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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments …2
Abstract …5
Introduction …6
Chapter I- The Origins of the Domestic Dog Motif in Seventeenth-Century Dutch and Flemish
Children’s Portraiture: From Noble Hunting Hounds to Childhood Companions…12
Chapter II- children, The Fruitful Abundance of the Dutch Republic: The Apple Attribute in
Children’s Portraiture and Its Pedagogical Symbolism…54
Chapter III- The Dutch Rinkelbel: An Object of Pleasure, Prosperity, Apotropaic Power, and
Childhood Education…87
Conclusion …119
Bibliography…124
Abstract

This Master’s research paper aims to provide an analysis of the symbolic role of three unique and multi-faceted objects in children’s portraits and pedagogical theory in seventeenth-century Dutch painting: the dog, the apple, and the *rinkelbel*. This paper will examine a wide range of the visual material in children’s portraiture which is derived from prints and genre-paintings. Often the imagery and its associations may be traced back to classical and biblical sources which remained prevalent throughout the culture of the seventeenth-century in the Dutch Republic and its Flemish borders. The analysis seeks to provide a thorough discussion of seventeenth-century educational sources, such as manuals and treatises, as well as their relationship to prominent attributes like the dog, the apple, and the *rinkelbel* in Dutch and Flemish children’s portraits. As well, this paper seeks to provide a discussion concerning the value of the child’s civic education and role in the vitality of the Dutch Republic. The role of childhood educators, including parental figures, older siblings, and wet nurses, and their depiction in children’s portraiture is also examined.
Introduction

Dutch children’s portraits from the Golden Age (the seventeenth century) reveal visual clues about the unique roles and expectations of the youngsters in familial units and their contribution to the social fabric of Dutch and Flemish culture. From these visual clues and reliable sources of evidence, like educational treatises, we may surmise that prosperity and civic progress were plentiful in the Dutch Republic as well as its surrounding borders and ultimately contributed to the shaping of our own North American contemporary constructions of childhood. Cultural educators from this period took their influence seriously as children were unanimously regarded as the cultural abundance and potential of the Dutch Republic.¹ Furthermore, the children celebrated in Golden Age portraiture by a ‘Republic of Educators’ were the product of a culture that valued familial and civic harmony.² This nurturing cultural environment was particularly cultivated in the privileged province of Holland, recognized as one of the most powerful and prosperous centres for trade in late-sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe.³

In the Dutch Republic, it was the expanding merchant class that most influenced local government policies, civic values, and cultural practices as a result of ambitious upward mobility.⁴ A new aristocracy was flourishing, comprised of this influential merchant class, regents or governors, with only a minor role for the hereditary nobility.⁵ Indeed, the tides of power were shifting as ingenuity and perseverance yielded power and prestige for ordinary

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⁴ Ronni Baer. Class Distinctions: Dutch Painting in the Age of Rembrandt and Vermeer (Italy: MFA Publications, 2015), pp. 34.
⁵ Ibid., pp. 144.
people seeking membership and acceptance amongst the new aristocracy in a newborn political
entity after the Dutch emancipation from Spanish control in the early seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{6}

Schama remarks that Dutch educators recognized that “the special virtues, and the frailties
of the Republic, then, were tied up with its youthful self-awareness.”\textsuperscript{7} The traditional Dutch
familial unit blossomed rapidly as the prosperous nation benefited from an improved standard of
living for the increasingly affluent middle class. Among other improvements, child mortality
rates were on the decline and children of the Republic were living well beyond the years of
generations that came before.\textsuperscript{8} Studies such as Phillippe Aries’ \textit{L’enfant et la vie familiale sous
l’ancien regime} (\textit{Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life}, 1960), Lawrence
Stone’s \textit{Family Sex and Marriage in England} (1979), Elisabeth Badinter’s \textit{Mother Love, Myth
and Reality: Motherhood in Modern History} (1980) shepherded the belief in the so-called
discovery of early modern childhood.\textsuperscript{9} Aries, Stone, and Badinter entertained notions that the
nurturing attitudes central to our modern conception of childhood and parenthood shifted
dramatically during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries because children were living longer
than during the middle ages. Lloyd Demause (1974), Bertha Mook (1977), Mary Frances
Durantini (1979), Steven Ozment (1983), Linda Pollock (1983), Jan Baptist Bedaux (1990),
Jeroen Dekker (1992), Wayne Franits (1993), Hugh Cunningham (1995), Benjamin Roberts


In \textit{The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age} (1987), Simon Schama argues that parents, guardians, and educators affectionately doted on the youngsters of the ‘Republic of Children’, more than any era before, as these children accepted their unique, fruitful position in the Dutch Republic as a highly esteemed product of civic pride and joy.\footnote{Simon Schama. “Chapter Seven: In the Republic of Children” in \textit{The Embarrassment of Riches} (London: Collins, 1988), pp. 521.} It is Steven Ozment (writing in 1983) who first embraces the notion that both mothers and fathers were responsible for their youngsters’ education and that parents perceived child-rearing, moral instruction, and the general upbringing of their offspring as an endearing
venture.\textsuperscript{12} Annemarieke Willemsen examines the formal educational opportunities allotted to both young boys and sometimes even girls who were afforded the privilege of attending school once they came of age, in both the Northern and Southern Netherlands.\textsuperscript{13} The educational school system in the Netherlands was perceived as a remarkable model for other sixteenth and seventeenth European nations as a result of their success in producing extraordinarily high literacy rates.\textsuperscript{14} A child’s successful upbringing and education was of public interest because it was perceived as an investment in the continued security of the principles and values that laid the foundation of the prospering Dutch Republic.\textsuperscript{15} \textbf{Advisory texts and treatises were published in both Latin and the Dutch vernacular as valuable resources for those hoping to better the lives of their families and the prosperity of the Republic by pursuing mercantile and professional careers. Extensive networks of schools specializing in a Humanist education, with a special emphasis on Latin, grew exponentially after the Protestant Reformation.}\textsuperscript{16} Even young girls were admitted to private schools specializing in French and accounting during the sixteenth-century.\textsuperscript{17} This is significant because prior to this period, the Catholic Church solely controlled the educational system in the Netherlands, as it did elsewhere in Europe.\textsuperscript{18} These conditions exerted a lasting hold until the late eighteenth century, according to social historians such as Schama, and culminated in the widespread

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., pp. 15.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Jereon Dekker, Leendert Froenendijk, and Johan Verbeckmoes. Ibid., pp. 47.
fascination with the development of the early modern child, childhood education, the role of the familial unit, and agreeable expectations of childhood.19

Jan Baptist Bedaux’s *The Reality of Symbols: Studies in the Iconography of Netherlandish Art, 1400-1800* (1990) and Wayne Franits’ *Paragons of Virtue: Women and Domesticity in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art* (1993) undertake a comprehensive study that examines, among other themes, the iconography of virtue and innocence in both Dutch portraits and genre painting. Bedaux and Franits examine the proliferation of symbols in both subject types that correspond to treatises and moralist emblem books promoting ideals of virtue and industry, as well as Plutarchian principles of discipline, habituation, and moderation.20 Educational treatises and emblem books were believed to express advice in the best interest of all *kinderen*, or children, and were published and read widely during the Golden Age of the Dutch Republic.21 These texts were disseminated to parents, children, and educators looking to harness the potential for virtue, spiritual morality, and joy. Jeroen Dekker, Leendert Groenendijk, and Johan Verberckmoes concur that the breadth of childhood education during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries expanded under progressive Renaissance, Humanist, and Reformation ideals concerning the self-awareness of the individual.22 Surely, Dutch youngsters today have their Golden Age ancestors to thank for their prized title as the happiest

children in the world, according to a 2013 UNICEF report.\textsuperscript{23} Citizens of the Dutch Republic earnestly believed in nurturing the body, minds, and souls of their adored children.\textsuperscript{24}

Dutch Republican values, inspired by Humanist values, as well as pedagogical principles and familial roles are encoded in Dutch children’s portraiture of the Golden Age by means of elements such as pose, action, costume, and symbolic attributes.\textsuperscript{25} This paper will demonstrate that the major catalysts responsible for this development included: a revival of classical pedagogical theory, an interest in exploring self-development, a major political shift from a monarchy to Republic after the separation of the North from the Southern Netherlands, and a prospering Dutch economy at the center of European trade and commerce. The priorities of educators and artists included the child’s carefully managed upbringing as an ideal that was paralleled with civic vitality and familial harmony in sixteenth and seventeenth century portraiture. This paper focuses on the popularization of three attributes, the dog, the apple, and the \textit{rinkelbel}, as allusions to education in Dutch children’s portraits. My analysis suggest that the proliferation of these motifs is likely a culmination of several of these multi-valiant cultural conditions: a resurgence of Plutarchian humanist values which aligned with a primarily Protestant Republic, a prosperous society with an emphasis on upward mobility, civic progress, individual self-

\textsuperscript{23} The Telegraph. “They raise the world’s happiest children—so is it time you went Dutch?” http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/family/raise-worlds-happiest-children-time-went-dutch/ This topic is thoroughly explored in Rina Mae Acosta and Michele Hutchison’s \textit{The Happiest Kids in the World} (2017).


actualization, familial harmony, the expansion of the scope for education, and the fostering of youthful vitality.
Chapter I- The Origins of the Domestic Dog Motif in Seventeenth-Century Dutch and Flemish Children’s Portraiture: From Noble Hunting Hounds to Childhood Companions

An animated Frederik de Vries looks directly out at the viewer, reaches his leg over his canine companion and clutches a narrow rope-like leash which holds the dog still so that he may playfully climb on top of his pet’s back. The young Dutch apprentice reaches an ungloved hand towards the sky and his obedient, loyal feathered friend accepts the invitation to perch atop the child’s thumb. The child and his animal companions are depicted in a rural landscape setting with an old, deeply rooted tree planted firmly behind the figures. The renowned engraver and expert draughtsman, Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617), was responsible for the engraved Portrait of Frederik de Vries and His Dog (1597, Fig. 1.1). The inscription at the base of the dog’s spotted paw suggests that Goltzius created this image for his dear friend Dirck de Vries, Frederik’s father, as a symbol of his friendship and to assure De Vries that his son was becoming more accomplished as an apprentice under the artist’s care in Haarlem.\(^{26}\) The Latin inscription places emphasis on the faithfulness of De Vries’ dog, the innocence of the young, impressionable boy, and the importance of instilling in him a good moral character. Goltzius’ engraving is a clever ode to the child’s educational progression and suitable moral development under his instruction. According to an analysis published by the Princeton University Art Museum, Goltzius equates himself with the dog, as the “devoted instructor and guardian” of


Frederik de Vries. In other words, the combination of a disciplined dog and the child is evocative of the relationship between the faithful educator and the keenly invested student. This chapter will explore the function of the domestic dog or noble hunting hound as a symbol in children’s portraits and its parallel to child-rearing practices from the Golden Age. This discussion will include the participation of the dog in pedagogical symbolism as well as its allusion to the child’s noble status and family wealth. Emphasis will be placed on the dog motif’s association to childhood education for the middle or upper classes as well as its relation to ideas about parental discipline in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This ‘Republic of Educators’, or the parents and guardians of children from the Dutch Republic and its nearby borders, to quote Jereon Dekker, were generally aware of the dog motif’s associations to the importance of education and instruction. Dekker even proposes that the civic encouragement of youthful education, an emphasis on Humanist child-rearing practices, and a redefining of individual roles in the familial unit became “a driving force behind much of the flourishing genre painting on education and on portrait painting of families and of individual children” in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Scholarly research reveals that the pedagogical roots of the dog motif originate from classical sources such as Plutarch’s influential educational and moral treatise: De liberis educandis. Plutarch writes in his treatise, which was intended for the use of parents and guardians, that children are malleable “and the very souls of children readily receive the

impressions of those things that are dropped into them while they are yet but soft; but
when they grow older, they will...be more difficult to be wrought upon.” He advises that
parents must take an active interest in their young nurslings from the very beginning of
their lives in order to shape them into well-mannered, literate, gracious and upstanding
moral citizens. Plutarch’s teachings insist that parental figures must lead by example in
hopes of banishing deviant behaviors. According to Plutarchian followers, raising a child
appropriately was considered both a parental endeavor and a civic duty, as moralistic
instructions were desirable for maintaining the goodness and vitality of the Republic. For
Plutarch, this civic obligation transcended class as even the poorest of families should
bestow upon their children discipline and a didactic education which would ensure a
thriving, harmonious community. Several centuries later, Plutarch’s philosophy
resonated with Phillippe Aries’ sociological theory that the Dutch Republic owed its
prosperity to its care and concern for children as the foundation of republican virtue and
longevity. In 1643, Johan van Beverwijck (1594-1647), a Dordrecht physician, confirms
this inclination when he defines the family unit as the “source and origin of the
Republic.” Therefore, as Ann Jensen Adams deduces, the private family sphere was
credited with instilling the social order of the Dutch Republic throughout the Golden Age.

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31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., pp. 16.
33 Ibid., pp. 11.
35 Johan van Beverwijck. Van de Winementheyt des Vrouuwelicken Geslachts (1939: Dordrect: Jasper Gorissz., 1643), Book 2, Chapter 9, pp. 209.
Plutarchian philosophy appealed to the beliefs firmly implanted in the minds of the citizens of the Dutch Republic who had recently separated from Spanish Catholic control and looked to the ancient Roman Republic as a role model for their keen Humanist minds and political aspirations. Furthermore, the belief in the highly malleable youngster “supposedly embodied a break with the ancient Christian tradition, in which the notion of ‘original sin’ allowed little scope for pedagogical optimism.” Therefore it is not surprising that the predominantly Protestant Dutch Republic, which emphasized the role of the self-actualized individual, would be more receptive to Plutarchian philosophy.

