 cm, Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge)

Fig.6 View of the Dam with the Weigh House at Amsterdam (about 1675-80. Black chalk, grey wash, 9x15.1 cm, musees royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels)

Fig.7 View of the Dam and Old Church at Amsterdam (about 1675-80. Black chalk, grey wash, 8.7x12.3 cm, musees royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels)

A drawing at Brussels, cut into two sheets at an unknown date (fig.6,7), served as a preliminary study for this view of Amsterdam's principal square, looking toward the former Weigh House, the inner harbor (Damrak) and the tower of the Old Church rising on the right above the city. The figures in the Berlin picture of the expansive square play a more prominent role than those in most of Ruisdael's existing paintings. The small figures in the middle ground are most likely by Ruisdael. Hofstede de Groot states that the larger, more carefully executed ones in the foreground are also by the artist.⁵

Fig.5 These extensive bird's-eye views of Amsterdam seen from the south, after the completion of the city wall, may have been possible from the tower of the Pauwentuin. Both paintings show more

⁵ Seymour Slive, *Jacob van Ruisdael: Master of Landscape*, (Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2005), 162-163.

of the vast expanse of Amsterdam than the drawing, which has probably been cut. The paintings include the Weesperpoort, which was set in the city wall. The Utrechtsepoort can be seen in the wall on the left. The large arched bridge linking the walls is the Amsterlbrug; beyond it the high spires of the Zuiderkerk and the more distant Oude Kerk are recognizable. The large building with a domed tower left of the centre on the horizon is the imposing New Town Hall.⁶

At that time, Amsterdam is a thriving business place, countries are here to unload goods merchant, merchants, travelers to gather. In Ruisdael's painting, also recorded when people trade practices. The most representative buildings in Amsterdam is Weigh House, in other words, Weigh House is also a symbol of Amsterdam. People in front of the shuttle in Weigh House Square, we talked to each other, engaged in the trading of goods, looks very lively and prosperity.

Ruisdael has painted the city hall, a symbol of Dutch democracy, the people's enjoyment of all civil rights, at the time, but the world's most free and open place. Stable political, and brought the cultural, commercial and artistic prosperity. One can imagine, Ruisdael is consciously into painting city hall, in addition to reflecting the atmosphere of democracy at that time, the actually projected Ruisdael at Amsterdam on the multi-image.

Ruisdael's painting added a lot of public constructions; the most obvious example is the long bridge, when the Netherland people attach great importance to urban development, good transportation

⁶ Seymour Slive, *Jacob van Ruisdael: Master of Landscape*, (Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2005), 164-165.

equipment to facilitate the people. The Netherlands has many channels, in particular, wants to bridge the facilities become important. In addition, the wild river, Ruisdael also describes a number of sailing boats, a symbol of the Netherlands is a maritime empire, the world's distribution center. Because the maritime industry's prosperity, and brought the Netherland economy has become very wealthy, people rely on export trade, culture and absorb the many foreign substances, while Netherland culture and the material will be planted throughout the world. In the 17th century, the Netherland dominated almost the entire world trend.

As described the city Haarlem, Ruisdael depicted Amsterdam, also painted the church. At that time, the Netherland believe in Calvinism, people believe that efforts to do good thing, God's salvation can be obtained. Because of this reason, the Netherland made to work hard to earn more wealth, to make public service more actively. Ruisdael depicted when people in addition to concentrate to the pursuit of wealth, but more eager to peace of mind. Although the church is less prominent in the painting, but they reflect that religion in the Netherland mind, that is very important spiritual sustenance.

III. Conclusion

To conclude, Ruisdael painted the city, the images are deliberately arranged to create the image of belonging to the city proper. We can see Ruisdael amazing powers of observation, whether describing Haarlem bleaching linen plant rural scene, or the bustling commercial city of Amsterdam, the screen can be arranged to ideal.

Ruisdael painted the cityscape using of harmonious colors scenery and high-point of view so that we can see the whole city as much as possible. Use of bleaching linen activities, Weigh House buildings, commercial vessels, city hall, windmills and churches, constructed to us the 17th-century Netherland imagination. Ruisdael was real substance in addition to reflecting the pattern, but also indirectly reveal the internal atmosphere of the Netherlands at that time: democracy, free culture, thriving commerce, and devout religious beliefs. The cities through the Ruisdael cityscape paintings, we seem to live in the Netherlands in the 17th century.

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V. Appendix:

Fig. 1 *View of the Plain of Haarlem with Bleaching Grounds* (early

1660s. canvas, 36.2x45 cm, private collection)



Fig.2 View of Haarlem with Bleaching Grounds (early 1670s. canvas, 55.5x62 cm, Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis, the Hague)



Fig.3 View of Haarlem with Bleaching Grounds (about 1670-75. canvas, 62.2x55.2 cm, Kunsthaus Zuerich, Stiftung Prof. Dr. L. Ruzicka)



Fig.4 The Dam with the Weigh House at Amsterdam. (late 1670s, canvas, 54.2x66.3 cm. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemaeldegalerie)

