

# Rembrandt's Early Paintings of the Female nude: *Andromeda* and *Susanna*

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The *Andromeda* of about 1630/31 and the *Susanna* presumably dated 1636 (both in the Mauritshuis in The Hague) were Rembrandt's first essays in painting the female nude.<sup>1</sup> The subjects of both paintings were quite traditional, but Rembrandt deviated considerably from current conventions. To grasp some aspects of Rembrandt's motivations, the two paintings will be compared to the pictorial conventions in earlier depictions of these subjects and they will be discussed within the context of contemporary notions about looking at the female nude.<sup>2</sup>

For his earliest exercise in depicting the naked female body, the *Andromeda* (fig. 1), Rembrandt chose a subject for which there existed a large number of prints – most of them Dutch – from the late 16th and early 17th century. Rembrandt would certainly have been stimulated by these prints, which (except for the book-illustrations from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*), stemmed mainly from the circle of Goltzius. These include one engraving by Hendrick Goltzius himself (fig. 2), three after Goltzius (by Jan Saenredam [fig. 3], Jacob Matham and an anonymous engraver), one after Van Mander (by Jacques de Gheyn II), one by De Gheyn after his own invention and one after Jan Saenredam (by Willem Swanenburgh).<sup>3</sup> Of all the narrative mythological subjects, *Andromeda* was – in this circle – the one most frequently represented in engravings. Apart from these prints, Rembrandt may also have seen the engraving by Fontana after Titian and the two etchings by Agostino Carracci.<sup>4</sup>

Elsewhere I have already discussed why this subject may have been the most favourite mythological narrative in prints from the circle of Goltzius, and I proposed several reasons for this oc-



2. Hendrick Goltzius: *Andromeda*. Engraving (1583)

3. Jan Saenredam after Hendrick Goltzius: *Andromeda*. Engraving (1601)

1. Rembrandt: *Andromeda*. Mauritshuis, The Hague



currence.<sup>5</sup> It may have had a special appeal for the artists because it could be seen as an emulation of an antique painting.<sup>6</sup> An allegorical reading concerning the status of the artist was also possible: Perseus as the artist, armoured by his patrons Mercury and Minerva, rides the horse which created the well of the Muses and rescues beauty from envy and ignorance.<sup>7</sup> In addition, a current political allegory could be projected onto the image. The Andromeda-story was quite often used in an allegorical sense in the literature of that time; it may have given contemporary images of Andromeda rescued by Perseus a particular significance: Perseus as the princely hero (William of Orange), rescues Andromeda personifying a country (the Netherlands), thus freeing her from the monster (Spanish tyranny).<sup>8</sup> Finally, the theme could also function in a particularly popular amorous context, presenting an image of the struggling lover doing everything in his might to

obtain his beloved. In this way it was used in one of those characteristically Dutch ‘vehicles of Petrarchism’,<sup>9</sup> the *Thronus Cupidinis*, a little book of love eblems.<sup>10</sup> The obvious erotic appeal of the image made an interpretation within this context quite self-evident.

However, most important for the popularity of the depiction of *Andromeda* is the conventional pictorial scheme, for which the illustrations of the *Metamorphoses* heralded the way. More than any other narrative theme, this subject offered the opportunity to represent a fully exposed female nude as the dominant focus of the picture; moreover Andromeda’s great beauty, the sight of which immediately fired the loved of Perseus, was pointedly described by Ovid.<sup>11</sup> The image of *Andromeda* could be used as a showcase for the artist’s mastery and ideals in depicting the anatomy and proportions of the female nude. This possibility seems to be thoroughly explored by Goltzius, who represented the subject four times as designs for prints during different stages of his career (fig. 2 and 3), showing both his virtuosity and his changing ideals in portraying the nude (the one from 1583 was in fact his earliest mythological nude).<sup>12</sup> This aspect of the subject may have been of great significance to Rembrandt, when he chose exactly this same theme for his first painting of the female nude.

All of Goltzius’s inventions were brilliant elaborations on the traditional scheme of the book-illustrations and Rembrandt probably knew them very well (Goltzius’s inventions as well as the book-illustrations).<sup>13</sup> Basically Rembrandt kept close to this conventional scheme,<sup>14</sup> which makes his drastic deviations all the more striking. Nothing is left of the elegant contraposto and of the pathetic unfocused expression of Andromeda, which we see in all the prints from Goltzius’s circle. The emotionally charged counter-movement created by Andromeda’s straining away from the terrifying monster, while at the same time turning to look at it, might have been inspired by Fontana’s print after Titian. The idea to omit the other protagonists might have been suggested by the prints of Agostino Carracci, who left out the figure of the rescuing Perseus and only kept the threatening monster.<sup>15</sup>

Rembrandt undoubtedly would have had several of these representations stored in his mind when he set out to give his own solution.<sup>16</sup>

By omitting Perseus and the monster, Rembrandt also eliminated the possibilities for any allegorical reading, for which the

inclusion of the images of both Perseus and the monster is essential. Rembrandt focused on the action and reaction of the narrative, as reflected by the single figure of Andromeda. In Rembrandt’s painting, Andromeda reacts more forcefully to what is happening than in any earlier depiction of this subject. By emphasizing her frightened reaction to an occurrence which we cannot see, Rembrandt heightens the feeling of suspense in an entirely new and original way. Panofsky described this beautifully in a footnote to his famous article about Rembrandt’s *Danaë* (1933), as: “Das Erwartungsmoment, die gespannte Konzentration der psychischen Energien auf einen ausserhalb des Bildes befindlichen Erlöser”.<sup>17</sup> Already a few years earlier, in his *Samson and Delila*,<sup>18</sup> Rembrandt brilliantly condensed a strong sense of suspense and impending danger in the expression of one figure of the scene: the frightened, wavering Philistine who is going to cut Samson’s hair. In *Andromeda* Rembrandt had the opportunity to do the same while focusing on only one single figure, since the image of the young girl chained to the rock was clear enough for the connoisseur to evoke the whole episode of the narrative.

Andromeda’s arms, awkwardly twisted because of her straining, show emphatically that Rembrandt imagined as no one had before, what her painful situation would look like in reality. Most striking of all is the total lack of stylization of the nude and the absence of any reference to classical ideals of proportions and posture, ideals which are present – albeit in varying ways and degrees – in all the earlier depictions of the subject. Rembrandt chose specifically a subject most suitable for displaying one’s conception of the female nude, as well as one which offered the opportunity to emulate well-known masters. The fact that all the previous examples – many of which he will have known – are so utterly different in the type of nude portrayed, makes evident how deliberate his deviation of the then existing conventions in depicting the nude must have been.

