

*The deceased are not hidden from sight: the significance of child (death) portraits  
in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic.*

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## Abstract

Seventeenth-century death portraiture exhibits an outward ease and comfort towards death that modern Dutch society has seemingly lost. This dissertation examines seventeenth-century Dutch Republic child (death) portraiture from a broader cultural and material perspective. What caused this apparent ‘ease’? The text builds upon the context of the Dutch Republic to rationalise the rise in popularity of these portraits. These types of portraits are analysed within the Dutch Republic’s emergence and its culture. The milieu of the period can be summarised as fearful, as plague, war, and uncertainty created an omnipresent fear of death. This fear was transformed into layers of ‘protection’. Symbolic, religious, and practical protection are enmeshed within pictural and material reality.

The entanglement of the economic, social, and political environment within the materialisation of these portraits only becomes clear when broadening the scope of the art historical analysis beyond the picture plane. The complexities of Dutch culture echo in the painted attributes. The wider cultural environment is funnelled into the painted scene through a flattening of the objects. Instantaneously, the real-life object is mirrored to the contemporary viewer. The absence of these attributes in death portraits generates a new symbolic landscape. Attributes and their protective quality are removed, but a transcendence of death is introduced to protect the child from time.

This dissertation attempts to provide an overview and analysis of the Dutch Republic and its connection to the rise of child (death) portraiture. This niche has not received adequate academic research. More research is needed into the connection between material culture and art to elucidate the correlation between the sensorium and memory in visual death culture.

Consequently, the study of material culture and art history must be linked more closely to promote the development of these multi-disciplinary theories.

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## Introduction

Death has almost completely vanished from modern daily life. Funeral homes have taken over the reality of death. Furthermore, hygiene and medical advancements have brought safety from sudden death, especially the death of young children. The contrast with the seventeenth century could not be bigger, where almost fifty percent of children died, and the plague still haunted society.<sup>1</sup> The omnipresence of death has transformed into an omnipresent taboo. It will never be pleasant to be confronted with a (painted) corpse. However, death is a constant, in the truest sense of the word, and should not be ignored in visual culture as it was also not ignored in the Dutch Republic.

This dissertation will assess the main question: ‘In what ways does child portraiture, particularly child death portraiture, embody the cultural zeitgeist of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic?’ This dissertation will attempt to familiarise the reader with the expression of death in historical visual culture to try to lessen the current taboo. The discussion will focus on the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic and the visual expressions of fear, protection, and grief. Particularly, the upcoming text will evaluate material culture and the symbolic connections in dead children’s portraiture.

The research used to create this dissertation is varied and wide, but the text is particularly indebted to two exhibition catalogues: ‘Kinderen op hun mooist’ (Pride and Joy)

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<sup>1</sup> Jan Baptist Bedaux, Rudolf, and Frans Hals museum, *Pride and Joy* (Ludion Press Ghent, 2000), 22.; Romie Wisselink, “‘Engeltje Van ’t Hemelrijk’. Een Onderzoek Naar de Betekenis En Functie van Naakte Baby’s in Gezinsportretten in de Zestiende Eeuw” (2019), 5, 9.; P. van de Ekamper, “Kromme Sikkels,” 80.; Rudi Ekkart, *Lief En Leed. Realisme En Fantasie in Nederlandse Familiegroepen Uit de Zeventiende En Achttiende Eeuw* (Museum Twenthe, 2018), 12, 48.; Bert Sliggers, *Naar Het Lijk* (Walburg Pers, 1998), 91.

by Rudi Ekkart and Jan Baptist Bedaux and ‘Naar het lijk’ (To the corpse) by Bert Sliggers.<sup>2</sup> ‘Naar het lijk’ is the only exhaustive study on death portraiture in the Netherlands, which already indicates the great lack of research in this niche field. ‘Pride and Joy’ assembles a great array of child portraiture from the seventeenth century, which also includes death portraits. Both books are fantastic starting points for beginning research, or for the more interested reader.

This dissertation considers child portraits in the context of the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century by asking three questions. First, how could children’s portraiture, and death portraiture, gain popularity in the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century, and what was its function? Second, how does the materiality of attributes included in children’s portraiture contribute to the function of portraits? Third, how is the function of symbolic protection and immortalisation conveyed through the transcendence of death in child portraiture? The period this dissertation discusses is mainly tied to the seventeenth century but also draws from earlier and later works and texts to deepen the contextual understanding of the subject matter. The works which have been chosen as examples throughout the text are not limited to death portraits confirmed by genealogical research. Many portraits cannot be linked to archival material, which limits the determination of their identity as death portraits. Nevertheless, the omnipresence of death in the Republic meant that all child portraits were built on the foundational knowledge that a child’s life was deeply ephemeral. Thus, a layer of death shrouds all child portraits.

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<sup>2</sup> Rudi Ekkart and Jan Baptist Bedaux, eds., *Pride and Joy* (Ludion Press Ghent, 2000).; Bert Sliggers, *Naar Het Lijk* (Walburg Pers, 1998).

Death surrounded the Dutch in a myriad of ways, as death was profoundly embedded in the context of the time. Therefore, the first chapter dives into a thorough discussion of the historical context of the Republic. The historical context includes an evaluation of the entwined Calvinist morals and language of symbols in daily life. The chapter will pivot to a discussion of the function of adult portraiture and how child portraits relate to their adult counterparts. The chapter evaluates the difference between modern and contemporary grief, and how this impacts modern analysis. Chapter two focuses on the material culture seen in child portraiture and how to interpret the function of these materials in the pictorial plane. The rattle will be studied as it exemplifies the paradoxical nature of Dutch symbolism. Protection is generated in two ways: practical and theoretical. Chapter three concentrates on how death is portrayed and consequently transcended in child portraiture. First, deathbed portraiture is considered from the viewpoint of ritual emptiness. Second, the appearance of children as angels in family portraits is discussed. Lastly, pastoral portraiture is discussed as the pinnacle of the transcendence of death in portraiture.

## Chapter 1: The evolving culture of the Dutch Republic

To understand why children's portraiture, and post-mortem paintings gained popularity in the Dutch Republic, this chapter will first evaluate the environment which fostered a heightened interest in art. The chapter will focus on answering the question: 'how could children's portraiture, and death portraiture gain popularity in the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century, and what was its function?'

This chapter will discuss the broader historical context of the Republic and the rise of Calvinism to illustrate the period. The common language of symbols will be deliberated before evaluating the omnipresence of death. After the context has been established, the chapter will evaluate the function of adult portraiture and how it compares to child portraiture. Lastly, the experience of emotions and grief in the seventeenth century will be considered.

### Historical context:

Scholars have expressed amazement at the unlikely flourishing mercantile economy of the Dutch Republic for decades.<sup>3</sup> In 1588, the Dutch Republic arose from war. The Republic was started alongside two large joint-stock companies, the Dutch East India, and the West India Companies.<sup>4</sup> These mercantile companies generated an astonishing influx of wealth via a monopoly on sea trade and slave trade.<sup>5</sup> The success is illustrated by the fact that one ship could

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<sup>3</sup> Maarten Roy Prak, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century: The Golden Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Claudia Swan, "Introduction," in *Rarities of These Lands* (Princeton Press, 2021), 1–29, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv16c9hfd.5>, 2.

<sup>5</sup> The wealth of the Republic is deeply indebted to the slave trade. This text cannot do justice to the complexities of this trade. For a starting point for further reading, see: <https://www.government.nl/topics/discrimination/history-of-slavery/the-history-of-slavery-in-the-kingdom-of-the-netherlands>

return on investment by more than two hundred per cent.<sup>6</sup> The mercantile trade presented the Republic with a cornucopia of luxury objects transported from unknown civilisations.<sup>7</sup> Correspondingly, foreigners documented the astonishing diversity of merchandise for sale in the Republic. A contemporary French traveller remarked that Amsterdam's market was a 'miracle'.<sup>8</sup>

The Republic, with an abundance of money and a new and unstable nation, was still finding its footing.<sup>9</sup> The introduction of a flood of foreign items highlighted the instability of the Republic's identity, and thus, a search for a signature cultural output began.<sup>10</sup>

Accordingly, new wealth led to a prosperous art market.<sup>11</sup> The creative industries were booming, and there was a significant influx of painters in all areas of the Republic.<sup>12</sup> Paintings were not only suddenly abundant but extremely diverse.<sup>13</sup> For example, landscape paintings

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<sup>6</sup> Swan, "Introduction," 2.

<sup>7</sup> Miya Tokumitsu, "The Currencies of Naturalism in Dutch 'Pronk' Still-Life Painting: Luxury, Craft, Envisioned Affluence," *RACAR: Revue d'Art Canadienne* 41, no. 2 (2016): 30–43, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44011805>, 33.; Joanna Woodall, "Laying the Table: The Procedures of Still Life," *Art History* 35, no. 5 (2012): 976–1003, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8365.2012.00933.x>, 977.; Herman Van Der Wee, "Reviewed Work(S): Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine and Science in the Dutch Golden Age," *The Economic History Review* 61 (2008), 255.; Swan, "Introduction," 2.; Doris Hattink, "Zeventiende-Eeuwse Kunstkabinetten" (2019), 5.

<sup>8</sup> Andreas Nijenhuis-Bescher, "De 'Hollandse Reis' En de Franse Visie Der Verenigde Nederlanden in de Eerste Helft van de Zeventiende Eeuw," *Neerlandica Wratislaviensia* 28 (2019): 119–34, <https://doi.org/10.19195/0860-0716.28.10>, 130.

<sup>9</sup> Prak, *Dutch Republic*, 4, 6.

<sup>10</sup> Jeroen J.H. Dekker and Leendert L. Groenendijk, "The Republic of God or the Republic of Children? Childhood and Child-Rearing after the Reformation: An Appraisal of Simon Schama's Thesis about the Uniqueness of the Dutch Case," *Oxford Review of Education* 17, no. 3 (1991): 317–35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305498910170306>, 319–322.

<sup>11</sup> Neil De Marchi and Hans J. Van Miegroet, "Art, Value, and Market Practices in the Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century," *The Art Bulletin* 76, no. 3 (1994): 451, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3046038>, 452, 453, 460.; Claartje Rasterhoff, *Painting and Publishing as Cultural Industries: The Fabric of Creativity in the Dutch Republic, 1580-1800* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 169, 170.

<sup>12</sup> Prak, *Dutch Republic*, 250, 252.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 251, Rasterhoff, *Painting and Publishing*, 185.

were popular because they displayed the natural beauty of the new Republic and put visual claim on the land.<sup>14</sup> The territory was embodied in paint and hung in private homes, claiming the land further through a signature cultural output.

