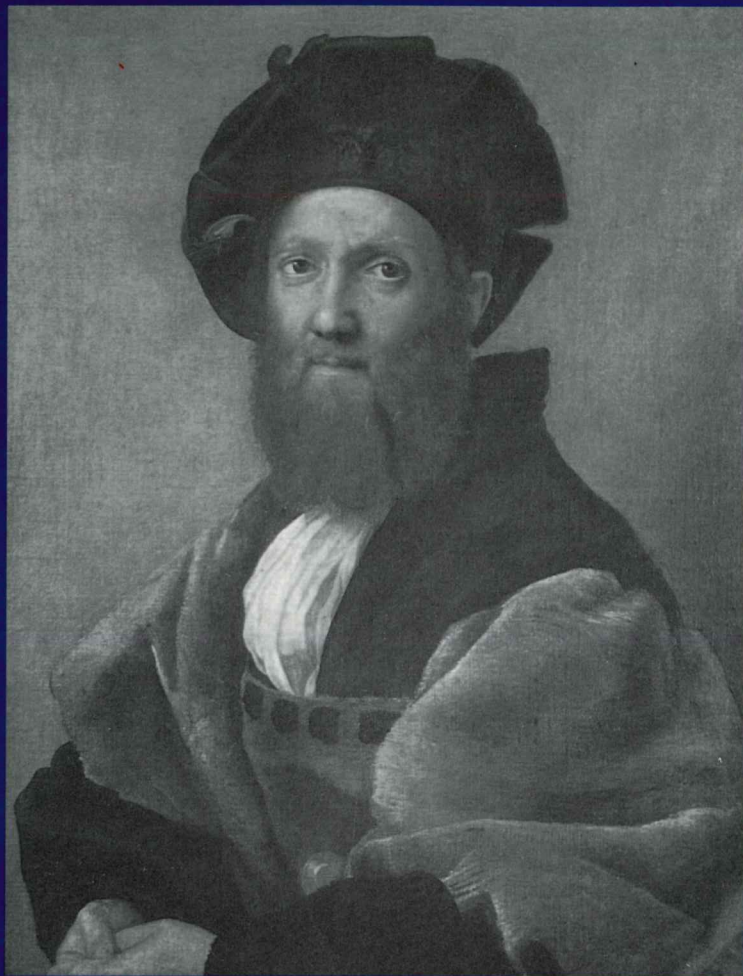


SPREZZATURA AND THE ART OF PAINTING FINELY

*Open-ended Narration in Paintings by Apelles, Raphael,
Michelangelo, Titian, Rembrandt and Ter Borch*



PHILIPP FEHL

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MICHELANGELO, TITIAN, REMBRANDT AND TER BORCH*

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Philipp Fehl

Sprezzatura and the
Art of Painting Finely

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Michelangelo, Titian, Rembrandt and Ter Borch*

Groningen
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1997

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SPREZZATURA AND THE ART OF PAINTING FINELY

OPEN-ENDED NARRATION IN PAINTINGS BY APELLES, RAPHAEL,
MICHELANGELO, TITIAN, REMBRANDT AND TER BORCH

*I have seene Painters doe
their worke, 'saith Libanius,' 'singing'.*

FRANCISCUS JUNIUS, *The Painting of the Ancients in three Bookes*,
London, 1638, Book II, ch.vii, §1. See note 1

The literature of classical antiquity is full of stories that tell us that too much care in finishing a picture is counter-productive. There is an invisible point towards which you must reach but beyond which you must not go. You can't be fine enough in perfecting your work but if you try too hard you are no longer fine, your picture becomes artificial just where you wanted to arrive at perfection in the representation of nature. Your piece will be labored and therefore look unnatural; it will no longer be, as nature always is, free. Apelles vaunted that his works had a certain grace, an ease and that in that quality, in it alone, he was superior to all his famous fellow painters.¹ He knew 'when to take his hand off his picture' and thus, by leaving it in a manner unfinished, he finished it to perfection. His famous dark varnish made his pictures shine in relative darkness more appropriately brightly and hid, perhaps, with a more completely accurate fineness what was too finely finished to do justice to truth with the semblance of a new and accurate and comforting fineness. Thus he could paint what could not be painted, 'thunder, lightening, and lightening flashes.' The fleeting apparitions became definite because he painted them fleetingly and the crash of thunder could be heard as an effect of what he made visible. Where the image was not enough the imagination supplied what was missing.

Apelles' famous signature 'Apelles faciebat' and not 'fecit,' 'he was making this picture,' not 'he made it,' is noted by Pliny the Elder in his Preface to his *Natural History* as a moral accomplishment, a signal of modesty. Apelles acknowledges having attempted but not necessarily accomplished his task. Pliny wishes he could sign his own work as Apelles did his paintings because there is always error and room for improvement. It would be a precaution against censure that would be

merited. Apelles' signature has been imitated from his own time on. But in Apelles' case it may be that his modesty in using the imperfect tense also describes the way in which he actually painted, by leaving out elements that defied representation and yet representing them exactly by the power of suggestion. On the level of technique there is the lesson of the sponge he eventually, in exasperation, threw at the mouth of a horse because its foam continued to look painted the more he tried to paint it exactly – and fortune and the imagination came to his aid and represented the foam naturally. The painter Nealces had similar success with the foam at the mouth of a panting horse when he was painting his *Man Checking a Horse with the Click of his Tongue*, the click of the tongue, of course, being as unpaintable – but still representable – as Apelles' 'Thunder.'² From the experience of these painters we must, however, not conclude that it is advisable to throw sponges at paintings to obtain true versimilitude, but rather that it is a good idea to stop worrying a picture. True effects are not produced by insisting on them; instead they turn cold.

What is taught by the perfection of imperfection in the terms of technique is also true in the presentation of a subject. The two are connected as body and soul. Euphranor made a statue of *Paris* that showed him, all at once, in the fullness of his character: as the 'judge of the goddesses,' the 'lover of Helen,' but also as the slayer of Achilles.³ The same art of showing all aspects of a personality, one more complex yet, with all opposites reconciled in the image by appealing to the imagination, was accomplished by Parrhasius when he painted *The Demos of Athens*, showing it 'in various lights, irascible, unjust, inconstant, and also amenable, merciful, full of pity, then again lofty, vainglorious, humble, fierce and timid, and all this in the same figure.'⁴ Just as lines must be so fine as to vanish, just hinting at what cannot be seen, so must subjects, in their complexity of aspects that are part of the whole in a single image, by a parallel reticence, show a similar tact. Timanthes appealed to the imagination when, having expended all the intensity of grief in several figures attending the *Sacrifice of Iphigenia*, he had Iphigenia's father who was obliged to order her sacrifice, cover his face with his cloak and so showed what could not be represented, grief in its ultimate form.⁵ The imagination reaches, as it were, behind the cloak and falls silent in beholding and yet not seeing the unutterable. Timanthes' work abounds in comparable successes. He is the painter of the imagination *par excellence*. Pliny sums it up: 'There is ever much more understood in his workes then is painted; and though the Art be great, yet doth his wit goe beyond the Art.'⁶

Not unrelated is Apelles' famous solution in portraying Antigonos, the king whose left eye had been gauged out, by painting the right side of his face in a near profile: his disfigurement, if we knew about it, was not denied, but it did not show.

And similarly again the sculptor Alcamenes was praised for being able to show the god Vulcan as lame as he was, and succeeding in turning that very lameness to a decorous advantage – decorous, that is, because his Vulcan was every inch a god, in the perfection of divinity.⁷

The loveliest, perhaps, of all the near proverbial and didactic stories hinting at the painter's success in letting us see the unseeable is offered by Ovid's praise of Apelles' *Venus Anadyomene*: 'Had Apelles never placed Venus in his painting/ she would still lie submerged in the watery depth.'⁸ Painting gave us the goddess in her true, her invisible loveliness.