By turning Andromeda into a frightened naked girl and eliminating any stylization which may diminish the emotional appeal of the helpless nude to the beholder, Rembrandt enhances the image of her vulnerability. This helplessness is all the more emphasized by the total isolation of her strongly highlighted body against the threatening background of the dark, rough cliff.<sup>19</sup> Because of the naturalistic rendering of the body, the nude figure is no longer an unapproachable ideal. This brings her closer to the

viewer's world of experience and it enlists his empathy. By suggesting the presence of the male hero, but not including him in the image, Rembrandt facilitates the imaginative process of identifying with the rescuing hero who was fired by love when seeing this desirable,<sup>20</sup> pitiful young woman chained to the rock.

Many aspects which characterize Rembrandt's narrative paintings during this early period were developed to serve the rendering of the 'affecten' (the convincing expression of emotions by bodily movement), which Van Mander called the soul of painting.<sup>21</sup> This was what Rembrandt referred to himself as "die meeste ende die natuerelste beweeghelickeijt" in a letter to Constantijn Huygens of 1639,<sup>22</sup> and it was precisely what Huygens acutely noticed already around 1630, when he praised Rembrandt specifically for his "vvida inventio" and his "affectuum vivacitas".<sup>23</sup> Comparing Rembrandt to Lievens, Huygens added: "since he [Rembrandt] gives himself wholly over to dealing with what he wants to express from within himself, he prefers to concentrate [his work] in a smaller picture, and to bring about, through compactness, an effect that one may seek in vain in the largest paintings by others".<sup>24</sup> Huygens used conventional terms and categories, but he employed them in such a way that he acutely expressed what struck him in Rembrandt's work.

Moreover, Huygens's beautiful *ekphrasis* of Rembrandt's Judasfigure is not a mere display of literary contrivances. Huygens's response to the Judas figure shows an engaged, participatory reading of the picture.<sup>25</sup> This may be part of an old *ekphrasis*-tradition, but the context, as well as the sheer enthusiasm with which Huygens did this, give us an insight into the connoisseur's perceptions. When discussing *Judas repentant*, Huygens explicitly focused on one figure only. He did not describe the figure of Judas, but emulated its emotional expression in words by way of an empathizing scrutiny of the depicted figure – gleaning the whole drama of the narrative from this one figure. In the process Huygens made clear that this pitiful image is something entirely different from anything he has ever seen; he ends by saying that he sets this one figure against all the refined art of the past.

This attitude seems to be in perfect agreement with the goals Rembrandt was striving for with intense consistency in his narrative paintings of this period.<sup>26</sup> It was this kind of response he wished to evoke from the connoisseurs (not necessarily Huygens's sophisticated and literary contrived response).

However, Rembrandt's *Andromeda* presents a female nude in an erotically charged situation. This means that an involvement of the beholder also had quite ambiguous implications. The subject has an archetypal erotic appeal: the female victim in utter distress, rescued by the male who is instantly smitten by the sight of her. This brings us to contemporary preoccupations with notions about the sense of sight and seduction by sight. Numerous late 16th- and 17th-century Dutch texts, stemming from various cultural groups, reflect a veritable obsession with the sense of sight as the seat of all desire and as the main cause of the arousal of love and especially lust. Such thoughts were already very old, but in this period they were expressed with remarkable frequency and insistence. In many texts – ranging from the condemnatory and moralizing to the playfully amorous (or even overtly erotic) – this concept was also transferred to looking at depictions of female nudes.<sup>27</sup> A few pictures also reflected some of these notions in a moralizing, or playful way. In a painting by Werner van der Valckert for instance, the power of the image of the nude Venus is shown in a witty and direct way: Venus, seductively smiling at the viewer, unveils her body for him, while Cupid aims his arrow straight at the beholder.<sup>28</sup>

The power of such images in arousing lust was a widely – and sometimes vehemently – discussed issue and the impact was obviously taken very seriously. It is therefore evident that the contemporary beholder and the painter must have been very conscious of the erotic appeal as a fundamental aspect of such pictures.<sup>29</sup> Seen in this context, it is striking that the most popular subjects with female nudes in Dutch painting of this period concern men being seduced by *seeing* a beautiful naked woman. The viewer is placed in the same position and sees the same enticing beauty as the man *in* the picture. These subjects in which the male is visually aroused, predominantly have very negative connotations, since the men are severely punished. Thus, a moral is near at hand, as in the themes of *The bathing Diana and her nymphs seen by Actaeon* (the most popular mythological subject in Dutch painting of the first decades of the 17th century),<sup>30</sup> *The bathing Bathsheba seen by David* and *The bathing Susanna and the Elders* (the two most popular biblical subjects in Dutch art). The images contain the titillating tension between looking at, and enjoying seductive beauties, and being made aware that this very act is illicit. All of these subjects were painted by Rembrandt, and he did so

with highly unusual deviations from the current conventions.<sup>31</sup>

One of the 17th-century authors who was extremely preoccupied with the dangers of looking at naked women and depictions of the nude, was of course Jacob Cats. Indeed he was even ridiculed by several contemporary poets because of his spasmodic moralizing.<sup>32</sup> When Cats warns his readers against the dangers of the eye, he refers pointedly to stories about David and Bathseba and Diana and Actaeon, which are exactly popular subjects in painting. Elsewhere he also narrates a story which includes the viewing of a depiction of the latter, in which the viewer is clearly equated with Actaeon, the voyeur in the image.<sup>33</sup> When Cats denounces paintings with nudes (the only function of which is, in his opinion, to arouse lasciviousness in the beholder), he warns that the more competent the painter, the more dangerous his paintings are for our minds: the better the painter succeeds in a close rendering from life, the more he manages to disorder our emotions and impulses, Cats maintains. Here the notion that naturalism enhances the involvement of the beholder, is clearly stated in the context of erotic pictures.

The subject of Susanna – in which *the* exemplar of chastity arouses base lust in the men who are looking at her – was a special target for moralizing criticism, as well as a source for playful voyeuristic identification. The most extreme critique on painting in general and paintings of nudes in particular, came from the religious Raphael Camphuyzen, who mentioned Susanna as one of the most disgusting subjects, saying with utter abhorrence that “painters show us a naked woman bathing between lustful men, which is cancer for morality and venom for the eyes, and that should be Susanna, a chaste woman”.<sup>34</sup> Camphuyzen emphasized that the beautiful lies of painting which deceive the eye, will reign over the mind; ultimately one wants to do and to have everything one beholds in a painting.<sup>35</sup>

On the other hand, Rubens, who painted the subject many times, called a painting of *Susanna* “una galanteria” in a letter to Sir Dudley Carlton. The elderly Carlton replied that he hoped that the *Susanna* Rubens was currently painting would “prove beautiful enough to enamour even old men”.<sup>36</sup> The voyeuristic identification is formulated here in a playful way. Perhaps Goltzius implied the same, when he included his friend Jan Goverstz. in his painting (he may have been the first owner of Goltzius’s

