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Introduction

Batavian Phlegm? The Dutch and their Emotions in Pre-Modern Times

HERMAN ROODENBURG AND CATRIEN SANTING

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In the autumn of 2011 the Royal Dutch Historical Society held its annual autumn conference. The theme was *Cool, Calm and Collected: The Dutch and their Emotions in Pre-Modern Times*. This introduction to the subsequent special issue of the *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* gives a brief historiographical overview of the history of emotions in general and its scant practice to date in the Northern Netherlands. Seven case-studies are introduced that show that the assumed phlegmatic character of the Dutch was a relatively late construction, coming into being in the course of the eighteenth century. Earlier descriptions of local and regional characteristics vary widely. Although most of the earlier authors mention the negative influence of the damp living conditions on the Dutch, just as frequently passionate behaviour, expressing vivacity, anger and heightened sentiments, was deemed typical of the freedom-loving barbarians from the north. The current national hero Desiderius Erasmus for example was known for his jealous, rash and overly emotional temper.

Bataafs Flegma? De Nederlanders en hun emoties in de Premoderne Tijd

Het najaarscongres van het KNHG had in 2011 als thema *Cool, Calm and Collected: The Dutch and their Emotions in Pre-Modern Times*. Deze introductie op het daaruit voortvloeiende themanummer van *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* geeft zowel een kort historiografisch overzicht van de emotiegeschiedenis in het algemeen als van haar (bescheiden) beoefening tot nu toe in Nederland. Zeven casussen laten zien dat de veronderstelde flegmatische volksaard van de Nederlander een late constructie was die in loop van de achttiende eeuw tot stand kwam. Vroegere beschrijvingen van lokale of regionale kenmerken lopen nogal uiteen. Hoewel de meeste oudere auteurs de negatieve invloed van de vochtige leefomstandigheden op de Nederlanders wel onderkennen, beschouwden

zij evenzeer onbesuisd gedrag dat vrolijkheid, boosheid en verhitte gevoelens uitdrukte, als typerend voor de vrijheidslievende barbaren uit het noorden. Desiderius Erasmus bijvoorbeeld, tegenwoordig onderdeel van de Canon van de Nederlandse geschiedenis, stond bekend om zijn jaloerse, onstuimige en emotionele karakter.

The English diplomat William Temple, a former ambassador to The Hague, did not think too highly of the emotional lives of the Dutch. In 1673 he wrote: 'In general, All Appetites and Passions seem to run lower and cooler here, than in other Countreys where I have convers't'. His observations are hardly flattering:

Quarrels are seldom seen among them, unless in their drink, Revenge rarely heard of, or Jealousie known. Their tempers are not aiery enough for Joy, or any unusual strains of pleasant Humour; nor warm enough for Love.

Indeed, as Temple continued, 'this is talkt of sometimes among the younger men, but as a thing they have heard of, rather than felt; and as a discourse that becomes them, rather than affects them'. The Dutch were not to blame: the cause of all their dullness was the climate of the country, the 'dulness of their Air'.¹

This was a standard explanation. An individual's temperament was thought to depend on the *complexio* – his (or her) particular mixture of the four bodily 'humours' or fluids, blood, yellow bile (choler), black bile (melancholy) and phlegm in combination with the person's sex, age or social class, and on climate and the physical environment. Was Temple right? Were the Dutch, with their dank climate and watery environment, really so phlegmatic? Or, to put a different question, did they at least believe he was right? Did they recognise enough of themselves to integrate his views in how they saw themselves?