Plutarchian pedagogy emphasizes that parents should be held accountable for the shortcomings of their children. All forms of educators, including parental figures and guardians, rejoiced alongside their young pupils and apprentices in the merits of a successful upbringing. Goltzius’ print of the young, lively, and keen Fredrick de Vries is certainly a commemoration of the educator’s as well as the pupil’s milestones. The print medium is unique because unlike a painted portrait, the child’s likeness could be proudly circulated to dear friends within Goltzius’ circle and that of the de Vries family, similar to today’s class photographs.

First Plutarch, and, in the sixteenth century, Erasmus, earnestly maintained that *natura-ars-exercitatio*, the triad of natural aptitude, rules, and habituation (or practice), would guarantee a child’s successful upbringing. As Jeroen Dekker states, “the child is

training in the virtue of obedience”.39 Obedience, an essential civic characteristic, naturally lends itself to Plutarch’s educational triad: *Natura-ars-exercitatio* and the domesticated dog motif as it has been demonstrated. *Natura-ars-exercitatio* is derived from the Aristotelian philosophy on education which combines natural aptitude (nature) with rules (education), and habituation (practice).40 This triad is exemplified in the parable of King Lycurgus of Sparta and two dogs: the ill-behaved dog and its obedient sibling.41 In the parable, there are two puppies born from the same litter with equal aptitudes. One has been reared as an obedient hunting dog, while its mischievous, unruly sibling has not been appropriately trained or disciplined. When King Lycurgus releases a hare before both dogs, it is the educated dog who is successful in snaring the hare for its master. The other dog is gluttonous, naughty, and disobedient when it rushes towards a bowl of food which has been placed in front of each sibling as a distraction. This parable is illustrated in an emblematic print from Otto van Veen’s *Quinti Horatii Flacci emblemata*, published in Antwerp in 1612.42 [Fig. 1.2] The emblem depicts a crowded marketplace, as imagined from ancient antiquity, that juxtaposes the good and bad behavior of the dogs: the obedient


41 This parable epitomizes the learning process and was vastly popularized in Dutch writings from the early modern period. Jan Baptist Bedaux also makes note of these entries in his *The Reality of Symbols: Studies in the Iconology of Netherlandish Art 1400-1800* (1990), pp. 162.

For example:


hunting hound chases after the hare as the crowd parts for both animals, while the unruly, self-absorbed dog remains at the foreground of the image, mindlessly licking a pot. This parable epitomizes the idea that natural inclinations can be corrected by a decent upbringing based on the principles of *natura-ars-exercitatio*. The triad was widely referenced in educational treatises and emblem books published during the period by authors such as Jacob Cats, Samuel van Hoogstraten, Abraham Ortelius, and Adrianus Pointers, among others. Unruliness and disobedience can be tamed with proper discipline, habituation, and persistent education. In portraits of children, the dog motif can allude to this anecdotal, obedient hunting hound from the parable of King Lycurgus and, more generally, to the notion of behavior corrected by proper training.

The image of the dog, from noble hunting hounds like the greyhound to faithful domestic companions such as the Maltese terrier, becomes an easily readable allusion to the young sitter’s familial status, upbringing and education. The dog motif in children’s portraiture was not a new phenomenon, as its pedagogical associations, as we are now aware, originated from Plutarch. Furthermore, the dog motif was not exclusively Dutch. As this investigative study will demonstrate, the image of the dog was also developed in Flemish art and became widespread later, when Flemish artists began work in England and abroad. The dog motif, in conjunction with the child’s likeness, possesses a two-fold symbolic association to noble prestige and a Humanist education as an embodiment of Plutarchian pedagogy, instruction, and the curbing of natural desires, as evoked in examples such as the parable about King Lycurgus of Sparta. Furthermore, when the dog

depicted is a well-bred hunter, it may emphasize the child’s noble birth or at the very least, make an allusion to the child’s prestigious familial status, as it was originally only the aristocracy which held the right to own an expansive estate and to hunt upon the land.\textsuperscript{44}

Jacob Gerritsz. Cuyp’s \textit{Portrait of Michiel Pompe van Slingelandt} from 1649 (Dordrecht, Dordrechts Museum) [Fig. 1.3] depicts a lively youngster making direct eye-contact with the viewer as he gracefully balances a bird on his right arm. The boy gestures with his opposite hand to the actively sniffing, prowling hunting dog in the foreground, as he strides across the landscape. The alert and keen attitude of the dog is perhaps intended to parallel the child’s eagerness to learn. The falcon and the hunting dog evoke aristocratic pretensions concerning land ownership and the hunt. The child’s father is Lord Slingelandt, a new member of nobility. Sorgh Matthijs Pompe van Slingelandt was afforded the title of Lord after he purchased several country estates.\textsuperscript{45} This portrait may be read as a celebration of the Slingelandts’ newfound wealth, increasing social prominence, and the celebration of a morally respectable male family heir. The bird, identified as a kestrel, is a variant of the pedagogical educational motif of the faithful dog.\textsuperscript{46} A trained hunting bird such as a falcon or kestrel will fly away from its owner when ordered and eventually return to its master’s arm as commanded. The loyal bird and dog are reflections of the child’s faithfulness to his family and commitment to a moral upbringing. In many ways, Jacob Gerritsz. Cuyp’s portrait of \textit{Michiel Pompe van Slingelandt} and Goltzius’ \textit{Portrait of Frederick de Vries and His Dog} function as commemorations of the children’s

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
educational progression and their educators’ faithfulness to actively providing moral
instruction as alluded to by the young boys’ loyal animal companions.

The settings for portraits of young male heirs in a dark, wooded landscape, with
their hunting hounds, were not restricted to naturalistic views of the Northern or Southern
Netherlands. Pieter Nason, an Amsterdam-based artist, paints a Portrait of a Boy as
Hunter (Luxembourg, Musée, 1670) [Fig. 1.4] in an imaginative, mountainous, Italianate
setting, wearing a fantastical classicized costume which evokes finely wrought, Roman
armor. He stands confidently with his “Renaissance elbow” protruding out by his left side
with a staff in the other hand as his striking gaze meets the viewer’s eyes. This calculated
gesture demonstrates that the child is adopting a cultivated, adult pose to make himself
appear as if he is more impressive, undoubtedly after much habituation and training. The
boy’s buttercream curls, pompous ostrich feather hat, the sumptuous silk and filigree
material of his billowing costume, and the noble dogs by his side allude to his prestige. The
collar around the unusual black and white greyhound’s neck signifies that the dog has a
master. The second dog is likely a spaniel; this type of lapdog was a status symbol for the

47 Jan Baptist Bedaux & Rudi Ekkart. Pride and Joy: Children’s Portraits in The Netherlands 1500-1700
48 Joaneath Spicer. “Chapter Five: The Renaissance Elbow” in History of Gesture: From Antiquity to the Present
nobility or the tremendously wealthy.\textsuperscript{49} A similar example by another Amsterdam artist, Jacques Vaillant (Amsterdam 1643- Berlin 1691), is \textit{Portrait of a Boy as a Hunter Holding a Boar Spear with a Greyhound} (Lawrence Steigrad Fine Arts, 1670).\textsuperscript{50} [Fig. 1.5] The older boy shares a similar powerful stance and body posture to Pieter Nason’s \textit{Boy as Hunter}. One arm stands akimbo while the other firmly grasps a spear, a weapon used for the dangerous noble sport of boar hunting. The boy’s stature dwarfs the greyhound. These elements portray the boy as a powerful figure, despite his youthfulness. The boy’s sumptuous fantasy costume places this portrait into the \textit{Portrait historié} category, in which the sitter impersonates or alludes to a figure from the classical past. This sophisticated conceit is a further demonstration of his familial prestige, suggesting a context that will foster his own Humanist education.\textsuperscript{51} The accompanying classical statue, a \textit{putto} or cupid, in conjunction with the classicizing character of the portrait, may reflect the boy’s

\textsuperscript{49} The toy spaniel, with its aristocratic notions of prestige, eventually becomes a favourite breed of King Charles II of England in the later 17\textsuperscript{th} century. Hence, the breed is today known as the King Charles Spaniel. Thus, the toy spaniel became further associated with royalty and advancing social status. However, the spaniel remained an extraordinarily popular choice of breed for Dutch, Flemish, and English children’s pets in the early sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries. Chris Packham and Robin Warwick Gibson. \textit{Pets in Portraits} (National Portrait Gallery Publications, 2015), pp. 50-51, and 53.  
education in one of the superior Amsterdam Humanist schools, which produced followers of the renowned writer on sixteenth-century pedagogy: Erasmus of Rotterdam.\footnote{Annemarieke Willemsen. \textit{Back to the Schoolyard: The Daily Practice of Medieval and Renaissance Education} (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepals Publishers N.U., 2008), pp. 26, 40 and 41. Erasmus wrote his own educational treatise \textit{Familiarium Colloquia Formulae} which was published in 1523.}

A Flemish example that combines the powerful, obedient hunting hound and the bird is Erasmus Quellinus’s (1607-1678) and Jan Fijt’s (1611-1661) \textit{Boy with Falcon and Two Dogs} from 1650 (Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten) [Fig.1.6].\footnote{Jan Baptist Bedaux & Rudi Ekkart. \textit{Pride and Joy: Children’s Portraits in The Netherlands 1500-1700} (Amsterdam: Ludion Press Ghent, 2001), pp. 210.} This captivating portrait depicts a haughty boy dressed in sumptuous robin’s egg blue damask robes who stands proudly before a landscape possibly set in the vicinity of Antwerp. He is accompanied by a greyhound as well as a brown and white pointer. The youngster’s powerful, stiff stance portrays him as a miniature adult. An eager falcon perches upon the boy’s gloved hand. The boy’s opposite hand firmly grasps the leash, controlling two full-sized dogs with extraordinary ease. The youngster’s eyes appear in dialogue with his greyhound as if he has given him a command. This is surely an impressive feat for such a young boy and likely an embellishment meant to emphasize the boy’s exceptional nature, distinguished status, and commanding personality. Assuredly, the child’s portrayal with
these companions is a suggestion of the boy’s substantial status, although his identity goes unrecorded by history. Perhaps, he is an aristocratic family’s heir or the son of a wealthy bourgeois family which now owns the rights to a considerably sized portion of once noble land, along with the title itself.\textsuperscript{54} This lively and dynamic child portrait evokes emblematic associations to the parable of Lycurgus while also conveying the youngster’s elite status.

These two Antwerp artists from the Spanish Catholic Netherlands share a commonality with Dutch Republican society in the similar portrayal of their children as wealthy and well-bred aristocrats. This suggests that the ideals of childhood education and upward mobility are not specifically a question of Protestant or Catholic values but rather of economic and social aspirations on both sides. Despite political conflict, we see the blurring of cultural boundaries as the quest for social progress remained a key objective for both Dutch and Flemish families.\textsuperscript{55} These similarities in pedagogy, childhood upbringing, and self-improvement demonstrate that the political divide was permeable.


\textsuperscript{55} Ronni Baer, Henk van Nierop, Herman Roodenburg, Eric Jan Sluijter, Marieke de Winkel, and Sanny de Zoete. \textit{Class Distinctions: Dutch Painting in the Age of Rembrandt and Vermeer} (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts Publications, 2015), pp. 34.
Caeser van Everdingen’s (1617-1678) *Portrait of a Girl as Huntress* (1665, Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten) [Fig. 1.7] is an example of Dutch Classicism which demonstrates that the role of the hunter was not exclusive to boys in child portraiture produced during the Golden Age.\\(^{56}\) History painting and classicizing portraiture were especially regarded as the “most prestigious of the genres” and it was honourable for parents to proudly portray their children in this manner.\\(^{57}\) The female huntress is dressed in loosely draped fantastical costume and wearing Roman style sandals. In one hand, she clutches a gilded horn and in the other she firmly grips the collar of her greyhound, with its long, lanky, yet powerful limbs, as her gaze interlocks with the viewer’s as if to accept a command. The gilded hunting horn evokes an association to Diana, the goddess of the hunt and domestic animals. The unidentified girl’s educational training would have been her mother’s duty, unless she was sent to a girls’ French school for formal instruction.\\(^{58}\) The task of the Dutch mother was to embody domestic virtue and chastity and to educate her daughters in the principal occupations for elite middle and upper-class

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women at this time, housewifery and motherhood.\textsuperscript{59} Mothers would sometimes rely on treatises or reference guides on proper behavior; one of the most popular was Jacob Cats’s \textit{Houwelyck} (Marriage), originally published in 1625.\textsuperscript{60} An engraving that accompanies the first chapter of \textit{Houwelyck} depicts a seated dog resting at the feet of a gentlewoman. [Fig. 1.8] Wayne Franits proposes that the woman, illustrated with her needlework sampler, a symbol of domestic industry, is an embodiment of female domesticity.