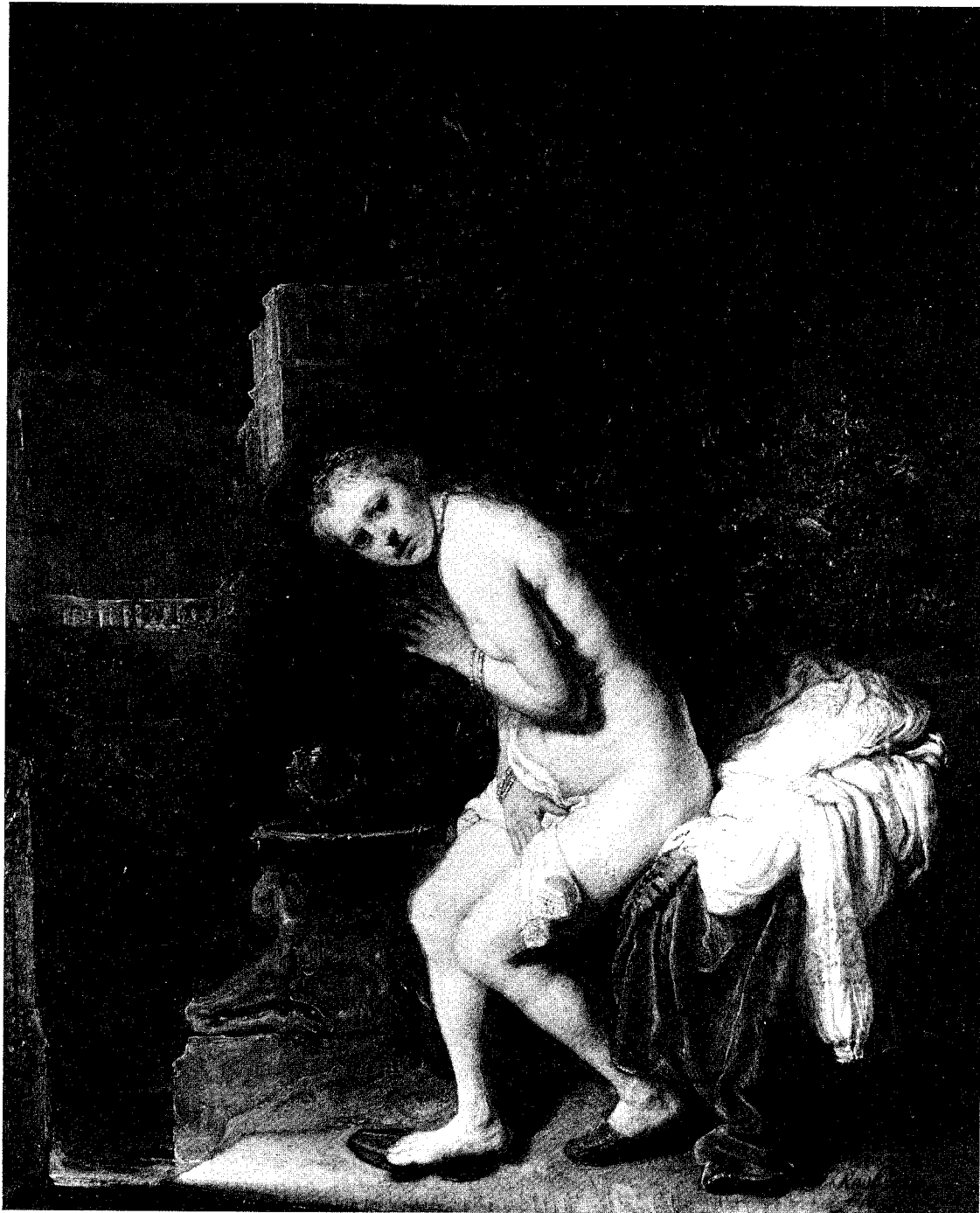


4. Hendrick Goltzius: *Susanna and the Elders* (1607). Musée de la Chartreuse, Douai

*Susanna*). We can recognize Goverstz. in the Elder at the right, who looks delightedly at the naked Susanna (fig. 4).<sup>37</sup> However, with such an image the possibility to verbalize a severe moral was always there, if one felt inclined to do so.

In the many poems about paintings with female nudes by Vondel and Vos around the middle of the century, a witty game is played with the same notions about arousal of lust and identification with the lovers of the depicted women.<sup>38</sup>

I am convinced that Rembrandt, in a deliberate and brilliant way, brought these notions to their ultimate conclusion in his second painting of a nude as the focus of a painting, the little *Susanna* in the Mauritshuis (fig. 5). As in the *Andromeda* he concentrated once again on the image of a helpless naked female victim, com-



5. Rembrandt: *Susanna and the Elders* (1636?). Mauritshuis, The Hague

pletely isolated. Her state of mind is also defined by a frightened anticipatory glance.

Again Rembrandt would have known very well the conventions of this subject from several prints after inventions of the Haarlem mannerists (fig. 6).<sup>39</sup> In addition, he could rely on the composition of his master, Pieter Lastman (fig. 7). He would certainly also have known Vorsterman's (fig. 8) and Pontius's prints after Rubens and perhaps the prints of Annibale and Agostino Carracci.<sup>40</sup>

The composition by Lastman (fig. 7) was undoubtedly his starting point for rethinking the subject (initially he made a drawing after this painting, in which he introduced a few significant changes).<sup>41</sup> However, the Vorsterman print after Rubens (fig. 8) will have been an important stimulus for Rembrandt's painting.<sup>42</sup> In Rubens's invention the elders are conveniently removing Susanna's robes for the viewer. Susanna is characterized as a model of chastity – a *pudicitiae exemplar* as the text under the print says;<sup>43</sup> at the same time Rubens enhances her erotic appeal. Susanna's chasteness is emphasized by her crouching position and the determined attempt to hide her body with both arms. By her movement, she seems in fact to be hiding her body from the gaze of the viewer. Her frowned look, directed out of the picture, suggests that she is aware of his presence. As Elizabeth McGrath has said of the work: "the heroine's obvious annoyance that we, the spectators, are spying on her naked charms makes us only conscious that the artist has invited us to follow the example of the Elders and do just this".<sup>44</sup> Rubens's attempt to actively involve the viewer, would have been an important precedent for Rembrandt.

Rembrandt also emphasized Susanna's natural reaction, specifically her defensive gestures of hiding her breasts and abdomen. By assuming this posture the figure recalls the antique *Venus pudica* attitude, a pose which had already often been used for earlier Susanna's (for instance in the prints after Hendrick Goltzius and Cornelis Cornelisz. [fig. 6]). It is striking, however, that, although the gestures seem absolutely natural, Rembrandt at the same time referred more directly to a specific antique source: the *Venus Doidalsas*, or crouching Venus.<sup>45</sup> Evidently he got his inspiration from the print of Albrecht Altdorfer (fig. 9), which was in its turn a free copy of Marcantonio Raimondi's engraving after this antique statue.