All of these stories, though many stress a technical skill, more or less darkly also include a moral lesson. You can show freedom of motion or the emotions in their full play, or the truth of what cannot be painted, if you are free yourself, if you do not slavishly labor over a set task, if your imagination is engaged in encountering the subject so that our imagination, the viewers', can join yours; you can move only if you can be moved yourself in contemplating your subject. The glory of art, the high respect in which artists were held, the prices they commanded, and the prizes they were offered – Apelles to whom Alexander the Great gave his mistress because Apelles, while painting her in the nude at Alexander's command, had so desperately fallen in love with her that his life was in danger – all point to the life of the emotions and the possession of an exquisite skill that is joined to a superior intelligence in the management of that skill and makes the visual arts, like poetry, as worthy and delightful in their exercise as in their contemplation. The Romans, so legend has it, restricted the practice and the teaching of painting to people born free.⁹

It was left to Leon Battista Alberti to articulate the link between the stories and the moral charm and worth of works of art in his *Della pittura* by calling on the poets and, above all, the rhetoricians of antiquity, notably Cicero and Quintilian, when they were reflecting on the link between the exercise of their own skills and the dignity of their arts.¹⁰

A fully developed study of these interconnections between the visual and the liberal arts was not offered until the great Dutch philologist Franciscus Junius presented his *De pictura veterum* in 1637.¹¹ In it the corpus of the literary evidence pertaining to the visual arts in antiquity is collected, ordered, and combined in a great mosaic picture of quotations that are morally supported and enlarged with the evidence provided by rhetoric and poetry to form a veritable history and theory of the visual arts. We shall return to Junius and the usefulness of his work to us in our own concern for the state of our discipline in the end of this lecture but let it be said at the outset that his theory shows a wonderful respect for the didactic anecdotes with which we began. They rise from the practice of painting and they are moral by extension. Junius, in the direction indicated by Alberti, but by dint of a philological labor of love, develops them but happily he does not submerge them in theory. The morality of painting comes in the doing, exactly as these anecdotes suggest. They provide, in the terms of folklore, a commentary on the works of the great artists and fructify our imagination, but they are not prescriptive to artists; their elusive lesson is not law. It is to be taken to heart but not copied out. Each artist, to find the freedom art craves will choose and apply the lesson in the terms of the task at hand and in accordance with his own nature and gifts.

It is for this reason that I have refrained from attempting a theory woven around the stories in paintings that I call open-ended. Instead I show you examples and try to order them after a fashion, to point to the variety of procedures possible in the pursuit of the same ends. The open-endedness of these narrations grows from the same concerns, I believe, that are alive in our anecdotes. It is part and parcel of the painter's readiness to stop short of over-reaching himself when he sets out to imitate nature, with the help of poetry, as accurately, as fully as he can. Each picture, each solution to the problem the painter encounters once he penetrates into areas he cannot literally make visible has its individual character. His solution can then become the source of new anecdotes and didactic legends.

Baldassar Castiglione in his *Libro del Cortegiano* recommends the arts to the courtier in almost the same terms in which Alberti urges their noble usefulness but he does it gently; his propositions are offered in conversations; his proposal takes shape playfully, itself becoming an example of what he advocates. As Castiglione paints the picture of the perfect courtier, the courtier comes to life. The dialogue demonstrates in its make-up, in its becoming, in the shaping of its frame, the virtues, the grace of living, the charm but also the high seriousness and relaxed gravity that are variously developed in the conversations as the aspects of a courtier's character and his profound responsibility for the choices that are made by the prince he serves. We owe Castiglione the word *sprezzatura* which is at the heart of our discussion. It is the courtier's noble disdain of unworthy effort, of untoward eagerness. He should 'usar in ogni cosa una certa sprezzatura, che nasconde l'arte, e dimostri, ciò che si fa e dice, venir fatto senza fatica e quasi senza pensarci.'¹² In other words, what Apelles achieved in the art of painting the courtier should strive for in the art of his conduct. It is the first step in achieving that ultimate perfection that Apelles was famous for in painting, *grace*, that is that perfection of beauty that is all effortless ease, in works of art as in human conduct.¹³

Raphael's *Portrait of Castiglione* (FIG.1) radiates some of that ease, as has often been pointed out, the *gravità riposata* that Castiglione praises and recommends to his courtier in his book.¹⁴ Raphael placed Castiglione on a chair, in a seemingly simple and yet sophisticated pose for a representation in *contrapposto* that Leonardo had created for his *Mona Lisa*. It gives mobility to the figure, who is only now turning to face us. Raphael used it to advantage many times, as in the portrait of *Maddalena Doni* in the Pitti Palace. And even the *Fornarina in the Nude* is almost uncannily placed in the same pose as is his *Castiglione* and so obtains a haunting presence that is peculiarly her own. Castiglione faces us thoughtfully, openly, and yet politely. The principal purpose of the portrait is, of course, likeness, physical likeness, and Castiglione himself paid a full tribute to this overwhelming function of the picture in a poem he cast in the guise of a letter of love written to him by his young wife Hippolita. The picture is her only consolation during Castiglione's enforced absence:

'To it I offer caresses, smiles, jest, and even conversation – as if it could answer. Assenting and nodding, it often seems to me to be on the point of saying something, and of uttering your words. Our son recognizes his father, and greets him with lisping utterance. With this I solace and while away the dragging days.'¹⁵



1 RAPHAEL

Portrait of Baldassar Castiglione

In the poem Castiglione shows how the successful portrait functions on an intimate, a lyrically moving level, at his home. But the portrait is also stately, not only in dress but in moral posture. The *gravità riposata* is accentuated by the view we get of the hilt of Castiglione's sword. It is covered in gold and shines forth with a strong accent of light from the somber coloring of his garments and the sedate tonality of the picture as a whole. Castiglione is shown as a knight, but his left arm almost hides his sword; his hands clasp one another; he will not draw his sword rashly. There is yet another accent of gold in the picture, Castiglione's hat badge, which is placed on his cap in a manner that allows us a glimpse of its gleaming presence, but what the device on it is we cannot tell. It is hidden from us and yet it is shown. Raphael, however, and Castiglione's familiars knew the device, and to them the picture conveyed a private meaning that transcended the obvious, the plain portrait character of the image; it conveyed it to them, we might say, openedly.

Renaissance portraits are full of devices pronounced by hat badges but hardly ever do we find a badge that, as it were, does not show its face. It wants to be recognized, to be read, even though its meaning may remain enigmatic to the uninitiated.¹⁶ Once we become aware of the discreetly hidden and yet open challenge of Castiglione's hat badge we want to know, of course, what it was like in the original. Fortunately a portrait medal representing Castiglione survives.¹⁷ (FIG. 2) On the reverse we see Aurora in her chariot rising above the horizon. Two female figures with butterfly wings, personifications of the Hours, are harnessing the horses whom they will guide across the sky which expands over Italy and the Mediterranean Sea. The inscription *TENEBRARUM ET LVCIS*, though it is cryptic, can be amended, 'she partakes of darkness and light' and clearly identifies the figure as Aurora. Castiglione, whose portrait is on the obverse, identifies himself as her champion and devotee.

The sense of the device, as is always the case with *imprese*, is many-faceted and expandable. One aspect of it, since Aurora is rising over the North of Italy, over Castiglione's Mantua, we might say, is clearly political. A new day will rise over Italy from Mantua. But Aurora is also the friend of poets, *Aurora amica poetarum*. Raphael's Poesia in the Stanza della Segnatura is seated on roseate clouds. And then there may be a personal reference to an unknown lady whom Castiglione may have looked upon as his very own Aurora.¹⁸



2 *Portrait Medal of Baldassar Castiglione*



3 MARCANTONIO RAIMONDI
Aurora Rising

It is unlikely, however, that Castiglione simply put his portrait medal into his hat as a badge. Badges as a rule were complex works in raised, sculptured relief.¹⁹ An engraving of Aurora by Marcantonio Raimondi (FIG. 3)²⁰ that was long believed to have been made from a drawing by Raphael may well represent the Aurora Castiglione wears in his hat in Raphael's portrait. The shape is right and the horses are almost study pieces for an image in high relief. The political allusion is not made but if (as the medal shows) Castiglione did connect Aurora with a new dawn of light over Italy, it is there still, as it were, by the proxy of Aurora's presence. How great is her radiant energy and how do the clouds of the night melt away before her rising, forceful presence!²¹

But none of this was visible to an ordinary viewer of the portrait, one who did not know Castiglione's Aurora. For him the picture was what it is for all of us, Castiglione's simple portrait that shows his likeness – and only in his bearing and dress his character. But for the initiate, the intimate acquaintance, the reticent image begins to speak, not only as the portrait speaks in its so moving character of a speaking likeness, but it also tells what his life is about. And that is not just about Aurora but about discreetly hiding Aurora as well: *sprezzatura* is not declarative but open-ended in what it has to say, even if in silence.²²

It is, I think, not an accident that Aurora appears at the heart of the conclusion of the *Libro del Cortegiano*. Bembo has given his great speech in praise of heavenly love and the company did not notice that the night had passed. But Messer Cesare Gonzaga alerts them to the fact.

‘...Then the windows were opened on the side of the palace that looks toward the lofty peak of Mount Catrica, where they saw that a beautiful rosy dawn (*una bella aurora di color di rose*) had already come into the east, and that all the stars had disappeared except the sweet mistress of the heavens of Venus that holds the border between night and day; from which a soft breeze seemed to come that filled the air with a brisk coolness and began to awaken sweet concerts of joyous birds in the murmuring forests of the nearby hills.²³

And then the company, having resolved the evening's subject of discussion, go home in the new daylight, each to his own room, looking forward to the coming evening's next conversation. The book ends with a few teasing words addressed by Emilia Pia to the young Gaspare Pallavicino of whose early death Castiglione

gives us notice in the introduction to the fourth and last book of the *Cortegiano*. Cesare Gonzaga too, he who noticed that the day was rising, is among the early dead mourned by Castiglione in the same introduction.²⁴ The last words of the *Cortegiano* which salute Aurora and are written in a seemingly forward-looking joy stepping towards a new conversation, are at the same time a last farewell. The end of the book then, in its loving recalling of the dead, and of the whole life of the delightful court that was no more when Castiglione undertook to write his work, itself is open-ended.

