

## Flatness in Dutch Art: Theory and Practice\*

Book V of Gerard de Lairese's *Groot Schilderboek* is devoted to the topic of light and shade, and the seventh chapter of this book, '*Van de Slagschaduwten in de Zonneschyn*', discusses the ways in which shadows are cast in differing forms of sunlight.<sup>1</sup> As is often the case in his treatise, Lairese<sup>2</sup> mingles advice to painters in general with criticism of painters in particular, and, at the end of the chapter, he engages in a diatribe against those who, he claims, always want to paint their subjects as if they were in broad sunlight. These 'Sunpainters' as he calls them, *Zonschilders*, turn their backs on diffused or indirect light, *gemeen licht*,<sup>3</sup> which Lairese himself contends is the most perfect form of lighting in a painting.<sup>4</sup>

'It isn't flat, they say: by which they mean, that it isn't sunny, nor clear and sharp in the shadows, as it normally is when they depict things in their sunlight. Flat, flat, they say to their pupils, or disciples, in a soft voice, so that strangers cannot hear: as if it were a secret, unknown to art itself. They say that the good *Philemon* was so enamoured of things which had flat lights and shades, that he only painted pictures with sun or moonshine. He made his preference plain when he put all his intellect into a depiction of *Jupiter* and *Alcmena*, in which the two of them were on their way to bed, and the sun was shining pure and clear through the windows into the room, so brightly that you could have counted all the squares of the window on the floor. Poor *Jupiter*, how cruelly you are treated! Shall *Phoebus* shine through the windows against your command, when you had expressly ordered him to keep himself hidden for three times twenty-four hours? But never mind about that, thought the painter: it has to be flat; so the sunshine has to be there, even though it was the middle of the night.'<sup>5</sup>

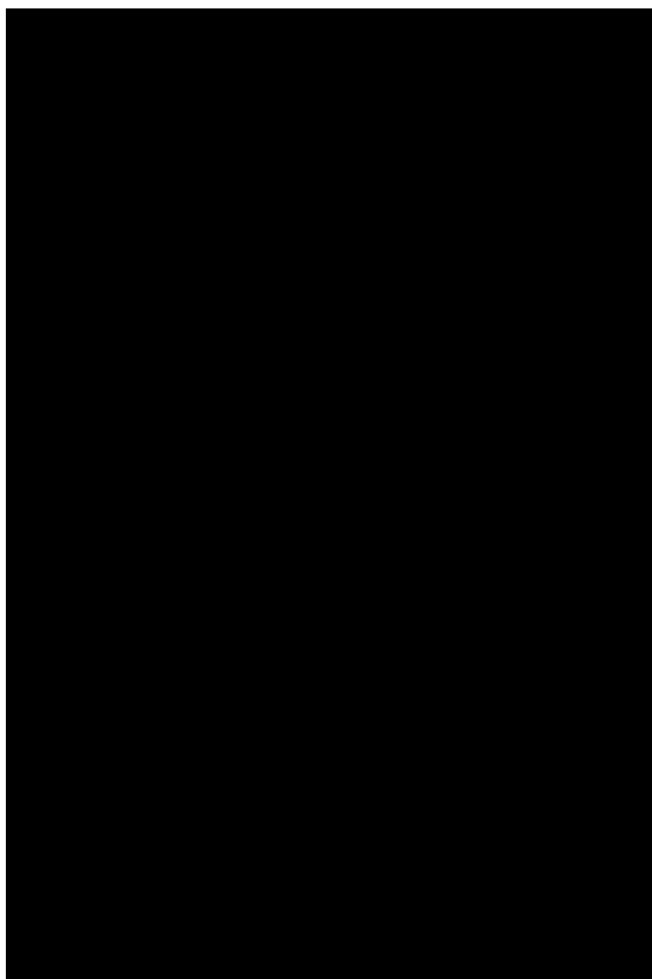
The painting Lairese describes probably never existed – the subject of Jupiter and Alcmena is extremely rare in art<sup>6</sup> – and it seems likely that he has chosen this example only because, in the myth, Jupiter told the sun to hide while he slept with Alcmena, the mother of Hercules.<sup>7</sup> It is also unclear who 'Philemon' might be, and whether this is meant as a disguised name for a real painter, or a pure fiction. But despite these uncertainties, the passage is an interesting one, since it suggests that there were painters in Lairese's day who treasured the word 'flat' – in Dutch, '*vlak*' – as a piece of precious jargon, which, in their view, captured an important aspect of art.

One might think, from the satirical tone of Lairese's text, that 'flat' was the favourite word of a small group of unusual artists he happened to know; but the history of 'flatness' can be traced back over a hundred years in Dutch art theory, via Samuel van Hoogstraten and Willem Goeree to Karel van Mander's *Schilder-boeck*.

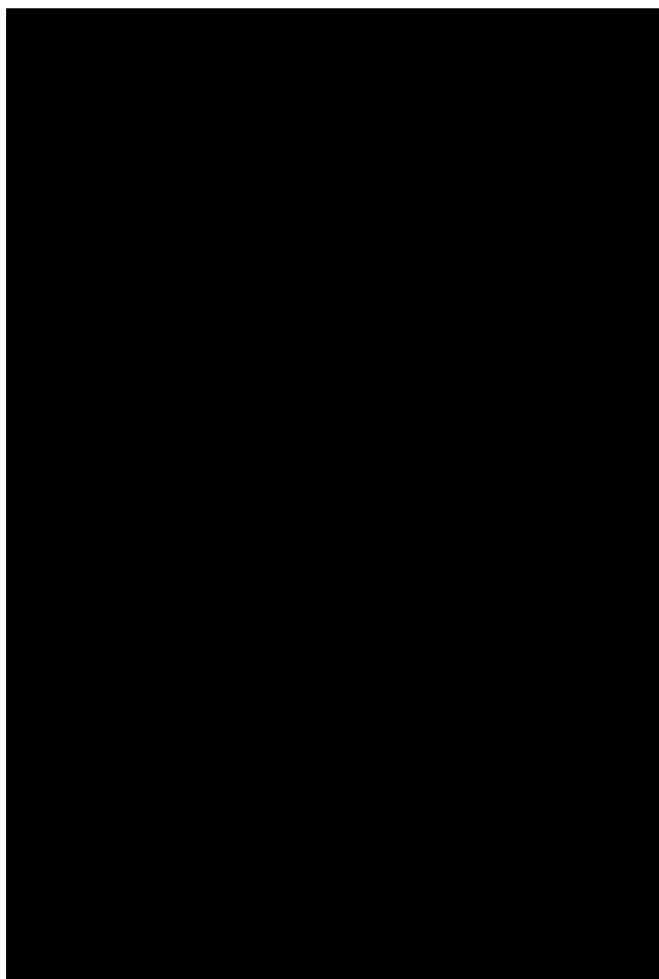
'*Vlak*' was a key term in the aesthetics of seventeenth-century Holland, and this article is an attempt to reconstruct its meaning.<sup>8</sup>

In modern Dutch-English dictionaries, '*vlak*' is given as 'flat', 'level' or 'smooth'; in geometry, '*een vlak*' is a plane. But whether 'flat' is the perfect translation of '*vlak*' as used in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century art theory may be questioned. Samuel van Hoogstraten used the word to describe the brushstrokes of the late Titian,<sup>9</sup> which are famously raised and impasted, so we should not suppose that by 'flat' is meant 'smoothly or evenly painted'.<sup>10</sup> John Frederick Fritsch, who translated the *Groot Schilderboek* into English in the eighteenth century, rendered '*vlak*' consistently as 'broad',<sup>11</sup> and this certainly fits well with Hoogstraten's<sup>12</sup> use of the word to describe Titian's late work. The problem however is that, since Fritsch's day, 'broad' has taken on a meaning which would always be associated with Titian's late manner; 'broad brushstrokes' are invariably loose and thick, but '*vlak*', as I hope to show, could also be used for the work of fine painters such as Gerrit Dou. It seems best, therefore, to continue to use 'flat', since this has no obvious connotations in modern art theory: but the flatness being suggested is not a flatness of the pigments themselves on the support, but rather a visual flatness, an impression that the objects depicted have no or little relief.

This statement should become clearer if we return to the passage by Lairesse quoted earlier. Lairesse associated 'flatness' with sunlight; and at the end of the chapter from



1a  
Ian Jones, *François Quiviger in direct sunlight*, 19 March 2007. © Warburg Institute.



1b  
Ian Jones, *François Quiviger in ambient light*, 19 March 2007. © Warburg Institute.

which that passage was taken, he also suggested that ‘flatness’ could be an effect of moonlight or candlelight. In all these cases, he is thinking of the light as being direct, unreflected and undiffused. Direct light, he claims, causes both highlights and shadows to seem flatter, and to have clear edges. In this, he is surely correct. The two photographs in fig. 1 were taken on a sunny, cold afternoon within a few minutes of each other. In the first (fig. 1a), the subject (François Quiviger, art historian and librarian at the Warburg Institute) stood in direct sunlight, while in the second (fig. 1b) he moved back two or three metres, into the shadow of a building. The sky above was blue, so in the second photograph he was lit by reflected light from (a) the sky above, (b) the wall of the Warburg to his right and (c) the back wall of a row of houses to his left. Reflections spawned further reflections, leading to an ambient effect, with light coming from all sides.<sup>13</sup>

The flattening effect of shadows in direct sunlight can be seen easily enough in the collar to the left of Dr Quiviger’s head. In the first photograph this collar is no more than a flat shape, read as being parallel to the surface of the image, and forming part of a large shadow that engulfs a third of the head and some of the shoulder. It is only when we see the second photograph that we realise the collar actually recedes in folds, and is very far from being flat. Lairesse’s claim then that sunlight produces flat shadows while ‘*gemeen licht*’ produces a greater sense of relief<sup>14</sup> is well borne out by these photographs.<sup>15</sup>

Although Lairesse stresses the association of flat shadows with direct light, other authors who discuss flatness appear less interested in the optics of shadows in real life, and more in the aesthetics of shadows as used in art.<sup>16</sup> In Samuel van Hoogstraten’s *Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst* of 1678 there is a revealing passage on the desirability of using flat shadows. The passage occurs in the first section of his book, ‘Euterpe’, which is devoted to drawing:

Some begin their drawings with outlines; others use coloured paper and sketch onto it the largest lights, before they indicate any outlines: while still others block in lights and shadows over the whole sheet at once. But whether you begin or end with the shadows, you should split them up in your mind into lesser and greater, and depict each in a flat manner, according to its darkness; for by working them too much, and melting them in, all your work would turn to copper; and you would even lose the capacity to judge it. Don’t allow yourself to be bothered by small modulations [*kantigheden*] in a soft shadow, nor by the fact that, when viewed from close by, a darker one can be seen in the middle of it; because the force will be all the greater if you hold it at arm’s length, and you will get used to comparing parts with one another; and in the end you will find this method of working of more use than you would ever have dared imagine; whereas otherwise, if you fiddle about with trying to smooth everything sweetly away, you run the risk of getting lost entirely; as has happened to many a noble soul, through a tendency to sweeten and reinforce their work continuously with depths and highlights.<sup>17</sup>

Hoogstraten tells us that one should draw shadows flat, because otherwise ‘by working them too much, and melting them in, all your work would turn to copper.’<sup>18</sup> This statement is not immediately clear; it is an example of an art theoretical passage which is best given sense by looking at the art to which it refers.<sup>19</sup> We need to locate some drawings which appear to display the characteristics that he is describing. It is not difficult to find seventeenth-century Dutch drawings with flat shadows (figs 2, 3 & 4) – we will discuss them further below – but it is hard to find contemporary drawings which contain ‘overworked’, ‘melted’ shadows that seem to have ‘turned to copper’. Smoothly worked shadows of any kind are not common in Netherlandish drawings. An exception which proves the rule is Frans van Mieris the elder’s drawing of Willem



2  
Carel Dujardin, *Self-portrait holding a bat*, signed and dated 1658, red chalk on paper, 30.4 x 23 cm. London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings. © Trustees of the British Museum.