6. Jacob Matham after Cornelis Cornelisz. van Haarlem: *Susanna and the Elders*. Engraving (1599)



Most important – and completely new – is that in Rembrandt's painting all the attention is now focused on Susanna, and on her alone. This is a direct result of a change of the particular moment represented: it is precisely the moment she starts in fear but before she knows the cause of her fear. This exact moment was never depicted before. It epitomizes the essence of suspense. In this work – even more forcefully than in his *Andromeda* – Rembrandt concentrated on the crystalized moment of anxiety and impending danger as expressed in one figure. The Elders are still hiding in the bushes; the viewer even has difficulty finding them. One's

first impression is that Susanna is totally alone (the second Elder was in fact not even discovered until quite recently).<sup>46</sup>

What the viewer sees is a Susanna who suddenly realizes that she is being watched – one could imagine that she has just heard a twig snap. She starts in fear and begins to rise from a sitting position.<sup>47</sup> Her weight is already on her feet, which emphasizes the agitated suddenness of her reaction and gives a suggestion of wavering unbalance (which recalls the Philistine in the *Samson and Delila*). In the process she steps on her slipper; thus Rembrandt stressed the abrupt clumsiness of her spontaneous movement, which is at the same time brilliantly used as a metaphoric motif referring to her chasteness.<sup>48</sup> Slightly turning away her upper

7. Pieter Lastman: *Susanna and the Elders* (1614). Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin



body from the onlooker, trying to hide her secret parts, her large dark eyes look intensely at the viewer. It is the viewer she confronts as the intruder who made her start in fear.

To an even greater extent than Andromeda's, Susanna's brilliantly lit body, is completely isolated against the dark, threatening background. This is enhanced by the stark contrast between the thick application of paint in the body, modelled with great vitality, and the thin and very sketchlike treatment of the background. Rembrandt used this background to accentuate her face and her movement: Susanna's face aligns with the crossing point of two diagonal lines (the contours of the foliage and the hill in the background) and a strong vertical line (the architecture of the palace).<sup>49</sup> Our attention is thus focused on Susanna's facial expression and her intense, striking dark eyes.<sup>50</sup> The solid vertical at the same time serves as a foil for the strained and twisting movement of her torso. And it is the gaze of the viewer to which she reacts so forcefully. Unlike Rubens's *Susanna*, her reaction is not ambiguous: the viewer is recognized as the intruder and primary offender.<sup>51</sup> Susanna is trapped by the beholder's gaze, which becomes explicitly the illicit gaze of the voyeur. At the same time this makes the image more intensely erotic. In this very erotically charged moment, the engaged viewer experiences, as it were, the rush of being caught in an illicit act by the source of his sensual enjoyment. In this way the moral and erotic tension are linked as never before.

The fact that Susanna's posture contains a classical motif, emphasizes all the more that her anatomy and proportions defy all conventions of depicting the female nude; they deviate entirely from all the examples Rembrandt may have seen. Lastman's *Susanna* looks idealized and statuesque in comparison. As in Rembrandt's *Andromeda*, the lack of conventional stylization brings Susanna disquietingly close:<sup>52</sup> at the same time it emphasizes the vulnerability and complete helplessness of the naked woman. Both effects serve to evoke an empathy of which Jacob Cats certainly would have disapproved. But it is precisely this way of looking (with the viewer as engaged participant), that we encounter in the poems of Joost van den Vondel and Jan Vos celebrating paintings of Susanna.<sup>53</sup> It is unknown to which paintings they referred, although Vondel speaks about an Italian painting. It is, however, of greater importance that, while using in a witty and contrived way many *topoi* from the tradition of laudatory, *ekphra-*



8. Lucas Vorsterman after Peter Paul Rubens: *Susanna and the Elders*. Engraving (probably published in 1620)



9. Albrecht Altdorfer: *Crouching Venus*. Engraving

*sis*-poems,<sup>54</sup> their poems give us nonetheless insight in certain values and critical categories with which such paintings were viewed and appraised by informed spectators. It seems to me that in a supreme – and rather drastic – way, Rembrandt was trying to elicit this kind of response.

Vondel especially assumes the position of the Elders, who experience the erotic effect of seeing Susanna. He concentrates solely on the image of Susanna, not even mentioning the Elders (who were undoubtedly portrayed in the painting he took as the starting point for his poem). Vondel draws attention to the fact that Susanna tries to hide her body with drapery, which shows her chasteness, because nobody, except her husband, should be allowed to see her nudity.<sup>55</sup> Then he draws attention to her mouth (which one would like to kiss),<sup>56</sup> and especially to her alert eyes (which, like glowing coals set afire whoever sees her).<sup>57</sup> He also describes her back, shoulders, neck and arms, painted as if it were living flesh, as well as the expression of anxiety and shame – all



of which make the figure of Susanna irresistible. In a combination of traditional praise of the painting and playful identification with the Elders, he emphasizes that nobody will be able to withstand the arousing power of this image of Susanna.<sup>58</sup> Vondel asks rhetorically if inanimate paint is able to inflame us:<sup>59</sup> his answer is clearly yes. The sight of such a virtuous and chaste woman entices us to trespass the laws by which the Elders were severely punished.<sup>60</sup> The viewer is the victim of Susanna's beauty and it is the painter who is to blame; this accusation is clearly meant as a compliment.<sup>61</sup> Jan Vos, who uses many of the same motifs, emphasizes more the danger which threatens Susanna, and her expression of fear and chaste despair, which make us want to rescue her.<sup>62</sup>

The aspects upon which Vondel and Vos elaborate, may be seen in a great number of Susanna depictions, as they are not very specific; both respond to conventional elements in many representations of Susanna. However, Rembrandt's deviations from these conventions (which make his painting so exceptional) heighten the emotional impact and the tension between moral and eroticism, inherent in precisely the motifs to which Vondel and Vos pay attention.

When Rembrandt wanted to introduce himself as a painter of the nude, he chose subjects with respectable pictorial traditions. These subjects were highly suitable for emulating famous artists in the depiction of the nude as well as in the expression of emotions. At the same time *Andromeda* and *Susanna* were erotically charged subjects par excellence; their attraction had much to do with the ambivalent contemporary preoccupations concerning the seductive power of sight. Rembrandt kept close to traditional pictorial schemes, which generated certain expectations in the connoisseur/viewer, but he brilliantly enhanced the inherent moral and erotic implications of the subjects by way of some radical changes in the conventions of representing the story and in the conventions of rendering the nude.<sup>63</sup> Thus, he involved the spectator in an unprecedented and drastic way.

