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Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp*: a Sinner among the Righteous

Two key studies of *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp*, by W. S. Heckscher (1958), and W. Schupbach (1982), have emphasized the contributions of Dr. Tulp, the major patron, to the painting's iconography. Heckscher argues that Tulp requested Rembrandt to portray him as Vesalius reborn; he claims the artist depicted the doctor as a Magus who rids the community of evil by making the body of an executed criminal socially useful. Schupbach is also convinced that Tulp, a learned humanist, established the iconography involving the double messages of knowing God and knowing oneself.

I will argue that viewpoints of both patron and artist have been encoded in the painting, resulting in conflicting messages, as well as ambiguities and ironies. My reading of the artist's contributions is based upon an analysis of the visual language, an examination of other Rembrandt works close in time, and a consideration of inherited schemata and Reformation themes.

In 1632, Rembrandt portrayed Dr. Nicolaes Tulp, praelector of the Amsterdam Surgeons' Guild, demonstrating the flexor mechanism in a corpse's flayed forearm and hand while guild members listen and observe [Fig. 1]. The corpse has been identified as that of Adriaan Adriaans (alias Aris Kindt). At the age of twenty-eight, Kindt was convicted and hung for "grave assault and battery that endangered the life of a man whose cloak he had tried to take with the aid of another criminal."[1] The painting was probably commissioned by Tulp and six other guild members, including the two wardens represented on either side of the corpse's head (the man on the extreme left appears to have been added after the composition was established).[2] Those represented in this dramatized group portrait surely paid their patronage moneys believing the work would celebrate their participation in the intellectual life of Amsterdam at a time when a university was being founded in that city.

Heckscher argues that Tulp, wishing to appear as the Vesalius *redivivus* of his age, requested that Rembrandt portray him engaged in the dissection of an arm, as the sixteenth century anatomist is shown in a woodcut in the 1543 first edition of *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*.[3] Prior to Vesalius, the actual cutting of the corpse was generally done by an assistant to the anatomy lecturer for reasons of decorum, and because the church frowned on desecration of the body. Vesalius, determined to advance the knowledge of

1) Rembrandt, «The Anatomy of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp», 1632, Mauritshuis, The Hague.

anatomy, dispensed with such an assistant and did his own dissections. Heckscher explains that Tulp believed the practice of anatomy led to greater knowledge of God, since the body is a product of Divine creation.

Heckscher reads the painting as a portrayal of Tulp purging the Amsterdam community of evil through the dissection of the corpse of an executed criminal. But is it likely the artist himself held such a belief? An examination, later in this paper, of how Rembrandt represented outcasts, thieves, judges and healers in works close in time, may provide an answer.

Schupbach argues that Tulp, a learned writer as well as medical man, established the painting's iconography. He had himself portrayed curling the fingers of his own hand, while manipulating with forceps the *flexores digitorum* muscles which would effect such a movement in the corpse's flayed arm. Schupbach discerns in Tulp's writings Christianized versions of

Galen's ideas, as well as those of 16th-century anatomist Andreas Laurentius; he believes that a demonstration of how a hand moves was chosen for the subject because both Galen and Tulp extol the human hand as a monument to God's wisdom, an instrument that permits humans to create civilization. The painting's message, according to Schupbach, involves knowing God and knowing oneself. Double emblems are conveyed as the guild member at the top of the composition gestures towards the corpse, and thus "points out the obvious mortality of man, while Dr. Nicolaes Tulp reveals the more elusive element that does not die."[4] Schupbach compares this paradoxical iconography—which he credits to Tulp—to metaphysical poetry then circulating in Amsterdam.

These major studies by Heckscher and Schupbach enhance our understanding of the iconography, especially as it relates to medical history, but they emphasize the patron's objectives to the neglect of the artist's predilections. By age 26, Rembrandt had already displayed considerable independence of vision.

While Heckscher and Schupbach build convincing cases for the emblematic significance of certain elements, meanings conveyed through formal choices of the artist deserve further attention. What, for example, can one deduce from contrasts of dark versus light, high versus low, joined shapes versus an isolated one? What is the effect of representing the corpse in such a visually privileged manner, so flooded with light and so dominant in the foreground?

Light from a high, unseen source illuminates the corpse which is painted a white mixed with ochre and gray. Despite the white collars and ruffs that set off their faces, Tulp and the guild members are predominantly dark in value. Since light in the Netherlandish tradition connotes sanctity and enlightenment, and darkness is associated with evil and spiritual blindness, it is curious that the corpse is so conspicuously light, and members of an Amsterdam elite so very dark. Such an effect might have been avoided through different positioning of the men or the book, more cast shadows on the corpse, or by draping the body more.

