

The present essay deals with the Charles Le Brun's theory of the representation of passions. It summarizes the most important publications about Le Brun's lecture on expression („Conference generale et particuliere) and mention some neglected aspects, for example its relation to the tradition of ancient rhetoric or period manners. The lecture is set in the context of period quarrels (quarrel about the importance of drawing or colour, quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns) and a special attention is given to the sources which were used by Le Brun to develop his theory (philosophical, rhetorical, medical and physiognomical studies, book of manners)

It follows from the study of literature and sources that the Le Brun's theory was innovative in many aspects but still depended on the older tradition, probably more than was recently supposed.