## Notes

1. For the technical data, condition and changes in size, as well as comments about style and subject, see: A.B. de Vries, M. Tóth-Ubbens and W. Froentjes, *Rembrandt in the Mauritshuis*, Alphen a/d Rijn, 1978, pp. 63–71 (*Andromeda*), pp. 121–131 (*Susanna*; in this book erroneously called *Bathsheba*), and especially *Corpus* 1, pp. 309–314 (A 31, *Andromeda*) and 2, pp. 198–201 (A 117, *Susanna*). For the *Susanna*, see also: B.P.J. Broos, *Meesterwerken in het Mauritshuis*, Den Haag, 1987, pp. 289–293 and P.J.J. van Thiel in: *Berlin-Amsterdam-London 1991–1992*, pp. 196–199.
2. During a seminar at Yale University in 1991, two students, Chad Coerver and Anthony Nygren, contributed in a stimulating way – in discussion and papers – to my insights into Rembrandt's *Susanna* in particular.
3. See for illustrations and a discussion of these prints: E.J. Sluijter, "Herschepingen' in prenten van Hendrick Goltzius en zijn kring, II. Andromeda en Callisto", *Delineavit et Sculptit* 5 (1991), pp. 1–27, in particular pp. 1–9.
4. Giulio Fontana: B. 56 (1562). For the Carracci-prints, see: D. de Grazia Bohlin, *Prints and related drawings by the Carracci family*, Washington, 1979, pp. 294–295, cat. nos. 179 and 180 (part of the so-called 'Lascivie'). One can only guess if Rembrandt somehow knew that Andromeda was also a favourite of Rubens, who depicted her as the centerpiece of the gardenfaçade of his own house (see: J.M. Muller, "The Perseus and Andromeda on Rubens's house", *Simiolus*, 12 (1981/82), pp. 131–146).
5. Sluijter 1991, *op. cit.* (note 3), pp. 3–9.
6. See K. van Mander, *Leven der oude antijcke schilders*, in: *Het Schilder-Boeck*, Haarlem 1604, fol. 74v (the life of Nicias). It is significant that Van Mander incorporated the traditional pictorial scheme in his description: he mentioned this painting as "the naked Andromeda who was freed by Perseus"; his source, a French translation of Plinius, does not mention her nakedness.
7. See: Sluijter 1991, *op. cit.* (note 3), pp. 6–7, with further references and J.M. Muller 1981/82, *op. cit.* (note 4), pp. 140–143.
8. See Sluijter 1991, *op. cit.* (note 3), pp. 4–6 and 17–18 for further references.
9. This characterization of the popular books with love emblems and the song-books from the first two decades of the 17th century, is borrowed from K. Porteman (in: idem, *P.C. Hooft, Emblemata Amatoria*, Leiden 1983, p. 17), in which Porteman discusses Dutch Petrarchism in connection with those types of literature.
10. *Thronus Cupidinis sive Emblemata Amatoria; P.T.L.*, Utrecht (without date). The first edition with prints by Chrispijn van de Passe was published in 1618. About the sequence of the emblems in Theodoor Rodenburgh's revision of the emblem-texts (in which he used the Petrarchan fashion for a more didactic purpose), see: S.F. Witstein, *Bronnen en bewerkingswijze van ontleende gedeelten in Rodenburghs Eglentiers Poëtens Borstwerpingh*, Amsterdam 1964 (Kon. Academie van Wetenschappen, afd. Letterkunde, dl. 27, nr. 6). The motto of the Andromeda-emblem is: "Love stimulates the mind", and in Rodenburgh's revision: "Love does not fear death".

11. “As soon as Perscus saw her there bound by the arms to a rough cliff – save that her hair gently stirred in the breeze and the warm tears were trickling down her cheeks, he would have thought her a marble statue – he took fire unwitting, and stood dumb. Smitten by the sight of the beauty he sees, he almost forgot to move his wings in the air.” *Metamorphoses* IV, 672–677 (English translation from the Loeb edition, London 1977). The Dutch translation by Florianus, reprinted numerous times from 1552 till the middle of the 17th century, follows Ovid’s text quite faithfully in this passage, but Florianus emphasized Andromeda’s beauty even more by elaborating the comparison with a marble statue: “[...] a marble statue, so beautiful and white was her body [...]” (ed. 1619, p. 81).
12. The first one, engraved by Goltzius himself, is dated 1583; the second, by an anonymous engraver can be dated around 1590; the third, engraved by Matham, is dated 1597, and the last one, by Saenredam, 1601. Together they give a good survey of Goltzius’s changing ideals in depicting the nude: from a ‘Blocklandt’-type of nude, to ‘Sprangerian’ stylization, to quite classical proportions, which in the last one got a more naturalistic touch.
13. The best known illustrations were the woodcuts by Virgil Solis (1563), of which exact copies were reprinted in the many editions of Florianus’s Dutch translation of the *Metamorphoses*; in its turn, Solis’s illustrations were free copies after Bernard Salomon (1557). The basic scheme of those illustrations was of great importance for all the later illustrations, as well as for paintings of the subject (this does not only apply to *Andromeda*, but to many other popular subjects from the *Metamorphoses*, see: E.J. Sluijter, *De ‘heyden-sche fabulen’ in de Noordnederlandse schilderkunst, circa 1590–1670*, Leiden 1986, part I, passim). It is quite clear that Rembrandt also knew the *Andromeda*-illustration by Pieter van der Borcht for a *Metamorphosis* edition, published in 1591 in Antwerp (see below, note 16).
14. The first stage of Rembrandt’s painting (visible in the X-rays) – in which the lower parts of the legs and the feet were not yet covered and the drapery concealed less than it does now – makes this even more evident. See for the X-rays and a drawing reconstructing the earlier design, before Rembrandt changed this part of the composition in a later stage: De Vries a.o. 1978, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp. 64–65.
15. The assumption that an engraving by De Gheyn after an illustration of the Andromeda constellation in a 9th-century manuscript (De Gheyn made this engraving for a new edition by De Groot of the famous astronomical treatise the *Syntagma Aratorum*), inspired Rembrandt to omit Perseus and the monster, is highly unlikely (De Vries e.a. 1978, *op. cit.* (note 1), p. 69, and especially G. Schwartz, *Rembrandt: zijn leven, zijn schilderijen*, Maarsse 1984, pp. 119–121, who elaborated further on this idea). See for my refutation of Schwartz’s peculiar interpretation of Andromeda, based on this assumption: E.J. Sluijter, “Een nieuwe vertekening van het Rembrandt-beeld”, *Oud Holland* 101 (1987), p. 291. The possibility that the painting was much wider at the right and included the monster and/or Perseus, is excluded by Bruyn a.o. *Corpus*, 1, pp. 309 and 312 (much of the bevelling of the panel is still there, only a narrow strip is missing; much more is missing at the left and bottom).
16. Rembrandt also knew the illustration by Pieter van der Borcht in *P. Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphosis*, Antwerpen, 1591 (Plantijn), p. 119. This is especially obvious in the first stage of the painting, visible in the X-rays: the long flowing hair (reduced in a later stage), the rather ungraceful loin cloth (especially the, originally planned, shorter version of the cloth), and the awkward position of Andromeda’s chained feet (later Rembrandt painted the rock in the foreground), are quite similar.
17. E. Panofsky, “Der gefesselte Eros. Zur Genealogie von Rembrandts Danaë”, *Oud Holland* 50 (1933), p. 214, note 1.
18. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, dated 1628, but according to *Corpus*, 1, cat. no. A 24, probably painted in 1629 (for a refutation of this later date, see: P. Schatborn in: *Oud Holland*, 100 (1986), pp. 59/60).
19. The extreme whiteness of Andromeda’s body might have been inspired by the text of Florianus’s *Metamorphoses*-translation (see note 11).
20. Anne Hollander – who takes the fashion in contemporary costume as her point of departure – is convinced that Rembrandt’s early nudes represent a sexually attractive contemporary ideal (she discusses the etchings of *Diana* and the *Naked woman seated on a mound*, of 1630 and 1631 respectively): “The intention to make these bodies look not only ‘realistic’ but specifically desirable is conveyed by their resemblance to the currently modish clothed look for ladies: high waistline, plump but narrow shoulders, huge stomach, and lots of rippling texture – in these instances flesh not silk”, and: “The fashionable silhouette was masterfully reflected in the nude images of the early Rembrandt, whose ladies have the modest breasts, fat shoulders, huge bellies and general massiveness below the waist that was then so much admired in female bodies”. A. Hollander, *Looking through clothes*, New York/London, 1975, pp. 160 and 108.
21. K. van Mander, *Den grondt der edel-vry schilderconst*, in: *Het Schilderboek*, Haarlem, 1604, fol. 127r (cap. VI, 55): “Laet vyerichen lust u herte doorbernen / Tot desen Affecten, als rechte Leren / Oft Siele, die Const in haer heeft besloten” (Let your heart be ablaze with ardent desire towards those affects, as being the true kernel, or soul which the art contains).
22. L. Strauss and M. van der Meulen, *The Rembrandt Documents*, New York 1979, pp. 161f. For a perfect description of what is meant by this much discussed phrase, see Van Mander in his chapter on the “Affekten”, *op. cit.* (note 21), fol. 25v (cap. VI, 35): “Maer op den motus des Lichaems van buyten, / T’ veranderen en t’roeren der lidmaten, / Moeten wy achten, tot constigher baten / Dat een yeghelijck mach lichtelijck mercken, / T’gheen onse Beelden lijden, ofte wercken” (We have to observe the visible movement of the body, and pay attention to the changing and moving of the limbs, so that, for the sake of art, everyone can easily see what our images of figures experience (endure, suffer) or what they do”. Van Mander based this part of his chapter about the affects on Rivius’s translation of Alberti (H. Miedema, *Karel Van Mander, Den grondt der edel-vry schilderconst*, Utrecht, 1973, vol. 2, p. 501).
23. Tuynman translates “affectuum vivacitas” as: “the natural power with which he is able to move the spirit [of the viewer]”; See the English translation of the passage about the *Judas-repentant* in Huygens *Vita* (manuscript, preserved in the Royal Library in the Hague) in: *Corpus*, 1, pp. 193–194.