According to Mary Frances Durantini, the scope for elementary education in the Netherlands expanded in the seventeenth century, particularly for young girls.\textsuperscript{61} In the Dutch Republic, especially, the primary function of childhood education was to infuse Protestant values such as civic moral duty and prune unruliness in youngsters before the stage of adulthood. This also led to widespread education in the Northern Netherlands which boosted the economy of the Dutch nation and yielded unparalleled literacy rates. Therefore, an elementary education, especially for young girls, had been a rarity a century earlier during economic turmoil but was now more widely available. The classicizing style of \textit{Portrait of a Girl as Huntress} may suggest a classical education which would have been

emphasized at a private all-girls French school or Low German school which taught in the Dutch vernacular.\textsuperscript{62} This is the knowledge the young girl will eventually pass on to her own children after her father has secured a fruitful marriage for her.\textsuperscript{63}

In \textit{Portrait of a Girl as Huntress}, the expertly trained hunting hound is a visual allusion to the Roman goddess of the hunt, Diana, who held dominion over wild and domesticated animals, or her Greek counterpart, Artemis. In the past, Diana/Artemis represented female personifications of fertility invoked as an aid in conception and even child delivery.\textsuperscript{64} Ancient and Renaissance visual representations of Diana depicted her with her archer’s bow and an alert hunting hound as her attributes. It is not a far stretch to conclude then that these associations are evoked in Caesar van Everdingen’s portrayal of a classically imagined young girl with her own hunting hound. Depicting youthful women as personifications of Diana in Netherlandish portraiture was a common theme during the seventeenth century around the same time that Van Everdingen painted his \textit{Girl as Huntress}, most likely for a Dutch family from his home town of Alkmaar, Netherlands.


\textsuperscript{64} Encyclopedia Britannica. \textit{Diana, Roman Religion}. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Diana-Roman-religion
Nicolaes Maes (1634-1693), who worked in Amsterdam and Dordrecht, also took to portraying Dutch women as classically-inspired personifications of Diana with her hunting accoutrements. Maes painted his own fantasy *Portrait of a Lady as Diana* (Lawrence Steigrad Fine Arts, undated, after 1660).\(^{65}\) [Fig. 1.9] Ferdinand Bol (1616-1680), who, like Maes, came from Dordrecht and worked with Rembrandt in Amsterdam, also depicted a woman in sumptuous, pastoral costume with her unstrung quiver of arrows and bow, as an allusion to or personification of the goddess Diana, in his *Portrait of a Woman Dressed as a Huntress* (Fogg Art Museum, 1640s).\(^{66}\) [Fig. 1.10] Around the same time, the Utrecht artist Willem van Honthorst also portrayed a noblewoman in this guise, in *Louise Hollandine van der Pfalz as the Goddess Diana* (Centraaal Museum Utrecht, 1643). [Fig. 1.11] The popularity of Dutch portraits depicting women as Diana with her hound suggests that Diana was a female ideal for women and female children. The goddess Diana, and her noble, obedient hunting hound by association, were indeed educational role models embodying female virtue and chastity for women and young girls who were expected to grow up imitating their own maternal paragons of virtue.


We have examined the maternal interest in the youngster’s upbringing. However, how does the paternal figure fit into this picture of the familial unit? According to Lawrence Stone, “in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century many fathers seem to have looked at their infant children with much the same degree of affection which men today bestow on domestic pets.” Stone argued that fathers did not actively participate in the lives of their children or share an unconditional bond with their own offspring, due to both high child mortality rates and a more absent role for fathers in the domestic sphere, where mothers reigned. This is a controversial thesis that has since prompted a lively debate concerning maternal and paternal affection in the Golden Age amongst sociologists, cultural historians, and art historians alike. Several prominent scholars have since proposed that maternal and paternal affection were more equal than previously thought, as the father’s role dictated that he provide the active physical and material means of support for his family’s security and survival. For instance, Rudolf M. Dekker writes about Constantijn Hugens, Secretary to Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik, and his unwavering

fatherly affection and interest in the raising of his sons.\textsuperscript{69} The topic of fatherly affection towards children and the paternal position in child-rearing will be explored more thoroughly in Chapter 2.

Both sides of the debate were outlined in Elisabeth Badinter’s \textit{Mother Love. Myth and Reality: Motherhood in Modern History}, which questions maternal instinct and the so-called ‘new’, affectionate ideal of motherhood that emerged during the early modern era in Europe. Badinter proposed that one of the advantages to the major undertaking of motherhood was the improvement of the mother’s personal agency within her own household, as she would be granted greater access to the literal purse strings of the home and greater familial decision-making once she became a maternal figure. Badinter also proposes that motherhood was applauded in Golden Age visual representations, such as genre painting, as an ideal, rewarding, joyous vocation for women who chose to accept the challenging role of child-rearing and maternal love without a forced hand.\textsuperscript{70} Dekker argues that this supposed newfound appreciation for the parents’ active role in their child’s upbringing should be considered inseparable from the modern evolution of family, now

\textsuperscript{69} Rudolf M. Dekker. \textit{Family, Culture and Society in the Diary of Constantijn Huygens Jr, Secretary to Stadholder-King William of Orange} (Brill, 2013).

centered on the child, beginning in the fifteenth century in Holland. Children learned from the examples of their own knowledgeable parents and older, wiser siblings. The child was an “apprentice in adult life.”\textsuperscript{71} A Girl as Huntress celebrates the child’s exemplary upbringing and by extension her parents’ role as models of behavior.

The Maltese terrier, a finely-bred dog that connotes considerable wealth, appears in Pieter van Lint’s (1609-1690) Portrait of a Child Aged Five Months, produced in 1645 (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp). [Fig. 1.12] A lapdog eagerly stands on its haunches as the infant employs his hand to exert control. The dog’s fur is closely clipped. Its impeccable coat and its collar of jingling bells suggest that the dog has been domesticated. Perhaps the master is the young nursling.\textsuperscript{72} The Maltese terrier is intended to exhibit obedience and disciplined behavior as it is commanded, like the examples which we have previously investigated. This dynamic is purposefully unrealistic. The role of the infant as a young master evokes a moralistic message. Of course, the baby would have been physically unable to train the dog at only five months old. Therefore, the Maltese terrier is


likely included in this portrait as an emblematic reminder of the child’s potential to acquire a disciplined upbringing.\textsuperscript{73} Discipline is only perfected with practice and experience. This helps to explain the Maltese terrier’s own boisterous behavior. The nursling’s companion misbehaves and must be disciplined because its development is still incomplete in the same way that the five-month old infant still has plenty of time to learn from its own parents.

The motif of an obedient dog standing on its back legs as if to beg is found in many genre paintings as well as in Dutch children’s portraits, such as J. W. Delff’s \textit{Portrait of a Two-Year-Old Boy} from 1581 (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum) [Fig. 1.13], Bartholomeus van der Helst’s \textit{Portrait of a Young Girl} from 1658 (private collection) [Fig. 1.14], Ludolf de Jongh’s \textit{Portrait of a Young Boy} from 1661 (Richmond, Virginia. Museum of Fine Arts) [Fig. 1.15], and Jacob Ochterveld’s \textit{Portrait of a Family Group} from 1663 (Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Art Museum), among many others [Fig. 1.16]. The begging dog is an embodiment of positive reinforcement and behavioral training as he or she will be rewarded with a treat or loving affection which parallels the parent’s own behavior towards the child being educated. According to Jean Baptist Bedaux, this specific image

originates from Abraham Ortelius’s *Album Amicorum* in 1584.\(^{74}\) [Fig. 1.17] The dog motif as a symbol of discipline, habituation, and obedience continued to be propagated in prints and emblem books from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For example, the Flemish Jesuit author Adrianus Pointers published the emblem book *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Iesu*, which achieved immense success in the Netherlands after it was translated and widely circulated in the Dutch vernacular, around 1640.\(^{75}\) As well, Jan Saenredam models his series *The Four Times of Day* after the remarkable printmaker and draughtsman, Hendrick Goltzius, and includes a dog sitting up on his haunches beside a pair of obedient, well-mannered children.\(^{76}\) [Fig. 1.18] The little boy and girl both carry educational hornbooks which were used in schools. The combination of the emblematic dog motif and the children’s primers emphasizes the *natura-ars-exercitatio* theme. While these emblems did sometimes function as mirrors of reality, they almost always provided insights about the society’s own material culture and culture. In this instance, material culture objects reflect the Dutch people’s belief systems, educational ambitions, and modes of behavior. As

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\(^{75}\) Ibid., pp. 113 & 117.

a result of the early modern embrace of the dog motif, the image becomes an easily readable allusion which parallels animal training with child-rearing, as it was frequently referenced in educational treatises and emblem books in Holland and elsewhere in early modern Europe.

Certainly, the image of the dog and its allusion to *natura-ars-exercitatio* evolved throughout the Golden Age in Dutch portraits of youngsters. One could argue that simply the image of the dog as a companion to the child quite literally begs for the viewer’s attention and prompts these educational undertones. Bartholomeus van der Helst’s *Boy with a Spoon* (Private Collection, 1643) is a charming example, tenderly painted with careful rendering of the toddler’s plump, fleshy, nude limbs, supple, rosy cheeks, and shimmering strands of golden hair.\(^77\) [Fig. 1.19] The beaming boy smiles sweetly out at the viewer with the one side of his cheek turned up to emphasize a pinch-able dimple. It is no surprise then, considering Van der Helst’s painterly affection, that this portrait is believed to be of the artist’s own son, Lodewijk, who was born in 1642. The silver spoon may imply Van der Helst takes great pride and joy in spoiling his child with affection. The toddler’s

boisterous canine companion, with his clean, closely clipped, silky white coat, helps himself
to the boy’s porridge. The youngster places his left hand gently on the back of his pet while
the right hand clutches the silver spoon. Surely, this composition evokes notions of proper
behavior as the child must be learning to eat from his spoon. Once again, the dog is not
expertly behaved; he has still some manners and good behaviors to learn, which his young,
charming master will surely teach him in time with discipline, habituation, and affectionate
reward. Similarly, the little boy is merely beginning his own commendable upbringing.

This commanding single-handed gesture of the child exerting authority over his or
her canine companion becomes a popular motif in children’s portraiture. This bold gesture
embodies power and connotes budding authority. A widely admired example of a young
master commanding his pet is Anthony van Dyck’s (1599-1641) portrayal of The Five
Eldest Children of Charles I (Royal Collection, London, 1637) [Fig. 1.20]. The central focus
of the painting is the full-length portrayal of Prince Charles, later King Charles II, in his
sumptuous, shimmery red silk garb, surrounded by his royal siblings, with his hand gently
resting upon an enormous mastiff. Charles’s enviable command of the large dog makes it
appear as a gentle giant, despite the breed’s associations as an assertive and intimidating
guard dog.78 This commanding, one handed gesture becomes an allusion to the young prince’s future ruling capabilities as the leader of the English nation. This gesture is also replicated in depictions of young girls, such as Paulus Moreelse’s (1571-1638) dignified Young Girl (‘The Princess’) (1620, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum) [Fig. 1.21], depicting a girl in an extravagant, fashionable green damask bodice, trimmed with elaborate gold braid, batiste collar finished in needlepoint lace, and matching intricately ornate lace cuffs, accompanied by an equally striking companion.79 The groomed toy spaniel, with its collar of silver baubles, sits patiently and tilts its delicate face upwards as if waiting for a cue from the child. The girl’s hand lightly scrunches the scruff of the spaniel’s neck to ensure that she sits still enough for the artist to capture both of their likenesses. We have already viewed this commanding gesture in Caesar van Everdingen’s Girl as Huntress. Dutch and Flemish artists creatively instilled gestures of command in their children’s portraits.

79 Carla de Jonge presumes that the young girl is in fact the Countess Elisabeth of Nassau-Dietz (1620-28), the daughter of Stadholder Ernst Casimir of Friesland. However, this theory has since been disproved. The girl wears European clothing that is typical of the early 1620s. It is unlikely that a child’s wealthy parents would commission a portrait of the daughter wearing outdated clothing. Therefore, her identity remains a mystery. Jan Baptist Bedaux & Rudi Ekkart. Pride and Joy: Children’s Portraits In The Netherlands 1500-1700 (Amsterdam: Ludion Press Ghent, 2001), pp. 127-129.
The pedagogical parallel and cultural meaning behind the origins of the dog as an attribute in portraits of early modern Dutch and Flemish children would have been recognizable to their seventeenth-century contemporaries due to the expansion of childhood education and the proliferation of educational emblems. The dog motif, as a parallel to the child’s exemplary upbringing, was intended to celebrate the child’s educational achievements and by extension, those of their affectionate, knowledgeable guardians. Furthermore, early modern children’s portraits, for the Dutch and Flemish people, expressed the solidification of early modern familial roles and civic ideals. The dog, whether it be a noble hunting hound, man’s best friend, or a charming companion, simultaneously parallels the child’s upbringing and educational training with that of the animal and is effectively a translation of pedagogical ideals concerning appropriate child-rearing practices.
Chapter I- Appendix of Images

Fig. 1.1. Hendrick Goltzius. *Portrait of Frederik de Vries and His Dog.*, 1597.
The Cleveland Museum of Art. Cleveland, Ohio.
Fig. 1.2. Otto van Veen’s *Quinti Horatii Flacci emblemata*, published in Antwerp in 1612.
Fig. 1.3. Jacob Gerritsz. Cuyp. *Michiel Pompe van Slingelandt*. 1649. Dordrecht, Dordrechts Museum.
Fig. 1.4. Pieter Nason. *Portrait of a Boy as Hunter*. 1670. Luxembourg, Musée.
Fig. 1.5. Jacques Vaillant. *Portrait of a Boy as a Hunter Holding a Boar Spear with a Greyhound.* 1670. Photo courtesy of Lawrence Steigrad Fine Arts. Private collection.
Fig. 1.6. Erasmus Quellinus and Jan Fijt's *Boy with Falcon and Two Dogs*. 1650. Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten.
Fig. 1.7. Caeser van Everdingen. *A Girl as Huntress*. 1665. Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten.
Fig. 1.8. Jacob Cats. The First Chapter Title Page From *Houwelyck* (Marriage). 1625.
Figure 1.9. Nicholas Maes. *Portrait of a Lady as Diana*. 1660. Courtesy of Lawrence Steigrad Fine Arts, Private collection.
Fig. 1.10. Ferdinand Bol. *Portrait of a Woman Dressed as a Huntress.* 1640s. Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Art Museum.