In 1719 the Frenchman Jean-Baptiste l'abbé Du Bos simply rehearsed Temple's observations, describing all Dutch painters as 'peintres flegmatiques', as 'froids artisans' and, like the Englishman, pointing to the climate.² To the Dutch themselves however, such generalising statements might have been far too crude. Not only were they not very complimentary, they also neglected all regional and local differences. Such temperamental variation had already been emphasised by the Dordrecht physician Johan van Beverwijck, in his

1 William Temple, *Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands*, George Clark (ed.) (Oxford 1972) 88-89.

2 Frans Grijzenhout, "'Schilders, van zulk een lome en vochtige gesteldheid". Beeld en zelfbeeld van de Nederlandse schilderkunst in de zeventiende eeuw', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 107 (1992) 726-728.

highly popular *Schat der gesontheyt* (Treasure of Good Health), published for the first time in 1636. He distinguished the temperaments of Hollanders and Frisians, and also those of the Brabanders, the Flemish and the Walloon.³ Some hundred and fifty years later, another anthropologically oriented author, the Leiden physician Johannes le Francq van Berkhey, distinguished even the most local differences in humoral make-up.⁴ However, as the reader will see, he was also one of the first Dutch scholars to explicitly embrace the hetero-image of Dutch dullness, giving it a new and positive twist. If an Englishman still spoke mockingly of the ‘Batavian phlegm’ in 1806 (see Edwina Hagen’s essay), in the last decades of the eighteenth century the Dutch were already using such phrases themselves.⁵

This special issue of *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* addresses the history of emotions, a relatively new but already highly vibrant field of study in, for instance England, Germany, the United States and Australia. Recently, the field has gained ground in the Netherlands as well. Last year the *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* launched a special issue on the corporeality of emotions, presenting an international perspective with its inclusion of case-studies from medieval Hainaut and from sixteenth-century France and Italy.⁶ It is a welcome companion piece to the present volume, which concentrates on the Netherlands or, more correctly, the territories constituting the present-day Netherlands. In bringing together seven essays covering a long time span, from the late Middle Ages to the first decades of the nineteenth century, we seek to promote the burgeoning history of emotions in the Netherlands and demonstrate what it might bring to the study of Dutch history in general. The essays all make clear that the Dutch were hardly as phlegmatic as a number of scholars, including Johan Huizinga and Max Weber, drawing on the old auto- and hetero-images, have argued. In her fine concluding essay, Dorothee Sturkenboom, one of the first historians to seriously address the emotional history of the Dutch, investigates both the construction and persistence of these images.

For a long time historians chiefly confined themselves to the study of documents articulating emotional standards and ideals. Nowadays most go beyond such texts. For example, inspired by medievalist Barbara Rosenwein,

- 3 Johan van Beverwijck, *Schat der gesontheyt*, in: idem., *Alle de wercken* (Amsterdam 1660) 78.
- 4 On his nine-volume *Natuurlyke Historie van Holland* (1762-1799) and his particular interest in ethnic diversity, see especially Eveline Koolhaas, *De ontdekking van de Nederlander in boeken en prenten rond 1800* (Zutphen 2010) 91-151.
- 5 On Le Francq van Berkhey’s and other scholars’ rephrasing of the term, see Dorothee

- Sturkenboom’s essay in this issue. On ‘hetero-images’ and ‘auto-images’, see Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen (eds.), *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam 2007).
- 6 *De lichamelijkheid van emoties*. Special issue of *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 126:4 (2013).

they like to identify transformations in both ‘emotional communities’ and ‘emotional styles’, investigating letters, autobiographies and memoirs, as well as a variety of narrative, archival and visual sources. They also emphasise performativity, what emotions can do or, more specifically, tracing the rhetorical techniques, the *pathopoeia*, of preachers, actors, politicians and painters, what emotions are actually made to do. Accordingly, the articles presented here by Mathilde van Dijk, Herman Roodenburg, Kristine Steenbergh, Eric Jan Sluijter, Fred van Lieburg, Edwina Hagen and Dorothee Sturkenboom all integrate the study of emotional standards with the study of actual emotional practices as they can be investigated in, for instance devotionalia, collections of sermons, ego-documents, chronicles, literary works, archival documents and paintings. The fields covered range from politics, philosophy and religion to the stage and the visual arts. The articles originate from a conference organised by the Koninklijk Nederlands Historisch Genootschap (Royal Netherlands Historical Society) in November 2011. The editors would like to thank all discussants, especially Thomas Dixon (Queen Mary, University of London), Wessel Krul (University of Groningen) and Matthijs Gerrits (Leiden University), for their valuable and inspiring contributions.