The flourishing economy was the foundation of the Republic and provided its inhabitants a completely new abundance of money.<sup>15</sup> The population had been hurled from a time of war into a time of lavishness within one generation. The wealth enhanced the power of the ‘burgerij’ (bourgeoisie). The new democratic milieu allowed the bourgeois to gain exponentially more power. The Republic was reciprocally reliant on its companies, creating a foundational entanglement between mercantile trade and the cultural output of the Republic.<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, the culture of the Republic has a visible bourgeoisie, ‘burgerlijk’ slant. For example, genre paintings often beautified the typical qualities of daily life, depicting charming scenes drawn from within the home. As Pieter de Hooch accomplishes in *Women at a Linen Closet*, 1663, the mundane tidying of linens is shown in a picturesque entryway, conveying a heightened yet simulated sense of serenity (Fig. 1).

#### New Calvinism:

A transformed protestant religion brought new perspectives and changed morals.<sup>17</sup> Calvinism was a prescriptive and austere religion, particularly in contrast to the preceding Catholic tradition.<sup>18</sup> The evident austerity was even noted by visiting foreigners.<sup>19</sup> This visual

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<sup>14</sup> Prak, *Dutch Republic*, 252, 259.

<sup>15</sup> Jeroen J. H. Dekker, “A Republic of Educators: Educational Messages in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Genre Painting,” *History of Education Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (1996): 155–82, <https://doi.org/10.2307/369503>, 160.

<sup>16</sup> Swan, “Introduction,” 12.

<sup>17</sup> Dekker, “A Republic of Educators,” 178.

<sup>18</sup> Hattink, “Kunstkabinetten,” (2019), 7.; Nijenhuis-Bescher, “De ‘Hollandse Reis’,” 129-131.

<sup>19</sup> William Temple, *Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands*, 1696, 128, 166-178.

austerity is further displayed in Calvinist teachings; God's word was superior to imagery.<sup>20</sup> This led to the religious iconoclasm in 1566, which removed all imagery of God within churches. However, Calvijn, the originator of Calvinism, was not opposed to *all* art.<sup>21</sup> Calvijn considered God to be all-encompassing and to be perceived in the flawless splendour of nature.<sup>22</sup> The nationalistic landscape paintings could have an added allegorical, religious identity. Calvinism's austerity was thus attached to perception and cultural expression.

One of the core teachings of Calvinism was predestination.<sup>23</sup> A Calvinist was permanently preordained to go to heaven or hell; Christ's death did not bring salvation to all. Consequently, all funerary rituals were removed from the church setting. The necessary expression of grief moved from the church into the home.

Art could thus be used in a prescriptive Calvinist manner. The painting of a *Prosperous Calvinist Family*, 1627, exemplifies the outward appearance of a proper Calvinistic family (Fig. 2). The family, dressed in black, sits around a table covered with crisp white linen and luxurious yet restrained foodstuffs. The children are in prayer, and even the smallest child sits peacefully. The scene is rendered in muted shades as if to dull the inherent luxury of a family portrait. Calvinistic austerity was intertwined with emotional expression, as is seen in the family's neutral expression.

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<sup>20</sup> Els Stronks, "Literature and the Shaping of Religious Identities: The Case of the Protestant Religious Emblem in the Dutch Republic," *History of Religions* 49, no. 3 (2010): 219–53, <https://doi.org/10.1086/651990>, 220, 226, 229.

<sup>21</sup> Els Stronks, *Negotiating Differences* (2011), 34.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>23</sup> Susan C Karant-Nunn, "Proper Feelings in and around the Death-Bed," in *Oxford University Press EBooks*, 2010, 189–214, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195399738.003.0006>, 203, 212.; Paola Duque, "Post Mortem Vereeuwiging van Jongoverledenen" (Thesis, 2006), 5.

### Emblem culture:

Calvinist morals were not only articulated in art but expressed in popular literature.<sup>24</sup> Calvinistic doctrine was communicated in popular literature and foremost crafted to be instructive and applied to everyday life.<sup>25</sup> The catechism of Calvinism was most evident in literature as emblems. Emblem books had a strong didactic effect generated by the combination of illustration and bite-sized text.<sup>26</sup> These emblems provide modern viewers with a look into contemporary thought and moral values.<sup>27</sup> The widespread popularity of emblem books is indicated by the custom that each household had one bible *and* one of the well-liked emblem books.<sup>28</sup> An inventory of the contemporaneous artist Albert Jansz Vinckenbrinck detailed that he owned ten theology books and four emblem books, again highlighting the importance attached to the two genres.<sup>29</sup> Books on subjects like marriage and child-rearing were commonly found in households, like ‘Houwelick’ (Marriage) written by the popular Jacob Cats.<sup>30</sup>

### Omnipresence of death:

The Republic was born out of war and existed in great flux. On top of this instability, the plague was running rampant until the mid-1600s.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, extremely high child mortality exacerbated the sense of instability. Almost half of children born would not reach adulthood,

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<sup>24</sup> Marloes Koelewijn, “Van Gehoorzame Honden Tot Vrome Kersen: Bijwerk Is Geen Bijzaak.” (2018), 8.

<sup>25</sup> Stronks, “Shaping of Religious Identities,” 225, 235.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 219.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>28</sup> Marianne Eekhout, *Werk, Bid & Bewonder, Een Nieuwe Kijk Op Kunst En Calvinisme* (Dordrecht Museum, 2018), 106-107.

<sup>29</sup> Marianna Eisma, “Albert Jansz Vinckenbrinck,” *Amstelodamum* 83 (1996), 38.

<sup>30</sup> Cats was even broadly known as ‘Vadertje Cats’ (Father Cats). Koelewijn, “Gehoorzame Honden,” 7, 14.

<sup>31</sup> P. van de Ekamper, “Kromme Sikkels Des Doods, of de Pest van 1624 in Delft” 27 (2018), 75-79.

with most of these deaths occurring in the first year of life.<sup>32</sup> As births and deaths were not yet recorded centrally, one can only get a sense of the extent of child deaths from baptism registries.<sup>33</sup>

The new nation, new religion, plague, and high child mortality, therefore, bred a fearful, unstable emotional environment where death was omnipresent.<sup>34</sup> The Dutch environment generated a growing preoccupation with life's impermanence, which was expressed in art and literature.<sup>35</sup> Hence, vanitas art was prevalent in several forms.<sup>36</sup> In emblems, young children are often coupled with a living skeleton, some interpretations more gruesome than others. Some emblems depict 'transi', decomposing skeletons, taking children from their loved ones by force (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4). The children are illustrated in complete terror, heightening the emotional impact of these moralising images. In one emblem about premature death, death is made less forceful. Here, death is not an active participant. A peaceful praying child is depicted inside the torso of a serenely grimacing skeleton, sitting on the ground (Fig. 5). The creation of these images could express a constant underlying current of the fear of death, particularly that of a young child.

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<sup>32</sup> Jan Baptist Bedaux, Rudolf, and Frans Hals museum, *Pride and Joy* (Ludion Press Ghent, 2000), 22.; Romie Wisselink, "'Engeltje Van 'T Hemelrijck'. Een Onderzoek Naar de Betekenis En Functie van Naakte Baby's in Gezinsportretten in de Zestiende Eeuw" (2019), 5, 9.; P. van de Ekamper, "Kromme Sikkels," 80.; Rudi Ekkart, *Lief En Leed. Realisme En Fantasie in Nederlandse Familiegroepen Uit de Zeventiende En Achttiende Eeuw* (Museum Twenthe, 2018), 12, 48.; Bert Sliggers, *Naar Het Lijk* (Walburg Pers, 1998), 91.

<sup>33</sup> Wisselink, "'Engeltje Van 'T Hemelrijck'", 9.; Amsterdam's baptism register can be viewed here: <https://archieff.amsterdam/indexen/>

<sup>34</sup> Isabel Casteels, Louise Deschryver, and Violet Soen, "Introduction: Divided by Death? Staging Mortality in the Early Modern Low Countries," *Early Modern Low Countries* 5, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.51750/emlc10005>, 2, 10.

<sup>35</sup> Liana Cheney, *The Symbolism of Vanitas in the Arts, Literature, and Music* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), 271, 272.

<sup>36</sup> Cheney, *The Symbolism of Vanitas*, 272.; Julie Hochstrasser, *Still Life and Trade in the Dutch Golden Age* (Yale University Press, 2007), 104, 107.; J. Bruyn, "Over Het 16de En 17de Eeuwse Portret in de Nederlanden Als Memento Mori," *Oud Holland* 10 (1991), 246.

Furthermore, fear of death was likely exacerbated by the contemporary notion that getting ill could weaken one permanently.<sup>37</sup> Seventeenth-century medicine was a growing field based on the ancient concept of the four humours.<sup>38</sup> The fear of illness generated an obsession with healthy living, which is indicated by the many practical medicinal manuals.<sup>39</sup>

Hence, the growing Republic was in a constant state of fearful flux. Emblematic literature helped the Dutch understand and apply Calvinistic morals. Health-focused books provided support to combat ailments in the hopes of escaping death. Therefore, emblem books and art created a language of commonly understood symbolism within the Dutch Republic.<sup>40</sup> The language of symbolism was even recorded in elaborate texts, such as Cesare Ripa's 'Iconologia', where symbols were explained by theme.<sup>41</sup> The hidden symbolism transformed into commonly understood visual cues for contemporaries. Thus, symbols provided a new way of expression, which could help the residents grapple with the surrounding changes. Creating and buying art and literature may have developed a stabilising appeal to the Dutch. Art stilled life into one recorded moment without any fear of the unknown future.

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<sup>37</sup> Klaas van Berkel, Albert Clement, and Arjan van Dixhoorn, *Knowledge and Culture in the Early Dutch Republic: Isaac Beeckman in Context*, JSTOR (Amsterdam University Press, 2022), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv2n06jbq.13>, 184.

<sup>38</sup> For explanation about the Hippocratic theory of the four humours see: Jouanna Jacques, "The Legacy of the Hippocratic Treatise the Nature of Man: The Theory of the Four Humours.," in *Greek Medicine from Hippocrates to Galen* (Brill, 2012), 335–59.; Berkel, *Knowledge and Culture*, 186.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.; W.P.R.A. Cappers, "Aan Deze Zijde van de Dood. Funeraire Componenten van Seculariserende Cultuurlandschappen in Nederland 1576-2010," *Yearbook for Ritual and Liturgical Studies* 30 (2014), 264.

<sup>40</sup> Peter Hecht, "The Debate on Symbol and Meaning in Dutch Seventeenth-Century Art: An Appeal to Common Sense," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 16, no. 2/3 (1986): 173–87, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3780637>, 173, 174, 180.; Ekkart, *Lief En Leed*, 11.

<sup>41</sup> Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia*, (1764).