3  
Adriaen van de Velde, *Cavalymen*, inscribed with what appears to be the artist's signature, red chalk on paper, 28.8 x 19.5 cm. London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings. © Trustees of the British Museum.



4  
Samuel van Hoogstraten, *Portrait of Matthijs van Merwede*, signed in monogram, pencil on vellum, 16.4 x 14 cm. Universiteit Leiden, Prentenkabinet.

Paedts with his nurse (fig. 5); the faces in this drawing are shaded in a very smooth way, although one can hardly call them ‘overworked’.<sup>20</sup> To locate seventeenth-century Netherlandish drawings with shadows which do seem ‘overworked’, or ‘melted’ or ‘turned to copper’, is not at all easy, and to date I have not succeeded in finding a single example. There are however a number of French drawings which seem more promising candidates. In the portraits in figs 6 & 7, by, respectively, Daniel Dumonstier and Lagneau,<sup>21</sup> one can see an exceptionally soft, smooth chiaroscuro, in which the chalk has been carefully stumped into an effect that one might think burnished, perhaps like copper.

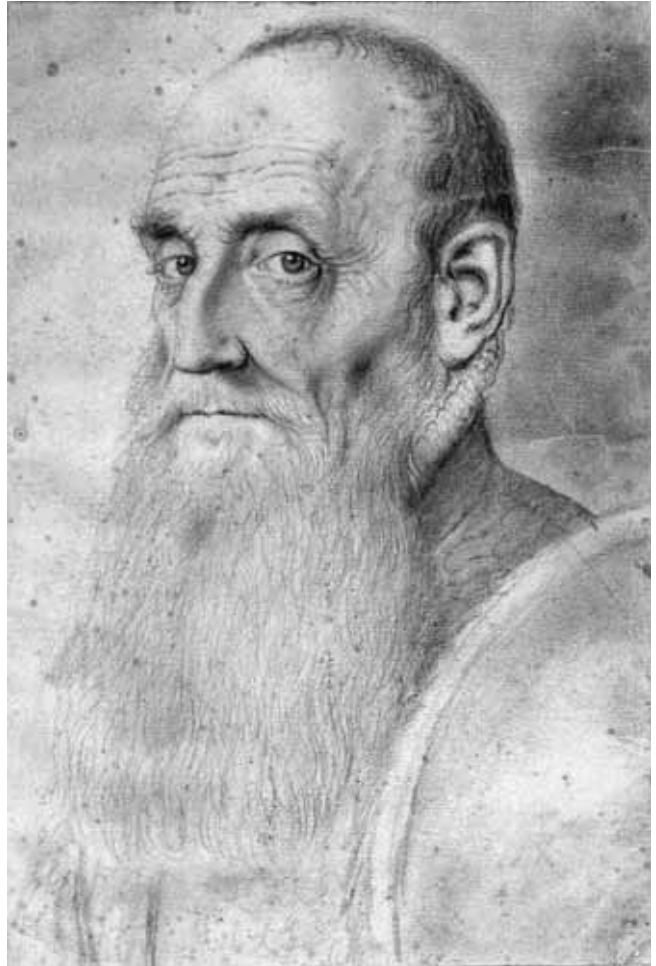
Although these drawings by Dumonstier and Lagneau may exhibit a style of shading which accords with Hoogstraten’s analysis, there is nothing to suggest that the Dutchman thought his French colleagues were important figures in the art of the time; and yet he claimed that ‘many a noble soul’ had fallen foul of the sweet, smooth manner. If he is not being ironical here, then he seems to be claiming that leading artists had also drawn in the copperish style. Perhaps he is here referring to the more



5  
Frans van Mieris the Elder, *Willem Paedts asleep, with his nurse*, signed and dated 1664, black chalk, on vellum, 29.4 x 23.3 cm. London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings. © Trustees of the British Museum.



6  
Daniel Dumonstier, *Portrait of a young man*, charcoal with coloured chalks, 30.2 x 26.1 cm. London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings. © Trustees of the British Museum.



7  
Lagneau, *Portrait of an old man*, black and red chalk on paper, 37.5 x 26 cm. London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings. © Trustees of the British Museum.

finished drawings of Florentine draughtsmen of the High Renaissance, some of which seem ‘smoothed away’ and ‘melted in’, and also, perhaps, to some eyes, copperish: Michelangelo’s *Bacchanal of Children* (fig. 8) is one example. It is unlikely that Hoogstraten had ever seen this, or any of Michelangelo’s other ‘presentation drawings’, but he may have come across prints made after them by Enea Vico (fig. 9) or Nicolas Béatrizet – which, admittedly, are much less smoothly shaded than the originals – or works of a similar fineness by other Florentine artists (figs 10 and 11).<sup>22</sup> One might think that he was familiar with Leonardo’s famous *sfumato* style, but there is no evidence that Hoogstraten had ever seen anything from the hand, or taken to be from the hand, of Leonardo; though he may, of course, have known copies.<sup>23</sup>

Returning now to the nature of flat shadows, we can see in fig. 2 how Dujardin casts a shadow of even intensity across the face of his sitter, and across one side of his jacket; the clean line of the shadow across his upper arm is a classic piece of what Laireisse might have called ‘sundrawing’. No effort has been made to smooth the shadows into the highlights. While the *Bacchanal of Children* consists for the most part of seemingly infinite gradations of soft half-tone, Dujardin’s much simpler drawing is made up of four discrete tones, brought about by three kinds of hatching and the colour of the paper itself, and each is left to abut the others, rather than being slowly blended in. The effect is one of a figure sitting in direct light, but the eyes are open



8 ▲  
 Michelangelo, *Bacchanal of Children*,  
 red chalk on paper, 27.4 x 38.8 cm.  
 The Royal Collection © 2008, Her  
 Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.



9 ►  
 Enea Vico, *Bacchanal of Children*,  
 after Michelangelo, engraving,  
 28.5 x 40.6 cm. London, British  
 Museum, Department of Prints and  
 Drawings. © Trustees of the British  
 Museum.

so wide that they undercut the sense of strong sunlight (cf. fig. 1).<sup>24</sup> Fig. 3, on the other hand, is very much a drawing of an effect of sunlight. The flat, evenly hatched shadow across the hat and face of the cavalryman is construed as so intense that the eyes become almost invisible, partly due to the subject squinting, and partly due to

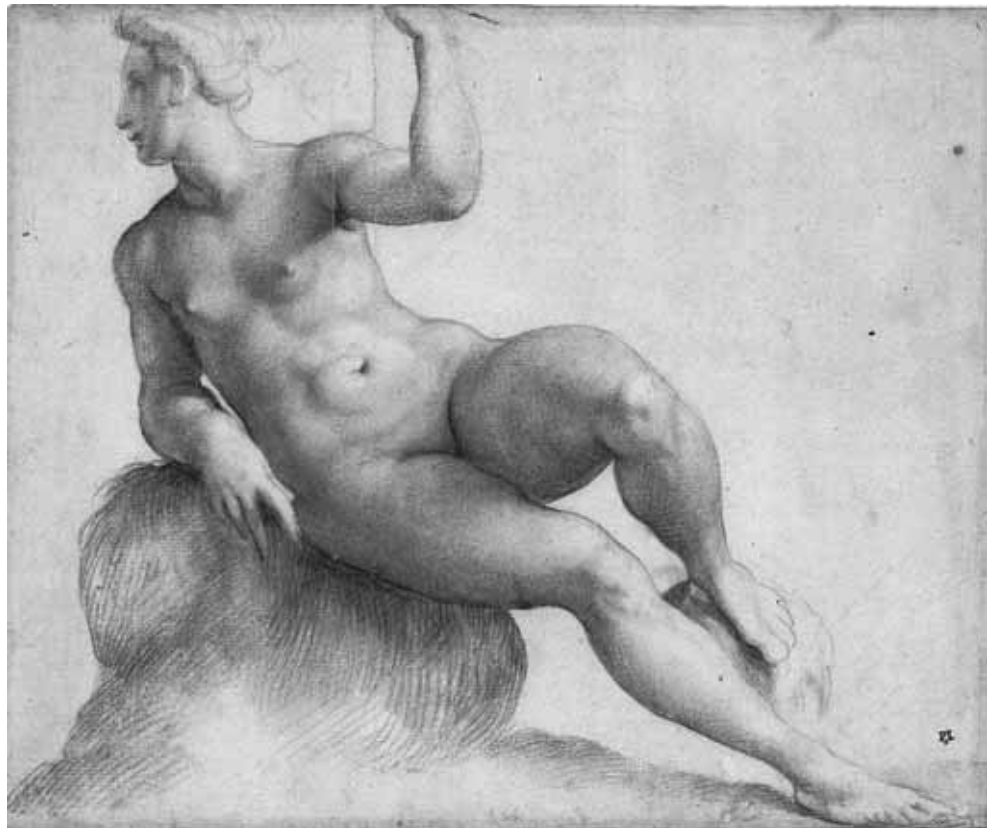
10

Cesare da Sesto, *Study for a Madonna*, red chalk on reddish prepared paper, 26.5 x 21.0 cm. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana.



11

Francesco Salviati, *Reclining nude*, black chalk, 21.8 x 26.1 cm. London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings. © Trustees of the British Museum.





the thickness of the shadow. At the same time, the shadows are hatched fairly lightly, and the combination of the two – deep shadow, light rendering – makes the figure seem indistinct, as if in a haze of heat.<sup>25</sup>

Fig. 4, a portrait of the poet Matthijs van de Merwede by Hoogstraten himself (and drawn at around the time he was working on the *Inleyding*) is interesting in that it uses flat shadow without being a ‘sunpainting’. The clear-edged, dark shadow cast by the sitter’s nose could only be projected by a strong, direct light (or, as we shall see, by a carefully channelled indirect light), but the logic of this lighting is not carried through to the rest of the drawing. Merwede’s head ought to be throwing a dark shadow onto his cravat and his left shoulder, his hair should be casting more shadow than it does, (especially at right), the shadows under his chin, even if they are meant to be cancelled out by reflections from his necktie, are implausibly tentative, and the light and shade on his clothes are as weak as if they were drawn in a northern light in Hoogstraten’s studio (which they probably were). Nevertheless, Hoogstraten depicts his sitter using essentially four tones, from the white of the vellum down to the black of the deepest shadow via two half-tones, and the half-tones and the shadow are laid on in flat, tessellating areas. One can see that here he has followed his own advice:

...split them up in your mind into lesser and greater, and depict each in a flat manner, according to its darkness; for by working them too much, and melting them in, all your work would turn to copper...

