

Book Reviews

reviewer can still remember how the great pioneer in the psychotherapy of schizophrenics, the man who originated the concept of homosexual panic, Edward J. Kempf, from whom Sullivan borrowed many ideas, sputtered in anger when he recalled how Sullivan had suggested that he – Kempf – had basic homosexual tendencies. Tact, as Perry also points out, was often not a strong suit of Sullivan's.)

By laying ghosts and settling rumours for once and for all, Perry has performed a most useful and, it is only fair to note, entertaining service. It should not be possible for scholars to proceed to the two important questions still unsettled. The first is the secret of Sullivan's influence – particularly his awesome clinical acumen, with which Perry deals, but only incidentally. The second is the quality of Sullivan's ideas. Most of his writings appeared only after his death, and thus far thoroughgoing systematizations of them – or critical historical discussions – have yet to appear. Perry, who has edited much of Sullivan's published work, whets the appetite in this biography.

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WILLIAM SCHUPBACH, *The paradox of Rembrandt's 'Anatomy of Dr Tulp'*, (*Medical History*, Supplement No. 2), London, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1982, 4to, pp. xiv, 110, illus., £9.00.

This is undoubtedly a fascinating work. It presents in a penetrative manner a fresh view on the famous painting of young Rembrandt, usually called the 'Anatomy lesson of Dr Tulp'. It offers a new approach to the original meaning of the canvas, suggesting that it is not only a mere group-portrait of Dr Tulp amidst prominent Amsterdam surgeons, but also the expression of two general ideas and lessons of anatomizing, which would have been prevalent up to about 1675.

The first of these ideas presented by the author, which is fairly generally accepted, is that Dr Nicolaas Tulp – by demonstrating the ingenious mechanism of the *mm. flexor digitorum sublimis* and *profundus* – shows the wisdom of Nature, of God, the Creator. The second idea is that the figure of Frans van Loenen, often neglected, pointing to the corpse with his index finger, seems to refer to the mortality of human life, and to the old adage "know yourself". This is not merely conceived by Schupbach in the original psychological sense of the Greek, but also in a spiritual and metaphysical, religious way. The Wisdom of God as well as of the corpse leads the viewer to his relationship to God. So, these motives or mottoes are, according to Schupbach, as the two centres of the ellipse of the conception of the painting as a whole. Therefore, the author feels inclined to the hypothesis that the original forgotten meaning of the 'Anatomy lesson' is that of an emblematic group-portrait.

The starting-point of this interpretation seems to have been the result of research on the painting, making use of infra-red exposure and X-rays, by the staff of the Hague Mauritshuis, published in 1978. This, among other things, shows that Frans van Loenen originally wore a hat, which could suggest that he acted as "an unofficial assistant *praelector anatomiae*, whose task in the painting is to pass on Tulp's message to the viewer and to posterity".

Be that as it may – the entire argument of the author is extraordinarily well documented in the five appendices, with quoted texts and other references, running to some fifty pages, and occupying about one-half of the volume. Schupbach appears to be unusually familiar with old Dutch publications. The work is illustrated with forty-five plates, and has an index.

Of course, there are minor points on which the reader may differ from the erudite author. One may, for instance, wonder whether or not too much emphasis has been laid on the influence of the French anatomist Laurentius in The Netherlands. His textbook *Historia anatomica humani corporis* (1595) may have been much less used in Dr Tulp's country than is supposed in this book; J. A. van der Linden may have praised and recommended it in his *De scriptis medicis* (1637), but it has never been reprinted in Holland as it was in France and Germany.

Even for those who are not entirely convinced by the author's arguments, Schupbach's work is to be considered as an important contribution to a better understanding of Rembrandt's creation, which will be highly appreciated by both medical and art historians.

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