Fig. 1.11. Willem van Honthorst. *Louise Hollandine van der Pfalz as the Goddess Diana.* 1643. Centraal Museum Utrecht.
Fig. 1.13. J. W. Delff. *Portrait of a Two-Year-Old Boy*. 1581. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.
Fig. 1.15. Ludolf de Jongh. *Portrait of a Young Boy*. 1661. Richmond, Virginia. Museum of Fine Arts.
Fig. 1.16. Jacob Ochterveld. *Portrait of a Family Group.* 1663. Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Art Museum.
Fig. 1.17. Abraham Ortelius’s *Album Amicorum*. 1584
Fig. 1.18. Jan Saenredam. *The Four Times of Day* after the remarkable printmaker and draughtsman, Hendrick Goltzius. Date Unknown. Private Collection.
Fig. 1.19. Bartholomeus van der Helst. *Boy with a Spoon*. 1643. Private Collection.
Fig. 1.20. Anthony van Dyck. *The Five Eldest Children of Charles I*. 1637.
Fig. 1.21. Paulus Moreelse. *Young Girl (‘The Princess’).* 1620. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

The evident concern expressed in 17th-century literary sources and documents for the well-being of Dutch children and a serious interest in their primary education and moral upbringing leads to the consensus that these youngsters were truly cherished and regarded as the apples of the Republic’s eyes.\(^8\) This metaphor is fitting as seventeenth-century Dutch artists possessed an insatiable appetite for symbolism in genre painting and still life; Dutch children’s portraits featuring the apple as attribute were no exception to this trend. The vast proliferation of tantalizing, scintillating seventeenth-century still-life paintings of fruit serves as a testament to a hungry obsession for the flourishing representation of idealistic Dutch table settings, while moralist genre scenes shed light on the compositions of children’s portraiture. The most recognizable and perhaps one of the most prolific symbolic fruits in children’s portraiture would appear to be a sweet, unblemished, ripening, juicy apple. How did the apple come to be a prominent symbol associated with children, moral upbringing, and elementary pedagogy?

Esteemed educators and moralists popular in the Golden Age of the Dutch Republic, like Erasmus and Jacob Cats, preferred to integrate Christian values with classical humanist philosophical ideas. The attribute in question, the apple, is deeply rooted in humanist values and prominently featured in Biblical scripture. In the Dutch Republic, and throughout early modern Europe, the Bible still remained the most esteemed literary source for moralists and for people who often consulted scripture as a guidebook to their everyday lives.\(^8\) The so-called forbidden


fruit, perhaps an apple, bears historical significance due to its inseparable association with the Tree of Knowledge and Eve’s consequential fall from paradise, as detailed in Genesis.\(^{82}\) After Eve picks a fruit from the Tree of Knowledge she is enlightened and gains self-awareness. This is a pivotal point in the biblical story concerning the origin of man and woman because both Eve and Adam are now able to discern the difference between goodness and evil. Consequently, Eve now fully comprehends the unforgiving consequences of her actions and is wracked with guilt as both of them are banished from the peaceful Garden of Eden. As a result of her shortsighted actions, God also names Eve “the mother of all living beings” and emphasizes her duty to give birth to the Earth’s children.\(^{83}\) Therefore the apple as a symbol is explicity tied to children, child-bearing, and eventually childhood. The apple’s potent symbolism is reflected in the Latin language. In Latin word for ‘apple’ and ‘evil’ is synonymous- \textit{malum}\(^ {84}\) – and reflects this biblical alliance. In this sense, the multivalent apple has also garnered a reputation as the symbol of temptation. From this point on, the apple is directly linked to the origin of sinful behaviour.

Arguably, the symbolism rooted in the apple attribute is likened to other fruits as the Latin word \textit{malum} describes both the apple and the pomegranate. A pomegranate is defined as an “apple with many seeds”.\(^ {85}\) While this chapter will examine the apple attribute specifically, similar symbolism undoubtedly may apply to other fruits as the understanding of the apple’s

\(^{82}\) There is no reason to assume that the fruit in question was actually an apple. Historically, apples did not grow in the Middle East. In the Latin text of the Bible, ‘pomum’, is a generic word for fruit. Fruit also has positive association when offered by Virgin Mary to baby Jesus. See M. Levi d’Ancona, \textit{The Garden of the Renaissance: Botanical Symbolism in Italian Painting} (Florence: Olshki, 1977), pp. 176-178; R. Falkenburg, \textit{The Fruit of Devotion: Mysticism and the Imagery of Love in Flemish Paintings of the Virgin and Child, 1450-1550} (Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1994).

\(^{83}\) Genesis 3: 1-22.


\(^{85}\) Merriam-Webster. “A Pineapple is An Apple (Kind of): How did this Tropical fruit get tied to the apple?” https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/word-history-pineapple?src=recirc
top
This article explains the nuanced understanding of the word ‘apple’ which was commonly a placeholder descriptor for foreign fruits.
associations evolved to encompass an abundance of fruit. On the other hand, its Latin counterpart, *in bono*, refers to the differentiation between good and evil. Discernment between moral good and corruption requires knowledge. Hence, the apple’s link to childhood pedagogy surely positions itself as a clever attribute in a Dutch youngster’s portrait from the Golden Age.

The apple and the pomegranate can also be seen as a representation of desire and fertility, a meaning rooted in classical writings. According to Jennifer Meagher of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Christian texts from the Middle Ages and Renaissance borrow from the original pagan symbolism. In these sources, the apple is associated with mythological gods and goddesses like Aphrodite (Venus) and Demeter’s (Ceres’) daughter, Persephone (Proserpina). In *The Judgment of Paris*, Paris of Troy finds himself blinded by vanity and ego when he bestows a golden apple on Aphrodite as he is swayed by her promise of the beautiful Helen of Sparta. Three goddesses, Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, Athena, the goddess of wisdom and war, and Hera, goddess of women and marriage, laid claim to the apple as the fairest of all goddesses. Paris’s unwise choice leads to the destruction of Troy in a war waged by Sparta after he has stolen Helen from their kingdom. Paris dismissed Athena’s offer of all known knowledge and skill, a gift that would have allowed him to become the greatest warrior and most knowledgeable mortal on Earth. He also dismissed Hera’s promise of unwavering position and untold wealth.

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Ovid’s Metamorphoses tells of Persephone’s punishment for consuming several pomegranate seeds from the Underworld during her abduction by Pluto, God of the Underworld. Consequently, Persephone is banished to the Underworld for half of the year. Her banishment brings about the cyclical changing of the seasons as her mother would mourn her only child’s departure in the fall and winter, then rejoice in her return during the bountiful spring and summer months. Furthermore, Persephone is directly linked to the nurturer Mother Earth as Demeter is Persephone’s mother. This is similar to Eve’s title as the mother of all living beings. Perhaps, the story of Persephone is also symbolic of a woman’s cycle and is linked to motherhood like the Genesis tale from the Bible. In the Genesis story, the apple is linked to moral discernment and the pursuit of knowledge. In *The Judgment of Paris* the apple it alludes to desire. In *Persephone, Queen of the Underworld* the pomegranate bears a metaphorical link to Mother Earth, as well as fertility, and by extension, the role of a nurturer. Correspondingly, the apple as a symbol in Dutch children’s portraiture is richly imbued with these symbolic connotations which call to mind the parent’s vital role as their child’s moral compass, primary educator, and fulfilling nurturer.

The Dutch familial unit can be symbolically understood in terms of a bountiful family tree. The symbol of the tree, like the fruit, was also used to illustrate the medieval scheme that typically categorized seven major steps in life, known as the *Ages of Man*. The swirling branches of the tree of life in Ulrich von Lilienfeld’s *Concordantia cariatis*, a medieval manuscript sketch in The Morgan Library in New York, is evocative of the *Ages of Man* scheme. [Fig.2.1] Upon close examination, it appears that this manuscript even depicts a young boy

attending school in a classroom, properly equipped with his writing tablet. Imagery such as this solidifies the tree of knowledge and the apple, a fruit which is propagated in orchards, as a symbol of knowledge. The role of parents as educators of their children may be evoked, then, in the visual articulation of the Dutch familial tree, which perhaps likens the family tree to the tree of knowledge. Branches are added to the family tree when a new paterfamilias continues the family legacy as a result of the birth of a new heir. When these vibrant, young parents begin to conceive and give birth to their babbling bundles of pride and joy, these youngsters can be figuratively symbolized as newborn fruit, like an apple. Adriaen Hanneman’s *Portrait of Constantijn Huygens and His Children* (1640, The Hague, Koninklijk Kabinet van Schilderjen Mauritshuis, The Netherlands) depicts Huygens in a central roundel surrounded by the likenesses of his children, charming putti and fruit. [Fig. 2.2] His beaming young daughter at the top of the frame in her white frock and protective cap is the only child grasping an apple. Therefore, her likeness and the apple work together to emphasize that she is the latest addition to Huygens’ family tree.

Likewise, a fruitful marriage refers to the parents’ ability to produce numerous children. As Jan Baptist Bedaux and Jereon Dekker have noted, the popular comparison of parents to branches, and their offspring to an abundance of fruit, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, originates from the Old Testament of the Christian Bible in Psalms 1 and 128, 1-3:

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90 Ibid., pp. 185.
1. Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways. 2. You will eat the fruit of your labour; blessings and prosperity will be yours. 3. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table. 91

The origins story decrees that a harmonious and dutiful marriage is a fruitful marriage. A bountiful marriage union would produce many children. Furthermore, a child’s upbringing is the reflection of his or her parents’ affection, tactful discipline, and sensible education.

The origins of the fruit metaphor used to describe the intimate relationship between educator and child evokes how necessary it was that children learn from a nurturing example. Parents and educators alike were expected to nourish their children’s spiritual selves with moral teachings, expand their knowledge through formal education, provide for their physical needs, as well as train them as apprentices in adult life. After all, according to Steven Ozment, exceptional parenting in the seventeenth century was an imperative civic responsibility for “[t]oday’s children were tomorrow’s subjects and rulers, and they would shape society as they had themselves been shaped at home.” 92 In other words, both mothers and fathers were required to take up parental responsibility as educators. This dispels the popular misconception that the father’s role in the child’s upbringing was not considered as prominent as that of the youngster’s mother. Ozment concludes that children shared an equally lasting bond with both mother and father. 93 That said, a mother or wet nurse’s nurturing role was naturally more intensive during the immediate infant and toddler years while the youngster was still breastfeeding and confined

within the household. Paternal authority became more prominent around the age of seven when the child began his or her schooling, as noted by Ozment.94 Therefore, the portrayal of a child in a commissioned portrait depicts the positive influence of both parents and celebrates their early milestones as a family. As children grew older, the maternal authority was expected to emphasize moral and spiritual upbringing. On the other hand, the paternal figure would later advise his children on the importance of reputation, family honour, and legacy.95 However, a child’s portrait, unlike that of an adult, is arguably more of a recognition of the youngster’s growing potential for achievement than it is a prideful summation of their grand accomplishments. A Dutch children’s portrait is concerned with conveying the youngster’s promise.

The historian Charles John Sommerville insists that the Protestant Reformation led to the development of educational progress throughout early modern Europe.96 Sommerville acknowledges that the Protestant Reformers were especially invested in primary education for both boys and girls.97 The Dutch Republic was primarily Protestant and thus these sentiments were widely shared. Prior to the Protestant Reformation, schooling was entirely under the control of the Catholic Church in the Dutch Republic. The aftermath of the Protestant Reformation led to an expansion and secularization of the Dutch education system in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Parents were now able to choose between sending their children to Latin or Humanist Schools for young boys, private French schools for girls and young children, and

Low German Schools which taught in the Dutch vernacular.98 Martin Luther published an open letter in 1524, addressed “To the Mayors and Aldermen of all the Cities of Germany in behalf of Christian Schools” in which he insists that the establishment of primary schools for young girls and boys would ensure “the maintenance of civil order and the proper regulation of the household, [which] needs accomplished and well-trained men and women.”99 In addition, Luther expressed the view that youngsters have a natural desire to learn and take pleasure in acquiring knowledge.100 Luther was among the first in Europe to campaign for an education founded upon a combination of Humanist and Christian principles. It is fitting, then, that quality education and fair pedagogical practices would be esteemed in the Protestant Dutch Republic. Parents were required to sow good moral values and virtues in their offspring. Moreover, moral literacy in the Golden Age was a compulsory component of the Dutch education system.

In Roemer Visscher’s widely disseminated emblem book, Sinnepoppen, from 1614, we find the apple nestled in a bowl with other varieties of fruit in a still-life composition with the Dutch phrase “Vrooch rijp, vrooch rot” written above its printed image. [Fig. 2.3]. This translates to: “Early to ripen, early to rot.” This moral phrase is evocative of youthful potential. Educators were advised to appropriately harness and encourage the children in their charge. Perhaps a direct reference to Visscher is conveyed in Jan de Bray’s Boy with a Basket of Fruit in 1658 (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts) where the affluent youngsters carefully balances his basket of

impeccable apples and grapes.\textsuperscript{101} [Fig. 2.4] The roundness and ruddiness of the boy’s cherubic cheeks imitate the qualities of the apples in his basket. References to Visscher’s bowl of fruit emblem may also be found in the Dutch artist Jan Albertsz. Rotius’s \textit{Portrait of a Girl} (1660s. Westfries Museum, Netherlands) and Flemish artist Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert’s \textit{Two Girls as Saint Agnes and Saint Dorothy} (1650s, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten in Atwerp, Belgium) where a bowl of perfect fruit is perched upon a covered table. Johan van Beverwijck, the first Dutch physician and judge of Dordrecht, wrote a medical treatise entitled ‘The Treasury of Health’ (in Dutch, \textit{Schat der Gesontheyt}). Beverwijck advises in his medical treatise that “not only apples, but all soft-skinned fruit tend to have juice that spoils very easily.”\textsuperscript{102} [Fig. 2.5 and Fig. 2.6] Beverwijck would have advised against overindulging in fruit as it was believed to be of insufficient nutritional value. As fruit does tend to spoil easily, it must be cultivated appropriately and carefully handled so as not to bruise or blemish. This creates an analogy with the fragility of a child’s moral character.