The essays also demonstrate how rapidly the history of emotions has expanded over the past fifteen years, attracting keen students not only of cultural and social history, but also in the history of art and literature. Three research centres have been established in the past decade, the ‘Centre for the History of Emotions’ at Queen Mary College, University of London, founded by Thomas Dixon; the Forschungsbereich ‘Geschichte der Gefühle’ at the Max-Planck-Institut für Bildungsforschung in Berlin, led by Ute Frevert; and the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions, based at five Australian universities. In 2011 the Netherlands started its own platform, called ACCESS (Amsterdam Centre for Cross-Disciplinary Emotion and Sensory Studies; <http://access-emotionsandsenses.nl>); it was officially launched by Thomas Dixon at the KNHG conference. In 2009, the field’s international and remarkably multi-disciplinary rise was endorsed in a journal of its own, the *Emotion Review*. In this journal scholars from the humanities, the social sciences and the life sciences discuss the field’s most recent issues in both theoretical and review papers.

Writing the history of emotions: a few central notions and issues

There is no shortage of good historiographical overviews (including the introduction to the *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*’ special issue), so we may confine ourselves to presenting briefly some of the more general notions

and questions.⁷ Although the promise of a history of emotions was already perceived by Johan Huizinga, Lucien Febvre and Norbert Elias, it only ‘took flight’, to quote Peter Burke, around 2000, when it developed greater analytical rigour and a stronger theoretical perspective.⁸ Analytical strictness of course starts with a proper historical semantics, a history of at least the most current emotion terms in the language investigated, to begin with the term ‘emotion’ itself.⁹

As Dixon showed, the English term ‘emotion’ was only accepted as a general scholarly concept in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The views of Charles Darwin were important here, in particular his book *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, published in 1872, as were the views of the American psychologist and philosopher William James, who published his seminal essay, ‘What is an Emotion?’, in 1884. Thanks to their influential views, in the twentieth century the term spread rapidly both within academia and outside.¹⁰

In the process, the term developed into a secular catch-all concept, covering all kinds of emotional experience. As such it may be used in a fairly neutral and impartial manner, which is what most emotion historians do, including Dixon himself, but if used uncritically it might easily eclipse older emotion terms that often articulate quite different attitudes to the self. Before Darwin and James the English language preferred other terms, such as ‘affects’, ‘passions’, ‘feelings’ or ‘sentiments’, each referring to different things. They could still have religious connotations (affects and passions, for example, were always morally and religiously charged). They could also relate to either the private or the public sphere or to the inner or the outer person. Even ‘emotion’ (of French origin, but already emerging in England around 1800) could still have a specific meaning. It was sometimes defined as mere outward

7 For a first, helpful introduction, see Jan Plamper, ‘The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein and Peter Stearns’, *History and Theory* 49:2 (2010) 237–265.

8 Peter Burke, ‘Is There a Cultural History of the Emotions?’, in: Penelope Gouk and Helen Hills (eds.), *Representing Emotions: New Connections in the Histories of Art, Music and Medicine* (Aldershot 2005) 35–48.

9 Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (New York 2003); cf. idem, ‘“Emotion”: The History of a Keyword in Crisis’, *Emotion Review* 4:4 (2012) 338–344; on emotion terms in German (and also French and English) lexicons from the early

eighteenth century on, see Ute Frevert et al., *Gefühlswissen. Eine lexikalische Spurensuche in der Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main 2011), English translation: idem, *Emotional Lexicons: Continuity and Change in the Vocabulary of Feeling 1700–2000* (Oxford 2014).