Dutch art continued the tradition of allegorical symbolism in portraiture, further layering, and complicating meaning.<sup>42</sup> Messages were conveyed in multifaceted pictorial code.<sup>43</sup> Art became a social agent within the Dutch Republic, where it was the messenger of many paradoxical meanings. For instance, black clothing conveyed as much austerity as it did opulence, as black symbolised religious piety but was also an expensive and labour-intensive colour to make.<sup>44</sup>

The Republic developed a culture where contemporaries widely understood the language of symbols.<sup>45</sup> It is important to specify that modern analyses could miss symbols or over-emphasise hidden meanings. Allegorical messages were used throughout all sectors of the Republic, not only in emblems or portraiture.<sup>46</sup> As Jacob Cats wrote: ‘Underneath the image, a deeper meaning can be found.’<sup>47</sup> This is not to say that all citizens would have understood these messages or that the painters intended these messages to be read. However, it does mean that one *can* apply these paradoxical layers of meaning as a modern viewer. These meanings should simply be interpreted with caution. Dutch art from this period can have a multiplicity of meanings and multiple intentions, which should be part of any analysis of art from the Dutch Republic. The language of symbols was enmeshed with Dutch culture and should not be ignored.

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<sup>42</sup> Seymour Slive, “Realism and Symbolism in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting,” *Daedalus* 91, no. 3 (1962): 469–500, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20026724>, 487.

<sup>43</sup> Dekker, “A Republic of Educators”, 159.

<sup>44</sup> Alison McNeil Kettering, “Gentlemen in Satin,” *Art Journal* 56, no. 2 (June 1997): 41–47, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.1997.10791817>, 42, 43.; Benjamin Roberts, *Sex and Drugs before Rock “N” Roll : Youth Culture and Masculinity during Holland’s Golden Age* (Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 62, 67.

<sup>45</sup> Ekkart, *Lief En Leed*, 11.

<sup>46</sup> Arthur Weststeijn, “The Power of ‘Pliant Stuff’: Fables and Frankness in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republicanism,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 72, no. 1 (2011): 1–27, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23011274>, 2.

<sup>47</sup> Stronks, “Shaping of Religious Identities,” 235.

### Functions of portraiture

Adult, family, and child portraiture became increasingly popular within the Republic.<sup>48</sup> Economic growth was one reason for this boom in popularity.<sup>49</sup> Another reason could be because portraiture made a permanent mark on history. Despite this more uniform impact, there was a distinct difference between the function of child and adult portraiture. This distinction can be perceived within the categorisations of contemporary collectors. These collectors categorised child and adult portraiture and, moreover, made distinctions between various types of children in paintings.<sup>50</sup>

Adult portraiture's intent was poly-faceted. The portrait recorded likeness whilst it concurrently flaunted; 'pronken'. These portraits flaunted their newfound riches and booming mercantile businesses by including fantasy mansions in the background or by displaying opulent materials and jewels.<sup>51</sup> Yet, austere Calvinistic morals were enmeshed into all aspects of life. Calvinistic virtues were intertwined into states of dress, for instance, even hairstyles could hold moral value.<sup>52</sup> Dress codes were sometimes recorded in manuals. However, many codes of conduct were commonly understood and not recorded.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Koelewijn, "Gehoorzame Honden.", 4.; Dekker, "A Republic of Educators", 168.; Bedaux, *Pride and Joy*, 35, 36.; Slive, "Realism and Symbolism," 481.

<sup>49</sup> Rasterhoff, *Painting and Publishing*, 170.

<sup>50</sup> Mary Frances Durantini, *The Child in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting*, (UMI Research Press, 1983), <https://archive.org/details/childinseventeen0000dura/page/n5/mode/2up>, 2.

<sup>51</sup> Woodall, "Laying the Table, 995.; Rengenier C Rittersma, *Luxury in the Low Countries: Miscellaneous Reflections on Netherlandish Material Culture, 1500 to the Present* (Brussels, 2010), 141.; Bedaux, *Pride and Joy*, 30.

<sup>52</sup> Kettering, "Gentlemen", 42, 45.; Roberts, *Sex and Drugs*, 50, 62.; Wayne Franits, "Young Women Preferred White to Brown: Some Remarks on Nicolaes Maes and the Cultural Context of Late Seventeenth-Century Dutch Portraiture," *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 46 (1995): 394–415, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43875976>, 400.

<sup>53</sup> Emilie E. S. Gordenker, "The Rhetoric of Dress in Seventeenth Century Dutch and Flemish Portraiture," *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 57 (1999): 87–104, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20169144>, 87.

### Functions of child portraiture:

Child portraiture also had a function of ‘pronken’, flaunting. Many traditional individual portraits of small children, like Govert Flinck’s *Girl by a High Chair*, 1640, depict the child in pristine white gowns, rimmed with delicate lace, and accessorised with golden jewels and playthings (Fig. 6). Pure white fabric, like the black gowns of adult sitters, was difficult to manufacture and thus very expensive to buy.<sup>54</sup> Contemporaries comprehended this unspoken display of wealth immediately. The child is enveloped, quite literally, in wealth.

Child portraiture, like emblems, had a didactic function. Child-rearing was an important and moralised topic in the Republic. Many contemporary books explain how to raise a child into a well-formed adult.<sup>55</sup> The portrayal of a child had to account for didactic literary influences. The child had to be represented in a manner which conveyed Calvinistic virtues and good education.<sup>56</sup> In Jan Albertsz Rotius’ *Four-Year-Old Girl with a Pot of Carnations*, 1663 (Fig. 7), the girl touches one carnation delicately, signifying her connection to the symbol. The girl is dressed in luxurious fabrics, and the inclusion of the symbol shows that displays of wealth were not sufficient; the sitter had to be educated, too. Thus, a pedagogical layer was given to child portraiture; the carnations are tied to a stake, symbolising education.<sup>57</sup> These pedagogical virtues were echoed in the many domestic genre pieces made at this time, in which children are seemingly always well-behaved.

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<sup>54</sup> Roberts, *Sex and Drugs*, 62.

<sup>55</sup> Dekker, “A Republic of Educators”, 155, 166, 181.; Koelewijn, “Gehoorzame Honden.”, 7.

<sup>56</sup> Koelewijn, “Gehoorzame Honden.”, 7.; Dekker, “A Republic of Educators”, 178, 181.

<sup>57</sup> Bedaux, *Pride and Joy*, 19, 20.; Groenendijk, “The Republic of God, 324.; Dekker, “A Republic of Educators,” 160.; Jan Baptist Bedaux, “Beelden van ‘Leersucht’ En Tucht. Opvoedingsmetaforen in de Nederlandse Schilderkunst van de Zeventiende Eeuw,” *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (NKJ) / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 33 (1983): 49–74, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24705358>, 54.; Koelewijn, “Gehoorzame Honden.”, 4.

Yet, when these child portraits are placed in the context of the high child mortality and generally unstable circumstances of the Republic, it becomes apparent that children's portraiture had a more profound function. Principally, the portraits display a need to protect the child and immortalise their likeness.<sup>58</sup> This protection and immortalisation is ever-present, encompassing other functions.

The urge to immortalise is most apparent in the popularity of child death portraits from the middle of the fifteenth century and onwards.<sup>59</sup> One of the first examples of this type of portraiture is *Ivo Fritema and his family*, 1533 (Fig. 8).<sup>60</sup> The painting depicts the mother and father framing their children behind a table. One dead child lays nude and exposed on the table. This portrait displays the naturalistic tendency of post-mortem portrayals; the child's skin tone is unnervingly grey. The father points to the Bible with a neutral facial expression, which demonstrates the traditional stoic, Calvinistic expression of grief. The remaining children stand in the closest visual proximity to the corpse, highlighting that the deceased was once a part of their group and the family. The mother strengthens this visual narrative by cradling the deceased child from behind. The portrait exemplifies the interwoven nature of the family group, transcending mortality.

Deceased children could be portrayed on their deathbeds, but other types of death portrayals were also customary. Dead children were also, and most often, portrayed as angels.<sup>61</sup> They would be placed in family portraits to convey their eternal connection to the family.

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<sup>58</sup> Bruyn, "Memento Mori," 246.

<sup>59</sup> Sliggers, *Naar Het Lijk*, 77.

<sup>60</sup> Ekkart, *Lief En Leed*, 16.; Duque, "Post Mortem," 17.; Sliggers, *Naar Het Lijk*, 79-80.

<sup>61</sup> Sliggers, *Naar Het Lijk*, 94.

Furthermore, dead children were portrayed as ‘living’. Their death was only hinted at by the inclusion of specific attributes, like a bubble-blowing toy, which signified the ephemerality of death.

#### Contemporary parental love:

It is especially important to highlight the difference between the modern conception of grief and the seventeenth-century grief. Foremost, grief was much more present in daily life than it is now, due to high general mortality.<sup>62</sup> The notion that parents were less saddened by the death of their offspring is a myth.<sup>63</sup> The popularity of death portraiture, demonstrates the love that parents felt for their children.<sup>64</sup> Ego-documents do not customarily discuss grief Calvinistic emotionality inhibited outward expressions of grief. Nevertheless, there are some expressive poems, and further indications of deep sadness after a child’s death in contemporary diaries.<sup>65</sup> One example is the poem *Kinder-lyck* (Child-like, Child-corpse), 1637, by Joost van den Vondel, one of the most read authors of the period, which expresses the enormous grief Vondel felt at the funeral of his child.<sup>66</sup>

The concern for children's well-being is depicted with a great tenderness in seventeenth-century domestic genre paintings.<sup>67</sup> There is an abundance of paintings presenting how children were carefully fed, dressed, and cared for (Fig. 9). These paintings represent the notion of

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<sup>62</sup> Groenendijk, “The Republic of God,” 324-325.

<sup>63</sup> Ekkart, *Lief En Leed*, 12.; 48; Sliggers, *Naar Het Lijk*, 88-90.

<sup>64</sup> Bedaux, *Pride and Joy*, 57.

<sup>65</sup> Durantini, *The Child*, 33, see appendix E onwards.

<sup>66</sup> Duque, “Post Mortem,” 17.; See appendix A.

<sup>67</sup> Dekker, “A Republic of Educators,” 162, 163, 164, 165.

motherly love, an idea which was widespread in much contemporary literature.<sup>68</sup> For instance, Johan van Beverwijck, a physician from Dordrecht wrote in 1660: ‘bij instellinge selfs van de nature, hebben alle menschen haer kinderen lief,’ (by nature, all people love their children.).<sup>69</sup>

Nevertheless, grief might have been experienced and dealt with differently than we are accustomed to now. One diary from 1593 notes the birth and rapid death of a baby where subsequently, the writer describes a ‘vrolijk kraamaal’ (cheerful postnatal meal, meant for family and friends to come and visit after the birth).<sup>70</sup> Describing the meal as cheerful does not negate the fact that the parents were mourning. The ‘kraamaal’ can be understood as a memorial of the child or a celebration that they were blessed with a child, even though the child died.

The Dutch likely had almost no taboo on death. The various types of death portraits probably hung in the home, where they could be viewed daily.<sup>71</sup> Sometimes, mourning rooms were created where the bereaved could contemplate the death of loved ones in the home.<sup>72</sup> The private nature of the grief process was exacerbated by the Calvinistic removal of all funerary rituals.<sup>73</sup> There were no more emotionally charged crucifixions, or pieta’s, within the church, which could be used to process the death of a child. Instead, these images moved into the home. Calvinism had created a ritual emptiness which had to be occupied with something new.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Sliggers, *Naar Het Lijk*, 91.; Wayne Franits, “‘For People of Fashion’: Domestic Imagery and the Art Market in the Dutch Republic,” *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 51 (2000): 294–316, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24706500>, 295.