Open-endedness abounds in Raphael's history paintings. I name one here because a passage in the *Cortegiano* obliquely points to it. It is just a joke, a *battuta*, in one of the conversations. Two cardinals, familiar friends of Raphael, criticize one of his pictures on which were shown St. Peter and St. Paul, declaring their faces were painted far too red. 'Why,' said Raphael, 'I did it on purpose; even in heaven, as you see, their faces are red in shame that the church is governed by men such as you.'²⁵ The picture, it seems to me, can only be *The Meeting of Leo the Great and Attila* in the Stanza d'Eliodoro (FIG. 4). I went to look and even after the many damages and restorations the picture has undergone the faces of the saints are, indeed, uncommonly red.²⁶ The reason is not far to see. Their faces, which look robust and confidence-inspiring to us in their near-profile view, are at the same time terrifying in their redness to Attila who sees them and the threatening charge of the saints' swords, and seeing them he gives the signal for his forces, which had been devastating the landscape with fire and sword, to turn back. The red flag that is by him and inspires terror is outmatched by the terror the irate Saints inspire in Attila. But, as Timanthes, who, in his *Sacrifice of Iphigenia*, covered the face of Agamemnon with a cloak so as to show by suggestion what he could not paint,²⁷ so Raphael lets us comprehend what he could not or would not paint, the Saints in their full terrorizing effect by inflicting it on Attila but not on us. We comprehend the terror by Attila's response to what he sees and we can only imagine it.

What we see is open-ended; what Attila sees is the full effect. Raphael exercised *sprezzatura*, fineness of concealment, joined to a hint of suggestion, to bring about both. But the picture, like many others in the *stanze* is rich in open-endedness far beyond this essentially technical aspect of composition. It plays, as it were, in two times at the same time; the time of Leo the Great and the time of Leo X. Each is sovereign in its presence; Leo X and his court cannot be more of their own time



4 RAPHAEL

The Meeting of Leo the Great and Attila

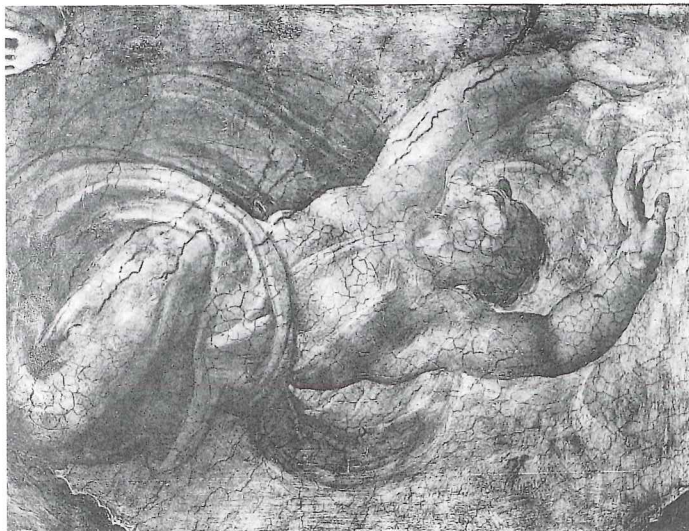
in which their portrait presence is carefully depicted but the event, in turn, clearly belongs to the historic time of Leo the Great. Each of these time-bound pictures is open-ended so that they coincide in significance. Leo X' gesture of peace, the *svave* of his *impresa* is the peace of Leo the Great that is being protected by St.Peter and St.Paul in the sky. Leo X does not need to look up at them to know that they are there, that they protect their church against the raging Attilas in all times. The link between these distant times that inhabit the picture is effected by tact; *sprezzatura* rules open-endedness.

The same holds true of the locale of the action. Everybody knows that the meeting of Leo the Great and Attila took place on the outskirts of Mantua and not outside Rome, as the carefully painted ruins in the background suggest. I do not think Raphael suppressed the identity of the locale of the action of *The Meeting of Leo the Great and Attila*; it belongs to that part of the picture that represents the meeting in its own time, but the ruins, in their contemporary presence, belong to the portrait of Leo X and his entourage. They serve, of course, open-endedly to support the common sense of both pictures, the assurance that Saints Peter and Paul ever will protect Rome.

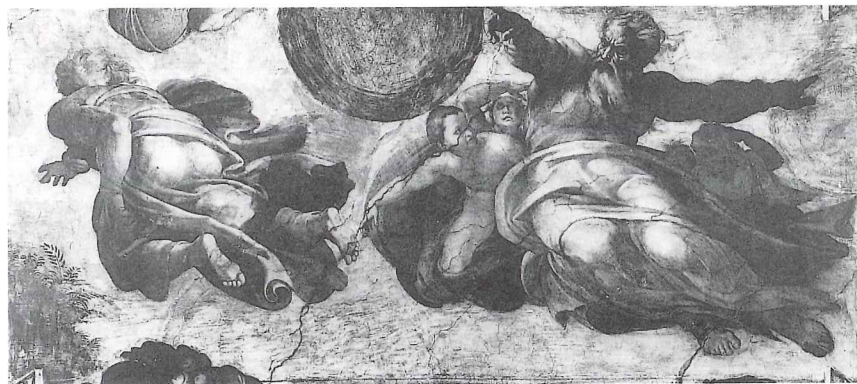
There is a kind of playfulness in this working of *sprezzatura*. It is exactly by this playfulness that *sprezzatura* serves sublimes ends.

Open-endedness, though used differently, with a *sprezzatura* more grand than fine, yet infinitely fine in the end, rules Michelangelo's paintings in the Sistine Chapel. Michelangelo invents with a great, enlightening impetuosity. On the Sistine ceiling he follows the example of the Bible itself. He tells the story of the Creation elliptically. We must supply what he does not show and yet includes in the action he depicts.

In the picture *God the Father Separating Light from Darkness* (FIG.5), God not only gives shape to the two forms of nature, he has descended from the highest empyraeum, where he dwells in ever-lasting quietude, to do so. The descent is shown in the picture of the divine work of the first day; the empyraeum our contemplation willingly supplies, and once we see it the painting stretches into endlessness. Similarly it is with the two paintings in one field, *The Creation of Earth* and *The Creation of the Sun and the Moon* (FIG.6). In response to the pointing blessing of God we see the just created globe of the earth with a touch of green



5 MICHELANGELO
God Separating Light and Darkness



6 MICHELANGELO
The Creation of Earth and The Creation of Sun and Moon

bringing forth grass – and that includes what will follow though it is not painted, ‘each herb yielding seed after its kind, and the tree yielding fruit.’ The whole majesty of the act of creation is realized, in the echo that a work of art can sound in praise of it, because the picture is open-ended. The artist’s imagination dips its brush, as it were, into ours to complete what, if it were painted in paint, would only be embellished enumeration. Here it is energy. *The Creation of the Sun and the Moon* continues the story in the field on the right. It is the work of the next day but in God’s actions it is a going and a coming and already the sun, placed at God’s command in the firmament, begins to turn in a wide circle about the earth that we see in the field on the left. The architectural frame of the ceiling does not confine the pictures; it supports the gradual dawning upon our consciousness of infinite spaces beyond it in which the actions we behold originate and find their completion. There also shall we find the starry sky that is omitted in the visible picture, completed in the work of God’s creation.

Similarly motivated again, in *The Sacrifice of Noah* (FIG.7) Michelangelo omits painting the rainbow which is God’s response to the sacrifice and the signal of the covenant between God and Noah and his seed. Noah points heavenwards as he offers the sacrifice. The rainbow is the response, not yet visible but already present in the realm beyond. The next moment, the one we cannot see, completes the picture.

And so we could go on, or point in detail to *The Last Judgment* which, by the very nature of its action, is still open-ended. The Judgment is not yet complete and Saints are still interceding for sinners they hope can be saved. The next moment will complete the picture; it itself will dissolve in it, in a world in which there will only be the realm of God with His blessed and separated from it in infinite distance, everlasting Hell. We, however, who stand before the picture, also are a part of it. Our own future hangs in the balance and is open-ended.