10 According to the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*, the Dutch term *emotie* only emerged in the 1880s. The dictionary quotes the psychological novels of Louis Couperus and Frederik van Eeden, both famous writers of the *fin de siècle*. Were they influenced by Darwin or James? Or was it perhaps a matter of French influences, of an elite still keen on adopting words and phrases taken from the French?

behaviour, the expression of inner feelings. Such historical semantics is now part and parcel of the history of emotions. As has been observed, ‘taxonomies of emotions do not track or translate across cultures or historical periods’.¹¹

Modern historians of emotions also disagree with Darwin and James that emotions would be merely corporeally based. Rosenwein in particular, criticised both (as she criticised Huizinga, Freud and especially Elias) for employing what she, following the cognitive philosopher Robert Solomon, described as an ‘hydraulic’ model of the emotions, confining emotions to the inner person and describing them as ‘drives’ and ‘impulses’ all struggling to get out.¹² Drawing on Solomon, Martha Nussbaum and other cognitive scholars, Rosenwein paired emotions with cognition. In this view, emotions are not irrational. They always result from our judgements about ‘weal or woe’, about what might be good or harmful to us – a very different model allowing emotion historians to skirt the outdated and all too Eurocentric grand narrative of increasing emotional restraint from the sixteenth century on. As an alternative, she proposed a narrative of shifts from one ‘emotional community’ to the other, describing such communities as social communities like any other (families, neighbourhoods, guilds, monasteries or parliaments) but adhering ‘to the same valuations of emotions and how they should be expressed’.¹³ Working in terms of ‘emotional communities’ (the concept, as perhaps too reifying, does not go unchallenged) and their concomitant ‘emotional styles’, one may also investigate, as Ute Frevert did, how emotions might be ‘lost’ or ‘found’ in time, looking carefully at their connotations and how these affect the emotions’ appraisal and experience.¹⁴

If a cognitivist approach serves to avoid seeing emotions as something less than cognition and accordingly to seriously qualify the ‘grand narrative’ of increasing emotional restraint, it unfortunately avoids the body as well. Here, the ideas of historian and anthropologist William Reddy with his interest in both the cognitive and the affective neurosciences, provide a more inclusive approach. He also highlights the performativity of emotions and introduced the term ‘emotives’ – emotional expressions in spoken language and gestures, that are both managerial and exploratory. Seeking to transform the emotional state

11 Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe and Mary Floyd-Wilson (eds.), *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion* (Philadelphia 2004) 4.

12 Barbara Rosenwein, ‘Worrying about Emotions in History’, *American Historical Review* 107 (2002) 827-836.

13 Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca 2006); cf. Plamper, ‘The History of Emotions’, 252-253.

14 Ute Frevert, *Emotions in History: Lost and Found* (Budapest 2011); for empathy and suffering in Tudor and Stuart England see Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen’s inspiring study, *Pain and Compassion in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge 2012); for earlier centuries, see Roodenburg and Steenbergh, this issue.

of others, they also explore one's own actual feelings, might even bring them about.¹⁵ Perhaps the most promising approach is that suggested by Andreas Reckwitz and Monique Scheer, seeing emotions as Bourdieuan emotional practices, making room for notions of embodiment. Drawing on Reddy (in Scheer's case) and recognising the interweaving of minds, bodies and social relations, their ideas resemble recent theories summarised under the heading of 'situated cognition' or 'extended mind' theory: cognition is not limited to the brain.¹⁶ As a result of these recent developments, the history of emotions becomes more and more involved with the history of the senses and the body. Influences from the neurosciences are undisputable, but opinions differ and most scholars have difficulties with the neurosciences' universalist pretentions.