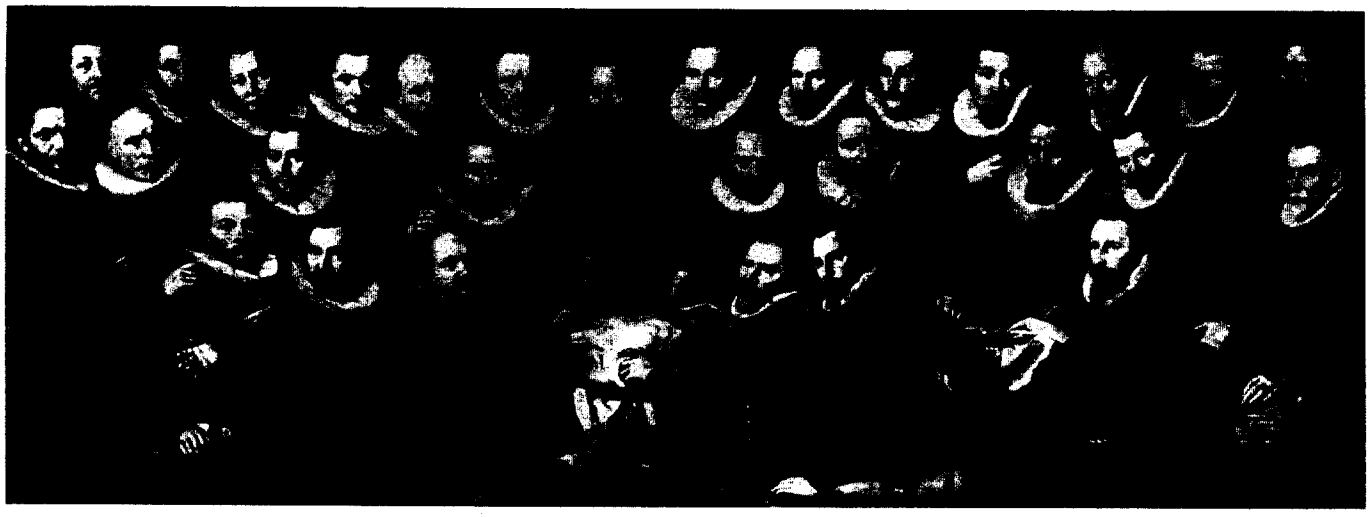
Kindt, a large, light form in the foreground, carries the lower third of the canvas. Although one man is seated in front of the dissecting table, his dark clothing causes him to recede and the corpse to project visually, so that the dead man seems very close to the viewer. The verticality of the living figures, two seated, the others standing, contrasts with the near horizontality of the corpse, setting up an opposition of active forces versus passivity. Formal elements establish a contrast between those who act and he upon whom they act. As Mieke Bal has stated, the painting represents "the social theater of mastery."[5]

Another dialectic occurs between clothed bodies and an almost naked one. Guild members wear well-tailored black and brown clothing decorated with costly pleated ruffs. Dr. Tulp is distinguished from the group by his high-crowned, wide-brimmed hat, substantial chair, and the niche behind him. He wears a cloak over a doublet with knotted laces at the waist, white cuffs and a collar decorated with lace. His moustache and pointed beard are well-groomed, as are those of the other guild members. Any physical imperfections these men might possess are concealed by voluminous clothing. They appear overdressed, protected—almost armored. Such clothing and grooming signifies that these men have stable careers and settled existences, with wives and servants to tend to their needs.

By contrast, the corpse possesses no clothing, except for a white loin cloth. Aris Kindt no longer even "owns" his body, which is the property of the state and is being dismembered. It is ironic that the thief's crime against private property has resulted in his loss of body ownership, and has allowed Tulp and the guild members to acquire it. His imperfections, stunted legs and big feet, are fully revealed. Wispy, unshaped hair on his upper lip and chin speak of low social rank. While the living appear well "put together," the corpse is being taken apart; the integrity of his left arm has already been violated. Tulp and the guild members merge into a large dark shape because of their black and brown clothing and the shadowy background. Their visual linkage into a many headed body signifies shared interests. The corpse, by contrast is one of a kind—truly solitary.