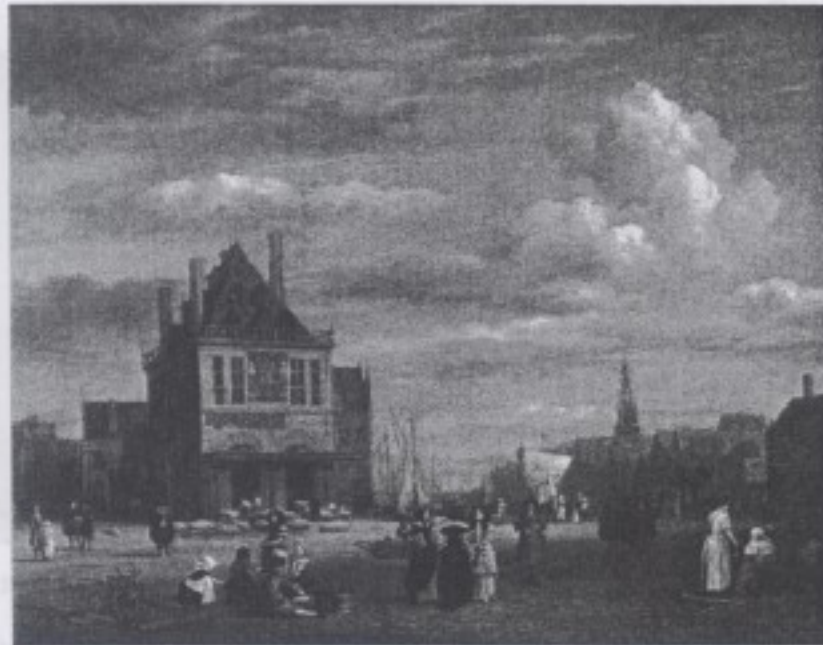


Fig.5 Panoramic View of the Amstel Looking towards Amsterdam. (About 1675-81,canvas, 52.1x66.1 cm, Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge)



Fig.6 View of the Dam with the Weigh House at Amsterdam (about 1675-80. Black chalk, grey wash, 9x15.1 cm, musees royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels)

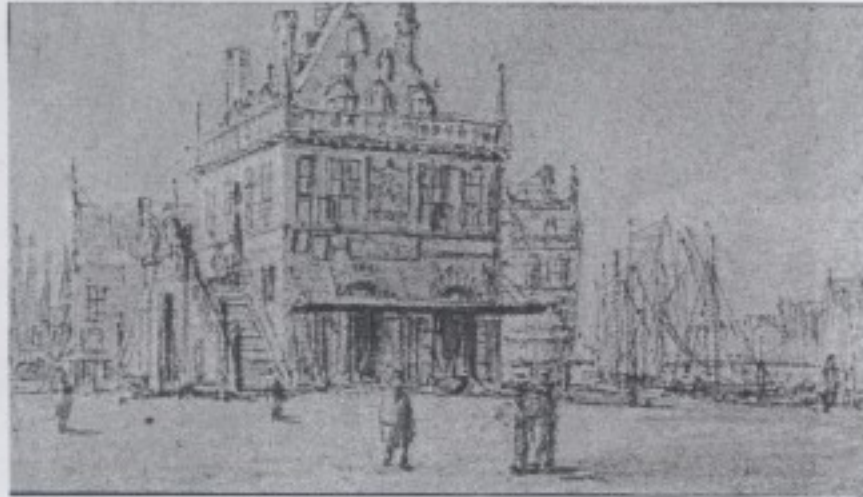


Fig.7 View of the Dam and Old Church at Amsterdam (about 1675-80. Black chalk, grey wash, 8.7x12.3 cm, musees royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels)



I. Preface

A bouquet of flowers may let people feel casual and happy today, and a vase of flowers could easily be placed in a room in 21st century. But in 17th century, flower was hard to get and only rich people could buy it. Flower painting became a replacement of real flowers, because many people couldn't afford real flowers and wanted to have flowers from different seasons at once. Although still-life painting might be the last level in art, it took a big part in 17th century Dutch painting. Why flower painting was popular at that time? Was the meaning of flower different from today? How did people think at that time? How did painter arrange the flower? In this article, I will first discuss the meaning of the flower painting. Then I will introduce some important flower painters' works, to see the main characters of flower paintings at that time.

II. The Meaning of Flower

When we talk about Dutch, always remind us the tulips. We think tulips grow everywhere in Dutch, and see it in many Dutch flower paintings. Actually tulip was imported from east in 16th century. In 1573, a man Ogier Ghislain de Busecq, he got some tulip bulbs and seeds from Turkey and he gave it to the famous botanist Carolus Clusius.¹ Carolus Clusius send seeds and bulbs to his friends in Flanders, growing tulips in his own garden and describing tulips in detail in his *Rariorum plantarum historia* of 1601.² Someday someone broke into his garden and stole his tulip bulbs, then sell it. Although is not a good behavior, it did help spread the tulips across the Netherlands. In 17th century, people thought tulips is incredible beautiful and wanted to devote everything to get the tulips. Many flowers especially those came from east

¹ E.H. Krelage, *Die eeuwen bloembollenexport*, The Hague 1946, p. 452.

² *Ibid.* p. 453.

were expensive at that time. In the first half of the 17th century and the second half of the 18th century, were periods of continuous inflation.³ Foodstuffs were volatile. The price of bread is not steady; the manual laborers could not afford it. People in that time couldn't have employment all year around, they only could afford 180 guilders per year, and it was really hard to live. They have to devote all thier life and income to feeding, clothing, and housing. So the flower buyers were on the top of the income range, and they were the wealthiest sections of the society.

Why tulips and most flowers connect to opulence? Here we have to mention the *Tulip mania*. Tulip grown from bulbs, it is not easy to know at first what kind of type the tulip will be and at least took three to seven years to become flower. The rare of tulips caused the price became higher. By late 1636 thousands of people had been sucked into the excitement of making instant fortunes.⁴ Then soon the price collapsed, many people get bankrupt. Tulip was a sign of wealth, but now more of tears, anger and laughter. And after tulip mania, hyacinth had the same cycle till 1739. It's obviously flower connect to opulence in 17th century Dutch.