Investigating the emotions in the Netherlands: a few developments

A historical semantics of Dutch emotion terms is still a desideratum, although recently a number of cultural and literary historians have made a start using digital tools.¹⁷ Various scholars have also discussed emotion terms in their wider investigations. For example, An-Katrien Hanselaer and Jeroen Deploige found that the late medieval female members of the Modern Devouts attached great importance to their emotional lives. They also explicated the emotional vocabulary deployed by the sisters: *benaudheid*, *anxt*, *vrees*, *bangicheit* (types of fear); *blijchap*, *verblijden*, *vroude*, *vroeliken herte* (types of joy); *minne* (love); *schaemte*, *schammen*, *schemel* (types of shame); *drovig gemoedes*, *ynwendelike seer bedrucket*, *swaermoedicheit* (types of sadness) and *druusticheit*, *toernicheit*, *stuericheit* (types of anger). Through self-examination and mutual correction the sisters learned to distance themselves from their everyday emotions and to transform them into those religious feelings deemed instrumental in their spiritual progress.¹⁸

15 William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (New York 2001) and idem, 'Historical Research on the Self and Emotions', *Emotion Review* 1:4 (2009) 302-315.

16 See especially Monique Scheer, 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (And is That What makes Them have a History)? A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion', *History and Theory* 51 (2012) especially 195-204 and Philip Robbins and Murat Aydede (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Situated Cognition* (Cambridge 2009). See also Roodenburg, this issue, and the *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*' special issue.

17 At the moment an exploratory 'sentiment mining' project is being conducted at both the VU University Amsterdam and the Meertens Institute. It investigates emotion terms and emotional styles on the Dutch stage, 1600-1830. Coordinator is the cultural historian Inger Leemans.

18 An-Katrien Hanselaer and Jeroen Deploige, "'Van groeter bannicheit hoers herten". De conditionering van de alledaagse gevoelswereld in vrouwelijke gemeenschappen uit de laatmiddeleeuwse Moderne Devotie', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 126:4 (2013) 481-499.

A similar variety of terms can be found in seventeenth-century treatises on painting. Karel van Mander preferred to speak of *affecten*, Franciscus Junius of *roerselen* (and also *ontroeren* and *beroeren*), while Samuel van Hoogstraten chose to speak of *lijdingen* and *hartstochten*: as the art historian Thijs Weststeijn suggested, he might have borrowed the latter term from Van Beverwijck, for whose *Schat der Ongesontheyt* (1644) he made a couple of illustrations.¹⁹ The eighteenth century may have known a larger vocabulary, distinguishing for instance *hartstocht*, *drift*, *passie*, *gevoel*, *sentiment*, *neiging*, *inclinatie*, and so on. All these words are still current in contemporary Dutch, but Sturkenboom cautions that in the eighteenth century they hardly meant the same thing. *Hartstocht*, she observes, did not only denote the strong and semi-permanent emotions it refers to today – emotions such as compassion, sadness, fury or vengefulness. It also had the wider meaning of what we would now describe as feelings or sentiments, emotions generally lacking what the psychologist Nico Frijda described as ‘action tendencies’, tendencies such as avoidance (fear) or rejection (disgust).²⁰ A similar conclusion had already been drawn by Jan Konst in his study of Dutch seventeenth-century tragedy. In these plays, *hartstocht* (still a new notion in the second half of the sixteenth century), encompassed both fierce and mild feeling, making it almost an equivalent of our present catch-all notion of emotions.²¹

Until recently it was mostly art and literary historians who studied the emotional lives of the Dutch. In their writings two periods received particular attention: the first centring on Rembrandt and his time, the second on eighteenth-century sentimentalism. In 1639 Rembrandt explained how in two paintings of his Passion Series, he had committed himself to ‘*die meeste en de naetureelste beweegelijkheid*’ (the strongest, and most natural movement and emotion). As the experts agree (among them Eric Jan Sluiter), by ‘*beweegelijkheid*’ he must have referred both to the movements depicted, to their vividness (a central rhetorical notion), and to their ability, through such vividness, to move the viewers’ emotions, to immediately engage their kinesthetic and affective empathy. His art has been related to two important texts on painting, Franciscus Junius’ *De Pictura Veterum* (1637) and Samuel van Hoogstraten’s *Inleydinge tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst* (1678). In their striving to move the viewer early modern history painters liked to draw on rhetorical techniques of persuasion, the writings of Cicero, Horace and Quintilian in particular. Interestingly, Junius’ and Van Hoogstraten’s

19 Thijs Weststeijn, ‘Between Mind and Body: Painting the Inner Movements according to Samuel van Hoogstraten and Franciscus Junius’, in: Stephanie S. Dickey and Herman Roodenburg (eds.), *The Passions in the Arts of the Early Modern Netherlands* (Zwolle 2010) 264-265.