The animated gestures and expressions of the living contrast with the stiffness of the body whose muscles show traces of *rigor mortis* (normally gone within twenty-four hours of death). The features of the living are easier to discern than those of the corpse—a shadow falls across the eyes, the bottom of the jaw is obscured by the curve of the chest, and one views the face from an oblique angle (the abrupt transition between head and chest might imply props under the body, and of course, the neck is broken). The pallor of the corpse contrasts with the ruddy complexions of the living—the two men who bend over him are especially rosy-cheeked and vital looking. Power contrasts decisively with powerlessness.

This is a work about not touching a body. Such negations bring to mind Foucault's statement: "There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say;...."[6] Dr. Tulp does not touch the body directly, but manipulates the flayed hand with forceps. He raises his other hand high enough above the corpse for his gesture to be read as one of avoidance. One might expect hands to be more prominent in a group portrait. Only Tulp's hands, the hand of the man who points, and the hand of the man who holds a list of names (originally an anatomical drawing),[7] are emphasized; it is easy to miss such a faintly painted hand as the one belong-



2) Aert Pietersz., «The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Sebastiaen Egbertsz. de Vrij», 1603, Amsterdams Historisch Museum.

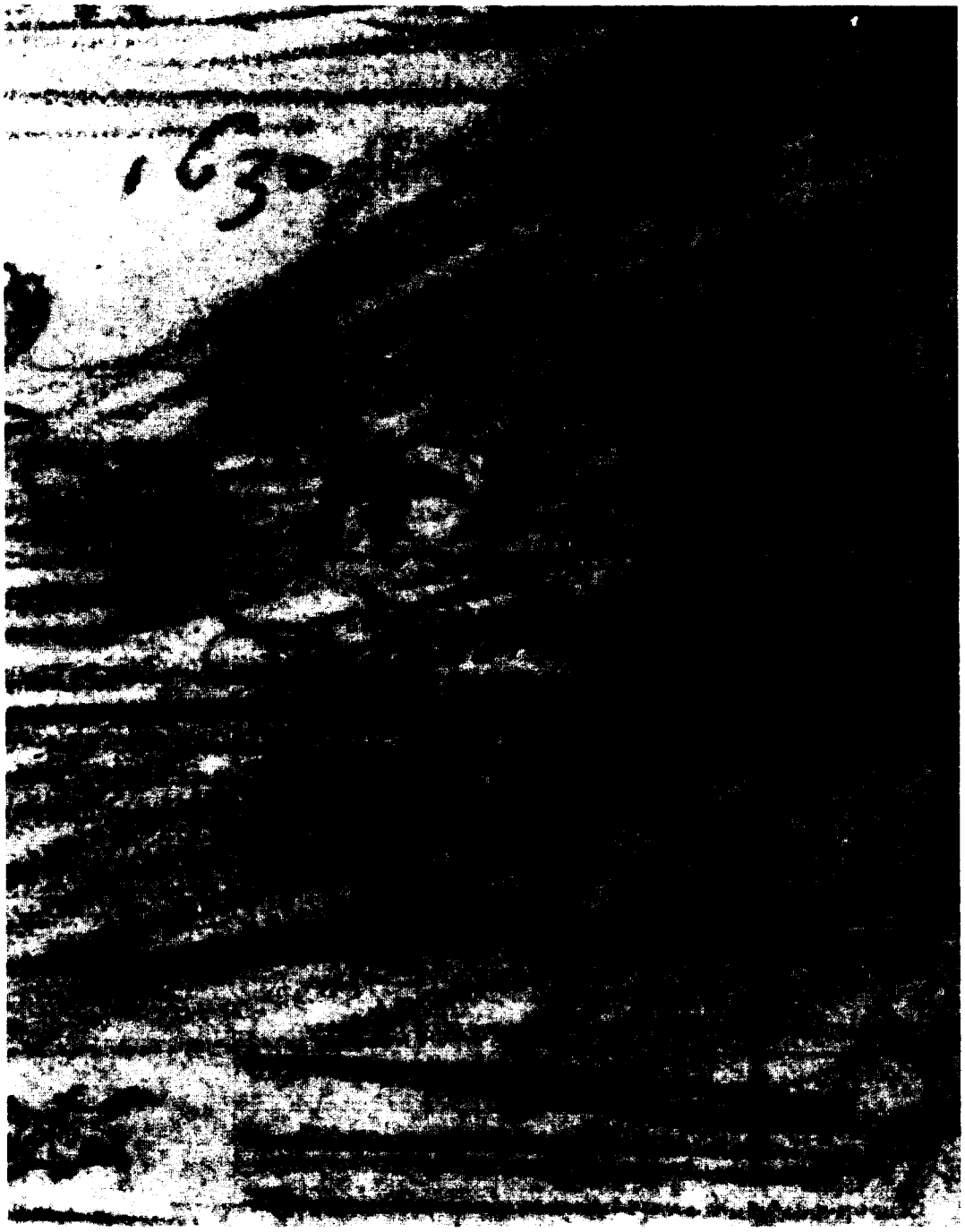
ing to the man in the foreground—it curls away from the corpse and around an armrest. Considering the number of men portrayed, hands are decidedly played down. The two men who arch over the corpse appear to pull in their stomachs, as if to avoid contact with the dead man.