Flower also played against another set of associations which flower could evoke: the simplicity and virtue of the rustic life.⁵ There was an important genre of poem in 17th century and 18th century, the garden poem. Garden poem is originated from Italy, writing in celebration of rural gardens, usually those attached to the country estates of the rich.⁶ Almost all the garden poets contrasted the safe, peaceful, pure life of the country with the vicious life of the towns. The Happy Man, who owns the garden, with a classical education and large amounts of money experienced country life. The

³ Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting*, New Haven: Yale University Press, c.1995, p.3.

⁴ Ibid. p.12.

⁵ Ibid. p.17.

⁶ Ibid. p.17.

country retreat should be a place of ordered peace. This meaning of simplicity and virtue of the rustic life, happy man and classical order then connect to the flower.

The garden poems also have other meanings, the religious messages. God's teaching can be derived from the garden's contents. The flowers in Happy Man's garden are so many pointers to Divine Truth. The lily preaches of chaste purity, the sunflower, which follows the sun through the sky during the course of the day, is an emblem of the devout soul humbly praising God, and so on.⁷

There are enormous sums of flower. We had already known the meaning of wealth, simple life and divine messages. Does the flower in painting have other meanings? In 17th century, one of the common similitudes was the comparison of the flowers with the brief life of man. Emmanuel Sweert in his *Florilegium* of 1612 told the reader that he had published his book in order: 'to place before your eyes the endless Almighty Power of God in which Man can, as in a mirror, see, observe and being moved thereby contemplate how short and insignificant his life is, and how great is the Mercy of God to have given us worthless Creatures for our enjoyment so beautiful a variety of such wonderful Creatures as Flowers, which tell us that the Life of Man is nothing other than a Flower of the Field which quickly fades...'⁸In a print, *A Young Man Holding Two Flowers* (fig.1) by Hendrick Goltzius, we see a well-dressed young man holding two flowers in his right hand. There is a motto under him, it said, 'Men's life is strange; One seeks pleasure, wealth, useless sins, another (through God's grace) rejects all evil desires, being thereby assured eternal life, by God's word. Thus O worthless and evil one improve your conduct, for man's life is like a flower.' Such meaning using frequently in prints and paintings. In Ambrosius Brueghel's *Vanitas* (fig.2), there are a vase of flowers, mirror, mask, instruments, hourglass, and other

⁷ Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting*, New Haven: Yale University Press, c.1995, p.26.

⁸ Emanuel Sweert, *Florilegium*, Frankfurt 1612, Introduction.

objects which all have symbol of vanitas. It also has couplet under the table in this painting: 'Beauty, riches, pomp, joy, art and the fame of majesty, indeed all things that are worldly, pass like a flower: Psalm 103, verse 15.' Painting of this sort that combine flower and other objects are common in 17th century Dutch painting. Flower also has other association to viewer who may not think of vanitas but the meaning of spring. However, flower reminds of time, especially time fleeting of nature.

Flower painting had another transience imagery is the power to conquer time. As we know flower wither with time, but that painted flowers last forever. For example, Willem van Aelst's *Flower Piece* (fig.3), there is a vase of flowers and pocket-watch. It may be a symbol of vanitas, but also a symbol of the power of art to freeze time.

In 17th century flower did have some symbolism meaning. When we look at flower painting, we can keep in mind of the flower symbolism of wealth, vanitas, and the relationship of time. Besides we have to also keep in mind that the meaning is not written in stone.

III. The flower painting

It is said that the flower piece was invented in Antwerp, when a lady who could not acquire some tulips asked the artist Jan Brueghel to paint them for her.⁹ Indeed before Jan Brueghel, there were other artist paint flower pieces. But it shows that flower painting at that time was acquired from people no matter how rich they are. In 17th century, flower painting are quiet popular. I will chronological introduced some artists in 17th century Dutch.

There were four artists at the beginning of 17th century played important role in floral still life movement, Jacques de Gheyn, Jan Brueghel, Ambrosius Bosschaert and Roelandt Savery. Jacques de Gheyn was born in Antwerp in 1565. He studied engraving with Hendrick Goltzius in Haarlem for two years, before moving to

⁹ L.J. BOL, *The Bosschaert Dynasty*, Leigh-on-Sea, 1960, p.17.

Amsterdam in 1591. Then he moved to Leiden in 1596 and to Hague in 1598 until his death in 1629.¹⁰ Flower pieces are a small part of his oeuvre. He was a draughtsman, engraver and painter who worked on allegorical and mythological scenes, as well as still-life and studies from nature. In his work *Vase of Flowers with Curtain* (fig.4) in 1615, we can see some traits. They are the high vanishing point and the composition of symmetry. And in *Vase of Flowers in a Niche* (fig.5) in 1612, we can see the same traits of high vanishing point and the composition of symmetry. In this painting, we see the flowers are painted in high tone against the dark of the niche while the overemphatic chiaroscuro is used. The flowers are placed in logical and consistent with order. But the twisting petals give the variety and visual interest to the painting. His contemporary, Jan Brueghel the Elder, was born in 1568 and lived most of his life in Antwerp, died in 1625. In his *Flower Piece* (fig.6), the background is totally dark made the flower much clear to see. The tone of the color of the flower made the spatial effect. His most contribution of flower painting is the variety of composition. He not used only vase but also basket, wreath and tazzas, influenced the artists after him.