<sup>69</sup> Sliggers, *Naar Het Lijk*, 91.

<sup>70</sup> Durantini, *The Child*, 33.

<sup>71</sup> Duque, “Post Mortem,” 17.; Sliggers, *Naar Het Lijk*, 72.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>73</sup> Duque, “Post Mortem,” 5.; Rasterhoff, *Painting and Publishing*, 170.; Cappers, “de Dood,” 264, 270, 269.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

As has been demonstrated, the theological and emblem culture in the Dutch Republic had a vast influence on visual culture. The omnipresence and fearful respect towards death found expression through certain elements or symbols within portraiture.<sup>75</sup> These symbolic objects were also paradoxical, signifying luxury and the fear of death. Furthermore, these ‘objects-made-symbols’ existed outside the two-dimensional plane of the painting and often would have been used in real life. The objects were closely related to the child's body, intensifying their materiality. The intensified materiality would strengthen the function of protecting and immortalising. The parent could feel the three-dimensional object and see it represented by their deceased child.

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<sup>75</sup> Slive, “Realism and Symbolism,” 488.

## Chapter 2: Materiality, Attributes and Function in Child Portraiture

As discussed in Chapter 1, the common language of symbols and the omnipresence of death in the Republic not only impacted the formation of art but also how it functioned in private surroundings. When child or death portraits are analysed through a lens of immortalisation, particular objects gain a greater symbolic attachment. How does the materiality of attributes included in children's portraiture contribute to the function of portraits? These objects, such as skulls or candles, are not commonly found in traditional vanitas works.<sup>76</sup>

This chapter will first evaluate the rattle, the so-called 'rammelaars' or 'rinkel-bellen' (rattle, tinkle bells) in Dutch. The rattle is a paradoxical but popular object that exemplifies the multi-layered nature of symbolic objects. Then, the wider visual culture and material associations are connected to the rattle to deepen the understanding of objects as symbolic agents. Subsequently, the prevalence of symbolic protective intent is examined and compared to how the need for protection was expressed in more practical methods. Lastly, the chapter will consider how moral and theological protection was attained.

### 'Rammelaars':

The rattle exemplifies the paradoxical nature of symbols in Dutch art. The luxurious rattles were made from silver or gold and frequently had a piece of coral, bone, or gemstone attached, yet were still meant for a child to play with. The smiling child in *Girl with a Rattle*, by Jan Claesz, c. 1609, holds a silver rattle with a piece of wolf tooth on its end (Fig. 10). The girl is dressed in an expensive but restrained black dress with textured red sleeves. She wears a lace-

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<sup>76</sup> Seymour Slive, "Realism and Symbolism in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting," *Daedalus* 91, no. 3 (1962): 469–500, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20026724>, 491.

trimmed apron and cap. The rattle is shown attached to a long chain. This connects it to her waist, making it easy to carry. An almost identical rattle was acquired by the Fries Museum, where the portrait is hung. The rattle has a spherical body, lightly decorated by flowing engravings, on which the arms with the bells are attached. This rattle also has a whistle at its end. The correlation between rattle and painting suggests that these sorts of objects were painted from life (Fig. 11).<sup>77</sup> A slim golden filigree rattle with a quartz end shows a different but popular type of rattle (Fig. 12). A surviving rattle of this type has not yet been connected to any painted works, but the style closely coordinates with many painted rattles (Fig. 6).

The survival of some seventeenth-century rattles reveals their material worth. It also demonstrates the personal value attached to these pieces. These items were protected from time by the family and not deconstructed and reworked into different silver objects. Moreover, the dual existence of the real and painted rattle in *Girl with a Rattle* confirms that rattles were not merely used as imagined props in portraiture. Rattles had a practical use for the rich *and* poor. For instance, a piece of an inexpensive bone rattle was found at an archaeological site, suggesting a wider use of rattles executed in different materials for all layers of society.<sup>78</sup> The rattle was likely a part of a young child's daily life in all layers of society.

Some rattles were intricately detailed and, therefore, costly to produce. They were proportionally expensive as a child's toy. The material value of these rattles is most prominently demonstrated through their presence in contemporary inventories. From an inventory of 1624, (Fig. 13): 'Kinder bel Clater met ketengen met silveren kanlidt wegende 16

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<sup>77</sup> Jeroen Giltaij, *Senses and Sins: Dutch Painters of Daily Life in the Seventeenth Century* (Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, 2004), 31.

<sup>78</sup> B. W. G. Wittewaall, *Nederlands Klein Zilver En Schepwerk, 1650-1880*, 2003, 208.; Hermien de Bruijn, "Vondsten Onder Bakker Schuijt," *Historische Kring Heemskerk*, 2004, <https://www.historischekringheemskerk.nl>, 67.

loot a: 24 stvr.’ (Child’s bell Rattle with chain with silver lid, weighing 16 ‘loot’ approx.: 24 ‘stuiver’, coins).<sup>79</sup> The rattle was significant enough to be included in the inventory and was even weighted and valuated. Consequently, the rattle embodies luxury and the child’s future wealth-filled life.

The inherent correlation to wealth is further exemplified by the presence of rattles in emblems to signify a spoiled child (Fig. 14).<sup>80</sup> In this emblem, the luxuriously dressed child is shown throwing a fit with an outraged facial expression. The rattle embodies the notion of excessive pleasure in the moralistic emblem. Gerard Dou’s painting, *Young Mother*, c. 1655 (Fig. 15), presents this moralistic message, too. The painting depicts two children and a woman in a sitting room. The mother is attempting to feed her child; however, the baby is distracted by a rattle. This scene has a layer of meaning similar to a vanity piece; the child is being distracted from sustenance by a shiny, earthly object.<sup>81</sup>

### Types of protection:

The rattle demonstrates the objects’ primary objective: protection. Protection as a predominant theme rapidly becomes apparent in all types of visual and textual expressions. On the one hand, the notion of protection could be theoretical and theological, as will be discussed later. On the other hand, some methods of protection were primarily practical.

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<sup>79</sup> Saskia Kuus, “‘Een Sattijnen Knechtges Mutzien’ - Kinderkleding Uit de Boedel van Maria Lienaertz (1624),” ONH, 2021, <https://onh.nl/verhaal/een-sattijnen-knechtges-mutzien-kinderkleding-uit-de-boedel-van-maria-lienaertz-1624>.

<sup>80</sup> Mary Frances Durantini, *The Child in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting*, Internet Archive (UMI Research Press, 1983), <https://archive.org/details/childinseventeen0000dura/page/n5/mode/2up>, 6, 190-191.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 6.; Wayne Franits, “‘For People of Fashion’: Domestic Imagery and the Art Market in the Dutch Republic,” *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 51 (2000): 294–316, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24706500>, 302.

A painted rattle could signify wealth, luxury, and personal attachment. The material and emotional worth is strengthened by using ‘magical’ and protective material.<sup>82</sup> A painted, but existing, rattle added material symbolism, veiled on top of two-dimensional symbolism.<sup>83</sup> The ever-present fear of death in Dutch society, especially related to children, is directly materialised by the creation of rattles.

Prevalent mystical materials were coral, quartz, and animal teeth. Quartz and coral were given protective qualities, and coral in particular was thought to protect from the evil eye and other hostile forces.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, coral was also a symbol of refinement and educational improvement.<sup>85</sup> Teeth from various animals, like in *Girl with a Rattle* (Fig. 10 and Fig. 11), were also used to protect the wearer.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, it was thought the child would gain the animal’s strength and power from the tooth. The bells of the rattle also held protective qualities, as the sound of these bells was associated with guarding against evil spirits.<sup>87</sup>

These protective powers were not only used for rattles but were deployed in objects like jewellery. Beaded coral necklaces and bracelets are present in a great many child portraits (Fig. 2, Fig. 10). These pieces of jewellery further encapsulate the child in protection, as is, for instance, shown in *Portrait of Susanna de Vos*, by Cornelis de Vos, 1627, in which her chubby wrists are encircled tightly by three rows of coral beads (Fig. 16). To conclude, the rattle

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<sup>82</sup> Wittewaall, *Nederlands Klein Zilver*, 307-308.

<sup>83</sup> Marloes Koelewijn, “Van Gehoorzame Honden Tot Vrome Kersen: Bijwerk Is Geen Bijzaak.” (2018), 35, 36, 27.; Julie Hochstrasser, *Still Life and Trade in the Dutch Golden Age* (Yale University Press, 2007), 103.

<sup>84</sup> Jan Baptist Bedaux, *Pride and Joy* (Ludion Press Ghent, 2000), 124.; Callisen 454, 455.

<sup>85</sup> Bedaux, *Pride and Joy*, 124.

<sup>86</sup> Wittewaall, *Nederlands Klein Zilver*, 307-308.

<sup>87</sup> Jeroen J. H. Dekker, “A Republic of Educators: Educational Messages in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Genre Painting,” *History of Education Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (1996): 155–82, <https://doi.org/10.2307/369503>, 165.

exemplifies the paradoxical nature of symbolic objects in portraits: the rattle signifies luxury and protection.

A more practical display of protection is found in the tradition of swaddling. This tradition was rooted in an obsession with health.<sup>88</sup> Young babies are displayed completely swaddled in thick layers of fabric. Medicinal manuals taught swaddling, especially that it needed to be done swiftly. Swaddling would protect the child from the cold, which was thought to cause fevers, jaundice, and vomiting.<sup>89</sup> In the portrait of *The Dordrecht Quadruplets*, 1621, the three surviving babies are portrayed swaddled, whilst the deceased child is dressed merely in a shroud (Fig. 17). Therefore, swaddling was likely only protective to living children. Further elaborating the health concern was the medicinal quality of play, a knowledge originating in antiquity.<sup>90</sup> Jacob Cats wrote that children were meant to play, and if they did not, the child would deteriorate into illness or pain.<sup>91</sup> Contemporary doctor Johan van Beverwijck again specified the significance of play to children.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, *too much* play could corrupt children, echoing the austere Calvinistic cultural ideas.<sup>93</sup> Playing freely helped children grow strong; a notion echoed in other contemporary literature.<sup>94</sup> Children are often painted during play, as is prominently seen in Bruegel's depiction of a city square (Fig. 19).<sup>95</sup> Play is also included in domestic pieces, often to heighten the visual interest, as seen in De Hooch's *Binnenhuis*, where the child plays 'colf' in the background (Fig. 1). Formal portraits include

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<sup>88</sup> Berkel 184; Bedaux, *Pride and Joy*, 76, 75.

<sup>89</sup> Engeltje van het hemelrijck 6.

<sup>90</sup> Durantini, *The Child*, 177.

<sup>91</sup> Koelewijn, "Van Gehoorzame honden," 10.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 10, 11.