This is also a work about not looking at a body, as Francis Barker has noted. "But with what philosophical serenity ... are those gazes able not to perceive the violent act of domination upon which this painting, almost despite itself, predicates their tranquillity? It would perhaps be too humanistic now to refer this blindness to the status of a joke on Rembrandt's part (although as a painter who was so frequently condemned by other artists for associating with the lower orders, who mixed with Jews, who went bankrupt in an age of accumulation, he was located somewhat ironically, shall we say, within the social order he depicts), but the fact remains: no eye within the painting sees the body. The scientific gaze, the perspective of natural philosophy, may be organized around the corpse, but in order not to see it."[8] Tulp is the only man who is turned towards the corpse, but he does not look down at the body. The gaze of the doctor might be read either as directed to an audience, or as the unfocused gaze of someone who concentrates on his own words. Similar ambiguities characterize the gaze of the man in the left foreground. The man who holds the list, and the one at the apex of the composition, appear to look at observers, while the eyes of the man closest to Tulp's arm appear unfocused, as if he is contemplating the doctor's words. The man just above the corpse, and the man above him, stare at the flayed arm. None of these characters see the corpse as a whole—but, from a high vantage point, the viewer of the painting does.[9]

Inter-textual issues are important to an understanding of the painting's visual dynamics. Dialogues exist between two secular discourses—a group portrait and a history painting of an anatomy demonstration—and two religious discourses—a martyrdom, and a raising of Lazarus. A number of scholars, including Heckscher and Schupbach, have discussed how various genres have been combined, but my conclusions differ somewhat from theirs, and I have not found mention in the literature of Lazarus imagery as it affects this work.[10] Bal and Bryson have analyzed the unpredictable dynamics involved when an artist borrows from other iconographic traditions: "...the sign taken over, because it is a sign, comes with a meaning," and hence the artist must "deal with it: reject or reverse it, ironize it, or simply, often unawares, insert it in the new text."[11]

It is not surprising that borrowings from a variety of schemata can be found in *The Anatomy of Dr. Tulp*; prototypes for anatomy demonstrations were scarce—prints of the subject in anatomy books tended to lack drama. The first painting of an anatomy done in Amsterdam was in 1603, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Sebastiaen Egbertsz. de Vrij* (Amsterdams Historisch Museum) [Fig. 2]. Aert Pietersz. adapted the pattern of a civil

3) Rembrandt, «Entombment», drawing, 1630, British Museum, London.


1630

militia banquet, with the corpse stretched parallel to the picture plane. Thomas de Keyser, in his 1619 *Anatomy lesson of Dr. Sebastiaen Egbertsz. de Vrij* (Amsterdams Historisch Museum), stayed within the discourse of an emblematic group portrait by placing the praelector and five wardens symmetrically on either side of a skeleton.

Schupbach has argued that Rembrandt did not depict an actual public anatomy, since the emptying of the abdominal cavity would have preceded a dissection of an arm. Also, the setting is generalized, without a balustrade to separate the operating area from the audience, and lacking the skeletons and other paraphernalia that were usually in anatomy theaters. However, Rembrandt, trained as a history painter, introduced narrative elements by having the six guild members react with varying expressions and movements to Tulp's actions, and by heightening the drama with *chiaroscuro*. Such dramatic effects give a general impression of a public anatomy, as do the gazes of those guild members which seem to focus on an audience. In general, the men appear aware they are "on stage."[12]

Rembrandt did employ a number of traditional aspects of group portrait discourse in *The Anatomy of Dr. Tulp*, such as expensive clothing, careful grooming, confident facial expressions and postures—all signifiers of high status in a community. Such a tradition involves clear views of faces, and sometimes the impression that those represented are making eye contact with viewers. One can read signs of vanity and pride—even a certain pomposity—in the body language of men who appear dressed and groomed to be watched.