We turn to Titian. His *Portrait of Cardinal Ippolito dei Medici* (FIG.8) shows him in the outfit of a Hungarian magnate, even his sword is, by the shape of its hilt, characterized as exotic. He is about to take off for Hungary to participate in its defence against the Turks.²⁸ His belly bulges. It is clear that behind the velvet garment he wears, hidden from view yet suggested in the painting, is his chest armor. In his red cap, conspicuous between the greenish plumes, he wears a hat badge. We see a bright star and a scroll with the suggestion of an inscription. The



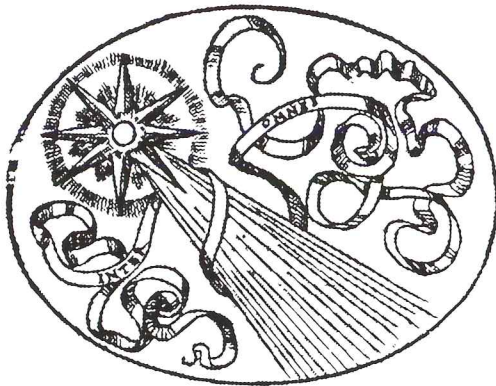
7 MICHELANGELO
The Sacrifice of Noah



8 TITIAN
Ippolito dei Medici

badge is as important to the completion of the picture as is his chest armor, but with it Ippolito can address only those who know the meaning of the emblem, to his intimates. The rest of us would never know were it not elaborately explained and illustrated by Paolo Giovio in his *Dialogo dell'impresie militari et amorose* (FIG. 9). The emblem is, indeed, martial and amorous; the bright star is a comet and the inscription, taken from Horace, on the comet that announced the indivination of Julius Caesar, reads INTER OMNES. It shines brighter than all the other stars. Giovio concentrates on its amorous significance. The impresa is addressed to Donna Giulia di Gonzaga whom Ippolito loved, 'risplendeua di bellezza sopra ogni altra.'²⁹ And so is the portrait addressed to all who may see it and yet to Giulia di Gonzaga in particular. Its address is reticent and yet, as Ippolito's face shows, challenges the viewer. The badge is featured but, a sign of the success of the open-ended composition of the work, it has (to my knowledge) never attracted the attention of students of this work.

Titian's *Federico II Gonzaga* (FIG. 10) is one of his finest portraits, not least because of the trusting presence of the white poodle who has raised one paw to caress the prince.³⁰ The poodle is undoubtedly a portrait of a cherished animal, in fact, it



9 *Inter omnes, Impresa of Ippolito dei Medici*



10 TITIAN

Portrait of Federico II Gonzaga

has been proposed, not without reason, that it may be the dog called Viola for whom, in 1526, circa three years after this picture was painted, Giulio Romano was asked to erect a tomb. It still exists in Mantua.³¹

Since the poodle is so lively and real we do not readily take to seeing in it an allegory of Faith, as dogs so often are, and prefer to see in him or her (if it is Viola) a treasured companion of the prince whom, in this portrait, we perhaps rashly identify as a self-indulgent playboy. He may have been one in real life, beyond the realm of his picture, but Titian's purpose was not to expose but to celebrate him and to be truthful about his appearance as well. Federico's left hand rests lightly on his sword; his other hand holds on to the dog, caressingly but also protectively. If our thought turns from dog to faith, not in a manner to degrade the dog to a symbol but in the playful pursuit of an open-ended suggestion, we may see in the prince a protector of the faith, again not in the terms of an iconographic communication, but as a natural aspect of his being a Gonzaga, a supporter of the faith with all the *sprezzatura*, the ease, becoming a prince.

Federico II made a point, like his ancestors, of extolling his faith on his coinage and medals (FIG.11). One of his devices was a steep mountain, sometimes



11 Proof of double ducat of Federico II Gonzaga

identified as Mount Olympos, on top of which was an altar and above it the inscribed word FIDES.³²

Federico declares his piety in his portrait delicately but nonetheless it is made evident by the ornamental chain about his neck. It is, as Harold Wethey recognized long ago, a rosary with an ever so small and unobtrusive cross that hangs over the prince's chest.³³ Once we make these connections the picture changes; the portrait becomes more impressively representational. The prince, as if stepping out of the pages of the *Cortegiano*, shows himself as a defender of the faith, as reticent in demonstration as *sprezzatura* proposes, but in earnest in his commitment to his faith, a credit to his nobility. And all that is made open-endedly evident by Titian without ever changing a single hair in the corporeal reality or cast of life of either prince or poodle in their playful and mutually caring attachment for each other. The dog is a dog and paws his master.³⁴ And the prince is a God-fearing prince, ready to defend his faith, but without rattling his sabre.

Titian's portraits of Pietro Aretino in the Pitti Palace and in the Frick Museum show him with his right arm virtually hidden from sight; it was lame as a result of a murderous attack on him.³⁵ Titian here may have deliberately recalled antique precedents, such as Apelles' clever portrait of King Antigonos,³⁶ but Aretino himself, as for that matter Antigonos, may have favored his good side when facing the world. In Titian's *Ecce Homo* in Vienna³⁷ (FIG. 12) Aretino is portrayed as Pontius Pilate who points to Christ with his left hand, the right performing a gesture of explanatory speech ('I see no harm in him!'), but the arm, as we can tell if we know about Aretino's infirmity, nonetheless is also lame. So great is the veracity, the becoming veracity of the portrait likeness.

But Aretino's presence in the picture is not merely the homage of a portrait. Its presence is joined to the sense of the work, as is that of Raphael's Leo X in *The Meeting of Leo I and Attila*, not on the same scale of identification perhaps, but with significant importance nevertheless, for Aretino wrote a very moving and compassionate, and once much loved, *Life of Christ on Earth*, his *Humanità di Cristo*.³⁸ His book is the 'Ecce Homo' that can be identified with Pilate's words but not his deeds; it offers, like Titian's painting, a portrayal of the real Christ.

Titian's picture is full of portraits of members of the family of Giovanni d'Anna for whom the work was painted. The open-ended story joins their lives – and pity – to



12 TITIAN

Christ before Pilate

the terrible moment in history that is the subject of the picture. The contemplation of the moment is painted right into the picture. Action and response, on both sides of the divide of what can be painted and what not, are joined into one. Even Titian is in the picture, if we read the inscription on the scrolled paper at the foot of the stairs. He signs as TITIANVS EQVES CES. F. 1543. The emperor's shield with the double-headed eagle is right next to it; the soldier who holds it looks up to Aretino-Pilate who points at Christ and he does so, we may perhaps say, together with Titian. The painting is at once, as it is usually regarded, a historical picture with portraits and a contemplation of Christ's presentation to the Jews, a contemplation in which some of the personages portrayed, most notably the two children, brother and sister, who look at us, deeply moved, participate. We ourselves are invited to share in their grief as, astonished, we look at the picture, and it and they, in their own seeing contemplation, come to life for us. The soldier in the lower left who caressingly holds on to a dog is probably one of the modern Caesar's men; the dog is both a dog and yet also a personification of Faith, and the soldier looks down with outraged astonishment at us, the viewers of the picture and the population of Jerusalem all at once, caught in our sins and asking anew for Christ's death. But only the soldier reproaches us.³⁹ The burden of the painting, the unpainted painting responding open-endedly to the open-ended painted picture, is that the sight of the portrayed children, and the words of Aretino-Pilate, and finally Titian's portrayal of Christ, who is both grand and meek, and is placed in the extreme and highest left end of the picture, should touch our heart. We need it opened to see Titian's painting rightly. The painting joins our lives to lives long passed and to life eternal.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is with hesitation that I approach a discussion of works by Rembrandt; it is surely not my field of study and I do it with apologies. Were it not that Rembrandt is so obviously committed to the freedom of *sprezzatura* and his works so rich and so unique in the formation of open-ended pictures, I should not have attempted to speak of him to you who live with his works in a daily converse, in his own language. I am emboldened to do so only because in many conversations I had with Horst Gerson when he was in America preparing his great book on Rembrandt's work I could consider myself his student and because his book continues to educate me.⁴⁰

We return for a moment to Raphael's *Castiglione*. As you know, Rembrandt saw the work and made a rough drawing of it, almost a caricature, and yet telling in its



13 REMBRANDT

Drawing after Raphael's Portrait of Baldassar Castiglione

likeness (FIG. 13)⁴¹. The encounter with the painting also inspired Rembrandt's etched self-portrait in which he accepts Castiglione's pose, garb, and hat as his own, looking at us from behind this disguise that yet is not a disguise but an attire of artistic pomp and circumstance that he wears both with pride and nonchalance, with the ease of its being his own. Raphael's portrait also inspired the great self portrait of 1640 (FIG. 14) which conveys, in spite of a certain challenging expression of the face, a sense of great calm. Gerson celebrates it beautifully: 'Den Umrißlinien des Körpers und des Barretts wird alle Schärfe genommen, so daß der Eindruck wohltätiger Ruhe entsteht.'⁴²

Friends of Castiglione's hat badge will be pleased to notice that it did not escape Rembrandt's attention. It re-appears, transformed in a repetition of golden ornaments on a chain pinned to Rembrandt's beret and contributes its share to the sense of well-being that distinguishes this picture in which Rembrandt pays tribute to the art of Raphael and his *sprezzatura* by joining it in the delicacy and wealth of its painting.