<sup>93</sup> Durantini, *The Child*, 177, 186, 189.

<sup>94</sup> Koelewijn, "Van Gehoorzame honden," 7.; Dekker, "A Republic of Educators," 173, 176.

<sup>95</sup> Durantini, *The Child*, 150.

echoes of play. Many portraits include dolls, ‘colf’ sticks, and other playthings.<sup>96</sup> The inclusion of toys thus communicated the child's health.

Furthermore, young children need to be protected *during* play. ‘Val hoedjes’ (falling hats) were crown-like stuffed hats meant to protect the head from the ground.<sup>97</sup> These hats are not often depicted in formal portraiture or genre pieces, likely because they were not part of formal attire.<sup>98</sup> Yet, several paintings from the period still include these hats. Cornelis de Vos’s *Portrait of a Family*, c. 1630, is a traditional display of prominence and luxury. The family is wrapped in luxurious materials, and the sitters are portrayed in a rigid composition (Fig. 21). Yet, the youngest child, sitting in the upper centre of the portrait, is wearing a velvet fall hat. In genre pieces, the hat could be used to reinforce the painting’s narrative. For instance, in Jan Steen’s genre piece, *The Egg Dance*, 1570, a toddling child is wearing a bright red fall hat (Fig. 22). The sense of protection of the hat is heightened in this dizzying spectacle, as the child could be pushed over by one of the dancers. Thus, swaddling and fall hats display the urge to protect young children in the Republic, heightened by the collective health fixation.

Protection was not always symbolised practically but also operated on a theoretical, moralistic level. Pearls were fashionable in the seventeenth century, worn as pieces of jewellery and as customisable additions to gowns.<sup>99</sup> The pearl had numerous connotations. Firstly, pearls were associated with religion, as the spherical shape embodied God’s ungraspable

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<sup>96</sup> See figure 27 for an example of a ‘colf’ stick.

<sup>97</sup> Bedaux, *Pride and Joy*, 77.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>99</sup> Micheline Cariño, “An Environmental History of Nacre and Pearls: Fisheries, Cultivation and Commerce,” *Environment & Society Portal* 2009, no. 3 (2012): 49–71, <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/4612>, 53.; Monique Rakhorst, “Bow Jewels of the Golden Age: In Fashion in the Low Countries,” *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 66, no. 1 (2018): 4–23, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26374286>, 14.

perfection.<sup>100</sup> It is no wonder that Johannes Vermeer chose to dress his *Allegory of the Catholic Faith* with a pearl necklace (Fig. 23). Secondly, the pearl symbolised Mary's divine conception and was linked to fertility and purity.<sup>101</sup>

Therefore, only women or girls, were depicted wearing pearls. This gendered divide strengthens visual associations of the femininity of pearls, as can be seen in Justus van Egmont's *Alexander, Jan-Cornelis and Maria-Aldegonda Goubau*, 1663 (Fig. 24). The three children are dressed in identical black gowns. However, the gender of the middle figure can be easily determined by her pearl adornments.

The femininity of pearls is deployed to develop visual bonds between mothers and their daughters. For instance, Johannes Verspronck's *Girl in Blue*, 1641, portrays a young girl in a light blue satin dress, trimmed with gold and white lace, wearing pearl jewellery (Fig. 25).<sup>102</sup> On its own, the portrait is not remarkable. When the portrait is placed next to the portrait of her mother, it becomes apparent that the girl's painting parallels her mother's (Fig. 26).<sup>103</sup> Their poses are identical, and even their facial expressions are alike. The visual bond was only occasionally portrayed in such a direct manner.

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<sup>100</sup> E. de Jongh, "Pearls of Virtue and Pearls of Vice," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 8, no. 2 (1975): 69, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3780417>, 72, 74-75.; Hallman, 10.

<sup>101</sup> De Jongh, "Pearls of Virtue," 76.; Emily Hallman, "Gems of Gods and Mortals: The Changing Symbolism of Pearls throughout the Roman Empire," *Armstrong Undergraduate Journal of History* 10, no. 1 (April 1, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.20429/aujh.2020.100101>, 9.; D. W. Robertson, "The Pearl as a Symbol," *Modern Language Notes* 65, no. 3 (1950): 155, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2908994>, 159, 160.; Hallman, "Gems of Gods," 7.

<sup>102</sup> Rudi Ekkart, *Lief En Leed. Realisme En Fantasie in Nederlandse Familiegroepen Uit de Zeventiende En Achttiende Eeuw* (Museum Twenthe, 2018), 44.

<sup>103</sup> There is some academic discourse about familial connection between these portraits. Ekkart, *Lief En Leed*, on page 44 explains the research into the provenance of these pictures.

The concept of the innate relationship between children and parents is reiterated in emblems: ‘Even when it is small, they are alike.’<sup>104</sup> The display of young girls alongside their mothers in genre pieces strengthened associations of domesticity and fertility.<sup>105</sup>

The child-parent visual symbolism represents the position of child-rearing in the Republic. Parents were responsible for their child's upbringing, even before conception.<sup>106</sup> The parents were inherently responsible for the child, as their bodies had created them.<sup>107</sup> Therefore, pearls in child portraits could symbolise the shared excellent virtue of the family. Pearls were reminders of fertility, innocence, and religion for the individual wearing them.

Thus, objects in paintings held different but layered symbolic attachments. As has been shown, many of these symbolic attachments within children's portraiture were protective. These symbols could be drawn from ancient material properties attached to objects like coral. Furthermore, as with fall hats, these symbols could have practical protective uses. The discussion of pearls showed that symbolism could also serve as a reminder of exemplary virtue, protecting against bad behaviour. To conclude, the protective function of the portrait is thus supported by these items.

Moreover, the material quality of the objects facilitates the immortalisation of the sitter. The material quality of the coral, quartz, and other materials expands the experience of the portrait. Accordingly, these artworks are no longer ocular-centric to contemporary viewers.

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<sup>104</sup> Durantini, *The Child*, 34.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 250.

<sup>106</sup> Jan Baptist Bedaux, “Beelden van ‘Leersucht’ En Tucht. Opvoedingsmetaforen in de Nederlandse Schilderkunst van de Zeventiende Eeuw,” *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 33 (1983): 49–74, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24705358>, 65, 67.; Dekker, “A Republic of Educators,” 162–166.

<sup>107</sup> Bedaux, “Beelden van ‘Leersucht,’ 65, 67.

Instead, memory and the sensorium would be engaged when observing the works. The child would always be near the objects. The child would hold the rattle and bite it. The pearls would lay on the child's soft skin. The fall hat would encapsulate the child's fragile head. The viewer feels the silver, the touch of a cold pearl on the skin. The reminder of the rattle's sound would similarly stimulate the senses, echoing beyond the painting. The sensory relation between the object and the child persisted after the child's death. Like the rattle, the flattened visual representation of a deceased child with an object would continue into the three-dimensional realm. A parallel between memory and the sensorium was embedded into the immortalised display of the protected child. The rattle was meant only for young children, which likely enhanced the memories associated with the object to parents. The popularity of pearls and their portrayal in adult and child portraiture endows the material with a unique sensory association. The feeling of a strand of pearls, or their unique sound, was always close in the seventeenth century.<sup>108</sup> Therefore, a mother could wear a piece of the memory of her child when they had been portrayed with pearls. The association with immortalisation is thus intensified by the sheer abundance of pearls in the Republic.

To conclude, the materiality of objects enhances the function of child portraiture through symbolic associations and the permanence of materiality. The child was symbolically or practically protected by the objects and twice immortalised by the portrait and the remaining objects. The fearful environment of the Dutch Republic is elucidated by the inclusion of attributes in portraiture, and even further by the visualisation of the corpse in portraiture.

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<sup>108</sup> De Jongh, "Pearls of Virtue," 77.; Hallman, "Gems of Gods," 7.

### Chapter 3: Transcendence in Child Portraiture

A portrait of a dead child was not uncommon in the Dutch Republic.<sup>109</sup> And these portraits did not *merely* capture the child's likeness. In the complex visual culture of the Republic, the portraits had a transcendent character. The transcendent portrayals build on the imagination of the viewer, honouring the children via fictive images, whilst still protecting them. How is the function of protection and immortalisation conveyed through the transcendence of death in child portraiture?

#### Death bed portraiture:

The lasting material impression of painted objects could protect and immortalise children. But seemingly, these objects could not protect *deceased* children. In contrast to child portraiture, deathbed portrayals did not include the above-mentioned prevalent attributes. Therefore, the absence of these objects might reveal the dissolved demand for earthly protection.

Rather, the attributes in death portrayals were adjusted to fit the afterlife. The items were no longer present in daily life, but rather correlated to superstitious funerary rituals. As mentioned above, the rise of Calvinism had eliminated ecclesiastical funeral traditions, and salvation could not be attained by rituals.<sup>110</sup> This ritual emptiness caused parents to seek secular expressions of grief. Calvinist churches were emptied of visual stimuli. Emotional depictions

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<sup>109</sup> Sliggers Museum, *Naar Het Lijk* (Walburg Pers, 1998), 66, 79.

<sup>110</sup> W.P.R.A. Cappers, "Aan Deze Zijde van de Dood. Funeraire Componenten van Seculariserende Cultuurlandschappen in Nederland 1576-2010," *Yearbook for Ritual and Liturgical Studies* (2014), 264.

of Christ on the cross had disappeared, removing methods of ecclesiastical grieving. Consequently, visual expressions of grief and death transferred to the home.

A portion of death portraits indicate Calvinistic austerity, visually and emotionally. The portrait of *Ivo Fritema* depicts the nude child without any attributes (Fig. 8). Moreover, the portrait lacks any heightened emotional expressions from the parents. *Portrait of a Deceased Girl, probably Catharina Margaretha van Valkenburg*, 1682, by Johannes Thopas, depicts the deceased girl as if she is asleep, surrounded only by her bed (Fig. 27). Both portraits focus on the appearance of the deceased. The sight of a peaceful eternal slumber was a sign of a ‘good death’. The notion of a ‘good death’ is found in ‘*Artes Moriendi*’, a contemporary etiquette book for death.<sup>111</sup> The portrayal of the face, especially the pallor of deadened skin, develops into the central point of these portraits and, therefore, into a symbol.

Opposing the austere demands of Calvinism, ritualistic and symbolic items were utilised and presented in death portraits. Laurel crowns, palm branches, and smouldering torches are the most prevalent objects.<sup>112</sup> The child lies peacefully, in *Portrait of a dead infant*, 1645, by Bartholomeus van der Helst, on a bed of straw alongside a smouldering torch (Fig. 28). The rendered straw signifies the protection for the living against the spirit of the dead, a persisting ‘heidens’ (pagan) ritual.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, any allegorical associations are deepened within these austere portrayals by the sheer soberness of the scene. The impermanence of these

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<sup>111</sup> Sliggers, *Naar Het Lijk*, 47.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 107.; Jan Baptist Bedaux, *Pride and Joy* (Ludion Press Ghent, 2000), 130.; Rudi Ekkart, *Lief En Leed. Realisme En Fantasie in Nederlandse Familiegroepen Uit de Zeventiende En Achttiende Eeuw* (Museum Twenthe, 2018), 53.; Paola Duque, “Post Mortem Vereeuwiging van Jongoverledenen” (Thesis, 2006), 19.