Representations of people clustered around and acting upon a passive body are found in many religious subjects, such as martyrdoms, the betrayal or tormenting of Christ, depositions and entombments. For example, in Dürer's engraving *Descent from the Cross* (1507), the motif of John bending over Christ's head is similar to that of a guild member leaning over the corpse's head in the Rembrandt; in the Dürer, Mary faces Christ and lifts his arm—Dr. Tulp faces the corpse and lifts muscles in its flayed arm. There is a book, presumably a Bible in Dürer's foreground, and a book, presumably an anatomy, in Rembrandt's foreground.

One need search no farther for prototypes, however, than to a 1630 drawing by Rembrandt of an *Entombment* (British Museum, London) [Fig. 3]. The portion in which followers of Christ carry his body closely resembles the Tulp composition, although with important differences: in the drawing, followers touch Christ's body lovingly and look at it—one person turns back to gaze at his face. The negation of touch and sight in *The Anatomy of Dr. Tulp* becomes more obvious after considering their emphasis by Rembrandt in his *Entombment* drawing of two years before. An adapted schema will bring with it expectations, and viewers may sense a lack when these are not fulfilled. In addition, Rembrandt, who had recently taken such care to express tenderness towards the body of Christ through the gestures and glances of his followers, may have found the body language of aversion appropriate for the Tulp painting.

This 1630 drawing is of additional interest, since the artist began with a sketch for a raising of Lazarus which he shaded out [Fig. 4]. In the Lazarus story, Christ appears in the guise of a healer, a "doctor" able to raise the dead. Clearly Rembrandt's imagination continued to dwell on the subject during the year he painted *The Anatomy of Dr. Tulp*, since in 1632 he did both a painting (Br. 538) and an etching (B.73) of Christ bringing Lazarus back to life. In the etching, Christ raises one hand above his head as he performs the miracle; Lazarus lies in the tomb, head slightly raised, mouth open. Onlookers react with intensity to the event. Tulp, too, raises one hand, though only chest high; the mouth of the corpse is slightly open, its chest expanded, as if full of breath; onlookers react to Tulp's words and actions. The doctor's mechanical manipulation of muscles is almost a parody of Christ's miracle. Tulp might be read as a false Christ, much as Bacchus—who shares attributes with Christ such as grapes, wine, and ardent followers—can be read as a false god in paintings by Caravaggio and Velázquez. Although considered "healers," Tulp and the guild members—most of whom, in comparison to the dead man, appear as "elders"—are part of a power structure that judged and condemned Kindt to death.

There are overtones of Christ in the corpse, as Charles L. Mee, Jr., and others have pointed out (although the ramifications of that resemblance can be developed more).[13] Aert Pietersz., in his 1603 anatomy, solved the problem of the corpse becoming identified with Christ through positioning the doctor's hand to hide the face, thus playing down the dead man's presence. By contrast, the corpse in the Rembrandt commands the viewer's attention to an extraordinary degree, considering that Tulp and other guild members—rather than Aris Kindt—paid for the work. The corpse's light, almost radiant body, its naked and helpless state, can inspire viewer empathy. The corpse is presented to the viewer as the body of Christ is presented in religious works; it lies in the foreground, on an altar-like table or slab, with space left for the viewer to approach in imagination. The white loin cloth resembles those in depictions of Christ. The minute detail with which Rembrandt painted the corpse's undamaged right hand encourages the viewer to imagine touching the body that Tulp and the others do not touch. Finger nails are modeled three-dimensionally, and appear embedded in flesh, wrinkles across the knuckles, and fatty tissue under the skin between the fingers are indicated. Three of the corpse's fingers touch, a poignant detail in a painting that gen-

erally negates touch. When Christ's body is displayed in an altarpiece, often Mary or an angel will point to the wound in Christ's side or to ones in hands and feet; this invites the viewer to imagine touching Christ's body. Another parallel to images of the martyred Christ is found in the way Tulp draws attention to the "wounded" arm with forceps; one sees blood, and bits of gray skin left on the palm.

The shadow across the eyes of the corpse recalls the artist's use of similar shadows in a number of his own early self-portraits, perhaps to suggest a melancholy (hence creative) disposition.