Jacob Cat’s proverb “Tucht baert vrucht,” or “Discipline bears fruit,” also alludes to wisely harnessing a youngster’s potential.\textsuperscript{103} If these admonishments were not heeded, Dutch moralists feared that youngsters would peak prematurely or spoil their souls like rotten fruit. Roemer Visscher, like Jacob Cats, was a follower of Plutarch. It is no surprise that Plutarchian philosophy implores that:

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the ripeness of that age [youth] admits no bounds in its pleasures, is skittish, and needs a curb to check it; so that those parents who do not hold in their sons with great strength about that time find to their surprise that they are giving their vicious inclinations full swing in pursuit of vilest actions.\textsuperscript{104}

The phrase “Early to ripen, early to rot” embodies Plutarch’s philosophy. Caesar van Everdingen’s \textit{Two-Year-Old-Boy} (1664, Canon Hall Museum, Bransley) is a cheeky depiction of a youngster set in the Dutch landscape. [Fig. 2.7] The boy, wearing a protective cap decorated with ribbon, balances his small pet finch on his index finger and appears to have taken a large bite out of the crisp, ripe apple held in his other hand. Each of these elements is an allusion to the child’s upbringing. The protective cap is worn when a child is learning to walk.\textsuperscript{105} The expertly trained finch functions like the portrayal of a tamed dog.\textsuperscript{106} Finally, the apple is a reference to the tree of knowledge and the boy’s educational progression as he quite literally consumes knowledge in the form of the fruit.

Around 1656, Amsterdam artist Gerbrand van den Eeckhout, a pupil of Rembrandt, painted another brazen example of the apple as attribute of knowledge in \textit{Portrait of a Six-Year-Old Boy Holding an Apple} (Kingston, Canada. Agnes Etherington Art Centre). The young boy holds the ripening apple out for the viewer to take from him as he playfully leans convincingly beyond his austere frame. [Fig. 2.8] This is a gesture and composition that Eeckhout may have

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learned from his own master. The child is about the right age to begin his formative education in a school setting. This bold, lighthearted, animated gesture and the apple’s association with the tree of knowledge evoke the child’s educational readiness and keenness for schooling. Perhaps, the illusion of the boy leaning out the frame, when combined with the apple, conveys the child’s active imagination, creativity, and bright mind as he finds pleasure in learning. Indeed, both Eeckhout and Everdingen portray their children as active participants engaging with the symbolic apple motif as an allusion to their own appetite for knowledge founded on the basis of moral goodness and discipline.

Another moralist writer, Jacob Cats, directly references the Biblical passage which likens branches to the moral character of a child in his treatise on marriage, *Houwelick*, published in 1648. An engraving, likely by Adriaen van de Venne, accompanies Cats’ reference and depicts two puzzled men in early modern contemporary clothing, attempting to straighten out a crooked, old tree with very few branches. [Fig. 2.9]. Cat’s moralist message is printed above the emblem in Dutch: “Rami correcti rectificantur; trabs minime.” This roughly translates in English to “Unlike old trees; young branches can be bent.” Youngsters are likened to young trees which are more receptive to their nurturer’s guidance and instruction. The branches of old trees are brittle and will break under pressure. Cats believed that children ought to be ensured a moral upbringing while they are young and receptive to their educators’ desired teachings. Justus Menius, a sixteenth-century German Lutheran pastor, urged parents to invest wisely in their children’s upbringing for “a tree rooted after it is grown will not yield fruit.” Dekker stresses

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that moralists like Visscher and Cats combined the pleasure of looking with moralistic texts in order to make their teachings more appealing and admonitory to readers.\textsuperscript{110} Emblem books strove to make moralizing amusing and accessible in hopes that their underlying messages concerning proper marriage, upbringing, and educational conduct would firmly take root. Moral emblems were complimented by powerful visuals.\textsuperscript{111} These moralist notions resonated with the majority of early modern parents and trickled down the social ladder. For example, Otto Brunfels’ \textit{On Disciplining and Instructing Children} was printed in both Latin and German in the mid-sixteenth century. Since Brunfels printed his treatise in the German vernacular, this made his counsel concerning contemporary, classical, and patristic pedagogical theory much more widely accessible to parents than treatises which were solely published in Latin.\textsuperscript{112} The average educated viewer would have been aware of the apple’s moralist connotations and find its inclusion meaningful in a child’s charming portrait.

Frans Hals’ \textit{Portrait of Catharina Hooft and Her Nurse} from about 1620 (Germäldegalerie, Berlin) depicts the daughter of a wealthy Amsterdam regent family. [Fig. 2.10] This painting uniquely highlights the intimate relationship between a child and her beloved nurse, dressed in plain clothes and holding out an apple to the affluent youngster dressed in golden brocade and wearing a cumbersome gold chain.\textsuperscript{113} As Marieke de Winkel has noted, a nurse’s unique connection “made parents reluctant to let her go and [sometimes] gave the nurse


\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{112} Steven Ozment’s \textit{When Father’s Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe} (Cambridge, England: Harvard University Press, 1983) pp. 136.}

\footnotesize{The Dutch people read the German vernacular as their own language.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{113} Marieke de Winkel. “Ambition and Apparel” in \textit{Class Distinctions: Dutch Painting in the Age of Rembrandt and Vermeer} (MFA Publications, Italy: 2015) pp. 66.}
leverage to exploit the situation” as these individuals were deeply cherished as an extension of the family.¹¹⁴ Both the child and her nurse gaze out of their portrait with warm smiles, dimpled chins, and flushed pink cheeks. The nurse appears completely smitten with Catharina and the young girl’s happy demeanor appears to reciprocate these sentiments. Despite the affectionate portrayal of Catharina’s nurse, the nurse’s position behind the girl and her plain clothing remind us that she is subordinate to the child’s wealth and social status. Yet, wet nurses in the Dutch Republic were live-in servants and often benefitted from an elevated status in a wealthy Dutch home due to their intimate bond with the privileged child being nursed.¹¹⁵ The inclusion of the apple as a symbol of nurture and knowledge pays homage to the nurse’s role as Catharina’s earliest educator, as she was tasked with her physical, emotional, and educational nourishment.¹¹⁶ It is fitting then that Catharina’s nurse, the child’s most closely acquainted educator, holds an apple out to the youngster. This gesture suggests that Catharina’s educator is symbolically transferring her valuable knowledge and experience to the youngster.

We do not know if Catharina’s nurse was a widow, but sometimes the nurses of affluent families were working widows charged with ensuring the well-rounded moral upbringing of the children in their care. Erasmus charged widows and nurses with the responsibility of advising girls and eventual young maidens on the proper forms of behavior with their husband-to-be, future children, family relatives, and friends in a manner which safeguards their virtue.¹¹⁷ This originally emerges from the Bible, specifically, Titus 2:3-5:

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 68.
¹¹⁶ Ibid.
3. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live…to teach what is good. 4. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, 5. To be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.\textsuperscript{118}

Erasmus urged parents to carefully select a “sober, chaste and cheerful” nurse.\textsuperscript{119} This may stem from the Renaissance belief that good moral character was transmitted during breast feeding. The unblemished apple may be equated with Catharina’s own uncompromised moral goodness and her nurse’s obligation as a virtuous educator. The apple seems to be visually tied to Catharina’s moral character because its aesthetically pleasing golden hue compliments the elaborate golden brocade on her dress. The visual connection purposefully reflects the child’s youthfulness and remarkable vitality. The juxtaposition between the young girl and her middle-aged nurse emphasizes the child’s youthful vitality even more.

Visscher’s emblem of the bowl of fruit and its association with the moral message: “Early to ripen, early to rot” possesses a dual meaning. Children are likened to young buds, blossoming with potential that educators must appropriately guide. Parents must be mindful not to spoil their children with an overabundance of affection that may result in damaging character traits such as greed and gluttony. The emblem’s message and imagery evokes interchangeable associations with the passage of time, beauty, and virtuous education. Beauty in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was synonymous with moral goodness and character.\textsuperscript{120} To offer an apple as a gesture

\textsuperscript{118} Titus 2: 3-5 in \textit{Holy Bible, New International Version}, (Biblica Inc., 2011).
\textsuperscript{120} Arthur K. Wheelock. \textit{A Moral Compass: Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Painting in the Netherlands} (Grand Rapids Art Museum, Michigan, United States of America: 1999).
acknowledges the nurse’s role as Catharina’s educator and the fulfillment of her moral responsibilities, according to Christian scripture and Erasmus’ educational treatise.

In Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert’s *Mother and Two Children* (Exact Date Unknown, 17th Century, Otto Naumann, New York), a maternal figure is depicted exchanging an unblemished fruit with her youngest child as the eldest daughter gently encourages her sister to accept the apple with her hand. [Fig. 2.11] In Cornelis de Vos’s Portrait of *Anton Reyniers, Maria Le Witer and Their Five Children* (1631, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia) it is the eldest daughter that offers up a fruit to her youngest sibling as the child sits upon the mother’s lap. [Fig. 2.12] It is perhaps expected that the eldest daughter from a Dutch family would participate in the physical and moral upbringing of her own younger siblings as part of her training as an admirable future wife and mother.

In his analysis of related motifs in genre painting, Wayne Franits links the apples in a bowl of fruit on a table and the pedagogical associations illustrated in Visscher’s emblem with a moral upbringing. An example is Gerard ter Borch’s genre painting, *A Widow Peeling Apples* (Vienna, Gemäldegalerie, Kunsthistorisches Museum, 1660s).121 [Fig. 2.13] Franits suggests that the woman in the painting could be a widow mentoring the young girl, who wears a luxurious costume. Although the widow’s identity remains ambiguous, the young girl carefully observes the older woman performing the domestic duty of preparing apples for a meal. An exchange of knowledge is apparent in the scene. Young girls learned from the example set by their womanly role models. Indeed, this genre painting depicts a moment of feminine virtue: industry, with a pedagogical undertone. Another genre scene, Hendrick Bloemart’s *The Apple Seller* (1623),

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depicts an elderly wrinkled woman with dirty finger nails and a toothless grin, dressed in a vibrant red garment, offering a basket of apples to a young, hesitant boy; this image depicts a similar theme but with a negative undertone.\textsuperscript{122} [Fig. 2.14] The boy with his pink, flushed cheeks, shimmering golden hair, and elaborate ruffled collar, is favorably illuminated in profile at the viewer’s right, thus signifying both his innocence and his prominent social position. The two characters create a visual juxtaposition between young and old, and perhaps also good and evil. The old woman personifies immoral corruption and sinful temptation, and may even remind the viewer of Eve’s fall from grace, whereas the young boy embodies naivety, virtue, and innocence as his beautiful, unblemished appearance visually signifies. In another genre painting, a mother from a modest household delicately holds up an apple to her seated toddler who holds his hand out as if to take a bite (Quiringh Gerritsz. Van Brekelenkam, \textit{Mother and Child in an Interior}, 1660, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio).\textsuperscript{123} [Fig. 2.15] As Barnes and Rose state, there is an emphasis on the mother’s responsibility of sharing her knowledge with her own children.\textsuperscript{124} This genre painting reminds the viewer of the dynamic between Hals’ Catharina Hooft and Her nurse.

Perhaps the apple is a reminder of the importance of moderation and prompts moral contemplation. Moralists such as Erasmus and Cats campaigned for the avoidance of excess or extremes in all areas of life.\textsuperscript{125} In these examples, the apple is a symbol of discernment and moral admonishment which encourages the necessity of leading a life in moderation as “Alte veel is

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., pp. 63.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., pp. 62.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid. pp. 32.
ongesont” (too much is unhealthy). Osias Beert the Elder’s decaying still life in *Fruits, Nuts, Wine, and Sweets on a Ledge* (1610) seems to embody Visscher’s moralist message. [Fig. 2.16] The perishable fruit in the still life attracts insects such as a fly and moth. This imagery conveys the ephemeral quality of beauty and earthly pleasures. It is a commentary on *vanitas* and the brevity of life in much the same way a vibrant, beaming, rosy-cheeked and beautiful child evokes the epitome of moral goodness and health with a promising future ahead. When a child and a ripe, sweet, unblemished apple are depicted together, the apple could be perceived as an ode to innocence. A rotted apple has been spoiled metaphorically in the same sense that a person of rotten character develops a fondness for corruption, disobedience, and self-indulgence. Likewise, portraits of Dutch and Flemish youngsters clutching a piece of ripening fruit in their own portraits serves as a symbolic reminder of a child’s vulnerability and moral innocence. Finally, the apple cautions the viewer about earthly excess and the negative implications of the moral corruption of the self.

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127 Ibid., pp. 32 & 33.
Chapter II- Appendix of Images

Fig. 2.1. Ulrich von Lilienfeld. *Concordantia cariatis*. Medieval manuscript sketch. The Morgan Library collection in New York, United States of America.
Fig. 2.2. Adriaen Hanneman. *Constantijn Huygens and His Children*. 1640. The Hague, Koninklijk Kabinet van Schilderjen Mauritshuis, The Netherlands.
Fig. 2.3. Roemer Visscher. “Vroech rijp, vroech rot” in *Sinnepoppen*. 1614.
Fig. 2.4. Jan de Bray. *Boy with a Basket of Fruit*. 1658. Museum of Fine Arts. Boston, U.S.A
Fig. 2.5. Jan Albertsz. Rotius’s *Portrait of a Girl*. Figure 5. 1660s.