From inspecting his theory and his practice, it would seem that what Hoogstraten wanted was a drawing built out of crisp contrasts, in which light and shade were clearly articulated, both between and within themselves. Shadows provide points of visual emphasis within the drawing – see in particular the small area of darkness at the top of the drapery fold on the man’s right shoulder, which is there not because the lighting demands it, but in order, presumably, to balance out its counterpart on the other side, and to make a clear cap to the line of shadow of which it forms the peak. Note too the shadows under the chin, where dark areas of flat shadow are inserted unmerged into the half-tone. There is no obvious reason, whether to do with the physics of light, or the overall spatial arrangement, the *houding*, of the piece, why these shadows need to be placed down flat in this way; the choice would appear to be largely aesthetic.<sup>26</sup>

The author who wrote at greatest length about ‘*vlak*’ was Hoogstraten’s contemporary, Willem Goeree. Goeree was a writer, printer and book-seller, not an artist, but despite Hoogstraten’s snide remarks about the untrustworthiness of ‘writers who have not wielded the brush’,<sup>27</sup> it seems very likely that Goeree had wielded the pen and pencil, if only in an amateur way, and his comments on ‘*vlakigheid*’ are echoed by Hoogstraten. He is the first art theorist in any language to write about flat shadows<sup>28</sup> – though not, as we shall see, the first to talk about flat highlights – and in the course of his description he tells us that he speaks from experience when he praises the ‘*vlak*’ manner.<sup>29</sup>

Like Hoogstraten, Goeree speaks of flatness mostly in the context of drawing. One of the chapters of his *Inleyding tot de Al-ghemeene Teycken-konst* of 1668 is entitled ‘*Van het vlak, kantigh, snel, en sacht Teyckenen*’ – ‘Of flat, firm-edged, rapid, and soft Drawing’<sup>30</sup> – and he has more to say on this subject in two other chapters of the book, those concerned with lighting<sup>31</sup> and the different manners of drawing.<sup>32</sup> In the second and third editions of his text he expanded this discussion,<sup>33</sup> and in what follows I shall mostly be using the third edition.<sup>34</sup>

At the outset of his chapter on flat shadows Goeree tells us that beginners have a marked antipathy towards the flat manner of drawing:

Experience seems to teach us that young Draughtsmen at the beginning of their studies almost always have a dislike for firm edges and flatness, seeming instead to take more delight in, indeed, to be drawn by nature towards, a soft and spongy (*voose*) haziness (*dommeligheid*);<sup>35</sup> moreover almost all of them are perfectly prepared to spoil the flat parts which they find in their Subject by continuously introducing small little lights, or broken little shadows; as if they meant by this means to bring great virtue and grace to their work; but what they show is that they still treat true and Picturesque Drawing<sup>36</sup> with false knowledge, and need to be brought from the shadowy mist of this ignorance, into the true light.<sup>37</sup>

‘Soft and spongy haziness’ is a different way of describing Lagneau’s over-smooth chiaroscuro (fig. 6), but it is clear that Goeree and Hoogstraten are thinking along similar lines as they map out the contrary of ‘*vlak*’. In fact, as Goeree goes on to explain, ‘*vlak*’ has two contraries, or rather is situated between two undesirable poles. Soft, spongy haziness is at one end; at the other is ‘stony hardness’, which is brought about by an excess of ‘firm-edged flatness.’<sup>38</sup> But before he can make these thoughts clear, he has to tell us what ‘firm-edged’ and ‘flat’ mean; which, after a certain amount of hortatory prose, he does on the following page:

Flat and firm-edged or rapid drawing consists mainly in this, that one lays down one’s shadows uniformly flat, whether through hatchings, shadings (*reuselen*),<sup>39</sup> or washes; so that the edges around them keep their sketched condition against the light, with the result that one can clearly see what figure or shape such shadows have as a general mass; and that their sides do not disappear in a hazy smoke or indeterminate sponginess, as a result of which the firm edges of their form cannot be seen: flatness also consists in this, that the large shadows, and places where many and various shadows appear together, keep themselves uniformly together, without floundering in the eye, and so forth.<sup>40</sup>

12  
Aelbert Cuyp, *Traveller seen from two different angles*, brush drawing in grey wash, with black chalk, on grey prepared paper, 17.8 x 21.0 cm. London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings. © Trustees of the British Museum.



Johannes Raven (attributed to),  
*A seated nude woman*, brush  
 drawing in brown wash, touched  
 with grey-brown wash, heightened  
 with white, 28.4 x 15.8 cm. London,  
 British Museum, Department of  
 Prints and Drawings. © Trustees of  
 the British Museum.



Examples of flat, firm-edged, rapid drawing are common enough. We have already seen some examples, but a further dimension is given when, as Goeree says here, the artist makes use of washes. In fig. 12, a study of a man from two different angles by Aelbert Cuyp, each area of shadow has a clear shape, whether seen against the light, or other areas of shadow; no effort has been made to blur edges into one another. At the same time, the shadows 'keep uniformly together'; they do not 'flounder' (*spartelen*), a term which seems to refer to areas of shade where parts of the shadow lift off from their surroundings, failing to form a unified space. We can see an example of 'floundering' in fig. 13, a brush drawing which was formerly assigned to Rembrandt and is now attributed to Johannes Raven. The brown shadows, which may have been painted by a later hand, seem to advance and stickily embrace the model's flesh.<sup>41</sup>

After telling us about the nature of the flat manner, Goeree returns to his statement about the two poles which the artist must try to avoid. The concept 'firm-edged' (*kantig*) has both good and bad senses; there is praiseworthy *kantigheid*, but there is also blameworthy *kantigheid*:

When one is beginning to draw, one should avoid the firm-edged, and the soft and hazy manners, the two rocks against which many make ugly collisions; but, by paying

close attention, it is possible to escape more easily from the one than from the other. By drawing in all too soft and woolly a way, one almost always falls into a childish sponginess, and by drawing in a firm-edged and rapid manner one sometimes falls into stiffness: but since it is commendable to choose the better of two evils, it will be best to draw flat and firm-edged, even if that tends somewhat to the side of stiffness, than, by drawing in a soft and melting way, to lose the right path, and fall into a soft, spongy manner. Unbecoming hardness can, with the correct remedy and careful attention, gradually be chipped away and entirely overcome; the other manner runs completely to ruin, and has to be cured and restored from top to toe.<sup>42</sup>

To understand this passage one needs some idea of what Goeree thinks 'stiffness' or 'hardness' is. Presumably it is somewhere between 'floundering' and the desirable flat manner. The anonymous drawing of Jupiter on his eagle in fig. 14 seems to fit the description. The shadows have been built up with an ink wash over red chalk hatching, with traces of black chalk; it seems possible that this is a student's drawing, with a master's efforts to improve it. The result does not show a great control of light and shade; witness the sceptre casting a shadow over the landscape, and a number of unintelligible shadows on the upper thighs, the arm holding the sceptre, and the god's right armpit. But above the errors of shading, there is an awkward balance between light and dark; the two do not quite cohere. This, I think, is 'stiffness' or 'hardness'.

One can understand what Goeree means when he says that the stiff manner can be rectified, but that the spongy manner must be rubbed out and restarted. One can always soften a hard edge with a finger, a cloth, a woollen brush or a rolled-up piece of paper (for chalk or graphite)<sup>43</sup> or a wet brush (for wash);<sup>44</sup> one can also add more hatchings, or layer in more washes, to soften the contrasts: but in order to remedy a heavily-worked area which has descended into sponginess (fig. 7) one can do little except erase it and start again.

Goeree has a tendency to define the flat manner by means of negation. He tells us repeatedly that the spongy manner is to be avoided, and he warns us against the stiff manner, but he has relatively little to say about the virtues of the flat manner itself. At one or two junctures, however, he does give us some idea of the positive virtues of flatness. So he writes, in the midst of yet another passage decrying over-worked shadows:

...if the areas of light or shadow are vague at the limits, the grandeur and bodily solidity of a Drawing are lost...<sup>45</sup>

After looking at Michelangelo's *Bacchanal of Children* (fig. 8) or Salviati's *Reclining nude* (fig. 11) one might think that Goeree is wrong about this; but perhaps he was thinking of drawings of more modest quality, such as the anonymous Italian drawing of a boy in fig. 15. When compared even to a mediocre piece of flat drawing, such as the Jupiter in fig. 14, this spongy portrait lacks relief, articulation and definition: Goeree's words 'grandeur and corporeal solidity' (*de grootsheid en de lichamelijke vastigheid*) seem to capture some of the difference between the two. If, as the drawings by Michelangelo and Salviati show, sponginess in the hands of great draughtsmen could produce great results, Goeree has at least put his finger on the dangers of mediocre *sfumato*, and he may well be right to suggest that a draughtsman of middling ability is more likely to produce a pleasing drawing with the flat, firm-edged manner than with the spongy manner.

In the first edition of the *Teycken-konst*, Goeree wrote more fulsomely about the virtues of the flat manner:

The Usefulness of this flatness is this, that, as an unfailing Ground rule, it brings out an excellent power and body in your objects, so that they become wonderfully



14  
German, ca 1600, *Jupiter and his eagle*, pen and wash over red chalk and traces of black chalk, 18.6 x 14.6 cm. Amsterdam, Sotheby's, 14 November 2006. © Sotheby's.



15  
Italian, 16<sup>th</sup> century, *Portrait of an unknown boy*, signed falsely in a later hand 'Camillo Procacino', black chalk on paper, 16.2 x 13.1 cm. London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings. © Trustees of the British Museum.

raised, in a way which is pleasing to the Eye, perfectly in accord with Nature, and in intelligent agreement with Art.<sup>46</sup>

Again, it is not immediately clear why flat shadows, more than other methods of shading, should result in objects looking raised; Michelangelo's *Bacchanal* is, once more, a clear example of how shadows that are not flat can have a strong sense of relief. I cannot help suspecting that, in the end, Goeree found flat shadows 'pleasing to the Eye' because all the leading artists of his time in the Netherlands used them; if he had grown up in Italy in the first half of the sixteenth century, he might have developed an eye for *sfumato* instead. It is surely telling that Leonardo's prescriptions concerning shadow are directly opposed to those of Goeree. In the first, French edition of his *Trattato* (an edition which Goeree knew very well indeed)<sup>47</sup> we read that:

Light which is cut by shadows in too hard a manner makes a very bad effect; therefore, in order to avoid this problem, if you are situating your figures in broad countryside, you shouldn't make it a sunny day, but should feign drizzly weather and some translucent clouds between the sun and your composition, so that by lighting your figures more feebly, the edges of their shadows will melt insensibly into the lights.<sup>48</sup>

In his preference for *gemeen licht* over sunlight, Gerard de Lairese had distinguished predecessors.

Nevertheless, flat shadows do seem to have been incorporated into the very design of artist's studios by Goeree's time. In a section of the book which tells us how to light

a motif, Goeree suggests – following Leonardo<sup>49</sup> – the use of a studio with north-facing windows, adding that, if one's room happens to face south, one should block the window with oiled paper or cloth, in order to keep the light uniform.<sup>50</sup> He also advocates, again following Leonardo, a light from above, which will cast shadows that are no longer than the projecting objects are tall, and preferably slightly less.<sup>51</sup> He then adds (and here I think he is being original) that a single window, or at least windows which are very close together, are better than several, ‘...because then [i.e. when there are several windows] the shadows often double, and seem to have a vague contour, which impairs the flatness of the cast shadows.’<sup>52</sup>

In making these remarks Goeree seems to be reflecting contemporary workshop practice, if Rembrandt's well-known drawing of a corner of his studio is representative evidence (fig. 16). The studio as a whole, which of course still survives in the Rembrandthuis, has two sets of windows, both north-facing, and in this drawing one of them has been shuttered entirely, while the other is shuttered at the bottom, allowing light through the top window only. It would appear from Goeree's text that the reason for the closing of the windows was to produce a particular fall of shadow on the subject, as well as to make the shadows themselves flat and firm-edged. So despite Lairese's gibes about *zonschilders*, the light used to create firm-edged shadows was not invariably direct sunlight; it could also be northern, studio light, deliberately controlled to make it mimic the flat shadows of direct light.<sup>53</sup>

Another means of producing flat, firm-edged shadows was lamplight – a method which, according to Bellori, was used by Caravaggio.<sup>54</sup> Goeree does not advocate

16  
Rembrandt, *The artist's studio*,  
pen and two shades of brown ink,  
grey-brown wash, a few corrections  
in white, 20,5 x 18,9 cm. Oxford,  
Ashmolean Museum.