20 Sturkenboom, *Spectators van hartstocht*, 78-84.

21 Jan Konst, *Woedende waakhierigheid en vruchteloze weelachten. De hartstochten in de Nederlandse tragedie van de zeventiende eeuw* (Assen, Maastricht 1993) 1.

notion of ‘oogenblikkige beweeging’ (momentary movement and emotion), closely related to Rembrandt’s ‘beweechgelickheit’, has been equated (though, as Sluijter has argued, not correctly) with the playwright Joost van den Vondel’s notion of ‘staetveranderinge’ (change of emotional state), central to his own efforts to visualise the strongest of emotions.²² Both Rembrandt and Vondel are discussed in the present volume, by Sluijter and Kristine Steenbergh respectively.

Another period standing out in the present historiography is the second half of the eighteenth century with its widespread international cult of sensibility. Dutch literary historians have written mostly on ‘sentimentalism’, confining the term to the cult’s literary expression and presenting the authors Rhijnvis Feith and Elisabeth Maria Post as its most important representatives. If we were to believe some of the older research, Dutch sentimentalism, other than its French, English or German counterparts, was both a relatively late and surprisingly short-lived development. It emerged, as it were, in 1783, when Feith published his epistolary novel *Julia*, and it ended in 1786, when his sentimental prose and poetry was severely criticised by a contemporary, Willem Emery de Perponcher. More recent research has not only demonstrated that decades later Feith and Post were still eagerly read, but has also traced the cult of sensibility in the period’s widespread ‘spectatorial literature’, in the country’s first national parliament (1796-1797) and in its long-term impact on both the pulpit and the stage. Here, the period is discussed by Edwina Hagen, who focuses on the politician Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck making use of the cult, and his allegedly less sensitive spouse.²³

Rather surprisingly, the emotions of other periods, for instance the later Middle Ages, the sixteenth century and also the century between roughly 1650 and 1750, have received far less scholarly attention. The essays by Mathilde van Dijk, Fred van Lieburg and Herman Roodenburg, as various essays in the *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, partly fill these lacunae.

The essays

One of the emotional communities always referred to in portrayals of the Dutch ‘phlegmatic temperament’ are the members of the *Devotio Moderna*,

22 See Eric Jan Sluijter, ‘Rembrandt’s Portrayal of the Passions and Vondel’s ‘staetveranderinge’’, in: Dickey and Roodenburg, *The Passions in the Arts*, 285-305.

23 See also her *President van Nederland. Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck (1761-1825)* (Amsterdam 2012); for a glance of the latest emotion research done on these decades, see Inger Leemans and Gert-Jan Johannes, *Worm en donder. Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse literatuur: de Republiek. 1700-1800* (Amsterdam 2013).

which until today have been type-cast as frugal, practice-oriented and tolerant. Van Dijk shows us that this cherished *lieu de mémoire* of Dutchness was basically an invention of nineteenth-century theologians wishing to ground the Protestant nature of the Dutch nation-state. Analysing the biographical writings of the Modern Devout in the town of Deventer, Van Dijk points out that the movement was only one of many late medieval reform movements. To lead such a ‘modern’ life of devotion the members’ emotions had to be given shape and moulded into proper performances. Therefore the brothers and sisters had ‘to reform’ their selves. The author assesses how the Devout handled their inner and outer lives, which emotions and performances of emotions were allowed and which had to be avoided. By carefully describing the models and practices employed by these women in their emotional reformation and situating these in contemporary theological and medical theories, Van Dijk concludes that the catalogue of affects presented – fear and love with its various subdivisions – did not differ much in terms of restraint and temperance from what was common elsewhere in the period. Of course there were variations in the way feelings were expressed, between men and women in particular. Interestingly, if a brother’s or sister’s process of reformation did not go smoothly their geographical origin was blamed. Prior Johannes Busch for instance, pointed to the coarse hearts (*corda rudia*) of the Frisians, making his work on the brothers and sisters’ ‘affective piety’ rather difficult.