24. Translation by P. Tuynman in: *Corpus*, I, p. 193 (not the whole text about Rembrandt and Lievens is translated there, but only the passage about the *Judas repentant*). For full translations in Dutch of Huygens's manuscript, see: A.H. Kan, *De jeugd van Constantijn Huygens door hemzelf beschreven*, Rotterdam, 1971 and C.L. Heesakkers, *Mijn jeugd / Constantijn Huygens*, Amsterdam, 1987. The Latin text in: *Oud Holland*, 9 (1891).
25. See also the interesting discussion of *ekphrasis* in connection with the 'reading' of Dutch paintings of tempest and shipwreck by L. Goedde, *Tempest and Shipwreck in Dutch and Flemish Art*, University Park and London 1989 (the chapter on "Reading Paintings: *Ekphrasis* and Interpretation"); Huygens's description of the Judas-figure is referred to on p. 126.
26. See also: Sluijter 1987, *op. cit.* (note 15), pp. 288–289.
27. For an extensive discussion and many examples, see: Sluijter 1986, *op. cit.* (note 13), pp. 269–281, and E.J. Sluijter, "Venus, *Visus en Pictura*", in: R.L. Falkenburg, J.P. Filedt Kok and H. Leeftang (ed.), *Hendrick Goltzius, Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 42/43 (1991–92), Zwolle 1993, pp. 337–396. About the 'sinful eyes' in connection with a painting by Rembrandt, see also: V. Manuth, "Die Augen des Sünders – Ueberlegungen zu Rembrandts Blendung Simons von 1636 in Frankfurt", *Artibus et Historiae*, 21 (XI) (1990), pp. 169–198.
28. W. van den Valckert, *Venus and Cupid*, circa 1612, Haarlem, private coll. See: P.J.J. van Thiel, "Werner Jacobsz. van den Valkcert", *Oud Holland*, 97 (1983), pp. 123–195, cat. no. 6.
29. For an extensive discussion, see: Sluijter 1993, *op. cit.* (note 27).
30. The *Judgement of Paris* also fits in this context: about *Diana and Actaeon* and the *Judgement of Paris*, see: Sluijter 1986, *op. cit.* (note 13), pp. 168–187, 195–197 and 210–224; about the *Actaeon*-theme also: E.J. Sluijter, "Some observations on the choice of narrative mythological subjects in late mannerist painting in the Northern Netherlands", in: G. Cavalli-Björkman (ed.), *Netherlandish Mannerism*, Stockholm, 1985, pp. 61–72.
31. For my analysis of Rembrandt's *Diana, Actaeon and Callisto*, see: Sluijter 1986, *op. cit.* (note 13), pp. 90–94 and 195–197; see also: W. Busch, "Das keusche un das unkeusche Sehen. Rembrandts 'Diana, Aktaion und Callisto'", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 52 (1989), pp. 257–277. For another subject painted by Rembrandt in which the 'sin of the eyes' is an issue, see the interesting article by Manuth 1990, *op. cit.* (note 27).
32. Particularly in the case of Cats's *Self-Stryt* (about Joseph and the wife of Potiphar), the relation between the moralizing goal and the definitely erotic content was ridiculed by Jacob Westerbaen, Jan Vos and Johan van Heemskerck (see also below, note 58). Sluijter 1986, *op. cit.* (note 13), pp. 289–290 and K. Porteman, "Vondels gedicht 'Op een Italiaensche schildery van Susanne'", in: G. van Eemeren and F. Willaert (ed.), *'t Ondersoek leert. Studies ... ter nagedachtenis van L. Rens*, Leuven/Amersfoort, 1986, pp. 313–314.
33. In *Houwelyck* (1625) and *Proefsteen van den Trouwring* (1637) respectively, see: Sluijter 1986, *op. cit.* (note 13), pp. 172–173, 177–178, 276–277, also: Sluijter 1985, *op. cit.* (note 30) pp. 66–68.
34. "Men doet een naeckte vrouw sich tusschen minnaers baden; / Tot kancker van goe seen' en schoubaer ooghen fenijn: / En dat sal noch Susann', een kuysche vrouwe sijn."; from the long poem "Tegen 't Geestig-dom Der Schilder-