17  
Rembrandt, *Pupil drawing from a  
plastercast by candlelight*, etching,  
9,5 x 6,7 cm. B. 130. Photo: Warburg  
Institute.



its persistent use, but he does think it makes an interesting variation on normal practice:

In practising after Plaster casts one can also, in the evenings, use the night light; as some commend it on account of flat shadows; and for the purpose a lamp is provided with pure oil and a number of wicks: one hangs or puts these at a suitable height in a secure place; and so that the light will not scatter too far, but stay together as a single light, the wicks must be situated very close to one another, because otherwise the shadows double, as one can see when there are two or three candles in a room; so if you can produce the same effect with one fat wick, it will be all the flatter and surer in the shadows.<sup>55</sup>

Again, it would appear that the practice of drawing from plastercasts by artificial light was one that really did take place in seventeenth-century Dutch studios, if Rembrandt's etching of a pupil doing just that (fig. 17) can be trusted. However Rembrandt's pupil should not, in Goeree's view, be carrying out this exercise by candlelight; lamps, he writes, are much to be preferred, since they don't burn down and so alter the shape of the shadow.<sup>56</sup>

Most of what Goeree has to say about flatness is confined to flat shadow, but it is important to observe that he also speaks on occasion of flat highlights. Thus he writes that :

One should highlight the lit part softly and uniformly, so that one can afterwards add stronger, or other important highlights, and still keep the general flat light.<sup>57</sup>



Another word of which we have seen a great deal, *kantig*, firm-edged, also appears in connection with highlights. Goeree writes that:

... some Highlights must be rapid and firm-edged, as for example on folds, pinches, creases in silk materials, and so forth, but on round and naked bodies, they should be somewhat broad and softer, especially where they are lit a great deal.<sup>58</sup>

This remark seems particularly close in spirit to the way in which Vermeer paints highlights on flesh and drapery in certain of his late works (fig. 18); one of the notable features of his late paintings is the excessive flatness of his lights and shadows. Note in the *Guitar Player* how the curtain is drawn across the window, leaving a small gap for the light; the firm-edged, flat lights and shadows in this painting were probably a depiction of studio shadows, created in the manner we have already discussed. For some reason, however, Vermeer began at the very end of his career to insert figures who had clearly been painted in directed light in the studio into rooms with more ambient lighting; this may I think explain why the National Gallery's *A Woman at the Virginals* (fig. 19) makes, to some eyes, an awkward effect.

Talk of highlights and draperies brings us to the last of the art theorists to be discussed in this article, Karel van Mander. Given that he was writing at the very





beginning of the century, it is hardly surprising that Van Mander uses *vlack* in a slightly different sense and in rather different contexts from his successors. In particular he never writes of flat shadows; but he does write of flat lights, so picking up on this aspect of Goeree's employment of the term. In the chapter of *Den grondt der edel-vry schilder-const* devoted to draperies, Van Mander draws a distinction between artists who depict draperies in a crumpled, confused manner, and those who depict them in a flat manner, which he thinks more pleasing to the eye:

Above all one thing needs to be said, namely, that one should not crumple draperies in a confused and laborious manner, as if they were completely frayed and torn. In this our predecessors erred in a fruitless way, especially Aldegrever, who was profuse with his creases and went seriously astray – that's the manner one calls confused [fig. 20]. But Dürer's draperies, especially in his late work, as one sees them in his prints, in which wonderful great flat lights appear, leaving the rest in deep shadow, as his best Mary images attest, are beautiful and instructive [fig. 21].<sup>59</sup>

It is frequently the case that, when Van Mander is using the word '*vlack*', he is talking about draperies,<sup>60</sup> but in each case he is concerned that the draperies be painted flat, without creases, because he wants flat areas of light to appear in the painting, which



20  
Heinrich Aldegrever, *Acedia*, signed in monogram and dated 1552, engraving, 10.3 x 6.2 cm. London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings. Bartsch VIII. 402. 130. © Warburg Institute.



21  
Albrecht Dürer, *Virgin and Child*, signed in monogram and dated 1520, engraving, 14.3 x 9.7 cm. London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings. Bartsch VII. 57. 38. © Trustees of the British Museum.

can then contrast with shadows. He makes this preference for 'flat light' explicit in the chapter of the *Grondt* which is concerned with composition:<sup>61</sup>

We should also take particular care in our history ... to bring a great deal of shadow together in one place, without letting our unmodulated dark colours push forcefully up against pure light, but rather against half-tones. Then we should also let a large amount of flat light group together, letting it flow off, like the darks, into half-tones.<sup>62</sup>

Van Mander's recommendation that we should not place dark shadows directly next to highlights, but modulate the transition using half-tones, is one that we find also in Hoogstraten, Goeree and Lairese;<sup>63</sup> abrupt transitions from dark to light can result in a painting looking like a chess board, as Van Mander, and, after him, Junius and Hoogstraten put it.<sup>64</sup> But this does not mean, or at least it does not mean for Hoogstraten and Goeree,<sup>65</sup> that lights should be smoothed into half-tones, which are then smoothed into the shadows; the different tones should abut one another, tessellating, rather than forming a single mass.



Van Mander's comment that we should bring a great deal of shadow together in one place is a very significant one; it almost forms a manifesto for seventeenth-century painting in the Netherlands. Four decades later, at the height of the *Gouden Eeuw*, Philips Angel was to repeat this call for massed shadows, using a striking metaphor. He said that in a painting one should try:

to arrange the shadow and the light together in a good order: for the same applies here as with a *Band* of dispersed *Soldiers*, who have completely lost touch with their *Heroic Leader*, and who cannot hope for sufficient strength to effect a victory, until they have grouped together, and brought all their strength to bear in one place, and so given themselves power enough to emerge victorious. The same may be said of our scattered shadow, which, so long as it is dispersed, cannot captivate the sight of *Amateurs*.<sup>66</sup>

These phenomena, of grouped shadow and flat shadow, are I think related, though they are not identical. A painter could be famous for his grouping of shadow, but employ a *sfumato* technique that was the opposite of the flat manner: Giorgione is one example (fig. 22).<sup>67</sup> At the same time, by the eighteenth century art theorists in France were referring to the broad masses of light and shade in a painting as 'flat', which only shows how the two concepts fed into each other.<sup>68</sup> Perhaps eyes that had grown used to masses of light and shadow then began to call for individual lights and shadows to be massed in uniform flat areas.<sup>69</sup> As we have already observed, the illusionistic rationale for flat shadows – the idea that they produce sharper relief – is not very convincing; if they were found desirable by Dutch art theorists, it is surely because, on their own, they were considered to be 'pleasing to the eye'.

Most of the discussion in this article has been devoted to drawings and prints, but 'flatness' was also considered a characteristic of paintings, as Lairese's remarks about 'sunpainters', and Hoogstraten's mention of Titian's late brushwork make clear.<sup>70</sup> We have seen how Vermeer painted the lights and shadows on his draperies in an almost exaggeratedly flat manner in his late paintings; but he was far from the only Dutch painter who made use of *vlackigheidt*. From still-life painters via landscape painters to figure painters, flatness was used as one way of introducing those crisp contrasts of light and dark which are so ubiquitous in seventeenth-century painting. Since shadows are features of our world which most of us look through, to the objects they



23  
Jan Davidsz de Heem, *Still life with books and lute*, signed, oil on panel, 26.5 x 41.5 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

24  
Jan van der Heyden, *Still life with exotica*, signed and dated 1712, oil on canvas, 74 x 63,5 cm. Budapest, Szépművészeti Museum.



enshrouded,<sup>71</sup> we do not always notice their extraordinary prominence in the art of the Golden Age; but when a seventeenth-century painting with flat shadows is compared to a later painting which has abandoned the flat manner, the difference is striking (figs 23 and 24). There are a number of shadows in Jan van der Heyden's still life of *exotica*, and some of them are flat (though not all – see the shadow cast beneath the mantelpiece). But in the foreground, on the books and the table cloth, the shadows seem to be there only because they have to be there in a realist painting; they are not an assertive element of the pictorial structure, as they are in De Heem's still life in fig. 23. The raking light coming in from the left in the earlier still life is reminiscent of the studio light falling from above in Rembrandt's drawing (fig. 16), and there is in fact evidence that De Heem deliberately directed the flow of light onto his motifs in a

25  
Meindert Hobbema, *The Avenue at Middelbarnis*, dated 1689, oil on canvas, 103.5 x 141 cm. London, National Gallery.



26  
Paulus Constantijn La Fargue, *The Herenpad in the Haagse Bos*, signed and dated 1778, oil on panel, 23 x 34 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.





similar fashion.<sup>72</sup> The shadow which cuts diagonally across the wall seems to be much less intense than the cast shadow of the lute, a physical impossibility, but one that allows De Heem to make the most of the flat shape of the latter. Dark areas of shadow are interleaved with the books and projected down onto the table (implausibly, there are no reflections here to cast light into the black shadows at the ledge) and even on the white pages of the books, and especially on the piece of paper in the foreground, shadows with clear, firm-edged contours define every last crinkle of the material. The difference with the smooth pages of Van der Heyden's books is stark: in the latter the shadows have simply been wiped away.<sup>73</sup>

Meindert Hobbema's famous *Avenue at Middelbarnis* (fig. 25) of 1689 is probably the most light-filled, shadow-free painting in his oeuvre,<sup>74</sup> but once we compare it to Paulus Constantijn la Fargue's 1778 painting of a path in the Haagse Bos (fig. 26), the difference between the flat mode of painting and its contrary is thrown into relief. Like Hobbema, La Fargue has painted a sunny day, as we can tell by the light cutting



through the trees in the middle ground; he has also cast shadow across the whole of his foreground. But La Fargue's shadow is of another kind to Hobbema's shadow; the latter, in the ditches and the trees at left and right, is so profound that we can barely see what it contains. Shadow this deep is only cast on the sunniest of days, and yet the trees by the path cast weak shadows, as if there were clouds obscuring the sun; but the path itself is clearly not in shadow. Nature has been rewritten for pictorial purposes, and yet we do not notice this artifice until we expressly look for it. La Fargue's shadow is nowhere near as harsh, and spatial relations within the shadow have been caught with great delicacy; this painting, like so many eighteenth-century Dutch landscapes, is a masterpiece of spatial construction. But the shadows in his painting are purely descriptive, they do not unite to form emphatic flat areas of darkness, as they do in the Hobbema.

La Fargue was not unusual in turning his back on flat shadow. Willem van Mieris' 'Poulterer' (fig. 28), made in 1733, towards the end of the artist's career, is clearly meant to be a 'sun painting', a fact advertised by the crisp black shadows on the masonry surround. But where a seventeenth-century painter would have used this as an excuse to drape flat shadows all over the figures and the interior behind, Mieris fills the room

behind with a soft light, and makes the shadows on his figures mild and transparent, much softened by judicious reflections. When compared with a work by Gerrit Dou made 96 years earlier (fig. 27), the taste of the seventeenth century for flat shadows stands out. Shadows are so thick in this room that there appear to be no reflections of any sort; it is as if sunlight touches objects once and then evaporates. The shadow of the young violinist's nose is projected cleanly across his cheek at an angle; only direct sunlight (or a small, high window) could have cast this shadow, and yet the sunshine appears to peter out before it reaches the back of the room. What is more, the shadows are inconsistent among themselves: the can on the floor casts a clear shadow, while the book casts both a crisp shadow and a penumbra. Like De Heem and Hobbema, Dou is altering reality for aesthetic purposes; and like them, he appears to be fascinated by the pictorial interplay of light areas with flat shadow.