The phenomenon of ‘affective piety’ is also examined by Herman Roodenburg, who argues that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Dutch preachers, such as the eloquent Jan Brugman, actively sought to arouse the believers’ emotions through all kinds of devotional practices centring on the sufferings of Christ. In his view, such bodily, emotional and often highly sensory practices, far from representing a ‘childlike’ universe (part of the grand narrative of increasing emotional restraint), in fact were a logical outcome of the contemporary rhetorical notions and techniques, which accorded a central place to the art of memory, to the construction of often the most vivid and forceful mental images. Rhetorical texts from Antiquity, the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium* in particular, were still a major influence. Drawing on Scheer, Roodenburg understands emotions as Bourdieuan practices, which allows him to do justice to all the bodily and sensory dimensions of the emotions evoked in the period’s numerous Passion texts and Passion paintings. That the reading of these texts (or hearing them read aloud) was already a highly performative practice is demonstrated by Ludolph of Saxony, who in his widely popular *Life of Christ* encouraged his readers to live their devotion as physically as possible until they broke down in tears.

Such a rhetorically inspired crafting of the emotions can also be found in Dutch seventeenth-century painting. Contemporary Italian art theory held that the strong point of Dutch painters was ‘copying’ nature, being experts in technical matters and that they generally preferred prosaic subject matter. Elements of this particular hetero-image were soon internalised, becoming

part of a positive auto-image, though ‘Dutch phlegm’ did not figure among these elements. Not even Du Bos’ observations would change this, while Temple did not say anything about Dutch painting at all. Instead, various painters, among them Karel van Mander, Pieter Lastman and particularly Rembrandt, sought to follow the new Italian development. The last soon became the unsurpassed master of the ‘passions of the soul’ (*lijdingen des gemoeds*), expressing the passions of his figures through the life-like depiction of their movements and gestures. Contemporaries quickly acknowledged that his renderings surpassed those of the Ancients as well as the Italians. The poet and courtier Constantijn Huygens eulogised his *affectuum vivacitas*. The viewer was supposed not only to see but genuinely feel the emotions depicted. In all this, Rembrandt diverged from Peter Paul Rubens who still embraced Italian idealisation, aiming for graceful pose and movement. Nor did he adopt the Flemish painter’s Senecan-Stoic’s ethics of keeping one’s mental balance under all circumstances.

Eric Jan Sluijter also points to the similarities of Rembrandt’s art with the contemporary stage. At the time, antiquating tragedies with alternation of violent emotions were immensely popular in Amsterdam. Just as Rembrandt’s work, they were meant to shock and engage the spectators. Around 1650, and probably influenced by Greek drama that also informed the plays of Vondel, Rembrandt revised his portraying of the emotions. In his later history paintings we encounter motionless situations in which a change of temper takes place gradually: but as early as the 1660’s, Rembrandt’s combining of highly emotional subject matter with ‘from life’ painting had become outdated. Grace and beauty were back in charge.

Kristine Steenbergh’s essay on the emotional politics of Vondel’s *Mary Stuart, or Martyred Majesty* (1647) is a fine companion piece to that of Sluijter. She demonstrates how the playwright aimed to arouse and mould the spectators’ emotions. The article investigates the play’s impact on its audience within the framework of both its emotional poetics and the contemporary political and religious events. Vondel clearly rejected older interpretations, such as the glorification of Mary Stuart as a saint and martyr, laying all the blame on the Protestants. Indeed, in portraying her tragic end the Catholic Vondel might have sought to unite Catholics and Remonstrants. Turning to an anti-Stoic, Aristotelian emotional poetics, the playwright sought to work an affective change of heart among the spectators ‘to wrench tears of pity from their eyes’. Their theatrical experience of compassion with the poor Queen of Scots, an Aristotelian catharsis, might forge a temporary emotional community bringing Catholics and the more moderate Protestants, such as the Remonstrants, together.