Ambrosius Bosschaert the Elder was born in Antwerp but his family moved to Middleburg when he was a child. In 1615, he moved to Bergen-on-Zoom then he was in Utrecht. In 1619, he moved to Breda. In 1621, while delivering a painting to the Prince of Orange's steward in The Hague, he fell ill and died.¹¹ His arrangement had three sorts: a bouquet in a vase or glass; in a table; in niche or in an arched window frame. The window painting was his invention. In *Flower Piece* (fig.7), a vase of flowers was placed in an arched window frame and the imaginary landscape of rock and river made the sight deeper. The painting is in a light tone even the background

¹⁰ Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting*, New Haven: Yale University Press, c.1995, p.128.

¹¹ Ibid. p.134.

sky is light, the flower still catch the eye. The dark foliage helps to make flowers stand forward even though flowers are painted in shade. We can see his flower is much sharp in the contour, the lines of leaves is clear to see. He is careful to use the color to strengthen the flowers. The color of yellow and white are used in frontal flower while the blue and red are used in back. This arrangement gives a graduation of color and the weight of the flower and makes a visual effect of three dimensions.

Roelandt Savery was born in Courtrai in Flanders in 1576 and died in 1639 in Utrecht.¹² Most of his paintings were landscape with animals, but his flower painting was followed for a hundred years. Like the former painter, he used colors, line and shadow to make the spatial arrangement of flower but more explicit. The chiaroscuro of hue is more developed. In his *Flower Piece* (fig.8), a vase of abundant flowers was placed in center in a niche. The niche is dark but right side is bright. The front flower is brighter than the behind. It makes an effect of light level from left to right: dark, light, dark and light. The frontal and central flower he painted is clearer than the side and back. Also the color of flowers makes the same effect, pink, yellow and white are in high tone put in front. In the same time, the color in low tone like red, blue and dark green are painted in the back. Even in the frontal flower, we can see the yellow, white and pink are placed well to lighten each other. It is a technique called 'chequering'. All this arrangement built up the illusion of space. He may be the first person who used chequering to make this effect.

After these four flower painters, some painter follow their techniques and composition. Balthasar van der Ast who was taken into the household of his sister and her husband, Ambrosius Bosschaert the elder, in 1609 when he was 15 or 16 years old. He moved from Middleburg with Bosschaert around 1615 to Utrecht. In 1632, he

¹² Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting*, New Haven: Yale University Press, c.1995, p.142.

moved to Delft, dying there in 1657.¹³ He adopted both Bosschaert and Savery's styles but made his own style. In *Vase of Flowers by a Window* (fig.9), there is a vase of flowers placed beside a window. The chiaroscuro is used. We can see the light came from left, and the dark between window and table make a space. His color is considerable. The flowers are from orange end of spectrum. And the larger flower was placed in center and small ones were ranged around. I think this painting is unique because the space the painter created is nature and real.

In the 1650s, a new generation of flower painters came forward. The most important painter is Jan Davidsz de Heem. He had diversity in composition. He is the first one to paint festoons. In *Festoon of Flowers* (fig.10), the background is black which he used frequently to put his flower against the black or extremely somber grounds. His chiaroscuro is strong that flowers seemed to emerge from the gloom, rather than standing before it. The contrast of hue can be seen from right to left and the light is unnatural. It seems like a spotlight on the flower. The flower was put in the center but he painted every flower from different direction. No one before Jan Davidsz de Heem had painted tulip in so many different poses.¹⁴ This diversity of position gives a sense of being painted from the life. His *Vase of Flowers* (fig.11) shows something different from tradition, too. The foliage here has the same proportion of flower. He depicts leaves as flowers. The painters before him always painted dark leaves and put them in the back of flower, but he didn't do that. His innovation of variety of floral arrangement made part of the standard repertoire of Dutch flower painting.

IV. Conclusion

We have already seen the flower painting from the beginning of 17th century till the

¹³ Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting*. New Haven: Yale University Press, c.1995, p.146.

¹⁴ Ibid. p.165.

mid 17th century. In my opinion, they have some common traits. Painter placed the flower in center and in symmetry composition. The flowers came from different seasons. It shows the painter didn't really place a vase of flowers in front of him, but took from drawings and then arranged different flowers of his mind. They all try to create an illusion of nature and the three dimensions of space and objects. They use chiaroscuro and colors to make effect to treat the viewer's eyes. And maybe because of market, the painter in the same period didn't change a lot in style.

Until Jan Davidsz de Heem, the style of flower painting had changed. I think the paintings became more theatrical. The contrast between background and flower is extremely strong. And the flowers became more dynamic and complicated. The arrangement of flower based on the former painter and developed in his own way.

I think the flower painting shows the ability of painter that he can handle the relationship between two and three dimensions, the beauty of nature, and the balance of color and tone. It also has to combine the imagination and reality. In the 17th century flower painting, we can see the evidence of the painters' efforts.

V. Bibliography

Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting*, New Haven: Yale University Press, c.1995.