These examples seem to suggest that flat shadows are a characteristic of the Golden Age, and that as Dutch art moved into the eighteenth century, so flatness became less sought after. This generalisation has I think some validity, although there certainly were eighteenth-century painters – such as Verkolje and Troost – who still used sizeable shadows, some of them flat.<sup>75</sup> And the complexity of the issue becomes clearer if we glance briefly at the art of Rembrandt, who more than any other Dutch painter is associated with the heavily shadowed manner of the seventeenth century (fig. 29). There is no doubt that there are many dark areas in Rembrandt's paintings, and that some of these are flat; but even the flat areas appear, on closer inspection, to be made up of numerous small brushstrokes, each of which is slightly different in tone and/or hue from its neighbour, and modulated also by underlayers of paint, which sometimes show through in gaps.<sup>76</sup> In a dark background, there may be an area of flat shadow that extends for a few square decimetres, but outside these blank areas there is a great deal of variety, with lighter passages being used to evoke an obscure enveloping space, and to direct attention to faces. And on the faces themselves, areas that look flat at first dissolve on further viewing. If we examine Titus' left cheek in the painting in fig. 29, we can see that there is a flat highlight, beneath his left eye, set into a flat half-tone, which extends from the chin to the temple; but both the highlight and the half-tone are very variegated, built with a medley of delicate and subtly different strokes; it is as if Rembrandt cleaned his brush and remixed his paints every time he dabbed the canvas. The brushstrokes themselves are flat, in that they are not smoothed into their surroundings; but the whole ensemble is of great complexity.

Would Goeree, Hoogstraten and Lairesse have considered this an example of 'flat painting'? I think they would, since Rembrandt has clearly disregarded the 'zoet verdwijnende gefutsel' that Hoogstraten condemned,<sup>77</sup> and he has left 'de vlakke plaetstreeken onverwerkt', just like the late Titian;<sup>78</sup> but nevertheless, Goeree's recommendation that 'one lay down one's shadows uniformly flat' is being disregarded here.<sup>79</sup> To be sure, Goeree was writing about drawing and this is a painting; but it shows that the claims of art theoretical texts need always to be balanced against the actual practice of artists.

It is one of the most persistent failings of art theory to turn matters of taste into 'infallible rules of art',<sup>80</sup> and to suppose that, because one style is aesthetically successful, all other styles must be aesthetic failures. Willem Goeree, unfortunately, fell victim to this fallacy, and even attempted to prove the superiority of flat shadows using a philosophical argument based on the Sorites paradox.<sup>81</sup> He tells us first what a wonder of nature it is that the line between light and shadow should have length, but no breadth. He argues that this must be the case, since, if one thinks that it does have breadth, one can then ask: is the line shaded or lit? And if it is shaded or lit it cannot be the line between the two, but must be part of the shadow or the light. Therefore, he continues, it is a mistake to draw shadows – especially cast shadows – as if they 'disappear in a misty smoke',<sup>82</sup> because that fails to appreciate that, as has just been shown, there is no





line between light and shadow. He concludes by saying that a rational judge will be able to tell why flat drawing gives such a graceful (*welstandig*) nature to things:

...namely, because it brings things nearer to the nature of natural shadows and lights. However we are aware that not everyone is able to see these well in reality, in order to imitate them.<sup>83</sup>

Goeree's argument is clearly meant to apply to the bases of shadows cast in direct light; at their middles and ends, shadows become increasingly blurred<sup>84</sup> (and even at its base there is an indeterminacy to a shadow's edge, caused by diffraction<sup>85</sup>). Moreover – as Goeree himself acknowledges<sup>86</sup> – the attached shadow on rounded objects such as bodies and columns is less firm-edged than the shadows they cast on the ground, although he does not observe, as Hoogstraten did, that this is caused by light weakening as it strikes the rounding object at a slant.<sup>87</sup> But the main problem with Goeree's argument is that it only works for direct light; the sorts of soft penumbrous shadows cast in diffused or reflected light certainly do 'disappear in a misty smoke', and it is not the case that painting shadows in the *sfumato* manner is

Luca Cambiaso (attributed to), *Sr George and the Dragon*, inscribed: '[...]Genovese' and the first word written over in a different hand 'Cangiaso', pen and brown ink, with grey-brown wash, over black chalk, 34.2 x 20.3 cm. London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings. © Trustees of the British Museum.



invariably less 'near to the nature of natural shadows and lights' than the flat manner.

In his failure to see this, Goeree not only showed that he could have attended more carefully to the behaviour of shadows in the real world; he also showed that he was unaware of some of the greatest achievements of chiaroscuro of the High Renaissance. There is no doubt that the flat manner of painting produced some great masterpieces; but many other great masterpieces, by Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael, Giorgione and Correggio, were made with that *sfumato* technique which Goeree dismissed as 'childish sponginess'.

In this paper I have dealt with flatness as it was discussed by Dutch writers and employed by Dutch draughtsmen and painters, but I do not want to give the impression that the phenomenon was exclusively Dutch, nor do I wish to claim that it was invented in the Netherlands. Numerous sixteenth-century Italian drawings in wash make use of flat shadows and highlights: a single striking example, a drawing attributed to Luca Cambiaso, must act here as the representative of a broad tradition (fig. 30). But if the practice of flatness can be traced at an early date in Italy, the discussions of flat highlights and flat shadows in the pages of Dutch art theory are I believe novel. The literature of art in the Netherlands has been dismissed in the past for its lack of originality,<sup>88</sup> but in its pages there are many new insights to be gained; often in brief passages that do not always seem well connected to what has come before, but which, when read and re-read, and carefully compared to the paintings and drawings of the period, make us see aspects of the art of the time in a fresh light.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> G. de Lairese, *Groot Schilderboek*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Haarlem 1740, I, pp. 270-276.

<sup>2</sup> There has been a tendency in the recent literature to write Lairese's surname 'De Lairese'. This goes against the normal French convention when dealing with surnames of more than one syllable (no one writes 'De Ronsard' or 'De Balzac') and it is not how it was written by the Dutch in his own lifetime – see the poems beneath the printed portraits of Lairese by Schenk and Philips (A. Roy, *Gérard de Lairese (1640-1711)*, Paris 1992, p. 54), or Houbraken's biography (A. Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, The Hague 1753, III, pp. 106-132). In Alain Roy's catalogue of Lairese's work his paintings are signed 'G. Lairese' 40 times and 'Lairese' once, while 'G. de Lairese' only appears six times and 'De Lairese' not at all. I have therefore reverted to the shorter spelling.

<sup>3</sup> L. de Vries, 'Gerard de Lairese: the critical vocabulary of an art theorist', *Oud Holland* 117 (2004), pp. 79-98, equates 'algemeen licht' with 'the homogenous, colourless northern light' of a painter's studio (p. 87). However, as De Vries acknowledges, Lairese recommends use of 'algemeen licht' for 'landscapes with a clear sky', which is hardly possible in studio light. I think that by 'algemeen licht' Lairese means something akin to ambient or global light (see M. Baxandall, *Shadows and Enlightenment*, New Haven and London 1995, pp. 5-6). He certainly thinks that 'gemeen licht' can be produced by sunlight reflected off cloud, since he explicitly says so, Lairese 1740 (note 1), I, p. 275 (see too note 14). Willem Goeree talks of shadows being lit only by 'den algemeenen, of ontleenden dag', as if 'algemeenen dag' can be defined

as any light which is not direct sunlight. W. Goeree, *Inleydinge tot de Algemeene Teyken-konst*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, Amsterdam 1697, facs. ed., Soest 1974, p. 121.

<sup>4</sup> Lairese 1740 (note 1), I, pp. 272 and 323-324. It should be added that Lairese, although he clearly prefers *gemeen licht* to direct light, also feels that painters should not exclusively paint the former: I, p. 273. I thank Ulrike Kern for this observation.

<sup>5</sup> 'Het is niet vlak, zeggen zy; willende daar mede te kennen geeven, dat het niet zonachtig, duidelyk noch scherp van schaduwen is, zo als zy gemeenlyk in hunne zonnelichten verbeelden. Vlak, vlak, roepen zy tegen hunne leerlingen, of discipelen, met een zagte stem, op dat het niemand vreemds zoude hooren: even of het een geheim was 't geen de konst zelve niet wist. Men zegt, dat de vroomme *Filameen* zodanig verzot was op de dingen, die vlak van dag en schaduwe waren, dat hy nooit Stukken schilderde als in de zon- of maaneschyn. Hy liet het voorwaar wel blyken, wanneer hy alle zyne zinnen aanspande in het uitbeelden van *Jupiter* by *Alcmena*; alwaar men hen beiden zag na bed toe treden, en de zon helder en klaar door de glazen in de kamer schynen, met zulk een kracht, dat men alle de ruiten op de grond zou kunnen geteld worden. Arme *Jupiter*, wat word u geweld aangedaan! *Zal Febus* tegen uw bevel door de vensters schynen, daar gy hem nochtans belast had zich drie maal vier-en-twintig uren verholten te houden? Maar wat was daar aan geleegen, dogt hem: het moest vlak zyn; en de zonneshyn moest daar weezen al was het midden in de nacht.' Lairese 1740 (note 1), I, p. 275. I am grateful to Ulrike Kern for drawing this passage to my attention.

<sup>6</sup> An engraving by Nicolas Tardieu after a lost cartoon for a lost tapestry by Perino del Vaga (once thought to be by Giulio Romano; see B. Davidson, 'The *Furti di Giove* Tapestries designed by Perino del Vaga for Andrea Doria', *Art Bulletin* 70 (1988), pp. 424-450) shows Jupiter and Alcmena seated, clothed, on the side of a bed; daylight, perhaps twilight, is visible through an arch in the background. In the Photographic Collection of the Warburg Institute there are also two images of Jupiter in the guise of Amphitryon meeting Alcmena, one on a fifteenth-century Florentine cassone and the other

on an eighteenth-century Flemish tapestry; both scenes are in broad daylight.

<sup>7</sup> Lairese probably knew the story from Plautus' *Amphitryon*, or from a modern adaptation of that play, such as Molière's *Amphitryon*; it is also told in Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 29. Diodorus Siculus, 4.9.2, and Apollodorus, 2.4.8, were the principal Greek sources for the tale; for further sources see J.G. Frazer's Loeb edition of Apollodorus. Lairese's assertion that the fabled night lasted three times 24 hours does not concur with the ancient texts, all of which state that the night was three times its normal length, so lasted ca 36 hours. Molière does not specify the precise length of the night.

<sup>8</sup> A number of scholars have discussed the word 'vlak' before, and I have profited greatly from their work: H. Miedema, *Kunst, kunstenaar en kunstwerk bij Karel van Mander: een analyse van zijn levensbeschrijvingen*, Alphen aan den Rijn 1981, p. 159; M. Kwakkelstein, 'Opbouw en inhoud van de *Teycken-Konst*', in W. Goeree, *Inleydinge tot de Al-ghemeene Teycken-konst*, [Middelburg 1668], ed. M. Kwakkelstein, Leiden 1998, pp. 54-55, 64-66 [N.B. when referring to this book below, I cite it as Goeree 1668 (note 8) when I wish to refer to the pagination of the 1668 edition of Goeree's *Teycken-konst*, and as Kwakkelstein 1998 (note 8) when I wish to refer to the pagination of Kwakkelstein's commentary]; and De Vries 2004 (note 3), p. 87.