- konst", a translation from the Latin poem ("Idolelenchus") by Camphuyzen's friend Johannes Evertsz. Geesteranus (this poem is the most extremist attack on the art of painting), in: *Stichtelycke Rymen*, Amsterdam 1644, p. 218. For several other quotations from this poem, see: Sluijter 1986, *op. cit.* (note 13), pp. 274–275 and in English translations also: E.J. Sluijter, "Didactic and disguised meanings? Several Seventeenth-Century Texts on Painting and the Iconological Approach to Dutch Painting of This Period", in: D. Freedberg and J. de Vries (ed.), *Art in History / History in Art*, Sta. Monica 1991, pp. 188–190. Before Camphuyzen's translation of "Idolelenchus" (first published in the edition of 1644), there appeared already in the first edition of the *Stichtelycke Rymen* (1624) a poem by Camphuyzen which contained a violent attack on painting as the mother of all vanity, and in which he praised the "Idolelenchus" by Geesteranus as a very courageous publication, since nobody dares to say such things aloud in a time that painting is to be seen everywhere and popular with everyone! (ed. 1624, p. 176).
35. For a full quotation and English translation of this part of Camphuyzen's poem, see: Sluijter 1991, *op. cit.* (note 34), p. 189.
36. "[...] hã da esser bella per inamorar anco li Vecchij [...]". See: E. McGrath, "Rubens's *Susanna an the Elders* and moralizing inscriptions on prints", in: H. Vekeman and J. Müller Hofstede (ed.), *Wort und bild in der niederländische Kunst und Literatur des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, Erfstadt, 1984, p. 84.
37. H. Goltzius, *Susanna and the Elders*, dated 1613, Douai, Musée de la Chartreuse. See: Sluijter 1993, *op. cit.* (note 27).
38. See Porteman 1986, *op. cit.* (note 32), *passim*, Sluijter 1986, *op. cit.* (note 13), pp. 272–274 and recently, G.J. Weber, *Der Lobtopos des 'lebenden' Bildes. Jan Vos und sein "Zeege der Schilderkunst", von 1654*, Hildesheim/Zürich/New York 1991, especially chapter VII. 4. "Die Erweckung der Affekte der Begierde und Liebe".
39. For instance: J. Saenredam after H. Goltzius (B. 42); J. Saenredam after Cornelis Cornelisz. (B. 36), dated 1599; J. Matham after Cornelis Cornelisz. (B.92), dated 1602. Furthermore there were wellknown prints of A. Wierix after M. de Vos, H. Wierix after A. Wierix, Chr. de Passe after M. de Vos.
40. For the prints after Rubens, see: E. McGrath, *op. cit.* (note 36). See for the Carracci-prints: D. de Grazia Bohlin 1979, *op. cit.*, (note 4), p. 291, cat. no. 176 (Agostino, one of the so-called 'Lascivie'), and pp. 44–445, cat. no. 14 (Annibale).
41. See Broos 1987, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp. 289–293 and Van Thiel in: *Berlin-Amsterdam-London 1991–92* pp. 196–199.
42. It is remarkable that only recently Van Thiel (thanking J. Kelch for pointing this out to him), was the first to pay attention to this very obvious source of inspiration: *op. cit.* (note 1), p. 199. I will not discuss here the many other sources which may have played a role for Rembrandt in the genesis of this composition (like the *Bathsheba*-etching of Buytewech of 1615 [see also below, note 52] and Lastman's *Bathsheba*, now in St. Petersburg).
43. The print (1620) was dedicated to Anna Roemer Visscher. McGrath: "[...] when pictures of naked women were used to make public compliments to illustrious and respectable female contemporaries, it was clearly essential to supply a moral that specifically relates to chastity. [...] But if he aptly characterised this Susanna as a model of chastity for publication and for the