VI. Slides

Fig.1

16. Hendrick Goltzius, *A Young Man Holding Yew Flowers*, first state, signed. Photo: Warburg Institute





Fig.2



Fig.3



Jacques de Gheyn II - *Vase of Flowers with a Curtain*, 1613 - Oil on panel, 43 1/4 x 29 1/4 inches (109.8 x 74.3 cm) - Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

Fig.4



Fig.5



Fig.6

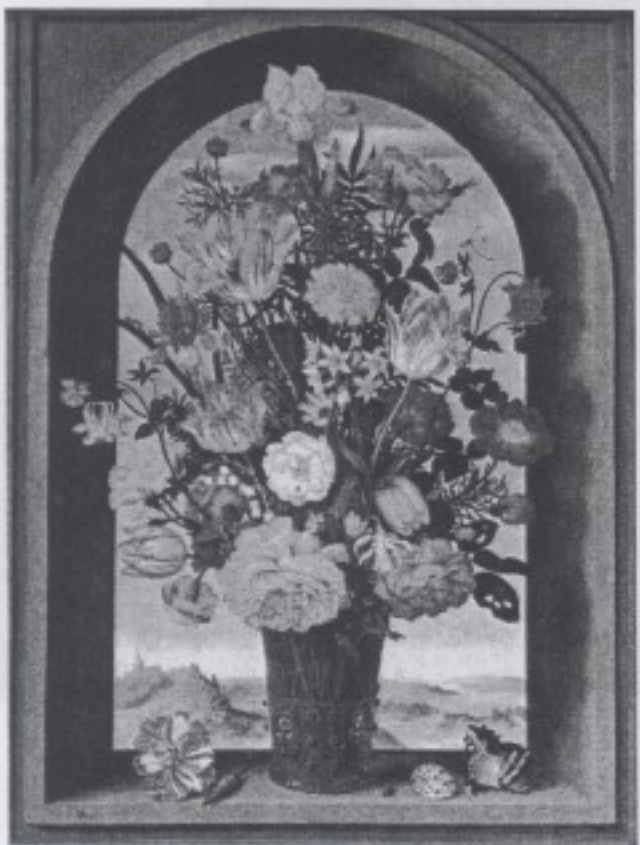


Fig.7

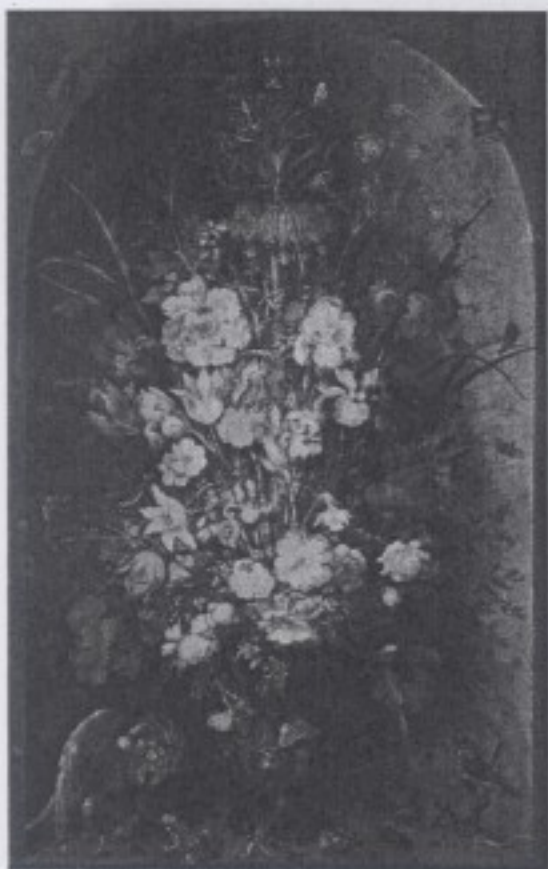


Fig.8

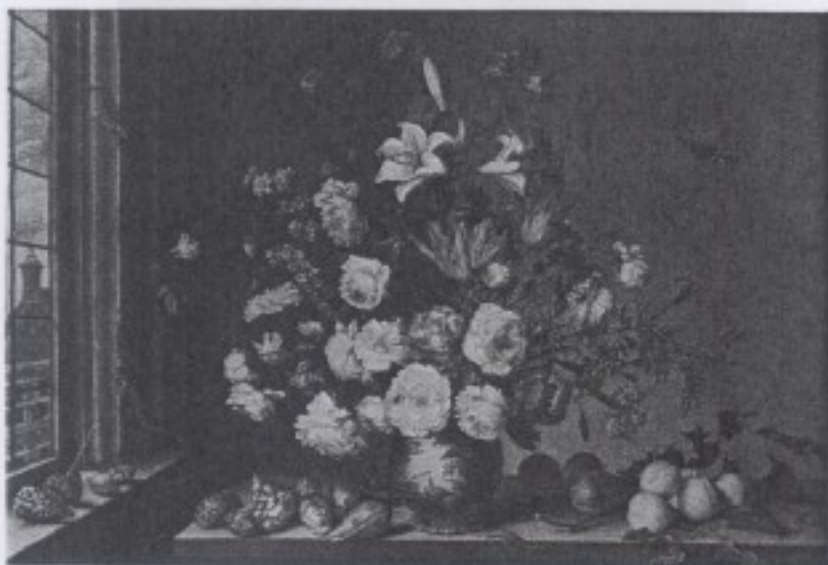


Fig.9



Fig.10



Fig.11

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Photo: Warburg Institute. Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting*, New Haven: Yale University Press, c.1995, p.44.
2. Ambrosius Bosschaert, *Vanitas*, panel, 124 × 77 cm, signed. Sotheby's, London, 1974. Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting*, New Haven: Yale University Press, c.1995, p.45.
3. Willem van Aelst, *Flower Piece*, canvas, 62.5 × 49 cm, signed and dated 1663. Mauritshuis, The Hague. Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting*, New Haven: Yale University Press, c.1995, p.50.
4. Jacques de Gheyn II, *Vase of Flowers*, panel, 109 × 74 cm, signed and dated 1615. Private Collection.