<sup>9</sup> 'De vroege dingen van *Titiaan* zijn zeer in een vloeijende [handeling] geschildert, 't welk nochtans met een vol pinseel gedaan is, maer in zijne laetste, toen hem de scherpeheit van 't gezicht faelde, heeft hy de vlakke plaetstreeken onverwerkt gelaten, welke uit de hand staende, ook dies te grooter kracht hebben.' S. van Hoogstraten, *Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst*, Rotterdam 1678, pp. 233-234. Hoogstraten was of course aware of the passage on Titian's late style in Van Mander's life of the artist: K. van Mander, *Het Schilder-Boeck*, Haarlem 1604, fols 176v-177r; see too K. van Mander, *Den grondt der edel-vry schilderconst*, ed. & trans. H. Miedema, Utrecht 1973, XII, 21-25; Van Mander was translating from the Italian: G. Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, ed. G. Milanesi, 7 vols, Florence, 1878-1885, vol. 7, p. 452.

It is possible that Hoogstraten was also aware of Sandrart's writings on Titian: J. von Sandrart, *L'Academia todesca della architettura, scultura & pittura: oder Teutsche Academie der edlen Bau- Bild- und Mablerey Künste*, Nuremberg 1675, pp. 72 & 164-165; however he does not echo Sandrart's damning remarks concerning Titian's late style. None of these authors says that Titian's eyesight began to fail (although Vasari (VII, p. 459) writes of '[gli] anni migliori ... quando la natura per la sua declinazione non tendeva all'imperfetto', which suggests the same). It seems probable that Hoogstraten picked up this idea through conversation with other painters, but it had been published in *Breve Compendio della Vita del Famoso Titiano Vecellio Di Cadore, Cavaliere et Pittore*, Venice 1622, sig. C3verso: 'Onde ridotto agli ultimi anni della sua vecchiezza, imitando il buon Socrate soleva dire che se l'occhio lo servisse, all'hora gli haverrebbe dato l'animo di cominciar qualche opera degna, parole in vero degne di tanto huomo ...: I am grateful to Charles Hope for showing me this text, and for discussing this issue with me.

<sup>10</sup> No one ever has suggested this as a translation, so far as I am aware. De Vries 2004 (note 3) proposes 'even', a rendering of which Thijs Weststeijn approves (pers. comm.); Jacqueline Penniall-Boer and Charles Ford, in their translation of Van Mander's *Levens* as part of K. van Mander, *The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters*, ed. H. Miedema, 6 vols, Doornspijk 1994-1999, translate 'vlak' as 'flat' on two occasions (212r35, 245v04) and leave it untranslated once (208r42). They translate the word 'vlaktheyt' (208r40) as 'smoothness'.

<sup>11</sup> G. de Lairese, *The Art of Painting*, tr. J.F. Fritsch, London 1778, pp. 159-163; De Vries 2004 (note 3), p. 87.

<sup>12</sup> It has also become common in recent years to refer to Hoogstraten as Van Hoogstraten (cf. note 2). In current Dutch the Van always remains attached to the surname, but in Hoogstraten's time this was not the case; see the verse below his etched self-portrait in Hoogstraten 1678 (note 9). Houbraken 1753 (note 2), who was after all Hoogstraten's pupil, always used the form Hoogstraten (I, pp. 90, 166; II, pp. 121, 136, 138, 166, 167, 243, 255, 360; III, p. 414), never Van Hoogstraten. I therefore prefer the shorter and less cumbersome spelling.

<sup>13</sup> On ambient light, see note 3.

<sup>14</sup> 'De voorwerpen in een gemeen licht zyn gantsch niet vlak gedaagd, en de schaduwen heel twyffelachtig. De tweede tint en de schaduw behouden veel meer hunne eigene koleur in een zuivere lucht en zonder wolken; vermits de voorwerpen aan alle kanten verlicht en niet bedampt zynde, de zelve zich duidelyk vertoonen, en veel meer rondon als in de zonneshyn.' Lairese 1740 (note 1), I, p. 247.

<sup>15</sup> Of course, photographs do not perfectly imitate what we see with our eyes, and tend to increase the effect of flatness described here.

<sup>16</sup> Hoogstraten only half acknowledges that direct light brings about flatness, in a passage devoted to what Michael Baxandall called 'slant/tilt shading' (Baxandall 1995 (note 3), p. 4): 'Schamping is, wanneer het licht niet vlak op de dingen straelt, maer noes, gelijk langs heenen, en kan zeer bequaem in een ronde pilaer aangewezen worden: want het licht heeft alleen zijn volle kracht ter plaetse, daer't allernaest is: komende door de ronde omwijking meer en meer te schampen, tot dat het zich eindlijk geheel in schaduw verliest.' Hoogstraten 1678 (note 9), p. 264. However, the use of the word 'vlak' here is adverbial, not adjectival, and Hoogstraten is not directly associating flat shadows with direct light. (The word 'noes' in this passage is rare and may be unfamiliar to modern Dutch readers; according to the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* it is a southern word, and means 'slanting' or 'oblique'.)

<sup>17</sup> 'Eenige beginnen hare Teykeningen met omtrekken, andere op gegront papier, bootsende dezelve, eeerze eenige omtrekken aenwijzen, met de grootste lichten, andere met alles te gelijk in 't geheel te dagen en te schaduwen. Maer 't zy gy met de schaduwen begint of eindicht, gy zultze by u zelfs in mindere en meerdere gaen verdeelen, en elke, naer haer behoorlijke bruinte, op een vlakke manier aenwijzen: want door het te veel verdrijven, en in een smelten zou al uw werk koper worden; en gy zoudt zelfs het oordeel daer af verliezen. Laet u geen kleyne kantigheden van een zachte schaduw verveelen, noch dat een bruindere in't midden derzelve van naby ietwes stoot; want de kracht zal te grooter zijn, als gy't wat uit de hand stelt, en gy zult gewoon worden deel tegens deel te vergelijken; en eindelijk meer nuts

uit deeze wijze van doen rapen, als gy u oit zoud hebben durven inbeelden: daer gy anders, door het zoet verdwijnende gefutsel, gevaer loopt van geheel te verdoolen; gelijk aen menich edel geest, door een genegenheit van hun werk deurgaens met diepen en ophoogen te verzoeten en bekrachtigen, gebleeken is.' Hoogstraten 1678 (note 9), pp. 29-30.

<sup>18</sup> Goeree 1668 (note 8), p. 25, also speaks of 'koperachtigheyt', but gives it a different sense: 'Maer gemerckt dat het Teykenen by 't Nachtlucht, dit onderworpen is, datse seer harde, en af-gesnedene, Schaduwen voort-brenght, waer doorder seer veele in wreetheyt, ende in Koperachtigheyt blinckende hooghshels ende Reflectien vervallen..'

<sup>19</sup> Cf. P. Taylor, 'The glow in late sixteenth and seventeenth-century Dutch paintings', in *Looking through paintings: the study of painting techniques and materials in support of art historical research*, ed. Erma Hermens, *Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek XI* (1998), pp. 159-175.

<sup>20</sup> The same draughtsman could make impeccably flat drawings, such as his head of a black woman, British Museum, no. 1895,0915.1212.

<sup>21</sup> His first name may have been Nicolas, though the evidence for this is not conclusive. 'Lagneau', in *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler*, eds U. Thieme and F. Becker, 37 vols, Leipzig 1907-1950, vol. 22, p. 218; Cathrin Klingsöhr-Le-Roy, 'Lagneau, Nicolas', in *Dictionary of Art*, ed. J. Turner, 34 vols, Basingstoke 1996, 18, p. 638.

<sup>22</sup> I am not of course suggesting that Hoogstraten had seen these particular drawings by Cesare da Sesto and Francesco Salviati; they are meant merely as examples of the style in question.

<sup>23</sup> On what Dutch artists and authors knew of Leonardo see P. Taylor, 'Leonardo in the Low Countries', in *Lives of Leonardo*, ed. T. Frangenberg and R. Palmer (forthcoming). Leonardo (*Traitté de la Peinture*, tr. R. Fréart de Chambray, Paris 1651, cap. xviii) expounds a notion of shadow which is directly opposed to that of Hoogstraten: '...sur tout soyez soigneux que vos ombres & vos lumières ne soient pas trenchées, mais qu'elles s'aillent noyant ensemble, & se perdant insensiblement comme la fumée..'. Kwakkelstein 1998 (note 8), p. 137. Cf. note 48 below.

<sup>24</sup> ‘...het onmogelyk is dat een man, vrouw, of kind, zonder moeite, en zonder van wezen te veranderen, voornamentlyk omtrent de oogen en de mond, zo lang met het aangezicht in de zon kan zitten...’ Lairesse 1740 (note 1), I, p. 274.

<sup>25</sup> ‘De voorwerpen, in de zon gedaagd, zyn min of meer bedamp’t, na dat de zon sterk of flauw schynt, en zulks om die redens will, dat de *atomen*, of de vezelen en ziertjes, welke zich tusschen ons en het oogpunt bevinden, door de kracht van ’t zonnelicht veel lichaamelyker schynen, dan in een gemeen of zuiver licht, en min of meer gekoloreerd worden, waar van de schaduwen der voorwerpen tēnemaal verflauwen, en schielyker wyken, als in een ander licht.’ Lairesse 1740 (note 1), I, p. 248.

<sup>26</sup> On *houding* see P. Taylor, ‘The Concept of *Houding* in Dutch Art Theory’, in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 55 (1992), pp. 210-232.

<sup>27</sup> Hoogstraten 1678 (note 9), pp. 2-3. Hoogstraten specifically excepts Junius from his criticism; besides Goeree he may possibly have been thinking of Gerardus Vossius’ chapter ‘De graphice, sive arte pingendi’ in his *De quatuor artibus popularibus*, Amsterdam 1660. However it is not clear that he knew this book: he refers to Vossius’ *Van de kennisse syns selfs*, Amsterdam 1654, on pp. 43, 70 and 280 of the *Inleyding* (H.-J. Czech, *Im Geleit van Hoogstratens Malerietraktat Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst: Anders de Zichtbaere Welt* (Rotterdam 1678), Münster 2002, p. \*146), but does not cite *De quatuor artibus popularibus*, which had not been translated into Dutch.

<sup>28</sup> Kwakkelstein 1998 (note 8), pp. 66 & 136, n. 126.

<sup>29</sup> ‘...ick spreek van ondervindinghe...’: Kwakkelstein 1998 (note 8), pp. 25, 136 (= Goeree 1668 (note 8), p. 59). From the comment that follows, it sounds as if Goeree also had experience of painting: ‘ja ick wil u verseeckeren dat het selfs in ’t Schilderen soo een behulp ende een goede maniere aenwijzen sal, dat ghy met een gemack, na u begeerte, meer werck sult in eenen dagh af-doen, als andersins met on-ghedult en misnoegen in dry.’

<sup>30</sup> Goeree 1668 (note 8), pp. 57-59.

<sup>31</sup> Goeree 1668 (note 8), pp. 24-26.

<sup>32</sup> Goeree 1668 (note 8), pp. 44-50.

<sup>33</sup> Kwakkelstein 1998 (note 8), pp. 65-66.

<sup>34</sup> Goeree 1697 (note 3), pp. 64-65, 104-105, 115-127. The chapter ‘*Van het vlak, kantigh, snel, en sacht Teyckenen*’ in the 1668 edition is incorporated in the 1697 edition into a larger chapter ‘*Handelende van der Vlak, Kantig en snel Teikenen; als mede van de Hoogsels en Reflexien*’.