Rembrandt's open-endedness can be as finely spun in the tradition of Raphael and as dramatically tense and abrupt as we have seen it practiced, in a fineness all their own, by Michelangelo and Titian. The former is shown to perfection in *The Holy Family* in Kassel (FIG. 15), with its painted curtain that protects not only the picture but also the Holy Family itself, like a veil behind which, for a tender moment, we are allowed to look.⁴³ The curtain draws our attention. Our eye gratefully looks at the picture which is arranged in a progressively affecting view, from right to left. The effect of a gradual unfolding is stronger yet if we imagine that we found the picture protected by a real curtain on top of the painted one and we pulled it away from right to left. The picture would then first reveal the painted curtain that looks as real as the celebrated curtain painted by Zeuxis that even fooled the painter Parrhasius⁴⁴ and, better than Zeuxis' curtain, this one would then reveal the saintly life that Rembrandt painted behind it. First, fitting in neatly into a space which the pushed back curtain has just revealed to us, we see St. Joseph splitting wood to feed the fire we shall see next, and the cat warming itself by it. The great window shows us the night outside and then only shall we see the beautiful Dutch Madonna, seated low, with the loving but hungry Christchild in her arms. She will soon feed him from the bowl of soup or milk that is placed aside for him by the fire. And last, the curtain of the Madonna's bed is a match to the curtain that started us on our entry into the picture, only this one is inside,



14 REMBRANDT
Self-Portrait



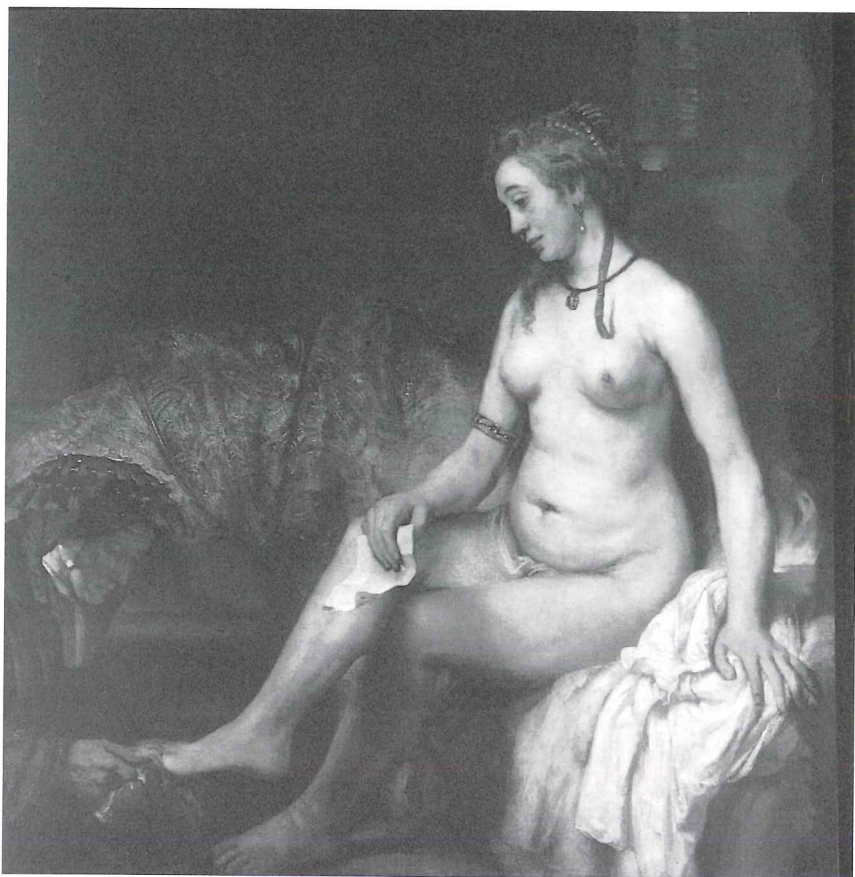
15 REMBRANDT
Holy Family

within the truth of the painting that is only protected by the painted curtain without. Fiction here joins fiction to the point of such a happy union between the two stages of one picture that we quite forget to praise Rembrandt for the beautiful frame together with a curtain rod which he painted in which to enshrine his picture within a picture.

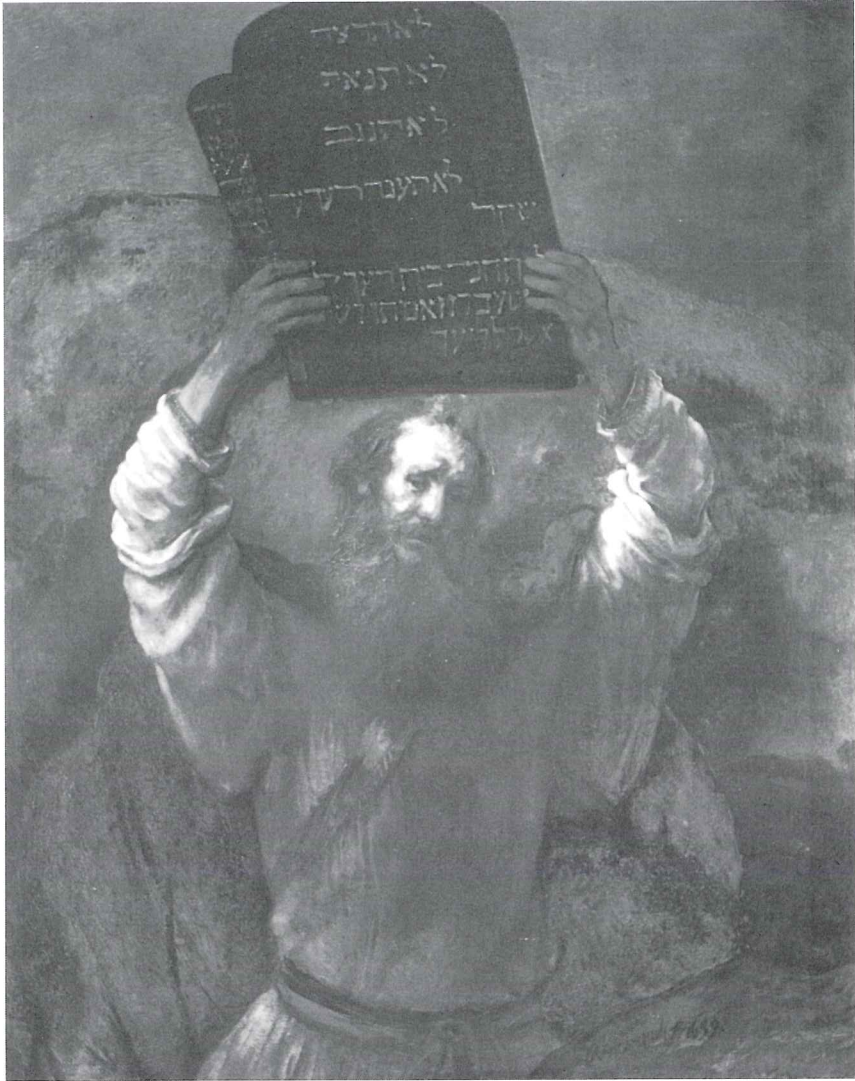
The other form of open-endedness, the intensely dramatic one, is perhaps most strikingly represented by Rembrandt's *Bathsheba* in the Louvre (FIG. 16). If it were not for the letter in the woman's hand we could not possibly know who she is and even the letter is but a suggestion; it does not fully identify the woman or the painting. A letter plays a crucial role in the story, but Bathsheba there is not its recipient. The burden of the woman's loneliness is inherent in her nudity. It is her pensive waiting that identifies the arrival of that letter as a decisive moment in her life and marks her surrender to it. The name of Bathsheba it suggests is a catalyst, a point of crystallization of the fate she must live. Horst Gerson has found beautiful words to speak of the double existence of this figure, in the reality of Rembrandt's studio and in its setting in the open-ended confines of history painting in which future and past are suspended. He speaks of dignity and monumentality as he recalls the evidence of the studio nude.⁴⁵

Often Rembrandt paints, without showing it, what is in front of the picture at which we are looking. The *Andromeda* shows the heroine in the fullness of her fear; the monster is at this moment approaching. We hear the waters churning under the impact of his weight in motion. Perseus, still without the scene, is not yet in sight.⁴⁶

More complex but based on the same literal open-endedness is the once much debated picture in Berlin which Horst Gerson, in a wise conciliatory mode, called *Moses and the Tables of the Law* (FIG. 17).⁴⁷ The Jews who behold Moses stand in front of him in the same space, as it were, as stand we. The inscription on the tablets, in letters of gold, are for us to read as much as for them. Rembrandt took much trouble to spell them out. The ordering of the two worlds in front of the picture resembles what we saw in Titian's *Ecce Homo*, but not because Rembrandt was influenced by the example of Titian's picture. The resemblance arises from the same pictorial sense of the truth of the picture that extends in front of it as much as into its depth and speaks from the past to the present. Is Moses about to break the first tablets, showing us how precious they are before he breaks them or has he, again in response to his prayer, received the new tablets and is bringing