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5. Jacques de Gheyn II, *Vase of Flowers in a Niche*, copper, 58.8 × 43.5 cm, signed and dated 1612. Mauritshuis, The Hague. Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting*, New Haven: Yale University Press, c.1995, p.132.
6. Jan Brueghel the Elder, *Flower Piece*, panel, 42 × 34.5 cm. Mauritshuis, The Hague. Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting*, New Haven: Yale University Press, c.1995, p.133.
7. Ambrosius Bosschaert the Elder, *Flower Piece*, panel, 64 × 46 cm, signed in monogram. Mauritshuis, The Hague. Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting*, New Haven: Yale University Press, c.1995, p.136.
8. Roelandt Savery, *Flower Piece*, panel, 130 × 80 cm, signed and dated 1624. Central Museum, Utrecht. Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting*, New Haven: Yale University Press, c.1995, p.145.

9. Balthasar van der Ast, *Vase of Flowers by a Window*, panel, 67 × 98 cm.
Staatliche Galerie Dessau, Schloss Georgium. Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting*, New Haven: Yale University Press, c.1995, p.148.
10. Jan Davidsz de Heem, *Festoon of Flowers*, panel, 26.2 × 47.4 cm, signed.
Staatliches Museum, Schwerin. Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting*, New Haven: Yale University Press, c.1995, p.163.
11. Jan Davidsz de Heem, *Vase of Flowers*, canvas, 69.5 × 56.5 cm, signed.
National Gallery of art, Washington. Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting*, New Haven: Yale University Press, c.1995, p.167.

Jan Steen (1626-1679) and Dutch genre painting

Lydia Lin (Ya Wen)

Little is known for certain about Jan Steen is that he is a painter, being a Catholic,¹ and he lived mostly in Leiden. Early eighteenth-century biographers of artist record that Jan Steen was taught by various painters such as the German painter **Nicolaus Knupfer** (1603-1660),² **Adriaen van Ostade**, as well as landscape painter **Jan van Goyen**,³ whose daughter Margriet van Goyen he married in 1649.⁴



1 Jan Steen, *Self-portrait*, c. 1670, oil on canvas, 73x62, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

2 Jan Steen, *Self-portrait as a Lutenist*, c. 1663-1665, oil on canvas, 55.3x43.8, Fundación Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid.

The feature of Jan Steen's comic art and genre painting are that he often depicts the crowd in interior with mess,⁵ having the merry and delighted atmosphere.⁶ His genre paintings have got caught between an iconographic approach that seeks to secure meaning hidden behind the realist depiction. That is to say, Steen depicts the daily objects of people, and may have some implications on them. My question of Jan Steen is, besides the normal scene of everyday life, did he have tried to convey something

¹ Steen was a Catholic artist in a predominantly Calvinist country. Although little is known about his attitude toward religion and Catholicism, it seems that it would have had an impact on his interpretations of popular festivals and biblical scenes.

² Nicolaus Knupfer (1603-1660) was a German painter of historical and figurative scenes in Utrecht

³ Steen has very rare pupils, one of them Richard Brakenburg.

⁴ Later they would have eight children, and after Margriet died, Jan Steen married another wife Maritje Herculens.

⁵ Steen also painted historical paintings, and this may be the influence by Nicolaus Knupfer.

⁶ The Dutch proverb "a Jan Steen household" which is originated in the eighteenth century and is used today to refer to a home in disarray, full of rowdy children, connotes a household at once. Unlike the word "a Vermeer household", they are the words to describe the usage of the interior.

on his painting? If he did, then what is the specific intention of him? Following seven pictures I would like to present may give some inspirations for us to him and his works.



3 Jan Steen, *The Bean Feast (Twelfth Night)*, 1668, Oil on canvas, 82x107.5, Staatliche Museen, Kassel

The first picture is *The Bean Feast (Twelfth Night)*, fig. 3). In the chaotic interior, here's a group of people celebrating the *Bean Feast on Twelfth Night* (the feast of the Epiphany, 6 January), which associated with Catholic tradition, perhaps indicating the religion which Steen had chosen.

In this picture, men, women and children form a cheerful crowd around the dining table, some in the fashionable middle-class dress of the day, while some are wearing different household utensils on their heads. Wearing the king's crown is a boy who stands on a small table, being helped to drain his glass by an elderly nun beside him. The jester, identified by the inscribed scrap of paper in his cap, is on his feet in front of the table, providing a rhythmical accompaniment with an earthenware pot and a small stick. On the far left, an older man with a metal funnel on his head has made a fiddle and bow from a ladle and a roasting spit, while someone else at the back is playing a real violin. The painter and his wife, however, have joined in the disorderly celebration, being seated at table in the middle of the painting. On the opposite side, clearly keeping their distance is a more genteel group gathered around a preacher and taking no part in the merriment.

This painting emanates life and vitality. Steen subtly emphasizes the important characters in the scene. For example, he raises the young king to the level of the

others by placing him on a bench, and accentuates his importance by situating him at the focal point of his perspective system. He features the inebriated woman by creating a vertical axis through her body that extends from the empty bird cage hanging over her head to the dog at her feet.



4 Jan Steen, *The Luxury Beware*, 1663, oil on canvas, 105x145, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, Vienna.