<sup>35</sup> ‘*Vooos*’ can also mean ‘soft’ or ‘weak’; by translating it as ‘spongy’ I do not want to give the impression that these shadows are full of small holes. Van Mander used ‘dommelighe’ to translate Vasari’s ‘sfumate’: ‘eenighe Engel-hoofdekens, die den Engel Gabriel versellen, ghedaen met een dommelighe soeticheyt’; ‘alcune teste d’Angeli che accompagnano Gabbriello, con dolcezza sfumate e di bellezza d’arie di teste condotte perfettamente’. Van Mander, *Schilder-boeck* 1604 (note 9), fol. 124v05; Vasari 1878-1885 (note 9), V, p. 17. For the verb dommelen/bedommelen see Van Mander, *Grondt* 1604 (note 9), V, 42; VIII, 10; XII, 34; *Schilder-boeck* 1604 (note 9) fols 183v04, 212r24 and 295r45.

<sup>36</sup> To translate ‘schilderachtig’ as ‘picturesque’ is inaccurate, but the only other option is to choose a neologism which will be unintelligible – Fritsch 1778 (note 11), pp. 251-262, plumped for the uninformative ‘painter-like’. The basic sense when applied to a motif was ‘worthy of being painted’, when applied to a painting was something like ‘worthy of the art of painting’, but in the course of the seventeenth century the word’s meaning became more specific, as it formed a focus for debate between different schools of opinion as to what was in fact ‘schilderachtig’. For a study of these debates, see *Het schilderachtige: studies over het schilderachtige in de Nederlandse kunsttheorie en architectuur 1650-1900*, eds C. van Eck, J. van den Eynde, W. van Leeuwen, Amsterdam 1994; B. Bakker, ‘Schilderachtig: Discussions of a Seventeenth-Century Term and Concept’, *Simiolus* XXIII (1995), pp. 147-162. As Thijs Weststeijn has pointed out to me (pers. comm.), sometimes ‘schilderachtig’ means little more than ‘pertaining to painting’ (see e.g. Hoogstraten 1678 (note 9), pp. 52, 153, 218 & 263), and it may be that in this instance Goeree is trying to refer to drawings that prepare the pupil for painting. However from his talk of ‘the true

light’ it seems to me that here he is using the word in a more value-laden sense.

<sup>37</sup> ‘De ondervindinge schijnd ons te leeren dat de jonge Teikenaars in ’t begin van hare oeffening, meest altijd een afkeer van de kantigheid en vlakheid hebben, en schijnen aan de andere zijde meer lust te hebben, ja van naturen genegen te zijn, tot een zachte en voose dommeligheid; daar-en-boven zijnze meest alle seer gereed, om de vlakke partyen die sy in haar Principaal vinden, doorgaans met kleine ligtjens, of verbroke schaduwjtens te bederven; even ofze van inbeelding waren, haar dingen daar door groote deugd en welstand toe te brengen; doch dese toonen datze de ware en Schilderachtige Teikenkunde, noch met slinkze kennis behandelen, en uyt de schaduwachtige nevel deser onwetenschap, tot het ware ligt moeten gebragt worden.’ Goeree 1697 (note 3), pp. 115-116.

<sup>38</sup> ‘Andere die hen wat meer laten voorstaan, meenen datze door een kantige vlakheid in een meer dan steenagtige hardigheid soudē vervallen, en dat ook hare dingen eensdeels mager en onvolkomen soudē schijnen...’ Goeree 1697 (note 3), p. 116.

<sup>39</sup> The useful word ‘reuselen’ has no exact equivalent in English. Goeree 1697 (note 3) defines it on pp. 100-101 as a form of hatching in which the lines are so densely packed that they merge together: ‘Wat nu het *Reuselen* belangt, ’t selve is mede een goede manier, en verscheeld daar in van het artseeren, dat het digt in malkander, sonder trek of stryemen, t’saamen geschommeld word.’ Cf. G. de Lairesse, *Grondlegginghe der Teekenkonst*, Amsterdam 1701, p. 25.

<sup>40</sup> ‘Het vlak en kantig of snel teikenen, bestaat voornamentlijk daar in, datmen sijn schaduwen eenparig vlak, het zy door artseeren, reuselen of wassen, aanleid; alsoo dat de kanten rontom hare bepaling van afteikening tegen het ligt behouden, invoegen men klaarlijk sien kan, wat figuur of gedaante soodanigen schaduwē in’t generaal heeft; en niet dat hare zijden verdwijnen in een dommelige rook of onbepaalde voosigheid, daar van de kantigheid haar’er form niet kan gesien worden: ook bestaat de vlakheid daar in, dat de groote schaduwen, en daar veel en verscheide schaduwen by malkander komen, zig eenparig by malkander houden, sonder in’t oog te spartelen, enz.’ Goeree 1697 (note 3), pp. 117-118.

<sup>41</sup> For a discussion of this drawing, of the group to which it belongs, and of the attribution to Raven, see M. Royalton-Kisch, exh. cat. *Drawings by Rembrandt and his Circle*, London (British Museum) 1992, pp. 214-219. I thank Martin Royalton-Kisch for bringing this drawing to my attention.

<sup>42</sup> 'In het kantig, en in het zagte en dommelig teikenen, heeftmen in den beginne twee klippen te vermijden, daar meenige zig lelijk aan stoten; dan van d'een komtmen met neerstige opmerking eer af, dan wel van d'andere; door het al te zagte en wolagtig teikenen, vervaltmen meest altijd in een kinderagtige voosigheid, en door het kantig en snel teikenen somtijds in stijvigheid: maar dewijl het prijselijk is van twee quaden het beste te verkiesen, sal het beter wesen vlak en kantig te teikenen, schoon dat al wat na de stijke [*read: stijve*] kant helde, dan datmen om sagt en mals te teikenen, van de regte weg sou afdwalen, en in een voose manier vervallen. De mistandige hardigheid kan door 't aangewesen middel en goede toeversigt allengskens besnoeid en r'eenemaal overwonnen worden; d'andere manier loopt heel ten bederve, en moet van't hoofd tot de voeten genesen en hersteld worden.' Goeree 1697 (note 3), pp. 119-120.

<sup>43</sup> 'Veele goede Schilders gebruiken in't schilderen menigmaal den duim of de pink, om sommige streken, die te hard stooten, wat te doen smelten; het staat knaphandig, en doet dikwils meer nut, dan met die door de Pinçeel lang te beknoeyen. Wanneermen Conterfeitzels teikend, en wel insonderheid op de grond-papieren, ismen gewoon de kanten van de hoogsels wat te verdrijven; hier toe kanmen, in plaats van doekjens, of wol in schagten gesteken, een stukje van 't selve grond-papier nemen, en rollen dat wel nauw in-een, invoegen dat het onder digt en vast, dog scherp, op de wijze van een peperhuisken loopt: en hier mede kanmen gevoeglijk eenige soete versmeltinge maken van de kanten die te hard mogten stooten...' Goeree 1697 (note 3), p. 103.

<sup>44</sup> '...men moet de schaduwen, die ontwijffelijck ware schaduwen zijn, vlak en kantigjens, en met een vol Pençeel aanleggen, sonder die aan de zijden van den dag te verdrijven, of flauwer te maken, ten zy met een tweede streek, de Pençeel een weinig vogt makende of omkeerende, dat met een ander Pençeel doen, dat slegts vogt van water is, en soo weining uwe schaduwe breeken, dat het niet sienelijk word, op dat

de grootheid van u partyen in haar geheel behouden word...' Goeree 1697 (note 3), p. 104.

<sup>45</sup> '...want als de partyen van't ligt, of van de schaduwen onseker van bepalinge zijn, is de grootsheid en de lichamelijke vastigheid in een Teikening verloren...' Goeree 1697 (note 3), p. 104.

<sup>46</sup> 'De Nuttigheydt van dese vlackigheydt is dese, datse over-al, en altijd, als eenen onfeylbaren Grondt-regel, een uyt-nemende macht en lichamelijckheydt in U E. dingen voort-brenght, waer doorse plaeylant voor het Oogh, volmaeckte na de Natuyr, en verstandelick weghens de Konst, sich wonderlijck komt uyt te heffen.' Goeree 1668 (note 8), p. 59

<sup>47</sup> Kwakkelstein 1998 (note 8), pp. 37-38 and 156-158.

<sup>48</sup> 'La lumiere qui est trenchée par les ombres avec trop de dureté fait un tres-mauvais effet; de sorte que pour eviter cet inconvenient, si vous faites vos figures en pleine campagne, il ne leur faut pas donner un iour de soleil, mais feindre un temps bruineux & quelques nuages transparents entre le soleil et votre composition, afin qu'esclairant plus foiblement les figures, l'extremité de leurs ombres vienne à se mesler insensiblement parmy celle des lumieres.' Leonardo 1651 (note 23), cap. xxix. Cf. also note 23 above.

<sup>49</sup> Leonardo 1651 (note 23), cap. xxvii; Kwakkelstein 1998 (note 8), pp. 106-107. The idea that picture galleries should be situated in the north of the house to benefit from the unchanging light can be found (as Goeree says, note 3, p. 63) in Vitruvius, *De architectura*, I. 2. 7 (Goeree may have taken this information from F. Junius, *De schilderkonst der oude*, Middelburg 1641, p. 334).

<sup>50</sup> Goeree 1697 (note 3), pp. 63-64. In this he is also following Leonardo 1651 (note 23), cap. xxvii; Kwakkelstein 1998 (note 8), pp. 106-107.

<sup>51</sup> Leonardo 1651 (note 23), cap. xxvii.

<sup>52</sup> '...ook is't ligt beter dat door een of digt te gaar staande vensters, dan't geen door verscheide venstergaten invalt; om dat alsdan de schaduwen niet selden verdubbelen, en een twijffelagtige bepaling schijnen te hebben, 't geen aan de vlakheid der slag-schaduwen hinderlijk is.' Goeree 1697 (note 3), p. 64. This comment is seconded by

Lairesse 1701 (note 40), pp. 29-30, where he tells us to be 'voorzichtig, dat gy nooit meer als een beknopt vensterlicht gebruikt, waar door men de vlakke Slachschaduwen best gewaar word, daar in tegendeel een groot, of ver van elkanderen verspreident licht verkiezende, zo worden de schaduwen verdubbeld, en krygen een twijffelagtige bepalinge' (Kwakkelstein 1998 (note 8), p. 106). Joachim von Sandrart recommended that studios be equipped with one high window of five to six feet square 'in order that Rounding may be achieved': 'wiewol die Rundung besser anstünde': Sandrart 1675 (note 9) p. 80. The practice of using high, single windows in order to create sharp shadows may have originated with Caravaggio, if Giulio Mancini's description of his studio design is to be believed: G. Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, eds A. Marucchi and L. Salerno, 2 vols, Rome 1956-1957, I, p. 108. It has been argued (M. van Eikema Hommes and E. van de Wetering, 'Light and colour in Caravaggio and Rembrandt, as seen through the eyes of their contemporaries', in D. Bull et al., exh. cat. *Rembrandt-Caravaggio*, Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 2006, pp. 164-179 [172-173]) that Mancini's statement cannot be taken seriously; but Sandrart, in his life of Caravaggio, gives good support to the idea that the Italian used a single window in his studio. Sandrart had worked from 1632-1635 for Marchese Vincenzo Giustiniani, Caravaggio's patron and friend, so his comments on the artist cannot be dismissed out of hand: '... Damit er [Caravaggio] aber auch die vollkommene Rundirung und natürliche Erhebung desto bäsler herfür bringen möchte, bediente er sich fleissig dunkler Gewölber, oder anderer finsterer Zimmer, die von oben her ein einiges kleines Liecht hatten, damit die Finsternis dem auf das *model* fallenden Liecht, durch starke Schatten, seine Macht lassen, und damit ein hoch-erhobene Rundirung verursachen möchte.' Sandrart 1675 (note 9), p. 189. The passage is ambiguous, in that 'Liecht' could refer either to an artificial light or natural light; but I take it that the adjectives 'einiges' and 'kleines' are more likely to modify 'Liecht' as 'natural light'.