In a late etching of 1657, *Presentation in the Temple*, Rembrandt placed a deep shadow across the face of the infant Christ. The shadow on Kindt's face is cast by a member of the Surgeons' Guild who bends over the body. It is ironic that in Rembrandt's 1629 etching of *Peter and John at the Gate of the Temple* (B. 95, British Museum, London) [Fig. 6], Peter bends to cast his healing shadow on a crippled man—clearly the guild member's shadow has no such power.

Tulp and the other men surround Kindt like tormentors in a mocking of Christ, or in a betrayal scene. As in pornography, the powerful violate the body of the powerless without danger to themselves. Tulp and the guild members display extremes of either not looking at Kindt or of focusing voyeuristically on one objectified part, the arm, which in its flayed state can signify castration. No guild member looks another in the eyes. This might appear natural in a group portrait, yet this is also a narrative painting. Such lack of eye contact might be read as signalling guilt. Even in Rembrandt's day, the Church officially condemned dissection, although, giving way to pressure from scientists such as Tulp, it permitted corpses of executed criminals to be so used. The body language of the guild members, as observed or constructed by the artist, may reflect a degree of moral discomfort on the part of participants (as well as painter).

Tulp, using forceps, does not touch this body tenderly—he is dismembering it, while others watch without concern for the corpse. It may seem odd to speak of the torture of a corpse, but the distinction between the living and the dead was not so absolute in Rembrandt's time as in our own. Before execution, criminals might be told they would be dissected, as if they would experience the horror of that process. In sixteenth century anatomy books, animated flayed corpses display their own muscles and organs, as if still alive. Not only was death thought of as a temporary state by the religious, but as Mee states: "It was commonly believed in the 1600s, though the physicians knew better, that the body was capable of sensation even after death."[14]

Entombments and Depositions, subjects depicted by Rembrandt just before and after the Tulp anatomy, dramatize the determination of Christ's followers to give him a respectful burial, despite danger to themselves, None of Kindt's social class are represented in the painting; no friends or relatives wait to receive his remains for burial, yet an entombment schema calls for mourners; viewers may sense their absence and instinctively assume such roles. Thomas Eakins, in the *Gross Clinic* (1875), did include such a "mourner," a woman whose anguished reactions to the operation balance the detached attitudes of the medical men.

The man at the apex of the pyramid points to the corpse, calling attention to the ultimate fate of all mortals.[15] But who can see him point, other than members of the implied audience and viewers of the painting?—certainly not Tulp or other guild members. Impressively dressed and preoccupied with their scientific interests, the warning seems lost on them, and even the man who points appears to do so without much conviction, as if making a conventional gesture whose religious significance has diminished as the power of science has grown. The viewer can see most of Aris Kindt's body and face, and can also see that Tulp and the guild members fail to see the dead man as a whole. As if from a God's eye view, the viewer observes the living and the dead as they cannot observe themselves. Rembrandt's *The Feast of Belshazzer* (Br. 497), painted two years later, springs to mind, in which an elite who dine in vessels stolen from the Temple cannot understand the warning written on the wall by a heavenly spirit. One should keep in mind that tickets sold to anatomy lessons such as Tulp's funded the banquet for the medical men which followed the event.

An etching created by Rembrandt a year after the Tulp commission demonstrates a very different relationship between living people and a corpse. In *The Descent from the Cross* (B. 81; II/III) [Fig. 5] the men who lower Christ's body handle it reverently. A man who resembles Rembrandt holds Christ by the left arm; this limb, through prominent muscles and tendons, resembles Kindt's flayed arm in *The Anatomy of Dr. Tulp*. Christ's neck looks broken—it appears stretched, and the head hangs at an extreme angle. Perhaps Rembrandt's representation of Christ's body was affected by memories or studies of Kindt's corpse.

To summarize, in *The Anatomy of Dr. Tulp*, the history painting discourse of an anatomy lesson celebrates science's secular values which permit violation of the body of an executed criminal for the general good to increase human knowledge. The group portrait discourse extols ambition, achievement and status. However, these discourses contend and even clash with religious discourses that carry messages of healing, compassion, reverence for the dead, and suspicion of pride. The blend in the painting is an uneasy one, resulting in an image more suggestive of alienation than of psychological unity.

5) Rembrandt, «The Descent from the Cross», etching, 1633, B. 81; III, British Museum, London.

Heckscher's interpretation of the painting springs from his conviction that it embodies largely the values of the patron. "...Rembrandt succeeded in expressing in his painting the idea of an atonement ritual in general (by contrasting with the coarse and lifeless appearance of the criminal the vital energies of the guild members) and a *trionfo* over death and sin...."[16] However, in the context of Calvinist ideology, "coarse and lifeless appearance" need not be a negative signifier, nor need "vital energies" always be a positive one—sinners and elite members of a community may be valued in paradoxical ways.