In the fourth painting (fig. 4) household gone away, and mother has fallen asleep, things have gotten out of hand. Animals like a dog, a pig, a duck, and a monkey just invading the home. And the children are misbehaving (smoking a pipe, raiding the cupboard, toying with mother's pearls). This misrule pales compared to the unseemly behavior of the central people. The man, perhaps the father, lewdly slings his leg across the lap of a beautiful seductress. And she holds the wine she proffers provocatively between his legs. Her alluring smile, indecorously assertive gaze, sumptuously painted yellow satin gown, and necklace with a ring identify her as a loose woman, probably a prostitute. This painting shows the transgression of the family.

The interesting part of the painting is the inscription on the slate at the lower right, itself a symbol of reckoning, is a proverb from which the picture gets its title, *in weelde siet toe* (in luxury, watch out), and the word *soma op* (sums up).

Traditionally luxury was associated with effeminacy, the effect of which was to corrupt the virtuous manly life, and was personified by a sexually seductive opulently adorned female.⁷ Steen wants to express the message that Luxury leads to ruin, in

⁷ Jan Steen: *Painter and Storyteller*, p. 168.

other words, this painting is a humorous allegory of the prodigal family, that merrymaking celebration gone out of hand.



5 Jan Steen, *The Merry Family*, 1668, oil on canvas, 110.5x141, on loan to the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

The fifth painting (fig. 5) shows a happy family around the table in the interior. Young and old, all are enjoying themselves enormously, the mother and grandmother are singing a song, and two sons are playing music while their brothers and a sister smoke a pipe. The father has stopped playing his violin and exuberantly raises his glass. His example is followed by the children in the foreground, who are also drinking wine.

Despite the merriness, this is not the cozy family party it seems. The happy, chaotic 'Jan Steen household' scenes almost contain a moral, that is, admonishments against undisciplined behavior and excess. This painting also contains a more specific message which can be read in the inscription on the mantelpiece to the right. '*Soo d'Oude Songen, Soo Pypen de Jonge*' (*As the Old Sing, So Pipe the Young*) (fig. 6).⁸ It means that children do what their parents do, even when they are setting a bad example. The children here are exuberant and restless and even the youngest are smoking and drinking. Also, empty eggshells often refer to the fragility and emptiness of a life that only consists of drinking, smoking and partying. The painter is warning against the consequences of a bad upbringing.

⁸ "As it is sung, thus it is piped, that's been known a long time, as I sing, so (everyone) do the same from one to a hundred years old."



6 The detail of *The Merry Family*. On the paper, it is written 'Soo d'Oude Songen, Soo Pypen de Jonge' (As the Old Sing, So Pipe the Young).

Steen represents the popular proverb "*As the old thing, so pipe the young*" as a pun on children smoking and blowing on pipes in imitation of their elders. He has depicted the proverb figuratively, but also literally: the adults are singing and the children are piping: playing a flute or smoking a pipe. In this way it is definitely sure that Steen focused on the moral behind the picture.



7 Jan Steen, *Interior of an Inn with an Old Man, the landlady and Two Men Playing Backgammon*, Known as *two kind*, c. 1636-79, oil on canvas, 63x69.5, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Because Steen opened a tavern to make life, the subject of his painting appears oftentimes (fig. 7). With the witty connotations, Steen depicted a group of men are having fun in a tavern. A young man is drinking beer, draining his tankard, while a

couple of others are playing backgammon⁹. Similar to card games, games of chance like backgammon symbolize folly (due to the risks) and represented vanity and wasted time. On the left, another game is being played. An old man tries to pull a young landlady onto his lap. The woman resists him half-heartedly. Her red stockings, however, suggest that she would not have been all that worried about her morals. *Kous*, the Dutch for stocking, could also mean the female pudenda or a loose woman. In this case, the red stocking of the landlady may have the sexual indications here.

Taverns were sometimes disguised brothels and this place certainly has a rather dubious air. The lute on the wall, the dog, and the eggshells¹⁰ on the ground all suggest debauchery, lust and idleness. As a Dutch old proverb goes "*Leven in de brouwerij brengen*" (*Life is from the beer*), Steen depicted the interior of the inn to convey his warning.

Also, a poem which is written by a Dutch poet in seventeenth century has the relationship to the subject. It describes the sense of lust and desire for the pleasure.

*For fleshly lust seduce and fawn on me
When freely I succumb to passion.
Yet even as I taste its pleasure they rob me
Of my name, my good renown, my soul's very rest.*¹¹

by Bredero *Liedeken van mijn zelven*

Another two paintings are that they both may have some erotic and moral intentions, giving the multiple and profound meaning on each other. The former one is *Girl offering Oysters* (fig. 8). As the title, it shows a lovely girl in the public room adding the salt the oysters on the table,¹² while on the background, there are still two people preparing more oysters. In literary and pictorial traditions in western culture, oysters took on moralizing significance as symbols of lust and worldliness. That is to say, oysters are laden with carnal overtones, the aphrodisiacal oyster.¹³

⁹ It is one type of playing cards. Backgammon is an old board game, probably English or Saxon in origin.

¹⁰ Cracking eggs into a pan was one of the many Dutch synonyms for coitus and was used as such by Matthijs van de Merwede in his priapic book, *Roomse min-triumpfen* in 1651.

¹¹ *Jan Steen: Painter and Storyteller*, p. 43.

¹² I can't stop wondering that, it's salty enough for oyster itself, why this girl just keep on adding more salt and pepper on the oyster? What is the purpose of her? And what is the purpose of the painter? Is it a way to strengthen the multiple meanings?

¹³ According to the ancient mythographers, Aphrodite (known to the Romans as Venus), was conceived in an oyster shell which subsequently transported her to the island of Cyprus. To ancient and early modern minds, Aphrodite symbolized love, sex, and fertility; such concepts were also linked, by association, to oysters.