<sup>113</sup> Sliggers, *Naar Het Lijk*, 192.

objects expresses the ephemerality of life. The torch has traditional vanitas associations; life is ephemeral and fleeting as a flame.<sup>114</sup>

Likewise, other rituals were intended to protect the spirit of the child, thus continuing the protective efforts of the parents. Herbs like rosemary could surround the deceased child. Flowers, or even silver pieces of paper and gold spangles, were all used to protect the child in the journey to the afterlife. The Calvinist church disapproved of these ‘pagan’ customs and even attempted to ban them fully.<sup>115</sup> Nevertheless, the rituals persisted, showing a profound belief in these customs. Moreover, the persistence displays the deep-rooted fear of death. The parents chose to ignore the ruling church to protect their children as best as they could. Therefore, the standard death portrait immortalised the likeness of the deceased child and fostered a sense of protection.

#### Children as angels:

As mentioned above, depictions of dead children as angels are one of the most prevalent methods of depiction.<sup>116</sup> The prevalence of the symbol of a dead child embodied as an angel meant that contemporaries had an implicit understanding of the motif.<sup>117</sup> These angels are frequently seen in addition to group or family portraits. For instance, in *Unknown Family*, 1594, by Michiel van Mierevelt (Fig. 29). Five disembodied heads with angel wings float between the family, looking down upon them peacefully. The strange composition suggests that these angels were added as an afterthought. The deceased child as an angel was echoed in literature. The most emotional example is the grief-stricken poem by Joost van Vondel, where his

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<sup>114</sup> Wendy Schaller, “Children Borne Aloft: Nicolaes Maes’s Ganymede Portraiture and the Context of Death and Mourning in the Seventeenth Century Netherlands.” (2001), 59-62.

<sup>115</sup> Duque, “Post Mortem,” 24.; Sliggers, *Naar Het Lijk*, 107.

<sup>116</sup> Ekkart, *Lief En Leed*, 51.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

deceased daughter is described as a ‘small angel in [the] heavenly kingdom’.<sup>118</sup> The notion of children as angels has Catholic associations and superficially contradicts the austere teachings of Calvinism. The doctrine of predestination allowed only the ‘elected’ to enter heaven, not each deceased child.<sup>119</sup> However, the Synod of Dordrecht, 1618, displays a compassionate facet of Dutch religious culture.<sup>120</sup> The Synod specifies that ‘pious parents ought not to doubt the election and salvation of their children, whom God hath called in infancy out of his life.’<sup>121</sup> The salvation of children of Calvinists was not limited, and they would even go to heaven without baptism.<sup>122</sup> Thus, infant children could be depicted as angels, as they were inherently part of the ‘elect’.

The child-as-angel motif was deployed in individual and group portraiture. *Boy as Cupid*, 1644, by Bartholomeus van der Helst, depicts a young, vital boy sitting in an Arcadian landscape, dressed in a strip of fabric (Fig. 30). He has vivid multicoloured wings, rendered in a naturalistic manner, and is holding a shell on which a bubble is balanced. Conversely to the effervescent appearance of the boy; this is likely a depiction of a dead child. The first signal of death is the boy's wings. The second is the bubble. The blowing of bubbles was a symbol of life's ephemerality and was frequently employed in vanitas paintings, in a motif known as ‘Homo Bulla’.<sup>123</sup> The third signal is the boy's bare skin. Nudity often signified death in portrayals of children, the symbol resulting from the Dutch health obsession. Young *living*

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<sup>118</sup> See section appendix B.

<sup>119</sup> Thomas Scott and Samuel Miller, *The Articles of the Synod of Dort*, (Philadelphia Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1841), <https://archive.org/details/articlesofsynodo1841syno>, 263.

<sup>120</sup> Bedaux, *Pride and Joy*, 130, 192, 276.

<sup>121</sup> Scott, *Synod of Dort*, 270.; Appendix C.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Schaller, “Children Borne Aloft”, 75-76, 110.; Mary Frances Durantini, *The Child in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting*, (UMI Research Press, 1983), <https://archive.org/details/childinseventeen0000dura/page/n5/mode/2up>, 191-192.

children needed to be protected from the cold, as was discussed in chapter two with the act of swaddling. Deceased children could, therefore, be represented in the nude.<sup>124</sup>

Beyond individual depictions of angels, deceased children were a popular addition to family portraits.<sup>125</sup> Presumably, these portrayals did not capture the likeness of the child, nor were they meant to.<sup>126</sup> Rather, the floating angel symbolised the soul of the lost child.<sup>127</sup> The child-as-angel in family portraiture signified the everlasting connection between the deceased child and the family. In the Bible, in the book of Job (1:19), children are specified to be a part of the family, even after death.<sup>128</sup> In the *Portrait of Amalia van Solms (1602-1675) with her two eldest children*, c. 1629, by Gerard van Honthorst, a chubby angel, extending a laurel crown, is depicted floating above Amalia van Solms (Fig. 31). Cesare Ripa in *Iconographia*, a contemporary and popular book on all types of symbolism, specifies this motif as meaning ‘Felicitas Eterna’ (eternal bliss).<sup>129</sup> The laurel crown has an inherent connection with death, as Ripa specifies the crown as an attribute of death.<sup>130</sup> The soul of the child as an angel stands in stark contrast to the representations of the child on the deathbed, most significantly by the radiant health seen in these depictions. The angels are explicitly healthy and animated. They are freed from their corporeal vessels and are transformed into complete bliss. Ripa specified ‘oprechte gesontheit’ (true health) as being a part of the depiction of eternal bliss.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Romie Wisselink, “‘Engeltje Van ’t Hemelrijck’. Een Onderzoek Naar de Betekenis En Functie van Naakte Baby’s in Gezinsportretten in de Zestiende Eeuw” (2019), 9, 17.

<sup>125</sup> Jan Baptist Bedaux, *Pride and Joy* (Ludion Press Ghent, 2000), 276.

<sup>126</sup> Wisselink, “‘Engeltje Van ’t Hemelrijck’”, 13.

<sup>127</sup> Sliggers, *Naar Het Lijk*, 97.

<sup>128</sup> Duque, “Post Mortem,” 9.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 19.; Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia*, 1764, 151., see appendix D.

<sup>130</sup> Ripa, *Iconologia*, 151.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

### Child in pastoral setting:

The notion of eternal bliss is echoed in pastoral portraiture. The child, or family, in a fictional, pastoral setting was a popular manner of depiction in the seventeenth century.<sup>132</sup> Pastoral portraiture was not always a depiction of a deceased person. However, there are examples of pastoral portrayals of deceased family members. For instance, the family portrait of *Inzameling van Manna*, 1648, by Dirk Metius, depicts the family as participants within a lively biblical scene (Fig. 32). The father stands amid his family, partaking in the action. Nevertheless, the father had already died when this portrait was commissioned.<sup>133</sup> The whole family is visualised outside the confinement of time. The portrayal transcends time and transcends death.

Thus, the pastoral motif exhibits the children outside the bounds of time. Hence, the pastoral setting acts as a protective cloak against time. Pastoral portraiture limits the use of recognisable seventeenth-century objects or costuming, protecting the painted figure in timeless fantasy.<sup>134</sup> The scene is not limited by the whims of fashion or trend-related objects like rattles or coral beads.<sup>135</sup> The scene is overtly idyllic; it depicts perfect weather and lovely, innocent scenes. The portraits are, to the modern viewer, still recognisable as being from the seventeenth century. However, the mix between historical setting, fantasy costumes, and pastoral scenes, create a sense of timelessness, even now. The portrayals float between time and space. These types of portraits allow for a more intense immortalisation of children.

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<sup>132</sup> Marloes Koelewijn, “Van Gehoorzame Honden Tot Vrome Kersen: Bijwerk Is Geen Bijzaak.” (2018), 20. Ekkart, *Lief En Leed*, 23.

<sup>133</sup> Ekkart, *Lief En Leed*, 85.

<sup>134</sup> Bedaux, *Pride and Joy*, 74.

<sup>135</sup> Emilie E. S. Gordenker, “The Rhetoric of Dress in Seventeenth-Century Dutch and Flemish Portraiture,” *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 57 (1999): 87–104, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20169144>, 89, 95.; Ekkart, *Lief En Leed*, 23.

Artists could then deploy these timeless methods of depiction, in part, in other portraiture. For example, *The portrait of Govert van Slingelandt and his family*, 1657, by Jan Mijtens, depicts the Lord of Dubbeldam, and his family in an arcadian setting whilst wearing seventeenth-century costumes (Fig. 33). The painting displays the grandeur of a high standing family, as they are cloaked in costumes made from luxurious, deeply coloured, fabrics. Yet, the baby, perched on the mother's leg, is depicted in a more pastoral manner, wearing a flower crown and piece of cloth. The flower crown echoes the association with the laurel crowns, as discussed above. The flower is a traditional vanitas item, as the life of a flower was intensely ephemeral. Moreover, the child holds a shell with a bubble, signifying death.<sup>136</sup> Genealogical research confirmed that the child had died when this piece was commissioned, confirming the timeless approach of the depiction and the conveyed poignancy.<sup>137</sup>

As has been shown, the transcendence of death is used as a visual tool to portray the immortalisation and protection of the child. Death bed portraiture transcends death through the portrayal of the child as being asleep but also endeavours to help the child transcend to heaven by providing protective attributes. A child depicted as an angel is no longer a mirror of the child but rather transcends the likeness to portray eternal bliss and signify the dead child as being part of the family. The child depicted in a pastoral setting tries to achieve a transcendence of time itself by deploying fantasy and historical costuming to draw the portrayal away from the seventeenth century. The function of children's portrayal to memorialise and protect is thus further enhanced by visual transcendence.

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<sup>136</sup> Ekkart, *Lief En Leed*, 88, 124.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, 124.

## Conclusions

To conclude, this dissertation has assessed the question: ‘In what ways does child portraiture, particularly child death portraiture, embody the cultural zeitgeist of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic?’

Considering the preceding chapters, the answer has been shown to be complex and intertwined with religion, literature, and material culture. Primarily, the new and unstable conditions of the Republic influenced the cultural output of the Republic. On the one hand, the mercantile trade provided the funds to express emotionality in a shrouded manner via artistic means. On the other hand, Calvinism created a ritualistic emptiness in the funerary space, which was remedied through the creation of various death-related pictural expressions. The function of child portraiture enhanced its embodiment of the fearful and unstable environment. The portraits attempt to immortalise and protect the child through various visual devices. This sense of protection is largely created by the enmeshment of material culture with the pictural plane.