16 REMBRANDT
Bathsheba



17 REMBRANDT
Moses and the Tables of the Law

them now to the Children of Israel – and to us – to keep and protect them for all time? The question, as far as I know, has now been closed. The catalogue and the guides of the Berlin Museum tell us, not in doubt, that Moses is about to break the tablets.⁴⁸

May I try to open the question again, at least just a little? Clearly, just as in the painting in which Polygnotus showed a horseman and his horse in a manner that makes it impossible to decide whether he is about to get off or has just got on,⁴⁹ a Moses lifting the tablets to smash them or a Moses lifting them to present them as a boon for all time must go through actions that at a certain point of the story look exactly the same and, equally clearly, the Moses who smashed the tablets shines through the Moses who redeemed them. If the picture is to resemble Moses, it cannot – as is demonstrated by Michelangelo's famous *Moses* – show the one without the other. Open-endedness is of the essence. But an open-ended narration in the hands of a master will be open towards truth and will not be without its point of crystallization. Iconography cannot really come to the rescue (though it may be an aid) if within the realm of open-endedness we want to see what is painted before our eyes. Compassion and mood provide their own plausibility. Moses' face shines with the light that God blessed him with but it is not a light that can be defined iconographically in the semblance of a straightforward symbol. It is open in its radiance. To the straightforward inquirer it does not therefore provide a proof or a definition. But where in nature or in the art of painting finely do we find straightforward answers? Only frigid pictures are accurate to the letter and in that respect also un-natural. May we not be guided by the expression of Moses' face that in all its fiery presence is not at all angry but instead infinitely meek, that he is offering the precious gift and not destroying it? The destruction of the tablets makes more *éclat*, a short-cut to sublimity. No wonder there is a whole *genre* of paintings embracing it, but the act of giving the tablets has so much to offer us in infinite delicacy that I permit myself to plead, in the name of the delicacy of open-endedness as an artistic device that we not shut the door on the possibility that Rembrandt painted a gentle picture after all, full of the stretch of the two stages in the history of the tablets balanced in the picture before us.

We turn to Ter Borch's so-called *Paternal Admonition* in Berlin (FIG. 18). Its central figure is a beautiful blond maiden in a beautiful satin dress. We see her from behind and yet seem to think we know what she is like face to face and that we know what she is doing, she is so perfect a figure in her repose in herself. We



18 G. TER BORCH
Paternal Admonition

perceive this, as it were open-endedly, in response to a story that is itself open-endedly represented, with such a smiling, reposeful manner, in the *sprezzatura* of Ter Borch's art of narration, that this so finely painted picture might serve as an allegory of all we have been talking about, in its various approaches to fineness, all along. The crystallizing point in this story is held in suspense. The seated woman drinks from a Venetian glass. The man who looks self-indulgent enough for a dandy, makes a gesture with his finger tips that is clearly addressed to the maiden whose reaction to it we cannot see. The eighteenth-century engraver Johann Georg Wille thought he was admonishing her and called the print *Paternal Admonition*.⁵⁰ He may have thought the admonition was tongue in cheek, at least half teasing the girl who may respond to it naively, becoming more charming yet in the way she is, unseen by us, blushing at the message. The scene, even if we do not accept Wille's interpretation, really his hint that he comprehended a story that hints at an explanation but does not provide it ready-made, has something about itself that makes it seem a play by Goldoni *avant la lettre*.

Goethe, as you know, introduced this picture into his *Wahlverwandschaften*.⁵¹ A beautiful young lady has organized a session of living pictures after prints. She plays the heroine of our scene and we see her in the exact dress (which it took some trouble to provide) from behind, in complete loveliness. Goethe took Wille seriously, without, however, losing the sense of the charm, the play at seriousness, that pervades the picture. He sees in the couple a father and a mother; the father, a little tediously, admonishes the daughter while the mother who, like the daughter, may have heard such admonitions before, drinks on from her glass. The living picture, Goethe reports, was a great success and the company insisted that the young lady turn around to give them a chance to gaze upon her beauty *en face*, to complete the open-ended picture that previously had remained artfully incomplete. A member of the audience cried out: 'Tournez, s'il vous plait,' and all applauded him but, Goethe adds with pleasure and approval, the actors in the picture knew better than that. They held their poses. The daughter continued to seem ashamed, the father remained seated and kept on admonishing, and the mother kept her eyes and nose in the transparent glass from which she seemed to be drinking even though the wine in it did not get any less.

This description and not the proposition that the father admonishes the girl is Goethe's real contribution to the story and to our understanding of the inviolability of open-ended pictures altogether. Rejecting the simplifying solution of the story

does not mean that these pictures do not have a crystallization point – there is one in this picture as there is in all the others we have seen tonight, but it is in their essence that they escape us even while we see them. They are the world that is composed of ‘airy nothings’ that the painter creates in the pictures he paints. It is therefore to the point, as Horst Gerson has taught us, not to insist on an interpretation. In the case of open-ended pictures we walk right through them if we try. But it is no better, surely, when we are faced with what a painter cannot paint or cannot define or will, for a good reason, hide, to deny – because we cannot see it painted, or cannot prove what it is with the help of unchanging identifying symbols – that the phenomenon exists at all.

Goethe’s interpretation of the print is mistaken to the extent that he saw a family group in the picture but he was right in celebrating the element of banter that makes the picture so charming. The currently accepted interpretation of the picture, perhaps reacting with suspicion to the *Gemütlichkeit* of Wille’s and Goethe’s family scene sees in it an example of a much more rough and ready genre.⁵² The young caller’s gesture – he cannot be her father – far from admonishing the girl is seen as an erotic proposition. A coin of gold is said to glisten between the two finger tips the youth extends to the girl who, under the circumstances, must be thinking over his proposition. The seated woman, in turn, would be a not inexpensive procuress. If we follow this crystallization, though the picture remains as beautifully painted as ever, the story turns into a heavy-handed joke. I would accept it, even if with regret, if the gold coin, on which the interpretation depends, really could be made out between the two fingers of the untrustworthy youth. But neither in Berlin nor in the Amsterdam version of the picture was I able to see, though I honestly and gallantly tried, even the slightest flicker of gold.⁵³ The existence of the coin, I can assure you, cannot be verified in front of the picture; it is a mere hypothesis, a possible coin, of course, but if so, an invisible one. I will not deny that an erotic element is within the range of possibilities of this so blessedly not outspoken picture, but it plays its charms to a different tune of music. The girl has just poured a drink for the woman who already has her nose in the glass. She must now be pouring another drink for the second guest in the room. And he, by putting two fingers quite close together to each other, indicates that he wants just a very small amount of the liquor, just what might go between his fingertips. He is just pretending, of course, in order to make *bella figura*, but the girl takes him at his word. I know full well that there are other paintings by Ter Borch where girls are offered money and do not

mind it – but since our girl is averted from us and no money is to be seen we are at liberty to guess at a gentler, more subtly teasing development of our open-ended story. There is a picture by Pieter de Hooch in the Metropolitan Museum (FIG.19) that shows us, in a decidedly less elegant setting, a girl seen sideways, pouring a drink for a caller who, with great complacency, points out the measure of the drink, ‘just a little, please!’ It is a plausible situation, and there is no open-endedness to it. But, like Goethe’s company performing the Terborch as a living picture, we opt for the girl’s never turning around, we hold out for only a soupçon of a solution, not the solution itself. The answer is in the delicately balanced tension of the picture and not in the solution of a puzzle.

Ter Borch’s fineness of execution is matched by the *sprezzatura* of his invention. It reaches the sublime in his celebrated painting of the ratification of the treaty of Münster of 1648 which ended the eighty years of war between the Dutch Netherlands and Spain (FIG.20).⁵⁴ Abraham Bredius, almost ninety years ago, when superlatives were not feared by historians of art, called it ‘presumably the grandest history painting in the smallest dimension,’ ‘wohl das großartigste Historienbild in kleinster Dimension.’⁵⁵ It shows, delicately understated, an assembly of portrait figures, virtually in miniature, each quietly affirming the treaty with a simple gesture of his right hand. The painter himself takes his place in the assembly, modestly standing in the extreme left, and sharing in the solemnity of the moment. There is nothing else to see, except the room, the documents, and a Bible. It is ‘wie es eigentlich gewesen.’ The reticence itself is a guarantor of the individual commitment of each member of the group; their standing so still suffices to convey the emotion in which the delegates share. The smallness of the picture itself encourages us to enter it with care, with delicacy; and once we do, we ourselves are touched by the emotion that no one can paint and yet all feel, relief and the commitment to the holiness of the moment, and to the guarding of the just born precious peace.

The picture is rich in tones of gray and there is a hue of dusk over it. Apelles’ varnish, as it were, covers the finely painted work and makes it finer yet. It unites the group and lets each individual come to life as a person in the life of his soul as we discover him in this assembly that is its own allegory of the triumph of peace over war.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have been a long way about, allowing the old didactic stories of the great painters of classical antiquity, resurrected again and again, to



19 P. DE HOOGH
The Visit



20 G. TER BORCH

The Ratification of the Treaty of Münster

guide us in our contemplation of master-pieces from different times and places, each of which showed more than the eye can see or language express without recourse to poetry, which, by nature, is open-ended in its discourse. It is not necessary, though it sometimes occurs, that the old stories are deliberately built into the paintings or that the painters, who certainly knew some of them, even thought of them at all as they invented their pictures. As long as art imitates nature it is bound to fall back upon the devices of the imagination and to invent the old stories, as it were, over again, in the making of new pictures.