Westfries Museum, Netherlands.
Fig. 2.6. Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert. *Two Girls as Saint Agnes and Saint Dorothy.* 1650s.

Fig. 2.7. Ceasar van Everdingen. *Two-Year-Old-Boy*. 1664. Cannon Hall Museum, Bransley.
Fig. 2.8. Gerbrand van den Eeckhout. *Portrait of a Six-Year-Old Boy Holding an Apple*. 1656

Agnes Etherington Art Centre. Queen’s University. Kingston, Canada.
Fig. 2.9. Adriaen van de Venne and Jacob Cats. “Rami correcti rectificantur; trabs minime.” in *Houwelick*. 1640s. Engraving. J.W. Jordan Library, Queen’s University. Kingston, Canada.
Fig. 2.10. Frans Hals. *Catharina Hooft and Her Nurse*. 1620.

Germäldegalerie, Berlin, Germany.
Fig. 2.11. Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert. *Mother and Two Children*. Exact Date Unknown, 17th Century. Otto Naumann, New York City, New York, U.S.A.
Fig. 2.12. Cornelis de vos. Portrait of Anton Reyniers, Maria Le Witer and Their Five Children.

Fig. 2.13. Gerard ter Borch. *A Widow Peeling Apples*. 1660s. Gemäldegalerie, Kunsthistorisches Museum. Vienna, Austria.
Fig. 2.14. Hendrick Bloemaert. *The Apple Seller (Grocery Seller with Young Boy)*. 1623.

Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, U.S.A.
Fig. 2.15. Quiringh Gerritsz. Van Brekelenkam’s *Mother and Child in an Interior*. 1660. Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio, U.S.A.
Fig. 2.16. Osias Beert, the Elder. *Fruits, Nuts, Wine, and Sweets on a Ledge.* 1610.
Chapter III- The Dutch *Rinkelbel*: An Object of Pleasure and Prosperity, 
Apotropaic Power, and Childhood Education

Govert Flinck’s (1615-1660) *Girl by a High Chair* [Fig. 3.1], in the Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis in The Hague, tenderly portrays a child with soft, rosy cheeks and a buttercream complexion standing confidently beside her carved high chair. The child wears a small protective cap adorned with a ring of wildflowers on top of her head. The Golden Age Dutch physician, Stephanus Blankaart, in his 1684 medical advisory treatise: *Verhandelinge van der opvoedinge en ziektes der kinderen*, describes this essential costume piece, the protective cap, as necessary so that if the child were to fall the youngster “would not injure itself as the impact would be softened by the cap”.\(^{128}\) This costume element is revealing of child-rearing practices from the period as it is generally found in accompaniment with leading strings at the back of the child’s gown. The child’s parents or guardians would direct the child away from danger with these leading strings. Rembrandt van Rijn sketched a charming drawing of *A Woman Holding a Child in Leading Strings; On the Left A Separate Study of The Bust of The Child* and demonstrates how this costume attribute would allow for a caretaker to guide the child appropriately. [Fig. 3.2] This is another attribute that evokes the Plutarchian philosophy of *natura-ars-exercitatio*, that is to say, the importance of discipline and habituation in child-rearing practices, which were held in high esteem, as evidenced in educational treatises, popularized throughout the early modern period in Europe. Often protective caps for Dutch and Flemish youngsters were worn in

conjunction with leading strings. The youngster’s protective cap with its padded brim provided safety and protection.\footnote{Saskia Kuus. “Children’s Costume in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century” in \textit{Pride and Joy: Children’s Portraits In The Netherlands 1500-1700} (Amsterdam: in Ludion Press Ghent, 2001), pp. 77.} In Flinck’s painting, the child’s familial wealth and exclusive social status is prominently displayed around her petite neck in the form of a heavy gold necklace. The thick, cumbersome gold chain appears out of place on such a small child. Thus, its awkward inclusion emphasizes familial wealth. Attached to the long gold chain is a toy known in Dutch as a \textit{rinkelbel}. The youngster’s opulent \textit{rinkelbel} appears to have a piece of bone or rock crystal attached to its gold mount. Only the most affluent European families could afford such an extravagant trinket, which thus becomes an evocative symbol of prosperity. Yet, Flinck’s depiction of the girl’s costume pales in comparison to Hendrick Berckman’s \textit{Young Boy with a Dog} (1667, Lawrence Steigard Fine Arts), dressed in an even more lavish, aristocratic costume. [Fig. 3.3] Fine gold thread is woven into the fabric of his gown. Delicate lace embroidery trims the edges along his apron. The youngster wears a protective cap decorated with silk ribbons and he is depicted clutching his prized \textit{rinkelbel} made of gold and rock crystal.\footnote{Donna R. Barnes and Peter G. Rose. \textit{Childhood Pleasures: Dutch Children in the Seventeenth Century} (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2012), pp. 105.} Even without the opulent frills of the youngsters’ costumes, the inclusion of the \textit{rinkelbel} in these portraits communicates the child’s familial prestige and commemorates a successful continuation of a family’s legacy.

\textit{A rinkelbel} was a toy reserved for the youngest child in the family, combining the amusements of jingling bells and sometimes a whistle with a piece of crystal or coral that functioned as a soother for teething babies.\footnote{Annemarieke Willemsen. “Images of Toys: The Culture of Play in the Netherlands around 1600.” In \textit{Pride and Joy: Children’s Portraits in the Netherlands 1500-1700} (Amsterdam, Harry N. Abrams, Inc.: 2001) pp. 65.} In the words of Annemarieke Willemsen, “A rattle
made the child important, no matter how small.” Willemsen further remarks that the *rinkelbel* appears frequently in commissioned portraits from the Dutch Golden Age. This curious, ostentatious childhood object, simultaneously one of pleasure, child-rearing, and apotropaic power will serve as the central focus for this chapter. The allocation of a younger’s attributes, including the choice of toy depicted in his or her portrait, is inherently meaningful and is revealing of the culture of childhood in the Golden Age. This chapter will examine the *rinkelbel’s* intertwined symbolism of prestige, physical development or nourishment, and finally the pedagogical philosophy infused in Dutch and Flemish children’s portraiture.

The *rinkelbel* can be considered an antecedent of today’s childhood rattles intended to amuse and occupy a restless youngster. Indeed, today’s rattles find their origins in English and American interpretations of the Dutch *rinkelbel*, or a rattle with whistles and bells, a toy that continued to be produced and used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Indeed, according to experts at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, these “[r]attles, in their most basic form, as simple toys to divert babies, go back to at least the 2nd century B.C.E.” Historians concur that Dutch *rinkelbels* inspired and contributed to the popularity of multifunctional rattles up until the opulent Victorian age throughout Europe and North America. An exemplary eighteenth-century (1755-68) coral and gold rattle with an ornate whistle and four jingling bells belongs to the collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art it was made by the New York City goldsmith, Nicholas Roosevelt, in American Rococo style. [Fig. 3.4] The museum also boasts a British nineteenth-century (1835-36) interpretation of the *rinkelbel*. The provenance suggests

133 The Victoria and Albert Museum. *Rattles*. http://www.vam.ac.uk/moc/collections/rattles/
that it likely belonged to the daughter of Duncan Phyfe, a New York cabinetmaker.\footnote{\textit{The Metropolitan Museum. Child’s rattle and teether.} http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/206728} [Fig. 3.5] This object has a narrow, rounded piece of red coral fitted to the bottom of its silver base, which is ornamented with whistle and bells. There are evident similarities in form and material with two seventeenth and eighteenth-century Dutch examples from the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.\footnote{\textit{The Rijksmuseum. Rattle.} \url{https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search/objects?q=rattle&p=1&ps=12&st=OBJECTS&ii=2#/BK-14684,2} [Fig. 3.5 and 3.6] The anonymous maker of another rattle [Fig. 3.7] from the Rijksmuseum incorporates rock crystal into the design like the rattles pictured in Flinck’s \textit{Girl in a High Chair} and Berkman’s \textit{Young Boy with a Dog}. Pieter Verschuyl’s \textit{rinkelbel} from roughly a century later is fashioned from gold and mother of pearl. The gold makes up the jingling bells and heart-shaped whistle. The mother-of-pearl soother functions just like the rock crystal and coral. The gold chain has been preserved in Verschuyl’s \textit{rinkelbel} and not in the other examples. The gold chain indicates that the \textit{rinkelbel} would have been worn around the neck or waist of a teething youngster as visually depicted in numerous children’s paintings which feature \textit{rinkelbels}, including Flinck’s \textit{Girl in a High Chair} and Berkman’s \textit{Young Boy with a Dog}. The visual and material resemblance is uncanny, even though these objects from the Metropolitan Museum of Art were made centuries after the Dutch \textit{rinkelbels} in both Flinck’s and Berckman’s children’s portraits. The rock-crystal-adorned \textit{rinkelbel} belonging to the young girl in Flinck’s portrait is similar to the object clutched by a male youngster in Hendrick Berckman’s \textit{Young Boy with a Dog}.\footnote{Donna R. Barnes. \textit{Childhood Pleasures: Dutch Children in the Seventeenth Century} (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2012), pp. 105.} Both are made from gold, a whistle protrudes from the top, several bells are fastened to its centre and rock crystal is attached at the bottom as a soothing device. While there are undoubtedly outliers, the original function and format of the \textit{rinkelbel} remains virtually
unchanged centuries later. The function of this non-gender-specific toy was two-fold: as a superstitious amulet intended to ward off evil and disease, as well as a soothing, teething device. According to Willemsen, *rinkelbels* were exclusively given to babies until they had completed teething and then later preserved for future generations as a family heirloom.\(^{138}\) The alluring functions of these *rinkelbels* and their later variants continue to combine elements of pleasure, protection, and prosperity.

Donna Barnes remarks that the young boy’s portrait by Berckman, like other Dutch and Flemish portraits from the period, was likely commissioned by the child’s parents as an exaltation of the future heir to the family’s fortune and estate, and the continuation of their legacy. His aristocratic privilege or affluent prestige is expressed in an ostentatious display of expensive silk ribbons and lace trimming on his protective bonnet, sleeves, collars, and cuffs. The child’s luxurious garments do not accurately reflect everyday clothing. It was customary that everyday clothing would have been soiled or dirtied throughout a day of play, exploration, and education in the household.\(^{139}\) Therefore, a child’s finer clothing would have been reserved for a special occasion -- for instance, a portrait commission. The young boy’s extravagant attire was potentially further embellished and idealized by Berkman to place emphasis on the child’s (and family’s) prestige. Upon further inspection of Berkman’s portrait, we see that youngster is commanding his imported Italian greyhound with his fine gold rattle; he even gestures toward the dog with his opposite hand. (The connotations of this interaction have been explored in Chapter 1.) As it is featured prominently, the *rinkelbel* is included first of all to symbolize the


child’s familial wealth. At the same time, the *rinkelbel* is closely linked to the first stage of life and physical childhood development. Barnes asserts that the *rinkelbel* was often an object that would have been preserved for the boy’s own children and handed down between generations as a prestigious heirloom. Although the Dutch *rinkelbel* may have functioned as a toy to amuse teething toddlers, these accessories were also displayed and preserved as an object of status. In this way, *rinkelbels* function like other prestigious material goods, such as the British state beds from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that were often commissioned for prestigious family homes as a symbol of affluence and sometimes never even slept in.\(^{140}\) Berckman’s portrait of the male heir is undeniably intended as an overt display and unabashed celebration of pomp, prestige, and parental pride. This luxurious display would have been condemned by early modern pedagogical writers such as Otto Brunfels who revered moderation in all things related to a satisfactory childhood upbringing, so as not to spoil the youngster and foster ill-begotten traits such as greed, vanity, or gluttony.\(^ {141}\) Nonetheless, a *rinkelbel* from the Golden Age is undoubtedly an expression of familial prestige when it is prominently included in a portrait of a child dressed in sumptuous costume.

In 1627, Cornelis de Vos painted a lively, charming portrait of his own daughter, Susanna de Vos, as a toddler, seated upright in her high chair (Frankfurt, Germany. Städelisches Kunstinstitut).\(^ {142}\) [Fig. 3.8] Susanna’s gaze is intent on the viewer as she plays with her food and


\(^{141}\) Steven Ozment’s *When Father’s Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, England: Harvard University Press, 1983) pp. 141. Otto Brunfels wrote *On Discipline and Instructing Children*, first published in Latin in 1519 and later translated into the German vernacular in 1525. As a result, his widely disseminated pedagogical treatise was accessible to the middle and affluent upper classes of early modern Europe.

grins slightly mischievously. This playful action leads the viewer to examine her wrists, adorned with beautiful three-stranded coral bracelets. The coral beads had the same function as that of a coral *rinkelbel*. Coral was said to control “fits of anxiety” in children and ward off disease, according to Rembertus Dodonaeus’ *Cruydt Boeck* herbal manual.\(^{143}\) While still costly, the coral bracelets would not have been as sumptuous as commissioning a handcrafted *rinkelbel* from a tradesman who would have had to procure an expensive, large piece of coral for teething. Cornelis de Vos, portrait artist and a father of three, would have been more likely to afford a band of coral beads as opposed to the luxurious *rinkelbel* as he was not a member of the noble or affluent class.