Similarly, Fred van Lieburg questions the accepted tradition of viewing Protestantism as combating the believers’ emotional and sensory lives. He studied a mid-eighteenth-century anonymous ego-document from the Brabant town of Willemstad, a unique testimony to this period of religious

revivals, both in the Netherlands and abroad. Through his micro-analysis of the document, which tells us about the emotional practices of a particular *communio sanctorum*, including its members' linguistic and bodily practices, we are introduced to a 'hotter' and often less educated sort of Protestant, embracing a strikingly sensory religiosity, condemned by the contemporary elite, including most of the ministers, as mere 'enthusiasm', as *dweperij*. Women played a prominent role in such private pious circles. At a meso-level, for instance in the contemporary spectatorial literature, the 'false piety' of these believers was contrasted to a 'true' and 'sincere' piety, knowing how to strike the right balance between restraint and emotion.

Restraint also defined the public image fostered by Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck (1761-1825), the first and also last 'president' of the Netherlands. He is the subject of Edwina Hagen's article. His political fate was greatly determined by the changing appreciation of emotions, a change he knew how to profit from initially but which in the end would turn against him. Like William Reddy interested in revolutionary France, Hagen is concerned with the cult of sensibility and its adoption in contemporary political discourse. His central concept of 'emotives' also proves fruitful in analysing the political emotions of the Dutch revolutionaries during the Batavian-French era. Schimmelpenninck made a limited but quite strategic use of the new political notion of 'enthusiasm', always behaving properly, never becoming overly passionate. In his emphasis on sincere feeling, on a virtuous self, Schimmelpenninck might well have been influenced by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, David Hume and Adam Smith. In his capacity as head of state, leading the Batavian Republic in the years 1805 and 1806, he developed the image of a benevolent father balancing head and heart. After a year Napoleon decided to replace him by the Emperor's younger brother Louis. His downfall was followed by a slander campaign in which he was accused of weakness, heightened emotionality and even promiscuity, while his wife Catharina was portrayed as the cool and calculating one, domineering over her husband. Journalists condemned her for her alleged insensibility, for what an Englishman described as her 'Batavian phlegm'.

In her concluding essay, Dorothee Sturkenboom surmises that the notion of Dutch phlegm will endure, whatever historians of the emotions, beginning with this special issue, might bring forward as objections. It has become a *lieu de mémoire* of Dutch identity, part of the present intangible heritage of the Dutch, which makes it relevant to trace its discursive history. How did this particular emotional identity, this constant interplay of auto-images and hetero-images develop and change over time? Obviously, classical humoral pathology and climate zone theories were influential and continued to be so, though they were constantly tailored to contemporary needs. Sturkenboom speaks of a 'water-induced inertia' – foreigners used to attribute the phlegm among the Dutch to their watery environment. The Italian Ludovico Guicciardini's description of the Low Countries, published

in 1567, proved important here. At the same time, as in all constructions of national identity, contradictory images abound. Guicciardini's countryman, Paolo Giovio, condemned his fellow humanist Erasmus for his jealous, rash and overly emotional temper, typical of the freedom-loving barbarians from the North. Interestingly, Sturkenboom also includes the Dutch love for money, their 'greediness', in her genealogy of the national temperament. Indeed, still construing it as a 'passion', foreigners deemed it the only emotion that could put the Dutchman's inertia in motion. It was in fact a new element added to the package, after the Dutch successfully re-invented themselves as the sober-minded merchants still figuring so prominently in the auto- and hetero-images of today: but as historians of the emotions keep cautioning, it was certainly not the only 'passion' which we no longer feel as such today. ◀

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