The Tulp painting was Rembrandt's first major commission upon leaving Leiden and settling in Amsterdam. Madlyn Millner Kahr, attempting to explain why Leiden became a center of *vanitas* still-life painting, brings up severe bouts of the plague in 1624-25, and the effect on cultural production of the University of Leiden, a stronghold of Dutch Calvinism. The appointment in 1625 of the didactic poet Jacob Cats as a Governor of the University further encouraged moralizing attitudes.[17]

Halewood believes that at an early age Rembrandt had "deeply internalized Calvinist notions concerning man, God, and Grace."[18] One might even argue that Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait* (ca. 1628), usually described as an experiment in Caravagesque tenebrism, can be understood in religious terms (as can some of Dürer's self-portraits); that the artist, whose eyes are lost in shadow and whose temple is touched with light, may have represented himself as a sinner lost in darkness and hoping for the gift of Grace. Early in his career Rembrandt etched himself as an outcast beggar, painted himself as one who helps elevate Christ's cross, and as the Prodigal Son (with Saskia on his knee). Calvin wrote that an outcast sinner was more likely to receive grace than a proud, wealthy, educated man. Halewood has argued for the presence of Reformation themes in many of Rembrandt's works throughout his career. Such themes are based on "what the Reformers themselves proclaimed as essential—the evangelical doctrine of salvation through God's grace alone."[19] He states that forgiveness is more "more abundant ... as man's state is more desperate."[20] Calvin stressed that the Pharisees wrongly thought of themselves as better in the eyes of God than sinners, saying: "after sin has held man sunk in ruin, grace then comes to their help; for {Paul} teaches us, that the abundance of grace becomes for this reason more illustrious—that while sin is overflowing, it pours itself forth so exuberantly, that it not only overcomes the flood of sin, but wholly absorbs it."[21]

Tulp and members of the Surgeons' Guild, who possess high status and scientific knowledge, work well in roles of Pharisees, just as the dead man, Aris Kindt—hung because he attempted to steal a cloak perhaps similar to Tulp's cloak—fits the role of a sinner. The illumination of Kindt's body might suggest that the gift of Grace has descended upon him. The guild members appear precariously balanced, as if about to tumble down, which can signify that their honored position will not last eternally. As Halewood indicates, there are precedents for such ironies, as in a sixteenth century *Calling of Matthew* by Jan Sanders van Hemessen, in which a richly dressed woman gives the notion that "preoccupations of earthly life cut us off from things of the spirit." An artist need not have consciously encoded such concepts in a painting—it is enough to have internalized such beliefs and to have viewed art that illustrates such an outlook. Halewood states: "That the sinner is instead chosen to receive God's love is the miracle that the Reformation ceaselessly celebrates,...."[22]

Margaret Deutsch Carroll also connects Calvinist beliefs and works by Rembrandt, such as the 1636 etching *Christ before Pilate* (B. 77 III). She quotes a passage from Calvin's *Institutes* in which he discusses the fallible nature of human justice, as well as Christ's identification with sinners. "When he is placed as a criminal before the tribunal, when he is accused and overpowered by the testimony of witnesses, and by the mouth of the judge is condemned to die—we understand from these circumstances that he sustained the character of a sinner and malefactor." It is interesting to note that Rembrandt created this image of miscarried justice just four years after he painted *The Anatomy of Dr. Tulp*, in which a condemned thief figures so prominently.

During the 1630s, and even before, Rembrandt explored a wide range of characters in his art, from the mighty to the outcast. Alpers believes Biblical narrative in Rembrandt can be understood "as a record of performed scenes—akin to the impersonations encouraged in the Latin schools."[23] In the 1630 etching *Beggar Seated on a Bank* (B. 174), the artist gave the outcast his own face,[24] yet he also portrayed himself as a patrician, as in the 1631 etching *Rembrandt in Soft Hat and Embroidered Cloak* (B. 7; III), in which he is dressed more grandly than Tulp. Clearly the artist entertained mixed feelings about rank, perhaps especially so upon moving from Leiden, a moralizing center, to Amsterdam, a more worldly city. The times too were in transition, as Dutch elites began, tentatively, to enjoy a display of wealth—Tulp took pride in his status and drove about Amsterdam in a carriage—yet, as Schama argues, some might still feel guilty about doing so.[25]

While Tulp's ideas may well have influenced *The Anatomy of Dr. Tulp*'s iconography, the painting contains both text and subtext (as in Goya's depiction of the family of Charles IV). One should contemplate both artist's and patron's agendas, keeping in mind that aspects of these may well have been subconscious. Interpretations must also consider meanings that cling

to borrowings from traditional schemata and that clash or blend in odd ways in a new image.