<sup>53</sup> A fact of which Lairesse was well aware; see previous footnote.

<sup>54</sup> '...ma [Caravaggio] trovò una maniera di campirle entro l'aria bruna di un camera rinchiusa, pigliando un lume alto che scendeva a piombo sopra la parte principale

del corpo, e lasciando il rimanente in ombra a fine di recar forza con veemenza di chiaro e di oscuro.' G.P. Bellori, *Le Vite de' Pittori, Scultori e Architetti Moderni* [Rome 1672], ed. E. Borea, Turin 1976, p. 217.

<sup>55</sup> 'Men kan ook in dese oeffening na Playsterwerk, des avonds het nagtligt gebruiken; gelijk sommige dat prijsen om het vlak schaduwen wille; en daar toe een lamp die wel voorsien is met zuivere olye en verscheide lemmetten: dese hangtmen of setmen op een bequame hoogte en vaste plaats; en op dat zig het ligt niet te veel sou verstroyen, maar by malkander als een ligt soude blijven, moeten de lemmet-pijpen digt by den anderen komen, om dieswil dat de schaduwen andersints verdubbelen, als men sien kan wanneer twee of drie verscheide keers-ligten in een kamer zijn: daarom by aldien ligt genoeg door een dik lemmet kan voortbrengen, 't salder maar te vlakker en sekerder om schaduwen.' Goeree 1697 (note 3), p. 64.

<sup>56</sup> Goeree 1697 (note 3), p. 65.

<sup>57</sup> 'De verligte party moetmen sagtelijk en eenparig hoogten, invoegen datmen daar na noch sterker, of andere voorname hoogsels soude konnen opsetten, en evenwel den algemeenen vlakken dag behouden.' Goeree 1697 (note 3), p. 125.

<sup>58</sup> 'Ten vierden moeten sommige Hoogsels snel en kantig zijn, als op ployen, nepen, krokeringen van sijde stoffen, en anders, maar op ronde en naakte lichamen, wat breed en zagter, insonderheid daar veel gehoogt werd.' Goeree 1697 (note 3), p. 126.

<sup>59</sup> 'Boven al dient wel een dinghen besproken, / Te weten, datmen confuys en swaermoedich / Niet en sal het Laken te seer verkroken, / Als oft al waer verdouwen en ghebroken: / Waer in ons Voorders dwaelden veel onvroedich, / Bysonder Aldegraef, die t'overvloedich / In dit kroken hem misgaen heeft abuysich, / Dats de maniere, die men heet confuysich. / Maer Dureri Laken, bysonder t'leste, / Datmen siet in zijn printen, daer soo heerlijck / Groote vlakke daghen comen, de reste / In veel schaduw verliesend, als zijn beste / Mary beelden tuyghen, is schoon en leerlijck...' Van Mander, *Grondt* 1604 (note 9), X, 13-14.

<sup>60</sup> Van Mander, *Grondt* 1604 (note 9), X, 4, 5, 10, 19, 20; Van Mander, *Schilder-boeck* 1604 (note 9), fols 102r, 187r, 193r, 208r.

<sup>61</sup> I have discussed the first half of this chapter in 'Composition in Dutch art theory', in *Pictorial Composition from Medieval to Modern Art*, eds P. Taylor and F. Quiviger, London and Turin 2000, pp. 146-171.

<sup>62</sup> 'Oock behoorden wy sonderlingh te wachten / In d'History, soo wy elders ontblooten, / Dat wy over hoop veel schaduwen brachten, / Sonder soo schielijck te laten met crachten / Ons herde bruyen teghen claeer licht aenstooten, / maer wel teghen graeuwen, dan eenen grooten / Deel vlak licht sullen wy oock t'samen hoopen, / Doent oock alst bruyen in't graeu verloren loopen.' Van Mander, *Grondt* 1604 (note 9), V, 41.

<sup>63</sup> Goeree 1697 (note 3), pp. 105-106, 126; Hoogstraten 1678 (note 9) pp. 305-306; Lairesse 1701 (note 40), p. 19; Lairesse 1740 (note 1), pp. 15-19; Van Eikema Hommes and Van de Wetering 2006 (note 52), pp. 175-176.

<sup>64</sup> Van Mander, *Grondt* 1604 (note 9), V, 42; Junius 1641 (note 49), p. 269; Hoogstraten 1678 (note 9), p. 305.

<sup>65</sup> Van Mander however uses the word 'cantigh' in an exclusively pejorative sense, to refer to passages of light which have lifted away from their shadows: *Grondt* 1604 (note 9), XII, 27-8; Van Mander, *Schilder-boeck* 1604 (note 9), fols 186v, 206v, 213v, 245f, 246f.

<sup>66</sup> '...de kracht die de levende en wesentlijke dingen hebben, schoon haer schaduwen ghestroyt zijnde, onder een haspelen, ende evenwel noch een welstandt hebben; soo konnen wy om de onvolmaecktheyt die in ons noch overigh is, het selve in onse wercken gheen welstandt gheven, noch soodanighen kracht als sy ons voor komen; dan als wy het selve wel te weghe konnen brengen, wanneer wy de schaduw, en het licht, ghesamentlijk met goede ordenen by een gheschickt hebben: want dit gaet hier even toe, als met een *Bende* verspreyde *Soldaten*, en verre van een ghescheyden *Krijght-Helden* toe gaet, dewelcke gheen macht tot overwinninghe en konnen hopen, ten zy dat sy by een rotten, ende alle macht ghesamentlijcken toe brengen, om soo door ghewelt de overwinninge te bekomen. Even so gaet het hier met onse verdeelde schaduw toe, dewelcke, soo langh alsse van een verspreyt zijn, en konnen het ghesicht van de *Lief-hebbers* niet in nemen.' P. Angel, *Lof der Schilderkonst*, Leiden

1642, facs. reprint Utrecht 1969, pp. 39-40. Cf. R. de Piles, *Cours de peinture par principes* [Paris 1708], Paris 1989, p. 176: 'Quoique le clair-obscur comprenne la science de distribuer toutes les lumières et toutes les ombres, il s'entend plus particulièrement des grandes lumières et des grandes ombres ramassées avec une industrie qui en cache l'artifice.'

<sup>67</sup> '[Giorgione] comprit si bien l'Art de bien faire paroître les jours et les ombres, qu'il y joignit encore celui d'accorder toutes les fortes couleurs ensemble, & de leur conserver cette vivacité & cette fraîcheur qui plaît si fort à la vûë.' A. Felibien, *Entretiens sur les vies et sur les ouvrages des plus excellens peintres* [Paris 1679], Paris 1725, vol. 1, p. 273.

<sup>68</sup> 'Les Ombres donnent aux Demi-teintes l'éclat dont celles-ci font briller les Lumieres. Elles seront traitées d'un ton vague, par masses plattes, & n'offriront que de très-légers détails des objets qu'elles voileront.' M.-F. Dandré-Bardon, *Traité de peinture*, Paris 1765, p. 116.

<sup>69</sup> I feel fairly confident that massed shadow preceded flat shadow; Giorgione, early Titian and Correggio introduced masses of light and dark, while flat shadow, it seems to me, grows out of mid- to late-period Titian and Caravaggio. On the shadows of Caravaggio, see Van Eikema Hommes and Van de Wetering 2006 (note 52).

<sup>70</sup> Goeree also says that flatness is a characteristic of painting; see note 29 above.

<sup>71</sup> For a more profound discussion of this complex issue see Baxandall 1995 (note 3), pp. 32-75.

<sup>72</sup> There is a *vanitas* painting by De Heem in Liberec which shows a wooden partition that blocks the lower light from the window. This painting is reproduced as fig. 28a in W. Kloek and A. Chong (eds), exh. cat. *Still-life paintings from the Netherlands*, Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) and Cleveland (Museum of Art) 1999, p. 168.

<sup>73</sup> Despite the depiction of shadows in this painting, Van der Heyden mastered both the flat and the non-flat styles. In many of his landscape paintings the artist uses shadows as aggressively flat as any in Dutch art (P. C. Sutton (ed.), exh. cat. *Jan van der Heyden*, Greenwich (Bruce Museum) and Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum), 2006-2007, cat. nos 4, 12, 22, 23, 26, 33 and 35). At the same time other paintings,

including works from his earliest period, point forward to the shadowless luminosity of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (cat. nos 2, 5, 8, 24).

<sup>74</sup> According to the National Gallery's website, the sky in this painting was damaged by cleaning some time in the nineteenth century; it seems likely that the clouds have lost some of their shadows.

<sup>75</sup> E.g. R. Baarsen, R.-J. te Rijdt and F. Scholten, *Nederlandse kunst in het Rijksmuseum 1700 – 1800*, Zwolle 2006, cat. nos 15, 31, 33, 35.

<sup>76</sup> On the subject of Rembrandt's local imprimaturas see E. van de Wetering, *Rembrandt: the Painter at Work*, Amsterdam 1997, pp. 211-215. I wonder if talk of 'local imprimaturas' may be slightly misleading; Rembrandt built his flesh tones over a swirling eddy of earth colours, as can be seen in the unfinished Aix-en-Provence self-portrait. See E. van de Wetering

et al., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings, IV, The Self-portraits*, The Hague 2005, pp. 476-485.

<sup>77</sup> See note 17.

<sup>78</sup> See note 9.

<sup>79</sup> See notes 41 and 63.

<sup>80</sup> '... de onfeilbare regelen dezer Konst...'; Lairesse 1740 (note 1), I, p. 325.

<sup>81</sup> Goeree 1697 (note 3), pp. 122-124.

<sup>82</sup> '...in een mistige rook verdwijnen...'; Goeree 1697 (note 3), p. 123.

<sup>83</sup> 'En hier uyt seggen wy, sal een redelijk oordeel kunnen weten, waarom het vlak teikenen de dingen soo een welstandigen aart geeft; namentlijk, om dat het de dingen nader met de natuur der natuurlijke schaduwen en dagen over-een brengt, alhoewel ons niet onbekend is, dat die, om wel gevolgt

te worden, van yeder in't leven soo niet kunnen gesien worden.' Goeree 1697 (note 3), p. 124.

<sup>84</sup> Baxandall 1995 (note 3), pp. 88-91. Goeree was aware of this: 'Merkt'er in 't voorby gaan noch over aan, dat hoe nader het licht, hoe dat de dagen en schaduwen sterker vallen, en hoe grooter distantie daar van daan, hoe flauwer men die op alle lichamen siet...'; Goeree 1697 (note 3), p. 64.

<sup>85</sup> Baxandall 1995 (note 3), pp. 80-84.

<sup>86</sup> Goeree 1697 (note 3), p. 121.

<sup>87</sup> Note 16.

<sup>88</sup> 'Diese Vertreter der officiellen Theorie [Hoogstraten and Lairesse] sagen uns kaum etwas Neues.' J. Schlosser, *Die Kunstliteratur. Ein Handbuch zur Quellenkunde der neueren Kunstgeschichte*, Vienna 1924, p. 559.