So far, we have learned that the *rinkelbel* is associated with prosperity and high social status. However, the *rinkelbel* also functions as an object of childhood pleasure, protection and early modern education. In Cornelis de Vos’ painting of his daughter, the coral bracelets share the *rinkelbel*’s function as an object of enchantment or protection. Donna R. Barnes and Peter G. Rose describe the *rinkelbel* as a “rattle with a protruding piece of bone, crystal, or coral with the additional function of supposedly keeping away evil spirits”.\(^{144}\)

Another multifaceted function of the *rinkelbel* was to relieve young children of the discomfarts associated with teething and anxiety. Essentially, *rinkelbels* functioned like present-day soothers for infants and toddlers. It was believed that the bone, crystal, or coral which protruded from the bottom of the *rinkelbel* would relieve this discomfort due to the materials’ mysterious, inherent, medicinal properties.\(^{145}\) According to the Victoria and Albert Museum,


\(^{145}\) The Victoria and Albert Museum. *Rattles*. http://www.vam.ac.uk/moc/collections/rattles/
Rinkelbels have traditionally incorporated and favored these red or white materials as they metaphorically symbolize human blood and animal bone.\textsuperscript{146} Researchers also insist that the rinkelbel incorporates animal bone and teeth as it “was also thought to confer the strength of the animal to fight off the pain of teething.”\textsuperscript{147} Dentistry treatments and surgery in seventeenth-century Netherlands were extremely dangerous and would sometimes result in death from complications. Parents believed in superstition as it was a comfort to them. Parents hoped to protect their beloved children from suffering such maladies with the rinkelbel. In this manner, rinkelbels were infused with superstitious values and functioned as objects of sympathetic magic. The sugar confections, an anise seed, a glazed almond, and a cinnamon stick, that are carefully articulated by Flinck in his Girl by a High Chair, reiterate that the girl is learning to chew properly. They are also revealing of the child’s elitist economic status as her family is able to provide her with these indulgent, scrumptious sweets which would fetch a high price in the Dutch marketplace. Often, these savoury delights were preserved for special occasions and milestones for those who could afford them. Families from the working class likely never had the chance to taste such luxuries. The high chair, like the rinkelbel, is also a familiar emblem for infancy. Infancy was considered one of the recognized stages of human life in early modern Europe (whether four, seven [as discussed in Chapter Two] or even ten stages), as represented, for instance, in Cornelis Dusart’s (1660-1704) L’Enfance (childhood) which belongs to the widely disseminated print series, Les Quartres Ages de la vie humaine (The Four Ages of Human Life).\textsuperscript{148} The rinkelbel was traditionally an affluent youngster’s very first functional toy. It

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\textsuperscript{146} The Victoria and Albert Museum. Rattles. http://www.vam.ac.uk/moc/collections/rattles/
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
allowed the child to soothe the discomforts of teething in much the same way that the sugary confections scattered across the high chair in Flinck’s portrait would have allowed.

Furthermore, coral, like rock crystal, was thought to ward off evils such as harmful thoughts and disease, and even to promote an overall sense of well-being beyond its putative therapeutic and medicinal properties.\textsuperscript{149} In \textit{Well-Being in Amsterdam’s Golden Age}, Derek Philips observes that despite Amsterdam’s reputation for having the lowest childhood death rates in Europe, Dutch youngsters were still highly vulnerable to an early death within their first year of life.\textsuperscript{150} Early modern European families, including those in the Netherlands, lived in constant fear of infant and child mortality as children were most susceptible to disease and illness during the earliest stage of life. A \textit{Family Portrait (Probably the Family of Jan Gerritsz. Pan)} painted in 1638 by an anonymous Dutch artist (Stichting Verzameling Semeijns de Vries van Doesburgh) is a heart-wrenching depiction of the realities of infant mortality in the sixteenth century. [Fig. 3.9]. Nine swaddled infants have been carefully depicted in their wicker baskets to commemorate their untimely demise.\textsuperscript{151} The two living children flank either side of their infant siblings. The youngest child, identifiable by the protective cap, proudly holds up a silver \textit{rinkelbel} adorned with an animal’s tooth and wears two strands of coral beads around the neck. The \textit{rinkelbel} in this portrait is simultaneously a reminder of the family’s tragic losses and an object of protection for their youngest living child. Objects of protection such as the \textit{rinkelbel} provided comfort for anxious parents as they were believed to protect the child from harm. This rationale is likely one


\textsuperscript{150} Derek Phillips. \textit{Well-Being in Amsterdam’s Golden Age} (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), pp. 125.

of the main elements responsible for the proliferation of the *rinkelbel* as a childhood attribute in daily usage and in Dutch portraiture.

Coral *rinkelbels*, especially, may have been perceived as objects of protection due to the apotropaic properties thought to belong to coral. According to Rembertus Dodonaeus, a renowned herbalist from Antwerp, writing in 1554, coral balls which were threaded onto a sturdy string and worn around a youngster’s neck would serve to protect the young child from ‘fits of anxiety’.\(^{152}\) Furthermore, the anthology compiled by George Frederick Kunz (1856-1932), *The Magic of Jewels and Charms*, asserts that even before the Renaissance, coral was widely believed to “dissolve the spell cast by the Evil Eye”.\(^ {153}\) During the early modern period, it was also commonly believed that red coral changed its hue to reflect the health of the coral wearer. Johann Wittich, a sixteenth-century German physician, supports this assumption when he recounts an experience he had with a young man named Bernard Erasmus, son of the burgomaster of Arnstadt. Wittich describes how a piece of red coral evolved in appearance from white to yellow and finally became entirely coated in black spots as Bernard Erasmus’ medical condition worsened.\(^ {154}\) Additionally, it has been recorded that in 1655 King Louis XIV of France (1638-1715) consumed tablets containing gold, pearls, and coral in order to thicken his blood, as had been prescribed by his physician.\(^ {155}\) While this medicinal practice may seem outrageous compared with today’s treatment for thrombocytopenia (low blood platelet count), King Louis XIV did this because it was believed that ingesting powdered coral, which was described as

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\(^{152}\) Rembertus Dodonaeus. *Cruydt Boeck*, Antwerp 1554, as quoted by Broos 1971, pp. 23.


\(^{155}\) Ibid.
sweet and sour to taste, would aid in thickening the blood. As well, adults suffering from such ailments often carried a *pater de sang* or a red coral ‘blood rosary’. A visual survey of Dutch children’s portraits with *rinkelbels* reveals that red coral is one of the favourite materials incorporated into the rattle as a soothing device. In addition to coral’s perceived protective properties, this is likely in part because red coral was recognized as a symbol of youthful vitality. Red coral necklaces are common in children’s portraits for the same reasons (see here, for instance, Figs. 3.9 and 3.11). The inclusion of coral suggests that the family is doing everything it can to ensure that the young portrait sitter is in good health and therefore the family’s youngest child and potential heir would be safeguarded. Thus, the proliferation of these objects of care and protection was an embodiment of the care and affection of parents and guardians for their beloved youngsters, as well as a reflection of early modern superstition and cultural practice.

Today’s marine biologists recognize that living coral organisms and polyps are the sea’s greatest builders. Soft-bodied coral polyps, which are related to sea anemones and jellyfish, provide the foundation for expansive coral reef colonies when their sturdy, protective limestone skeletons, known as calicles, fuse themselves to the rocks along the floor of the sea. These coral polyps divide, bud, and multiply until they grow into a unified stretch of reef. Coral provides nourishment for many sea creatures and is essential to the health of its underwater environment. While the early modern Dutch people were likely unaware of the biological nature of coral, their observance of the coral’s living properties would certainly have prompted curiosity. Seafaring, exploration, and trade were essential features of Dutch Golden Age culture. Healthy coral reefs are vibrant and are teeming with sea life and essential to the harmony of an

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156 National Geographic Magazine Online. *Coral, Anthozoa* animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/invertebrates/coral/
ecosystem. Likewise, in the seventeenth century, the Dutch believed that the child’s successful upbringing was essential to the harmonious existence of the familial unit.

Anthropologist Heather Montgomery argues that children are an “economic investment with a specific return, whether this is that they should go to work as soon as they are able to contribute to the family, or whether, in the longer term, they are expected to look after parents in their old age, thereby guaranteeing a safety net for the elderly.”  

Moreover, middle class children may ensure the continuation of the family business after apprenticing under their parents for several years before taking on a role as the household breadwinner. Affluent male children inherited the family fortune and estate which they would be expected to continue to preserve as well as pass on to future generations. Girls also contributed to the familial unit when they apprenticed under their mothers as managers of the domestic realm. They took on chores and duties which allowed for the smooth operation of the household or family business. Girls were expected to be virtuous and chaste so as to secure a fruitful marriage of kinship and familial alliance with a son from a prominent and successful family. Thus, the advent of children in a marriage union developed the social and economic capital of the youngster’s parents and the entire familial unit. Montgomery further elaborates that a youngster’s birth brings about a profound change in the status of the youngster’s mother and father. After all, “[c]hildren are also status-givers and the way in which proper families are formed…prolific child-bearing is honoured and respected.”

From a metaphorical perspective, a coral reef represents the familial ecosystem. Likewise, in the seventeenth century, the Dutch believed that the child’s successful upbringing was essential to the harmonious existence of the familial unit. Anthropologist Heather Montgomery argues that children are an “economic investment with a specific return, whether this is that they should go to work as soon as they are able to contribute to the family, or whether, in the longer term, they are expected to look after parents in their old age, thereby guaranteeing a safety net for the elderly.” Moreover, middle class children may ensure the continuation of the family business after apprenticing under their parents for several years before taking on a role as the household breadwinner. Affluent male children inherited the family fortune and estate which they would be expected to continue to preserve as well as pass on to future generations. Girls also contributed to the familial unit when they apprenticed under their mothers as managers of the domestic realm. They took on chores and duties which allowed for the smooth operation of the household or family business. Girls were expected to be virtuous and chaste so as to secure a fruitful marriage of kinship and familial alliance with a son from a prominent and successful family. Thus, the advent of children in a marriage union developed the social and economic capital of the youngster’s parents and the entire familial unit. Montgomery further elaborates that a youngster’s birth brings about a profound change in the status of the youngster’s mother and father. After all, “[c]hildren are also status-givers and the way in which proper families are formed…prolific child-bearing is honoured and respected.” From a metaphorical perspective, a coral reef represents the familial ecosystem. Likewise, in the seventeenth century, the Dutch believed that the child’s successful upbringing was essential to the harmonious existence of the familial unit.

158 Ibid.
159 Ibid.
unit and its branches represent a union’s offspring: beloved children. This imagery is deeply rooted in Christian scripture, according to authors like Jan Baptist Bedaux and Jereon Dekker. The popular comparison of parents to branches, and their offspring to an abundance of fruit (also discussed earlier in Chapter One), originates from the Old Testament of the Christian Bible in Psalms 1 and 128:3: “Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table.”\(^{161}\) The red coral branches on the ends of Dutch *rinkelbels*, especially when depicted in children’s portraits such as Willem van der Vliet’s *Unidentified Boy* (1638, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), reimagine this metaphor for the intimate relationship between parent and child. [Fig. 3.10] The biblical scripture encourages parents to play a vital role in their child’s upbringing as their actions are a direct reflection of parental affection, tactful discipline, and sensible education.

The small, dangling bells that often adorn the *rinkelbel* – a feature that today’s observer may perceive as a choking hazard – were intended to ward off evil spirits and prevent them from harming the child, according to popular folk tales from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.\(^{162}\) It was widely believed that objects that produced sound possessed the power to repel negativity and evil. At the same time, whistles and bells were amusing objects for developing youngsters who were intrigued by the tinkling of their *rinkelbels* when they shook them with their tiny hands. As a result, *rinkelbels* kept naughty and curious toddlers entertained.

As well, parents and guardians seemed to be aware that *rinkelbels* played a prominent educational role in the child’s sensory development and recognition of hand-eye coordination, as


the child tenderly grasps the end piece, shakes the rattle’s bells to produce sound, or gently traces
the outlines of the decorative metal shapes and figures with his or her small hands.

The placement of the youngster’s rinkelbel in Govert Flinck’s Girl by a High Chair, hanging from the child’s hip and easily accessible, is reminiscent of the placement of a Dutch woman’s chatelaine. The chatelaine is an accessory for carrying useful accoutrements including scissors, spindles, and keys that was commonly associated with the responsibilities of the housekeeper or the female head of the household and therefore provides a clue to the child’s gender. In writing about Flinck’s painting, Peter G. Rose reaffirms this notion when she observes that the wicker basket is indicative of the young girl’s future role as the head of her own household.163 Another Dutch artist, Jan Claesz, painted A Girl with a Rattle in 1609 (Leeuwarden, Fries Museum), in which the sitter is wearing a string of round coral beads with a gold pendant attached to its centre and clutching her silver rinkelbel, with its silver bells and an animal tooth attached to its end for teething, in her left hand. [Fig. 3.11] The rinkelbel is also attached at the youngster’s waist by an intricate, sturdy, sumptuous, silver chain. Once again, the placement of this accessory reminds the viewer of the chatelaine worn by the female head of the household. The foreshadowing of the youngster’s future is further emphasized by the object in her opposite hand: the youngster grasps a miniature doll of an adult woman. At this time, dolls were culturally recognized exclusively as a toy for female children.164 Perhaps the doll is an accessory for acting out her future role as the head of the familial household and domestic sphere. Dolls were typically dressed in adult female clothing because baby dolls only began to be

produced in the eighteenth century. The action of young girls playing with their dolls was intended to instill a sense of responsibility in the child which would prepare her for her eventual role as nurturer. A young girl was expected to repeat the behaviours she recognized as appropriated from her own experience and practice with dolls during play. It was not uncommon for youngsters to discipline or praise their dolls. Girlhood dolls were indeed devices intended to produce future refined and virtuous women. The combination of these attributes in Jan Claesz’s depiction evokes educational undertones, reinforcing the idea, mentioned earlier, that the child was believed to be an “apprentice in adult life.” This combination of the Dutch youngster grasping the *rinkelbel* in one hand and her miniature adult doll in the other reappears in other portraits, such as Ludolf de Jongh’s *Portrait of a Couple with Two Children* from 1673 (Figure 11. Amsterdam Museum). As described by Donna R. Barnes, the unidentified, seated youngster, with her protective cap on her head and her doll, playfully offers a *rinkelbel* on a chain to the baby wrapped in the mother’s arms. Likewise, the father simultaneously holds out a treat to the nursling to ease its aching teeth and sore gums. The gestures of the elder sibling and her father symbolize both the care lavished on infants and the idea that the baby of the family will learn from the example of his or her elders. In turn, the elder sibling will follow in the footsteps of her own parents as evoked in this lively scene. A curious spaniel, the multifaceted emblem of both a prestigious family and educational virtue (as discussed in Chapter One), leans forward on its haunches to inspect the commotion. The childhood attributes of the *rinkelbel*, the

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doll, and the dog in Ludolf de Jongh’s family portrait celebrate the early stages of life in the harmonious Dutch family and foreshadow the child’s upbringing via parental example. The doll, like the chatelaine-like placement of the *rinkelbel*, alludes to the young girl’s future adult role as caretaker of her own household.

