

space to Dryden without reference to James Winn's *John Dryden and His World* (1987). Nor are the important recent studies of English court culture of the period cited, notably *Art and Patronage in the Caroline Courts*, edited by David Howarth (1993) or any of the three books on the subject by R. Malcolm Smuts (1987, 1996, and 1999). The general, well-educated reader would be lost not only in the prose but in the labyrinth of references to minor period figures. The most obvious reader of *Image Government* would be an antiquarian who takes delight in recognizing obscure references. That reader would appreciate Langley's vast and admirable command of the period literature, and would, unlike most of us, be amused to find the significance of the book's title revealed at the end of the last chapter.

Anat Gilboa. *Images of the Feminine in Rembrandt's Work*. Delft: Eburon Publishers, 2003. 241 pp. + 18 black and white figures and 16 color plates. \$35.00. Reviewed by LISA ROSENTHAL, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, URBANA-CHAMPAIGN.

Anat Gilboa's *Images of the Feminine in Rembrandt's Work* speaks to the enduring interest in the art of Rembrandt, attested to by a spate of recent publications including monographs by Stephanie Dickey, Catherine Scallen, and Michael Zell, and catalogues from several exhibitions including *Rembrandt's Journey: Painter, Draftsman, Etcher* (Boston/Chicago 2003-04) and *Rembrandt's Women* (Edinburgh/London 2003), and to the growing literature on the representation of gender in seventeenth-century art. Originally written as a dissertation for the author's doctorate from the Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen, Gilboa's book aims to cover a broad array of paintings, prints and drawings while maintaining its organizing focus on Rembrandt's varied and shifting approach to the female figure in his art.

In a brief introductory chapter Gilboa describes her undertaking as a fundamentally iconographic study which seeks to elucidate Rembrandt's "personal and artistic development" (20). This developmental thesis organizes Chapter 1, which provides a chronologically-arranged overview of the diverse kinds of imagery that featured women across the span of Rembrandt's career. The artist's biography, especially regarding his marriage to Saskia van Uylenburgh, and, following her death, his relationship with Hendrickje Stoffels, provides the general framework both for this chapter and for the book as a

whole.

The remaining five chapters take up particular themes or genres. In a chapter on Rembrandt's images of Mary, Gilboa stresses Rembrandt's "dialogue with the pictorial tradition" (64). She argues that this dialogue, deepening over the course of his career, enabled him to combine Catholic and Protestant conceptions of Mary into his own "idiosyncratic" (69) image of her which would speak to the needs and tastes of his audience. A similar structural emphasis on the artist's development organizes her chapter on portraits of women. Here Gilboa sees in Rembrandt's works a growing "psychological sensitivity" (78) and articulation of the "individual" rather than the social surface (95) of his sitters.

Gilboa expands upon these two notions, i.e., Rembrandt's profound engagement with an inherited pictorial tradition and his evolving interest in representing psychological states, in her remaining chapters. In a chapter entitled "The Nude and the Erotic," she touches upon a large number of works in all three media (painting, prints, and drawings). Gilboa characterizes Rembrandt's approach to the female nude as neither idealizing nor moralizing; in her account the nude represented for Rembrandt a particular challenge as both a historical genre of art and as an authentic form of nature, both familiar and unknowable. Woman, as simultaneously a familiar (and familial) but also elusive subject is the particular focus of her chapter "Intimacy and Distance: Saskia and Hendrickje." In his pictures of the women in his life, Rembrandt produces what Gilboa sees as an ambiguous but deeply personal body of work which presses against the inherited conventions shaping the familial and marital imagery of his age. "Goddesses and Heroines" concentrates on narrative subjects and renderings of single figures such as Minerva, Juno, or Lucretia, again in all three media. Here Gilboa argues that despite Rembrandt's interest in scenes of violence and abduction, and the striking absence of images which depict harmonious relations between the sexes, his oeuvre moves in the direction of an increased sympathy for what she terms "the female perspective," evinced perhaps most vividly in his late works on the theme of Lucretia (173). In her conclusion, Gilboa asserts that Rembrandt's achievements included the ascription of greater "individual, emotional and psychological nuances" (172) to his female figures even while working within the confines of powerful traditions of Italian and Northern Renaissance and Baroque imagery.

One key question I had in mind while reading this book concerns the efficacy with which the author makes her claims. In fact, the very structure of the book mitigates a fully persuasive demonstration of an effective method. Gilboa's priority on broad inclusiveness curtails the fuller explication of how Rembrandt's images create their complex meanings that a more focused approach would have yielded. Although Gilboa defines her project as an iconographic one, her generally abbreviated discussions of individual works constrain her analysis of Rembrandt's encounter with pictorial tradition and of the particular effects of his borrowings, remaking, and rethinking of past art. This drive toward inclusiveness compels Gilboa to divide her chapters into subsections, many of which are no more than one or two paragraphs long. The result is a fragmented rush through a large catalogue of work that hampers the development of a sustained train of thought, while sometimes yielding the flattening effect of a list. Further exacerbating this problem is the lack of illustrations for several of the images that Gilboa does spend some time on; for example, the Brunswick family portrait, to which she refers more than once. A more acute problem of method, however, is the undeveloped theoretical foundation of Gilboa's enterprise. Some of this lack of clarity may be an effect of the occasionally awkward prose of the translation. However, her notion of the artist's capacity to render some form of psychological truth about his subjects begs for further analysis. Psychology, sexuality, and most particularly "the feminine" remain fully naturalized concepts, even as Gilboa mobilizes them as aspects of both the making and the reception of Rembrandt's art.

My second question concerns how the focus on women enlarges or alters our understanding of Rembrandt's art. Gilboa's interest in foregrounding the narrative challenges and the fundamental problems of representing nature that Rembrandt invested in his images of women is clearly a worthy project. But although Gilboa discerns complexities and ambiguities in Rembrandt's images of women, she appears hesitant to contend with the fuller demands of the task she has set herself.