The dissertation has attempted to familiarise the reader with the expression of death in historical visual culture to try to lessen the current taboo. Contemporary parental love has been illuminated by discussing primary texts, like Vondel’s poem, and evaluating pieces of art. What has been revealed is that rather than being primarily different, contemporary parental love is astoundingly similar to modern parental love and care.

The painted children are protected by the surrounding objects, a protection which continues into the three-dimensional realm. The pictures were entangled with the daily

sensorium, even after the death of the child. The symbolic connections in dead children's portraiture allowed the viewers to discover solace beyond the painted surface. Forbidden pagan rituals found their way into the painting, all to protect the dead *and* the living. Pastoral, fantasy settings were used to introduce a timeless impression to the viewer. Children became angels to display their everlasting presence in the lives of the living.

How, then, do these paintings embody the Republic's zeitgeist? They embody the Dutch's intense fear of omnipresent death by proudly displaying the deceased. The deceased were not hidden from sight. They are a part of the family within the painted reality, but also on the walls within the private home. The deceased are not gruesome or scary; they are a normalised presence.

Hopefully, this ertation has helped to familiarise the reader with visualisations of death to try to diminish the current taboo. Familiarity with death detaches the taboo and permits fear to be expressed. Again, being confronted with a painted corpse will never be pleasant. Yet, as has been shown, death used to have a normalised presence, providing solace. Take this dissertation as the first step towards embracing death in our daily lives. The deceased should not be hidden from sight.

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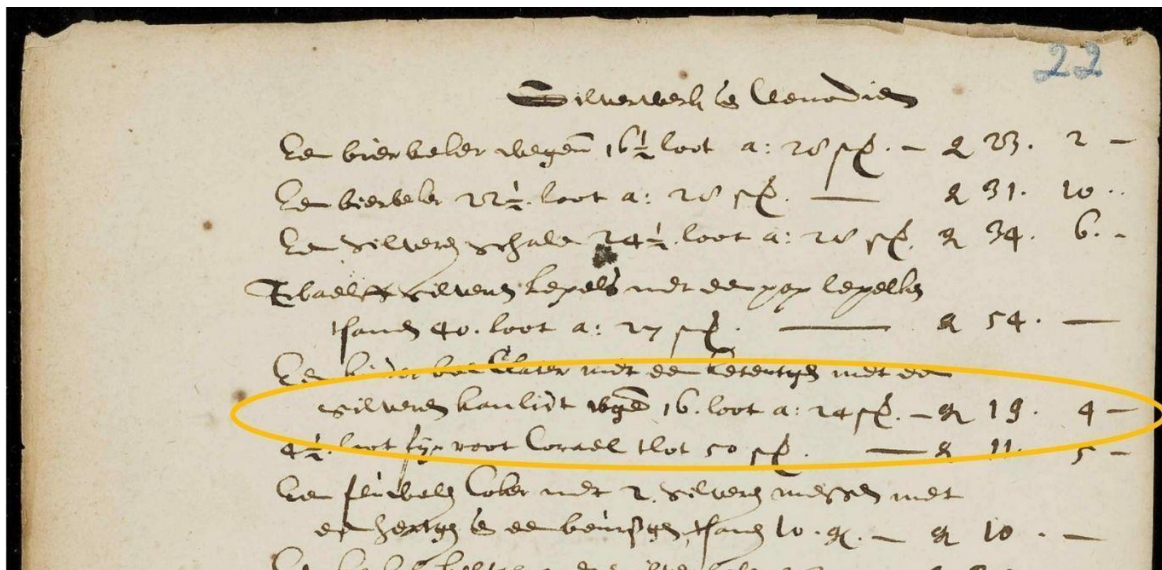


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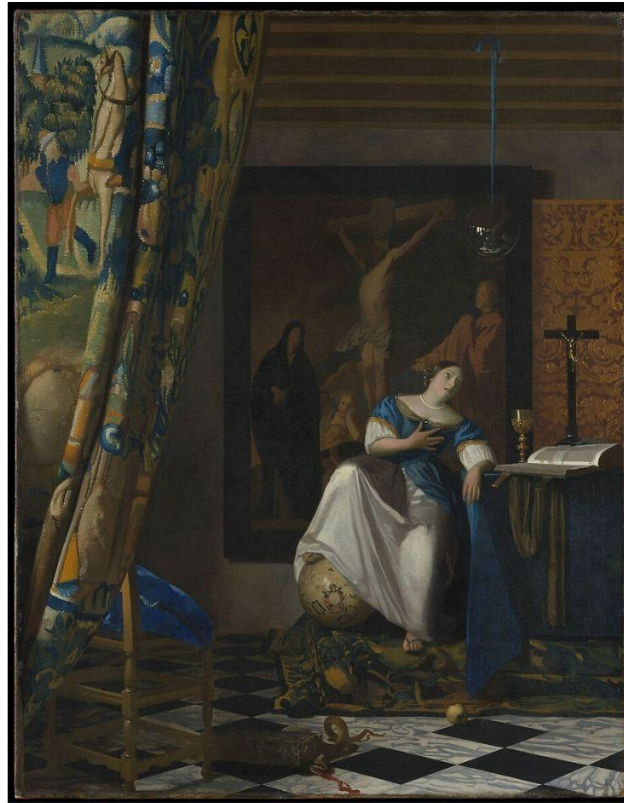


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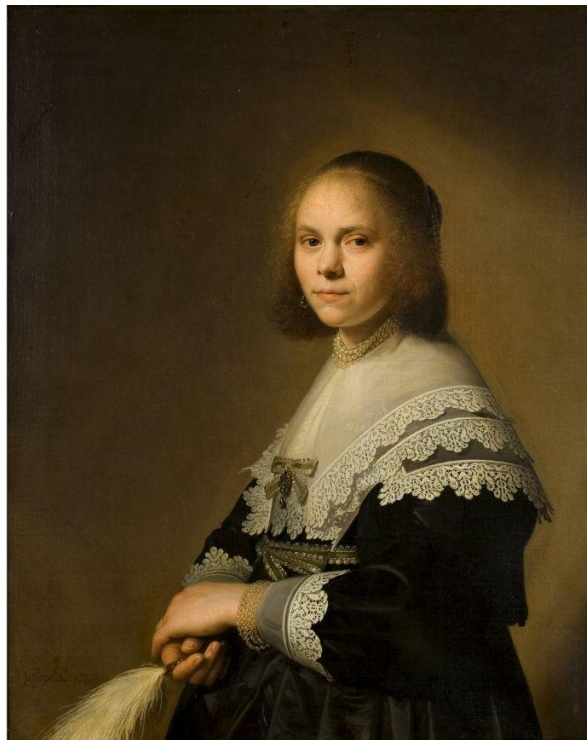


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## Appendices

<p><b>A.1: Vitvaert van mijn Dochterken, 1633, Joost van den Vondel</b></p> <p>De felle Doot, die nu geen wit magh zien, Verschoont de grijze liên. Zy zit om hoogh, en mickt met haren schicht Op het onnozel wicht, En lacht, wanneer, in 't scheien, De droeve moeders schreien.</p> <p>Zy zagh'er een, dat, wuft en onbestuurt, De vreught was van de buurt, En, vlugh te voet, in 't slingertouwtje sprong; Of zoet Fiane zong,</p> <p>En huppelde, in het reitje, Om 't lieve lodderaitje: Of dreef, gevolgt van eenen wackren troep, Den rinckelenden hoep</p> <p>De straten door: of schaterde op een schop: Of speelde met de pop, Het voorspel van de dagen, Die d'eerste vreught verjagen:</p>	<p><b>A.2: The death of my small daughter, 1633, by Joost van den Vondel.</b> <b>Translated by author.</b></p> <p>The fierce Death, who now cannot see white, Changes the grey linen. She sits high and aims with her arrow On the foolish young, And laughs when, in separation, The sad mothers weep.</p> <p>She noticed one, that, wild and unruly, Was the joy in the neighbourhood, And, quick a foot, jumped into the swinging rope; Or sweetly Fiane sang,</p> <p>And hopped, in a row, For the sweet young friends: Or floated, in the wake of a wacky crew, The tinkling hoop</p> <p>Through the streets: or cackled on a kick: Or played with the doll, The foreplay of the days, Who chase away the first pleasure:</p>
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<p>Of onderhiel, met bickel en boncket,  De kinderlijke wet,  En rolde en greep, op 't springend  elpenbeen,  De beentjes van den steen;  En had dat zoete leven  Om gelt noch goet gegeven:</p> <p>Maar wat gebeurt? terwijl het zich  vermaackt,  Zoo wort het hart geraackt,  (Dat speelzieck hart) van eenen scharpen  flits,  Te dootlick en te bits.  De Doot quam op de lippen,  En 't zieltje zelf ging glippen.</p> <p>Toen stont helaas! de jammerende schaar  Met tranen om de baar,  En kermde noch op 't lijck van haar gespeel,  En wenschte lot en deel  Te hebben met haar kaartje,  En doot te zijn als Saertje.</p> <p>De speelnoot vlocht (toen 't anders niet  moght zijn)  Een krans van roosmarijn,  Ter liefde van heur beste kameraat.  O krancke troost! wat baat  De groene en goude lover?  Die staatsi gaat haast over.</p>	<p>Or keep, with ball and stone,  The childish law,  And spun and grabbed, on jumping ivory,  The bones of the stone;  And had that sweet life  Don't care about right or wrong:</p> <p>But what happens? while it is having fun,  Thus, the heart is pierced,  (that playful heart) in a sharp flash,  Too deathly and too harsh.  The Death came on the lips,  And the small soul slipped away.</p> <p>Then unfortunately! the wailing scissors  With tears round the coffin,  And neither complained at the sound of  play,  And wished fate and share  To have with her card,  And die like Saertje.</p> <p>Her playmate wove (when there was nought  else to do)  A wreath of rosemary,  For love of her best friend.  O poor comfort! What good are  Those green and gold leaves?  The ceremony will be over soon<sup>138</sup></p>
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<sup>138</sup> This verse is translated in Rudi Ekkart and Jan Baptist Bedaux, eds., *Pride and Joy* (Ludion Press Ghent, 2000), 130.