Painters learn from painters, selectively, how to use *sprezzatura* and how to invent open-ended stories; they are free because they perceive the freedom of their great predecessors. Theory is a support and an encouragement, not a prescription. No one knew this better than Franciscus Junius whose great book on the art of the ancients is a constructive compilation of the often contradictory and yet mutually supportive texts that bear witness to the glory of art, its freedom and its order, its truth to nature and, in the very service of that truth, the reach of its imagination.⁵⁶

The third book of Junius' *De pictura veterum* celebrates the grace of works of art, their finest quality that is ineffable, and rises (to speak with Castiglione) from the *sprezzatura* of the artist. It is not only a pictorial quality but, without moralizing, a moral one and it bestows upon art its highest dignity, which is not far removed from its playfulness, from the working of the artist's liberal imagination in which, in the end, the viewer is invited to join him in the delight of what Max Liebermann, in defense of this tradition as much as of the practice of what in his time was modern art, happily called 'die mittätige Vorstellungskraft,' the participatory imagination of the lover of art.⁵⁷

Chapter VI of Junius' book dwells upon the praise of grace and the need of the artist, if he wishes to attain it, not to strive for it in absolute terms so much as to consider what suits his particular genius best, not to furnish his work 'with such things as he loathes nor with such things as hee is indifferently affected unto, but with such things as are the most agreeable with his nature and inward disposition.'⁵⁸

For a time Junius considered ending his book on this note in which freedom and responsibility are delicately joined. The remaining chapters, seven through eleven, he hoped to forge into a separate book he considered calling *Vindex picturae veteris sive de ratione picturas dijudicandi*, The Champion of Painting or on the Art of

Judging Art, including of course, since all art is one, in the term *pictura* works of sculpture in all its variants as well.⁵⁹ In short, the book was to set out to describe the complete connoisseur. I quote Junius, as I have done before, from his own translation of *De pictura veterum*, his *The Painting of the Ancients* of 1638.

'WE HAVE SEEN that the height of Art doth chiefly consist in the fore-mentioned Grace; and that this Grace must proceed from the perfections of an accurate Invention, Proportion, Colour, Life, Disposition, not onely as each of them is perfect in it self severally, but as generally out of the mutuall agreement of them all, there doth appeare in the whole worke, and in every part of it, a certaine kinde of gracefull pleasantnesse: We have seene likewise, that this Grace is not the worke of a troublesome and scrupulous study, but that it is rather perfected by the unaffected facility of an excellent art and forward nature equally concurring to the worke; so it is most certaine, that never any artificer could attaine the least shadow of this grace, without the mutuall support of Art and Nature: nature is to follow the directions of art, even as art is to follow the prompt readinesse of our forward nature. Seeing then that this grace can never be accomplished, unlesse all these things doe meet in the worke; so is it likewise evident, that even the selfe same things are requisite to the discovering of the Grace. The way of begetting is the onely way of judging. Whatsoever is not sought in his owne way, sayth *Cassiodorus*, can never be traced perfectly <*De institutione* XXVIII.3>

They therefore doe exceedingly mistake, who thinke it an easie matter to finde out and to discern such a high poynt of these profound arts. This inimitable grace, equally diffused and dispersed through the whole worke, as it is not had so easily, cannot be discerned so easily. Whether a picture be copious, learned, magnificent, admirable, sufficiently polished, sweet, whether the affections and passions are therein seasonably represented, cannot be perceived in any one part; the whole worke must shew it. *Dionysius Longinus* speaketh well to the purpose when he sayth, "We see the skil of invention, the order and disposition of things, as it sheweth it self, not in one or two parts only, but in the whole composition of the worke, and that hardly too <Longinus I.4. 'Hardly too' = not easily>.

2. Away then with all those, who thinke it enough if they can but confidently usurpe the authority belonging onely to them that are well skilled in these arts: it will not serve their turne, that they doe sometimes with a censorious brow reject, and somtimes with an affected gravity commend the workes of great masters: the neat and polished age wherein we live will quickly finde them out.⁶⁰

When Junius speaks of 'the neat and polished age wherein we live' he thinks above all of the renaissance of classical letters as it prospered in Dutch universities and at Cambridge and Oxford, and of the two great collectors and patrons of the arts, King Charles I, to whom he dedicated the Latin edition of his book, and the Earl of Arundel, whose librarian he was. Our age cannot boast a comparable refinement in the study of art and letters, in fact it tends to reject it. But we do have the consolation of the memory of Horst Gerson who, in trying times rediscovered and practiced not only the skills of the connoisseur but his virtue and his tolerance as Junius extolled them. His *sprezzatura* arose from an unquenchable sense of humor and his irony was benevolent and, as it were, open-ended. He could see beyond the obvious and do so with a naturalness all his own, smilingly and attuned to the work of art and the oeuvre of the master he was contemplating. His concern for nature matched his knowledge of works of art, the open-endedness of life was answered for him in the open-endedness of art. He could stand on his head, literally, if it suited him, and so look at opposites right side up. He lived with works of art in the language in which they speak and he contemplated the anecdotes of the artists of classical antiquity with a gentle delicacy and a smile. The Love of Art mourns his passing. The challenge of his example remains, and survives in his works and his students.

NOTES

1 The tales of the artists were lovingly collected by Franciscus Junius and incorporated into his *De Pictura Veterum, libri tres*, Amsterdam, 1637. He adapted his book and translated it into English, *The Painting of the Ancients in three Bookes*, London, 1638, and into Dutch, *De Schilder-Konst der Oude*, Middelburg, 1641. A second and enlarged version of *De pictura veterum* appeared posthumously, edited by Joannes Georgius Graevius, Rotterdam, 1694, together with the first edition of Junius' *Catalogus ...architectorum, mechanicorum, sed praecipue pictorum, statuariorum, caelatorum, ...*, Rotterdam, 1694. An annotated edition of *The Painting of the Ancients* together with an annotated English translation of the *Catalogus* was prepared by Keith Aldrich, Philipp Fehl, and Raina Fehl with the title *The Literature of Classical Art*, Berkeley, California, 1991 in 2 volumes. The first volume of Junius' second edition of *De pictura veterum* has just appeared in an annotated edition and translation into French by Colette Nativel, Geneva, 1996. All notes in this essay pertaining to texts collected by Junius are to the 1991 edition.

On the stories attributed to Apelles see especially his entry in the *Catalogus, The Literature of Classical Art*, vol. II, pp. 32-46. Our motto, from Junius' reading of Libanius, will be found in context, vol. I, p. 121.

2 Junius, *Literature*, II, p. 349.

3 Junius, *Literature*, II, pp. 175-77.

4 Junius, *Literature*, II, pp. 278-80.

5 Junius, *Literature*, II, pp. 401-403.

6 Junius, *Literature*, I, p. 115.

7 Junius, *Literature*, II, p. 16.

8 Junius, *Literature*, II, p. 43. The passage is Ovid's *Ars amatoria* III.401-402.

9 Junius, *Literature*, I, pp. 397-98.

10 Leon Battista Alberti, *Della pittura*, translated and annotated by John R. Spencer as *On Painting*, London, 1956. Note especially pp. 63-67, 89-98.

11 See note 1 above.

12 Baldassar Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, intro. by Amedeo Quondam, notes by Nicola Lange, 6th ed., Cernusco s/N, 1995, pp. 59-60 [Book I, ch. 26].

13 *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64 [Book I, ch. 28].

14 Erich Loos, *Baldassare Castigliones 'Libro del Cortegiano': Studien zur Tugendaufassung des Cinquecento*, Frankfurt, 1955, p. 65. See also pp. 115-17.

15 'Elegia, qua fingit Hyppoliten suam ad se ipsum scribendi,' in *Opere volgari e latine del Conte Baldassare Castiglione*, ed. Gio. Antonio e Gaetano Volpi, Padua, 1733.

16 *Imprese* are discussed both in earnest and playfully in Castiglione's *Libro del Cortegiano*, op. cit., pp. 23-24, 30-31, 69-70.

17 George Francis Hill, *A Corpus of Italian medals of the Renaissance before Cellini*, London, 1930, plate 192, n. 1158, and p. 300. See also Julia Cartwright, *Baldassare Castiglione, the perfect courtier*, London, 1908, pp. 448-51.