These associations suggest that, for young girls, the *rinkelbel* acquires an allusion to domestic duty and feminine virtue when represented in portraiture. Phillips observes that in early modern society, “[g]ender identity is firmly established by the age of eighteen months.”¹⁶⁹ In an early example, we see the foreshadowing of the youngster’s role in the familial unit alluded to in Bernard de Rijckere’s *Diptych of Adriaan van Santvoort and Anna van Hertsbeeke and Their Children Guillaume, Adriaan, Catharina and Jan Baptiste* from 1563 (Figure 12. private collection, depicts the female half of the diptych).¹⁷⁰ This curious example depicts Catharina at two years of age, grasping on to her mother’s splendid gold pomander with both hands, just as she might have handled her own *rinkelbel*. This thoughtful gesture implies that Catharina will one day follow in the example of her own prestigious mother. Anna van Hertsbeeke performs her role as her daughter’s guardian and educational example when she places her right hand on her daughter’s shoulder as a gesture of parental care.

As previously noted, the *rinkelbel* in early modern Europe was not a gender specific object. Young boys, such as the chubby cheeked child in *Portrait of an Unidentified Boy* by Delft artist Willem van der Vliet (Fig. 3.10), were depicted clutching their splendidly decorated golden *rinkelbels*, often mounted with vibrant red coral, which were also draped around their tiny

waists. To today’s viewer, a youngster’s gender identity is sometimes ambiguous in portraiture due to the historical costume similarities between girl and boy toddlers. It was customary for both young girls and boys to wear skirts until their days of potty-training were completed.\(^{171}\) However, Willem van der Vliet clearly conveys the child’s identity as a boy when he paints the youngster wearing a wide-brimmed, black hat with an ostrich feather like that customarily worn by Dutch adult men.\(^{172}\) This deliberate portrayal of the youngster’s male gender may be further metaphorically emphasized in the unusual, branched shape of the coral adorning his rinkelbel. Dutch boys were perceived as heirs to the family estate, fortune, name, and legacy, and this child, whose name remains unknown, would have begun another branch on his family’s ancestral tree. This analogy is reinforced by a sturdy, old tree that sprouts from the ground, just behind the boy’s back. The toddler also caresses a pink flower which has tumbled from a woven straw basket. Most likely it represents the transience of time or the fleeting quality of childhood.\(^{173}\) The combination of the branching coral on the boy’s golden rinkelbel, the old tree emerging from the shadow behind the child, and the delicate, freshly picked flowers that fall from the basket suggests the child’s inevitable role as a participant in the family lineage. The rinkelbel, an object which is not exclusively male or female in its ownership, may take on traditional male or female qualities, as well as allude to the child’s forthcoming adult role in the familial unit, depending on the accessories it is paired with.

The rinkelbel’s connection to teething, and its ability to soothe anxiety as an object of apotropaic or sympathetic magic, overtly links the object with two attributes of childhood:

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\(^{172}\) Ibid.

\(^{173}\) Ibid.
physical growth and emotional maturation. The child’s education and moral upbringing is referenced when the *rinkelbel* is combined with other significant pedagogical attributes, such as the canine companion in Berkman’s portrait of *A Young Boy with a Dog*. In Chapter I, we learned how the symbol of the dog is directly linked to Plutarch’s philosophy on *disciplina* and the parable of King Lycurgus. Finally, the *rinkebel* was treated as a family heirloom made of sumptuous materials like coral, rock crystal, a rare animal’s tooth, and precious metals. Therefore, it was an honour to pass your *rinkelbel* down from a Dutch parent to your youngest son or daughter as an indication that the family’s lineage had been safeguarded. In a way, a *rinkelbel* was a symbol of a child in training and a milestone of the first stage of life, as it only belonged to a youngster for a short period of time before it was handed down to the newest family addition.
Fig. 3.1. Govert Flinck. *Girl by a High Chair*. 1640. Royal Picture Gallery, Mauritshuis.
Fig. 3.3. Hendrick Berckman. *Young Boy with a Dog*. 1667. Lawrence Steigard Fine Arts.
Fig. 3.4. Left. Nicholas Roosevelt. *Rattle, Whistle, and Bells*. 1755-68. Gold, Coral. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.

Fig. 3.5. Anonymous Artist. 1835-36. *Child’s Rattle and Teether*. Silver and Coral.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.
Fig. 3.6. Anonymous Artist. *Rattle*. 1685-1700. Gold and Rock Crystal. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
Fig. 3.7. Pieter Verschuyl. *Rattle*. 1772. Gold and Mother of Pearl. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
Fig. 3.8. Cornelis de vos. *Susanna de Vos*. 1627. Städelsches Kunstinstitut. Frankfurt, Germany.
Fig. 3.9. Anonymous artist. *Family Portrait (Probably the family of Jan Gerritsz. Pan).* 1638. Stichting Verzameling Semeijns de Vries van Doesburgh.
Fig. 3.10. Willem van der Vliet’s *Unidentified Boy*. 1638. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
Fig. 3.11. Jan Claesz. *Girl with a Rattle*. 1609. Leeuwarden, Fries Museum.
Fig. 3.12. Ludolfe de Jongh. *Portrait of a Couple with Two Children.* 1673. Collection Amsterdam Museum, Amsterdam.
Fig. 3.13. Bernard de Rijckere. Diptych of Adriaan van Santvoort and Anna van Hertsbeeke and Their Children Guillaume, Adriaan, and Catharina and Jan Baptiste. 1563. Private collection.
Conclusion

Golden Age Dutch and Flemish children’s portraiture from the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries honours parents and caregivers as educators, celebrates childhood moral educational pursuits, and preserves the family’s prestigious and sometimes even pompous legacy. A specific feature of the Dutch Golden Age is the acquisition of aristocratic land rights and titles by the bourgeois class which inevitably contributed to improving the quality of life in the Dutch Republic. The Dutch aristocracy were in decline, especially during the seventeenth century, while the merchant middle class was growing more affluent and buying up country estates along with their prestigious titles.174 While some scholars argue that the Protestant Reformation was the driving force behind a thriving humanist fascination with childhood pedagogy, an emphasis on moral wellbeing, and a remodelling of the educational system, these sentiments were also shared in more predominantly Catholic regions of the Southern Netherlands.175 Despite political conflict between the Northern and Southern Netherlands and a fiery rivalry between Catholics and reformers, the education of youngsters and the desire for upward social mobility were vital concerns to both Dutch and Flemish educators and families alike.176 A desire for social progress and an investment in the nations’ future invigorated Dutch and Flemish culture, as is evidenced in the enthusiastic proliferation of children’s portraiture during the Golden Age. Investment in fostering a child’s potential was perceived as a civic responsibility for parents and educators while simultaneously contributing to the vitality of

For the Dutch and Flemish, there is an enduring awareness of the transience of time and obsession with the fleeting nature of youthfulness that culminates in a desire to preserve and protect future generations to an arresting degree. For instance, infant and child mortality remained frequent and inevitable, despite the newfound prosperity of the Dutch Republic as an enviable trading centre. Educators, and parents especially, were often afflicted with the loss of their beloved children due to illness, disease, poor hygienic practices, and a lack of modern medicinal knowledge. Therefore, the preservation of a child’s likeness, especially one that alluded to his or her early milestones and accomplishments, remained a motivation for commissioning a cherished children’s portrait. Citizens from the Dutch Republic and nearby territories relished the flourishing of wealth and social status that developed in parallel with moral educational progress and a fascination with the harmonious function of the familial unit. Dutch and Flemish child portraiture expresses familial wealth and prestige while it celebrates the youngster’s superior moral upbringing and knowledgeable education—either in a formal school or at in the domestic sphere under the guidance of household educators like parents, elder siblings, or perhaps, even nurses. Children’s portraits were truly a reflection of the family’s pride in their offspring and their budding potential, fostered by the expansion of the renowned Netherlandish school systems.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the symbolic origin of the dog motif in Aristotelian philosophy concerning *natura-ars-exercitatio*, exemplified in the parable of Lycurgus’ two dogs, prevail as the motif’s most pertinent association in child portraiture. The temperament of a child’s canine companion in a portrait of the youngster evokes parallels between the training of a domesticated dog with the upbrinding of a young child. An animated, keen dog suggests a parallel with the child’s affinity and eagerness for learning, as in the animated engraving by Hendrick Goltzius, *Portrait of Frederick de Vries and His Dog*. [Fig. 1.1] A portrait featuring a noble hunting hound celebrates the family’s social prominence, perhaps as a significant landowner, as demonstrated in the *Portrait of Michiel Pompe van Slingelandt* from 1649, by Jacob Gerritsz. Cuyp. [Fig. 1.3] An obedient dog, at the command of his or her young master, celebrates qualities such as loyalty or faithfulness, self-discipline, and obedience while also alluding to the potentially “commanding” nature of the dog’s youthful owner.

In Chapter 2, we explored how the unblemished apple, or fruit in general, reminds the viewer that children, like plants, must be cultivated carefully, as youthfulness is fleeting and education takes root most easily at the beginning stage of life. The apple as a portrait attribute is indebted to sources such as the emblematic bowl of fruit in Roemer Visccher’s *Sinnepoppen*, published and disseminated in print from 1614 onwards with its inscribed moral message: “Early to ripen, early to rot.” [Fig. 2.3] The apple’s perfection reminds the viewer of the child’s easily impressionable and innocent nature. The apple functions as a visual reminder that both childhood

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educators and their pupils reap the bounty of a morally conscious and disciplined upbringing, as demonstrated in intimate examples such as Frans Hals’ *Portrait of Catharina Hooft and Her Nurse.* [Fig. 2.11] Catharina Hooft’s nurse was tasked with her physical and educational nourishment from the child’s early age and undoubtedly formed a maternal bond with the youngster as evoked in the symbol of the apple.\(^{187}\) The apple, which evokes notions of the family tree, is also a metaphor for fertility and familial abundance, as well as a moral admonishment of earthly indulgence and excess.\(^{188}\)

Finally, Chapter 3 discussed the multi-faceted function of the lavish Dutch *rinkelbel* as an object alluding to education and parental protection as well as physical growth and emotional maturation. The rinkelbel was revered for its rumoured ability to soothe anxiety and the discomforts of new baby teeth, protect the child from fatal disease, and ward off superstition and evil spirits during a period when child mortality was alarmingly common.\(^{189}\) In children’s portraiture, the *rinkelbel* functions as visual indicator of the youngster’s innocence and sometimes even frailty, as the toy was only gifted to the youngest baby in the family.\(^{190}\) Eventually, the cherished object, like the family’s name and respectable legacy, would be passed down to the next generation for many years to come.\(^{191}\) The rinkelbel was a luxurious object as it was lovingly made from sumptuous materials such as coral, rock crystal, mother of pearl, a rare animal tooth, and precious metals like gold or silver. The *rinkelbel’s* presence in a child’s portrait was significant as an object of elevated status and monetary prestige. In addition, the


\(^{191}\) Ibid., pp. 67.
rinkelbel is often combined with one or more pedagogical attributes to allude to the child’s admirable educational instruction and upbringing. Furthermore, the placement of the rinkelbel across the waist for young girls reminded viewers of their mother’s chatelaine, which may have foreshadowed their future domestic duty as married women in charge of the familial household.  

The dog, the apple, and the rinkelbel, as prominently depicted and often carefully enlivened or animated in Dutch and Flemish children’s portraits from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, share an easily readable allusion to the young sitter’s prominent familial status, refined moral upbringing, and superior Netherlandish education. Children were also recognized as status-givers and celebrated as such. These attributes are visual clues to the child’s identity and to his or her family legacy. Children’s portraits are truly an embodiment of parental affection and reflect the unique cultural circumstances existing in the Golden Age of the newly emerging prosperous, Humanist, and Protestant Dutch Republic and its surrounding borders. The plethora of sixteenth and seventeenth century Dutch and Flemish children’s portraits is revealing of Dutch and Flemish cultural attitudes towards a blossoming political entity that privileged the family unit as the basis of a peaceful society and the monetary privileges which were now afforded to the merchant and regent middle class, superseding the hereditary nobility. As a result of shifting attitudes towards civic and individual improvement, Dutch society planted the roots which would foster the basis for modern conventions of childhood, child-rearing, and visual representations of childhood.

192 Ibid., 65.
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