- benefit of Anna Visscher, Rubens by no means thought that the scene was exclusively, or even primarily, a biblical exemplum of virtue, and it was certainly not painted by him, any more than it was by other artists, in order to give a moral lesson" (McGrath 1984, *op. cit.* [note 36], p. 84). I even think that Rubens, by choosing this subject for a dedication to Anna Roemer Visscher, commented with this print wittily on the fact that Anna was surrounded by a circle of poets (some of them elderly), who wrote quite amorous poems praising her beauty and virtue, while Jacob Cats dedicated in 1618 his *Maechden-plicht* (Duties of the Maiden), to her.
44. McGrath 1984, *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 84.
  45. Broos referred (followed by Van Thiel) to the *Venus pudica*-type of the *Venus Capitolina* (one of the many copies of the *Aphrodite of Knidos*) as the source for this posture (Broos 1987, *op. cit.* [note 1], p. 290 and Van Thiel in *Berlin-Amsterdam-London 1991-92*, p. 199). This type was evidently the source for Goltzius and many others, but in Rembrandt's painting the connection with the pose of the *Venus Doidalsas* – already often used by Rubens – is much more obvious (I want to thank Chad Coerver, who pointed out the importance of the Altdorfer print). About this antique statue, see: P.P. Bober and R.O. Rubenstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture: A Handbook of Sources*, London, 1986, pp. 62–63, and S. Holo, "A Note on the Afterlife of the Crouching Aphrodite in the Renaissance", *Paul Getty Museum Journal*, 6/7 (1978/79), pp. 24–25.
  46. That, apart from the profile of the elder at the extreme right, a glimpse of a face and headdress of the other elder is (hardly) visible between the foliage, was first noticed – at least by art historians – in *Corpus*, 2, p. 200. Although the face of the elder at the right is now for the greater part on the added strip of 4.5 cm., the nose and the mouth are on the original panel; since approximately one centimeter was sawed off before the strip was added, a bit more of the face than only the nose and the mouth must have been visible (see: *Corpus*, 2, p. 198 and Van Thiel in: *Berlin-Amsterdam-London 1991-92*, p. 196).
  47. Several aspects of Susanna's posture can already be recognized in the etchings of *Diana* (1630; B. 201) and *Naked woman seated on a mound* (1631; B. 198); these studies of naked women prefigure in many ways the nude of Susanna (see also below, note 51). Compare for instance the stomach, back, bottom and upper thigh of the former and the legs and feet of the latter. Their heavily seated pose, was, as it were, changed into a sudden rising movement.
  48. Two years earlier, Rembrandt introduced a comparable combination of a violent, spontaneous reaction and a metaphoric motif in his peeing *Ganymede* (Dresden); about *Ganymede*, see Van Thiel in: *Berlin-Amsterdam-London 1991-92*, pp. 192–194, with further references.
  49. Many elements of this background are to be seen in Lastman's *Susanna* and *Bathsheba*, but in Rembrandt's painting the space was compressed and the lines, already present in Lastman's works, were simplified and concentrated towards Susanna's face and body.
  50. It seems to me that the focus on her body and face must originally even have been stronger, when the panel still had an arched top and the strip to the right was not yet added. The large brown eyes recall Van Mander's description of Susanna (in: *De gulden Harpe inhoudende al de liedekens die voor desen by K.v.M. gemaect ende in verscheyden boeckkens wyt-ghegaen zyn*, Amsterdam, 1627, p. 204, quoted by Porteman 1986, *op. cit.* (note 32), p. 305–306): "Bruyn ooghsken klaer, als sterren deden gloeyen / Twee herten int vyer der oncuyscheydt fel [...]" ("Brown eyes clear like stars which made two hearts ablaze with the fire of unchastity".)
  51. Rembrandt used the outward look of the nude woman already in his etchings of *Diana* and the *Naked Woman seated on a Mound* (see above, note 47). In these prints the passive stare of the women flatly acknowledge the spectator: they simply turn to meet his gaze, revealing no discomfort about being viewed (comparable to Tintoretto's *Susanna* – Paris, Louvre – which Rembrandt may have known through a drawing by Lastman, who used Tintoretto's composition for his *Bathsheba* in St. Petersburg; it was also the source of inspiration for the *Bathsheba* of 1643 [New York, Metropolitan Museum], now considered a work of Rembrandt's studio).
  52. For Anne Hollander's opinion about the desirability of this type of female body, see above, note 20. Moreover Hollander draws attention to the stimulating suggestion of actual removal of clothing (discussing the etching of *Diana* and the *Naked Woman Seated on a Mound*, but the same can be said for the *Susanna*); see for instance the white chemise – not just drapery but actual undergarment – and the marks of garters on the legs: "The smock cuffs and collar are clearly visible along with all the flaccid lumps on her belly and the bumps on her knees" (Hollander, 1975, *op. cit.* [note 20], p. 159–160). The type of nude that comes closest to Rembrandt's, is that of Buytewech's *Bathsheba*-etching of 1615 (E. Haverkamp Begemann, *Willem Buytewech*, Amsterdam, 1959, cat. no. G 19); Rembrandt certainly knew this etching (see also above, note 42), but even this nude looks 'Italianate' in comparison.
  53. About these poems, see Porteman 1986, Sluijter 1986, and Weber 1991, cited in note 38, in particular the magisterial analysis of Vondel's poem by Porteman, which was published at the same time as my short reference to this poem, which – although far less sophisticated – boils down to a comparable interpretation.
  54. See Porteman 1986, *op. cit.* (note 32), *passim*.
  55. Vondel's Susanna also must have been portrayed in a *Venus-pudica* posture: "Bewaert noch d'eerbaerheit van vore met haer kleet, / [...] / Of iemants oogh zich zoekt in 't eenzaem te verzaden / Met aen te zien hetgeen den man alleen betaemt."
  56. "Geluckigh is de mont, die zulck een' mont magh kussen".
  57. In fact Vondel is more witty: Susanna's eyes, which are like beautiful coals, set afire the foliage (which stands for the Elders who are hiding there): "Haer flonckrende ooghen zien noch wackerer dan valcken / Door lommer, en door loof; dat voelt alree het vuur, / den gloet der schoone kole; een terghsel van Natuur, / Met Salomons vernuft, noch gene bron te blussen".
  58. Even the chaste Paul and Joseph would not have been able to resist this beauty, asserts Vondel (about this passage, see Porteman 1986, *op. cit.* (note 32), pp. 309–314, who interprets this as a witty reference to Cats's spasmodically moralizing *Self-Stryt* [see above, note 32] about Joseph – the male counterpart of Susanna – and the wife of Potifar).
  59. "Kan doove verf ons borst, vol sneeuw en ysgang, blaecken?"

60. “’t Gezicht van zulk een deught en kuische zon der vrouwen / Verruckt ons t’overtreên de steenigende wet, / Die met een hagelbui den gryzen ’thoof verplet.”
61. “De schildergeest heeft schuld: men wijte hem de scha / Der zielen, die in ’t net van deze vlechten dwalen; / Nadien hy zijn penseel ontvonckte aen zonstralen / Van oogen daer de Min hem leevende uit verscheen”. Porteman calls this a “schijn-*vituperatio*”. Here we encounter at the same time the motif that the painter’s achievement is also caused by the fact that he was incited by love for his (nude) model. For several variations on this ‘Apelles-theme’ in 17th-century literature and art, see: Sluijter 1993, *op. cit.* (note 27).
62. For a full quotation of Vos’s poem, see: Porteman 1986, *op. cit.* (note 32), pp. 314–315 (about Vos’s *Susanna*-poem also Weber 1991, *op. cit.* [note 38], pp. 218f). Even stronger than in Vondel’s poem, we feel a certain fascination with the nude model of the painter (see above, note 61), when Vos states that to portray this chaste beauty convincingly, the figure was painted after an unchaste model; however, one does not have to fear the venom of her mind – Vos reassures us – since the image is, after all, only paint, which shows no more than outward appearance.
63. To avoid complicating matters, the ‘Berlin’ *Susanna* has not been discussed here. In this painting, perhaps begun in 1638, Rembrandt returned at first to a more traditional scheme by using all the conventional narrative motifs (and keeping closer to Lastman’s composition), but heightening the violence of the action in a way which recalls his *Diana, Actaeon, and Callisto* (1634). In a later stage he toned this down considerably – painting out or changing these violent motifs, now representing a much quieter scene which focuses on the moment of proposition and moral decision. In this much less erotically charged image (finished in 1647), the elders are of an almost comical lewdness; they are – in a quite repellant way – the only offenders. (For a discussion of this painting and its complicated genesis, see J. Kelch in: *Berlin-Amsterdam-London 1991–92*, pp. 233–237; for this catalogue entry much information was supplied by Michiel Franken who presented an interesting paper on this painting at the Rembrandt symposium in Amsterdam, January 1992.) However, this very vulnerable and helpless (but not really frightened) *Susanna* still shows the same type of nude as the earlier one, which differs considerably from the *Danaë* (painted during the same period) and the later *Bathsheba*. In those paintings the relation to the viewer has also been changed. By using other representational strategies in portraying these seductive beauties, Rembrandt visualized different associations and connotations connected with the narrative and the nature of these women; they also show a change in attitude towards his sources.