18 For a comparable extension of the Aurora *impresa* note the reverse of the portrait medal of Ippolita Gonzaga by Jacopo Nizolla da Trezzo. It shows Aurora riding through the sky in a chariot drawn by Pegasus and scattering flowers unto the earth below. The work is inscribed VIRTUTIS FORMAEQVE PRAEVIA. Illustrated and discussed in the exhibition catalogue, Victoria and Albert Museum, London *Splendours of the Gonzaga*, ed. David Chambers and Jane Martineau, London, 1981, pp. 181-83 (no. 149). See also in the same catalogue the essay by Mario Praz, 'The Gonzaga Devices,' pp. 65-72.

19 See Benvenuto Cellini, *Due trattati, uno intorno alle otto principali arti dell'orificeria*, Florence, 1568, ch. V (ed. Milan, 1852, pp. 77-90) and his *Vita*, Florence, 1730; transl. John Addington Symonds, *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini*, 3rd edition, London, 1889, chapters 26 and 41, esp. pp. 42, 82. See also John Pope Hennessy, *Cellini*, London, 1985, pp. 30, 41, and plates 20-21.

20 Adam Bartsch, *Le peintre graveur*, ed. Würzburg, 1920, vol. XII, p. 119, no. 293.

21 Note the related, equally radiant representation of Aurora in Giulio Romano's *modello*, *The Death of Procris* (Frankfurt, Städelsches Kunstinstitut), reproduced in Frederick Hartt, *Giulio Romano*, New Haven, Conn., 1958, vol. II, fig. 473.

22 It is worth observing that Castiglione wears his badge cleverly inserted within a flap of his hat which was made for the purpose. We see a small area in shadow, the realm of the ocean and darkness indicated in Marcantonio Raimondi's engraving, and a large highlighted area of golden radiance for the rising Aurora. The bright golden badge as it sticks out from the flap, against the background of the dark hat, itself suggests Aurora's rising from the dark: TENEBRARUM ET LVICIS – but only for Castiglione and his friends.

23 Castiglione, *Il Libro*, op. cit., pp. 455-6; Charles Singleton, *The Book of the Courtier*, New York, 1959, pp. 359-60.

24 Castiglione, *Il Libro*, op. cit., pp. 363-64.

25 Castiglione, *Il Libro*, op. cit., p. 225.

26 For a searching study of the work and its iconography see Joerg Traeger, 'Raffaels Stanza d'Eliodoro und ihr Bildprogramm,' *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* XIII (1971), pp. 29-100, esp. 36-53; *idem*, 'Die Begegnung Leos des Großen mit Attila: Planungsphasen und Bildgenese,' in *Raffaello a Roma (Il Convegno del 1983)*, Rome, 1986,

pp. 97-116. See also, from a different point of view, Philipp Fehl, 'Raphael as a Historian: Poetry and Historical Accuracy in the Sala di Costantino,' *Artibus et Historiae*, XXVI (1993), pp. 9-76, esp. pp. 63-66.

27 Junius, *Literature*, vol. II, p. 402.

28 Harold E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian, II, The Portraits*, London, 1971, p. 119.

29 Paolo Giovio, *Dialogo dell'impresie militari et amorosi*, ed. Lyon, 1574, pp. 53-54.

30 See Wethey, *Paintings of Titian, op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 16-17, 107-108.

31 Rodolfo Signorini, 'A Dog named Rubino,' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XLI, 1978, pp. 317-20, plate 46a. See also Patrik Reuterswaerd, 'The Dog in the Humanist's Study' in his *The Visible and Invisible in Art*, Vienna, 1991, pp. 206-25.

32 *Splendours of the Gonzaga, op. cit.*, pp. 205, 287; See also Mario Praz' discussion of the device, *ibid.*, p. 65f. Note also the emblem on top of the title page of Antonio Possevino, *Gonzaga*, Mantua, 1617, which extols the traditional commitment of the dukes of Mantua to the faith. It shows the arms of the Gonzaga (four eagles) in a frame topped by a ducal crown which encircles the radiant face of the sun. The inscription reads NON MVTATA LVCE/FIDES. If we read the text and the image together, the sense, or one of the senses, is that in the splendor of the new crown the old faith of the Gonzaga shines forth like the sun. For an illustration see *Splendours of the Gonzaga, op. cit.*, p. 241.

33 Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian, II, Portraits, op. cit.*, p. 107.

34 Emblems, though they are concernedly recherché, yet find their origin in nature. 'È attribuita ancho al cane la memoria, la fede, & l'amicitia:' The suitability of dogs in emblems is illustrated by Paolo Giovio in some detail, *Dialogo, op. cit.*, pp. 267-68. For an amorous device of Federico II (featuring a lizard) see pp. 226-27. Much to our point is the inscription on the tomb of Federico II Gonzaga's dog Viola which extols her playfulness and faithfulness and puns on the word FIDES, joining earth to heaven: CAPELLA VIOLA/LVCINAM INFAELICITER EXPERTA HIC SITA SVM./HOC LVSVS HOC FIDES MERVIT MONVMENTVM/QVID MIRARE? FIDES IPSA CANES COELI INCOLAS FACIT. See Signorini, 'A dog...', *op. cit.*, p. 318, n. 14.

35 Wethey, *Paintings of Titian, vol. II, Portraits, op. cit.*, p. 75-76. See also Fehl, *Decorum, op. cit.*, pp. 167-80.

36 Junius, *Literature, op. cit.*, II, p. 40.

37 Wethey, *Paintings of Titian, op. cit.*, I, *Religious Paintings*, London, 1969, pp. 79-80; Fehl, *Decorum, op. cit.*, pp. 173-89, 264-65.

38 First published in Venice, 1535.

39 It is also possible that he is on Pilate's side and that his gesture and expression intend to incite the tumultuous population before him to further excesses. For my attempt to describe his participation in the action in this manner see *Decorum and Wit, op. cit.*, p. 176.

I have changed my mind on this chiefly because the dog, whom the soldier caresses, is so beautiful. Expressions have their own open-endedness and are recognized in context. In the context of this scene both views, I think, are possible but, as I said, the dog makes a difference.

40 Horst Gerson, *Rembrandt. Paintings*, London and Amsterdam, 1968.

41 Gerson, *Rembrandt, op. cit.*, p. 88.

42 Gerson, *Rembrandt, op. cit.*, pp. 86-89. I here use Gerson's text in the German translation because it seems to me more felicitous, in this instance, than the English translation. Horst Gerson, *Rembrandt. Gemälde. Gesamtwerk*, Gütersloh, 1969.

43 Note the illuminating comments on the work in Egbert Haverkamp Begemann, *Rembrandt. The Holy Family, St Petersburg*. The fifth Gerson Lecture (1989), Groningen, 1995, pp. 6-9, 19-20. See also the searching study by Wolfgang Kemp, *Rembrandt. Die Heilige Familie oder die Kunst, einen Vorhang zu lüften*, Frankfurt, 1986.

44 Junius, *Literature, op. cit.*, II, p. 417.

45 Gerson, *Rembrandt, op. cit.*, pp. 360-61.

46 Gerson, *Rembrandt, op. cit.*, p. 210.

47 Gerson, *Rembrandt, op. cit.*, pp. 412-501.

48 See, for example, Colin Eisler, *Meisterwerke in Berlin*, Cologne, 1996, p. 373. *Moses zerschmettert die Gesetzestafeln*.

49 Junius, *Literature, op. cit.*, II, p. 324.

50 *L'Instruction Paternelle*. Dated 1765.

51 *Die Wahlverwandschaften*, in *Goethes Werke, herausgegeben im Auftrage der Großherzogin Sophie von Sachsen*, vol. XX, Weimar, 1892, pp. 254-56.

52 See Eisler, *Meisterwerke, op. cit.*, pp. 382-84.

53 The catalogue Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz Staatliche Museen, *Verzeichnis der ausgestellten Gemälde des 13. bis 18. Jahrhunderts im Museum Dahlem*, Berlin, 1966, still questioned the existence of the gold coin. 'Was als Goldstück angesehen werden könnte, ist der Rand des Fingernagels.' Because of that the author suggests 'In Wahrheit handelt es sich um eine Weinprobe.' Since this is an unlikely explanation the gold coin withstood this early challenge.

54 National Gallery Catalogues, *The Dutch School, 1600-1900*, revised and expanded by Christopher Brown, London, 1991. This includes a report on the cleaning of the picture that enhanced, or better, brought into full evidence the delicacy of its tonality.

55 Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler*, IV, Leipzig, 1910, p. 337.

56 See Philipp Fehl, 'Touchstones of Art and Art Criticism: Rubens and the Work of Franciscus Junius,' *Journal of Aesthetic Criticism*, XXX, n. 2 (Summer, 1996), pp. 5-24.

57 *Max Liebermann. Jahrhundertwende*, Exhibition catalogue, Nationalgalerie, Berlin, ed. Angelika Wesenberg, Berlin, 1997, p. 265.

- 58 Junius, *Literature, op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 294.
59 Junius, *Literature, op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 331-34.
60 Junius, *Literature, op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 295-96.

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- 20 G. ter Borch, *The Ratification of the Treaty of Münster*, National Gallery, London.

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