8 Jan Steen, *Girl offering Oysters*, c. 1658-1660, Oil on panel, 20.5x14.5, Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis, The Hague



9 Jan Steen, *Woman at her toilet*, c. 1661-65, Oil on panel, 37x27.5, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

The second picture is *Woman at her toilet* (fig. 9). The woman is sitting on the bed, wearing or taking off her red socks, beside her are a dog sleeping on her bed. The interesting thing is *Kous*, the Dutch for stocking, could also mean the female pudenda or a loose woman in 17 century usage, as did mussel and oyster.¹⁴ Expressions such as "she's darning her stockings" were frequently used to refer to the sexual act. In that period, a woman with red stockings was a prostitute. Besides, the stocking, the half-filled chamber pot on the floor also refers to loose women, and *piskous* was another word for describing a woman as a slut. This kind of the erotic message was reinforced by the discarded slippers, the dog and the candlestick on the chair here these are all symbols of lust.¹⁵

Above two paintings, whether the intention of Steen to be ironic and moral, their conception has no doubt to have several and ambiguous meanings.¹⁶

¹⁴ There's several Erotic symbol in Dutch genre painting, for example, the man offers the partridge to a woman, might be the undertones to have the proposition with her. Secondly, fireplace may also have a symbolic meaning "fires of love."

¹⁵ The interpretation of Dutch genre paintings is complex. The same object in the different scene and different use might indicate the different meanings. Take the dog for example, sometimes the dog is the symbol of royalty, but sometimes is the symbol of loose.

¹⁶ According to *The Oyster in Dutch Genre Paintings: Moral or Erotic Symbolism*, it is said that the symbol of oyster with multiple meanings, such as pleasure, sins and their consequences—food and sex; gluttony and lust; momentary passion and transitory life, as evanescent as fickle fortune. P. 155.



10 Jan Steen, *The world as a Stage*, c. 1665-1667, oil on canvas, 68.2x82, Mauritshuis, The Hague

The last picture is *The world as a Stage*, or *A Stage of Human Life* (fig. 10)¹⁷. Early views saw this painting as an allegory scene of human life. In all its stages from young to old, and its evident curtain, this painting is just like to represent the stage of the world.¹⁸ "Life is a stage, and we play our part and receive our reward", wrote by Vondel,¹⁹ the great poet of the Netherlands, expressing the moral preoccupation of 17th-century Dutch culture. Steen could have included a *vanitas* damper in this painting, or it would be a painting as an allegorical scene of human life (fig. 11).



11 The detail of *The world as a Stage*. The Skull behind the curtain.

¹⁷ This painting has several names from different scholars, whereas I took the way of Mariët Westermann. In her book *The Amusements of Jan Steen*, she used the title of it, p. 312.

¹⁸ Ibid. It is said that Eddy de Jongh has called it *Stage of the World* to emphasize the worldly activities.

¹⁹ *Jan Steen: Painter and Storyteller*, p. 43.

Life is a stage, and in order to praise of folly (fig. 12),²⁰ all people are revealed behind the curtain, and just play their own role with any kinds of emotions and actions. However, man will die soon or later, so do us. Music, gambling, smoking, and drinking fill with this stage of the world. A clock on the distant back wall by be the symbol of lifetime. For he has given an extra pull to the central section of the curtain, hoisting it higher to give a neatly framed view of a gap in the rafters where a young boy blows the ephemeral bubbles of human life, giving the meaning of *Homo bulla*, man is a bubble (fig. 11).



12 Hendrick Goltzius, *Homo bulla* (gravure)



13 Adriaen van de Venne, frontispiece, *Tafereel van de Belacchende Werlt*, 1635, 17.7x13.6, Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam.

This is perhaps what Steen wants to tell people, *Tafereel van de Belacchende Werelt* (*Pictures of the world to be ridiculed*), without jeering at ourselves, for the foolish world is within us.²¹

Conclusion

One respect for us to see Jan Steen is that he shows the ordinary subjects of the daily life. Another respect is that he uses some allusions such as the Dutch proverbs to imply the moral meanings in his paintings, for example, the painting named *The Merry Family*. However, what are the direct and true meanings of his other works? It seems that sometimes he did not present his real idea of his paintings, whereas the

²⁰ I used the title of the book *The Praise of Folly* of Erasmus of Rotterdam in 1509.

²¹ *Jan Steen: Painter and Storyteller*, p. 43.

interpretations of his paintings are often ambiguous and elusive. Just as Steen's first biographer, Arnold Houbraken (1660-1719) wrote that Steen's "painting are as his way of life and his way of life is painting."²²

From his previous paintings, Steen's creative play with the conventions of the genres, had given the formation of modern notions of authorship and personal identity. In another word, Steen depicts everyday appearance and everyday life on the foundations of Dutch genre painting, but with the different methods on the genre tradition, and he even did not always try to provide an accurate portrayal of a real scene and, as I may say, his real intention, thus showing us the different aspects and opinions on his paintings.²³

²² *Jan Steen: Painter and Storyteller*, p. 13.

²³ In reality, I think the interpretation of the paintings of Jan Steen is difficult. Some studies of Steen are basically based on the Iconography, so the beginning of my study is very easy to have the stereotype on Steen's paintings. Whenever I see the specific painting of Steen, I would like to find some implications of it, sometimes it does work, but sometimes I think this kind of aspect is the limitation for the study. How should people to take a detached assessment of Jan Steen, or what kind of attitude should people have for him, I think it is a very important point of view.

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