Perhaps the painting of *The Anatomy of Dr. Tulp* forced Rembrandt to think deeply on the power relationships around him. Although highly ambitious, the experience of sketching the corpse of an outcast who came from Leiden, and was only two years his senior, may well have made a deep impression on the artist. Four years after *The Anatomy of Dr. Tulp*, Rembrandt etched *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (B. 91), in which a father demonstrates forgiveness through touch. Rembrandt continued to represent healing and forgiveness, thieves and Pharisees, miscarriages of justice and instances of mercy throughout his career, and in his old age, portrayed himself in the guise of Paul, a sinner reclaimed from darkness.

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[1] W. S. Heckscher, *Rembrandt's Anatomy of Dr. Nicolaas Tulp: An Iconological Study*, New York, 1958, p. 115.

[2] See *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings...*, v. 1-2, 1982-1986, p. 189, for a discussion of changes to the work during and after Rembrandt's life time. For example, the man at the apex of the pyramid once wore a hat, and the present list of names of those portrayed which a guild member holds was originally an anatomical illustration. Since these alterations do not affect my argument substantially, I have not devoted space to their discussion.

[3] The woodcut itself was done in 1542. It also appears in a number of editions after 1543.

[4] W. Schupbach, *The Paradox of Rembrandt's "Anatomy of Dr. Tulp,"* London, 1982, p. 49.

[5] M. Bal, *Reading "Rembrandt": Beyond the Word-Image Opposition*, Cambridge, 1991, p. 390.

[6] M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, New York, 1978, trans. R. Hurley, p. 27.

[7] See fn. 1.

[8] F. Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection*, London-New York, 1984, pp. 77, 78. Barker's reading of the focus of various gazes differs somewhat from my own.

[9] My interpretation of where these men are looking is based upon my direct observation of the painting; it differs somewhat from Schupbach's detailed discussion of this issue, pp. 5-8.

[10] See C. L. Mee, Jr.'s chapter on *The Anatomy of Dr. Tulp* in *Rembrandt's Portrait: a Biography*, New York, 1988, for a summary of these discussions. As early as 1958, Heckscher discussed similarities in the Tulp to martyrdoms.

[12] See A. B. De Vries, et. al., *Rembrandt in The Mauritshuis*, The Hague, 1979, trans. J. Brockway, p. 51, for a summary of opinions on whether a private or public anatomy is represented. De Vries contends that: "The relatively modern title of the work ... gives the false impression of an actual happening being depicted."

[13] Mee, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 115. It should also be noted that Rembrandt appears to have adapted Mantegna's image of a foreshortened body of Christ for his *Anatomy of Dr. Deyman*.

[14] *Ibidem*, p. 110.

[15] Schupbach makes a case for "paradox" in a group portrait whose purpose is to make men "live" after their death, but in which attention is called to the inevitability of death.

[16] Schupbach, p. 117.

[17] M. M. Kahr, *Dutch Painting in the Seventeenth Century*, New York, 1978.

[18] See W. H. Halewood, *Six Subjects of Reformation Art: A Preface to Rembrandt*, Toronto, 1982, p. 149, fn. 16, for a discussion of various opinions on Rembrandt's religious beliefs and affiliations.

[19] *Ibidem*, p. 5.

[20] *Ibidem*, p. 6.

[21] J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul...*, trans. and ed. J. Owen (rpt. Grand Rapids, 1948), Edinburgh, 1849, p. 215, as quoted in Halewood, *Six Subjects*, p. 6.

[22] Halewood, *Six Subjects*, p. 24.

[23] S. Alpers, *Rembrandt's Enterprise*, p. 44.

[24] See J. Held's "Rembrandt's Interest in Beggars," *Rembrandt Studies*, Princeton, MCMXCI, p. 160. Held, in discussing Rembrandt's use of his own face in portraying a beggar, states: "He may have overdramatized—at age 24—his sense of alienation, of not fitting smoothly into the world in which he lived. But there are many indications in his art as well as his life, that psychological difficulties as well as religious sensibilities predisposed him to sympathize with those rejected by society."