**B.1: Kinder-lyck, 1632, Joost van den Vondel**

*Constantijntje*, 't zaligh kijndtje,  
 Cherubijntje, van omhoogh,  
 D'ydelheden, hier beneden,  
 Utlacht met een lodderoogh.  
 Moeder, zeit hy, waarom schreit ghy?  
 Waarom greit ghy, op mijn lijck?  
 Boven leef ick, boven zweef ick,  
 Engeltje van 't hemelrijck:  
 En ick blinck 'er, en ick drincker,  
 't Geen de schincker alles goets  
 Schenckt de zielen, die daar krielen,  
 Dertel van veel overvloeds.  
 Leer dan reizen met gepeizen  
 Naar pallaizen, uit het slik  
 Dezer werrelt, die zoo dwerrelt.  
 Eeuwigh gaat voor oogenblick

**B.2: Child-like, Child-Corpse, 1632, Joost van den Vondel**

**Translated by author.**

Small Constantijn, blessed child,  
 Cherub, from high,  
 The nobles, here below,  
 Smile with tender gaze.  
 Mother, he said, why do you cry?  
 Why do you cry above my body?  
 Above I live, above I float,  
 Small angel in heavenly kingdom:  
 And there I blink, and there I drink,  
 It's all good for the giver,  
 Offer the souls that teem there,  
 Happiness from abundance.  
 Then learn to travel in thought  
 To palaces, out of the sludge  
 This world, that keeps fluttering.  
 Eternity passes by instantly

<p><b>C.1: Handelingen Der Nationale Synode, 1618.<sup>139</sup></b></p> <p>Het eerste hoofdstuk van de leer.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>XVII. Nademaal wij van den wil Gods uit zijn Woord moeten oordeelen, 'twelk getuigt, dat de kinderen der geloovigen heilig zijn, niet van nature, maar uit kracht van 't genadeverbond, in hetwelk zij met hunne ouders begrepen zijn; zoo moeten de Godzalige ouders niet twijfelen aan de verkiezing en zaligheid hunner kinderen, welke God in hunne kindschheid uit dit leven wegneemt.</p>	<p><b>C.2: Proceedings of the Synod of Dordrecht, 1618.</b></p> <p>First chapter of the doctrine.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>XVII. Since we must judge the will of God from His Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature, but by virtue of the covenant of grace in which they are included with their parents; pious parents ought not to doubt of the election and salvation of their children, whom God hath called in infancy out of his life.<sup>140</sup></p>
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<sup>139</sup> “Nationale Synode Te Dordrecht,” 1618, 257-259.

<sup>140</sup> Thomas Scott and Samuel Miller, *The Articles of the Synod of Dort*, (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1841), <https://archive.org/details/articlesofsynodo1841syno/>, 270.

**D. 1: Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia*, (1764), page 151.<sup>141</sup>**

Felicità Eterna. Gelucksaligheyt die eeuwich is.

Een naeckt Maeghdecken met goude locken en met Lauwer gekroont, zijnde schoon en blinckende, sittende op eenen gesterreden Hemel, houdende een Palmtack in den slincker, en in den rechter hand een vlamme Vier, slaende haere oogen, met een vrolijk gelaet, ten Hemel.

Zy wort jongh geschildert, om dat de eeuwige gelucksaligheyt niet anders in sich heeft, als een geduyrige vrolijkheyt, oprechte gesontheyt, onverderflijcke goederen, en alle besondere aengenaemheden, die de Ieughd volgen, waer van al het ander Ouder gebrecklijck is.

Naeckt isse gemaect, om dat zy niet van noode heeft, sich mette broose aerdsche goederen te decken, noch sich te verciereren en op te proncken, noch by 't leven te onderhouden, maer al haere en andere goederen, komen, sonder eenigh middel, van haer selven voort.

De gulde hoofdhayren, zijn de soete gedachten van de eeuwige vrede en van de

**D. 2: Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia*, (1764), page 151.**

**Translated by author.**

Felicità Eterna. Happiness that is eternal.

A naked virgin maiden with golden locks and crowned with Laurel, a beautiful being and shining, sitting within a starry sky, holding a Palm branch in the left hand, and in the right hand a flaming Four, raising her eyes, with a cheerful face, towards Heaven.

She is painted youthfully, because eternal happiness has nothing else within it, as constant happiness, true health, incorruptible goods, and all the special pleasures that follow youth, of which everything in old age is defective.

She is nude, because she has no need to cover herself with fragile earthly goods, nor to decorate and show herself off, nor to support herself in life, but all her and other goods come without any means, from within herself.

The golden locks are the sweet thoughts of eternal peace and tranquil harmony. In this

<sup>141</sup> Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia*, (1764).

geruste eendracht. In dese beteyckenisse is oock het goud voor de gulden Eeuwe genomen. Want de eerste Eeuwe was noch van den Menschen niet bedorven, maer zy leefden, sonder eenighsins de Wetten te besoedelen.

Op een gesterde Hemel wortse gestelt, om te vertoonen, dat de waere gelucksaligheyt, die sich alleene in den Hemel verblijft, den rassen loop der sterren, noch de onderlinge bewegingen der tijden, niet is onderworpen.

De Lauwerkroone mette Palmtack betoont, datmen tot de Hemelsche gelucksaligheyt niet kan komen, ten zy door veele verdruckingen, zijnde waerachtigh 't geene *S. Paulus* seyt, *Niemant wort gekroont, ten zy hy wetlijck heeft gestreden.*

De brandende vlamme vertoont de Liefde Godes: en het om hoogh sien, bediet de aenschouwinge desselven, want in dese beyde deelen bestaet, de saligheydt en de volmaecte gelucksaligheyt.

sense, the gold for the Golden Age was also taken. For the First Age was not corrupted by men, but they lived without corrupting the Laws in any way.

She's sat within a starry heaven, to show, that the true happiness, which resides alone in heaven, is not subject to the race of the stars, nor to the mutual movements of the times.

The Laurel Crown with Palm branch shows that one cannot arrive at Heavenly Blessed happiness unless through many oppressions, which is true what *S. Paulus* says, *no one is crowned unless he has legally fought for it.*

The burning flame exhibits the Love of God: and for the sake of it, contemplate the contemplation thereof, for in these two parts there exists salvation and perfect happiness.

**Ego-documents:**

<p><b>E.1: Jan Lansman.</b></p> <p>In 1659 vermeldde hij het overlijden van zijn twee jaar oude dochtertje Titia met de toevoeging: “daar grote ellende aan gezien hadde.”<sup>142</sup></p>	<p><b>E.2: Jan Lansman.</b></p> <p><b>Translated by author.</b></p> <p>In 1659 he mentioned the death of his two-year-old daughter Titia with the addition: “[he] had had great misery.”</p>
<p><b>F.1: Willem Bakker.</b></p> <p>Amsterdamse burgemeester, Willem Bakker, schreef in de jaren dertig van de zeventiende eeuw een korte autobiografie. Daaruit spreekt meer persoonlijke betrokkenheid, wanneer hij het overlijden aan de pokken vermeldt van twee van zijn kinderen. Het betrof zijn dochter-tje Margritje, 'blank van verwe, blond van haar met blozende wangen, poeselachtig, vrolijk, liefthallig, vriendelijk, en vrijpostig,' en zijn zoontje Isaac, 'een poeselachtig kind, blozende van wangen, blank van vel en met blond haar, blijgeestig en zeer liefthallig.'<sup>143</sup></p>	<p><b>F.2: Willem Bakker.</b></p> <p><b>Translated by author.</b></p> <p>Amsterdam mayor, Willem Bakker, wrote a short autobiography in the seventeenth century. This text shows more personal involvement when he mentions the death of two of his children from smallpox. It concerned his daughter Margritje, 'white by birth, blond of hair with blushing cheeks, kitty-like (velvety, soft appearance), cheerful, lovely, friendly, and bold,' and his son Isaac, 'a kitten-like (velvety, soft appearance) child, rosy-cheeked, fair-skinned and with blond hair, cheerful and very sweet.'</p>
<p><b>G.1: Professor E. Bronchorst.</b></p>	<p><b>G.2: Professor E. Bronchorst.</b></p> <p><b>Translated by author.</b></p>

<sup>142</sup> Dekker, *Uit de Schaduw*, 207.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<p>[June 21, 1539; recorded the birth of his daughter Judith. Two days later the child died but on the 4th of July a kraamaal was held, for the professor recorded in his diary, that they ate, drank, and made merry]</p> <p>“allen waren onder wijn en kwinkslagen erg vrolijk,”<sup>144</sup></p>	<p>“all were very cheerful under influence of wine and witticisms,”</p>
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<p><b>H.1: Christiaan Huygens (Dagboek)</b></p> <p>[...] Het dagboek vermeldt bij de aankomst op 23 september: ‘mijn zieke broer sluit me vol liefde in de armen,’. Een dag later overleed hij in rust en vertrouwend op God: ‘Ach wat een schitterend, vroom einde. Laat het zo ook gegeven zijn aan mij en de mijnen,’. De oudere broer overleed op 47-jarige leeftijd.<sup>145</sup></p> <p>[...] Ziekten nemen een grote plaats in het dagboek in. Huygens beschrijft onder meer zijn schrik toen hij de tien dagen oude Constantijn uit de wieg nam om aan bezoek te tonen, en het kind ‘stilzwijgens gans doods om de mond (werd) ende voorts het hele aanzicht, dat ons allen zeer ont-stelde.’ De kleine Constantijn leed aan flauwten, de hik, huidirritatie en diarree, maar het ergst was een zware koliek toen hij elf maanden</p>	<p><b>H.1: Christiaan Huygens (Diary)</b></p> <p><b>Translated by author.</b></p> <p>[...] On September 23, the diary states: ‘my sick brother embraces me with love,’. A day later, he died in peace and trusting in God: ‘Oh what a wonderful, pious end. Let it be so also given to me and mine.’ The older brother died at the age of 47.</p> <p>Diseases occupy a large place in the diary. Huygens describes, among other things, his shock when he took the ten-day-old Constantijn out of the cradle to show a visitor, and the child ‘silently became completely dead around the mouth and furthermore the whole sight, which shocked us all very much.’ Little Constantine suffered from fainting spells, hiccups, skin irritation and diarrhoea, but the worst was a</p>
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<sup>144</sup> Quote from Mary Frances Durantini, *The Child in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting*, Internet Archive (UMI Research Press, 1983), <https://archive.org/details/childinseventeen0000dura/page/n5/mode/2up>, 303.

<sup>145</sup> Marloes Koelewijn, “Van Gehoorzame Honden Tot Vrome Kersen: Bijwerk Is Geen Bijzaak.” (2018), 12.

<p>oud was. Het kind werd's nachts vaak wakker, 'zulks ons bijna perplex maakte, immers een groot medelijden met het kind hebbende.'"<sup>146</sup></p>	<p>severe colic when he was eleven months old. The child often woke up during the night, 'which almost perplexed us, as we felt great pity for the child.'</p>
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<sup>146</sup> Rudolf Dekker, *Uit de Schaduw in 'T Grote Licht* (Erasmus Universiteit, 1995), 39.

**Emblem texts:**

<p><b>I.1:</b></p> <p>‘Die t sterven in zijn leven heeft geleed/die vind de bitterheid des Doods geweerd.’<sup>147</sup></p>	<p><b>I.2:</b></p> <p><b>Translated by author.</b></p> <p>‘He who has suffered death in his life finds the bitterness of death avoided.’</p>
<p><b>J.1:</b></p> <p>‘Laat de dood u nog niet bedriegen, Zij klopt ook aan de kinderwiegen.’<sup>148</sup></p>	<p><b>J.2:</b></p> <p><b>Translated by author.</b></p> <p>‘Do not let death deceive you yet, She also knocks on the children’s cribs.’</p>

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<sup>147</sup> Dekker, *Uit de Schaduw*, 204.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.