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Dangerous, Seductive, and Innovative. Visual Sources for the History of Education

Abstract: This chapter focuses on images as sources for the history of education. Those sources could be scientifically dangerous – do they provide strong enough evidence? -, seductive – with their potential of bringing the researcher almost face to face with people in the past -, and innovative in adding new evidence and new insight to the history of education. After a discussion of the sources' dangerous and seductive aspects because of its complex relationship with educational reality, we concentrate on seventeenth-century emblematic books with educational and moral messages for parents and adolescents. Some emblems, consisting of text and image, are analyzed and interpreted with classic historic source criticism and with an educational variant of the iconographic method. It could indeed be concluded that also those visual sources could be dangerous and seductive. They, however, may shed new light on important issues in the history of education such as parenting and moral education, and also, if approached by historical source criticism, they do not differ in evidential value and strength from the traditional sources for the history of education and childhood.

Keywords: Visual sources, Emblems, Early modern Europe, Parenting, Historical sensation.

“Imagine”

In 1998, the twentieth ISCHE (International Standing Conference for the History of Education) conference in Kortrijk / Leuven was entitled “Imagine, All the Education. The Visual in the Making of the Educational Space through History”. For this title, Marc Depaepe, the organizer of the conference, referred to the famous 1971 song *Imagine* by John Lennon. While Lennon imagined an ideal world of brotherhood and world peace, it was the intention of the conference organization that the participants would imagine education by focusing on the visual in the history of education. This was new for ISCHE. Never before had an ISCHE conference focused on the visual and, therefore, it was not a matter of fact that enough supply of good presentations would be available for the conference organizer's demand or that enough good material would be produced to make a volume fitting the scholarly standard. After all, not only within ISCHE

conferences, but also in the study of the history of education more generally, most research focused on texts. Images, if used at all, were mostly treated as illustrations and not as primary sources; this, with the exception of a few national conferences and some publications of individual authors. One of them was the French historian Philippe Ariès (1914–1984), also one of the founding fathers of the cultural history of education with his *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime* from 1960, a study with groundbreaking and frequently debated theses on schooling and discipline and on childhood in history, yet long neglected because of its innovative and pioneering use of images. While the innovative French Annales School opened a new approach of topics and sources, visual sources remained neglected also by them for a long time. This was with the exception of Ariès who can be considered an outsider because only during the very last part of his career, he connected to the Annales's Powerhouse the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*.¹ About his use of visual sources, art historian Francis Haskell wrote: "Philippe Ariès was far more aware than any of the *Annales* historians of the significance of figurative sources".² For the rest, this pioneering book was neither mentioned nor referred to in the introduction to and the contributions of the publication of the selected conference contributions.

Those contributions, published in the 505 page long special issue of *Paedagogica Historica* entitled *The Challenge of the Visual in the History of Education*, showed that something had changed in the study of the history of education with contributions on images as sources in a great variety and over several epochs.³ This varied from religious iconography to Jesuit emblems in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, from Comenius's famous seventeenth-century *Orbis Sen-*

1 Philippe Ariès, *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1960). See Jeroen J.H. Dekker and Leendert F. Groenendijk, "Philippe Ariès's Discovery of Childhood after Fifty Years: The Impact of a Classic Study on Educational Research," *Oxford Review of Education* 38 (2012): 134.

2 Francis Haskell, *History and its images. Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1993): 496–497: "Philippe Aries was far more aware than any of the Annales historians of the significance of figurative sources." Haitsma Mulier, "Kunsthistorici en de geschiedenis. Een verslag van enkele ontwikkelingen," *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 101 (1986): 202–214; a special issue on 'Historische beeldcultuur' [Historical image culture] of *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 117 (2004); Merlijn Schoonenboom, "De verbeelde geschiedenis. Congresverslag "Kunst als historische bron,"" *Skript historisch tijdschrift* 19 (1997): 34–46.

3 Marc Depaepe and Bregt Henkens, "The History of Education and the Challenge of the Visual," in *The Challenge of the Visual in the History of Education*, ed. Marc Depaepe and Bregt Henkens, in co-operation with James C. Albisetti, Jeroen J.H. Dekker, Mark D'hoker, Frank Simon, and Jo Toll-ebeek (Gent: C.S.H.P., 2000), *Paedagogica Historica Supplementary Series* 6; also published in *Paedagogica Historica* 36 (2000): 11–17.

sualium Pictus to cigarette cards with ideological messages for youngsters in Nazi-Germany, from wall charts to images in nineteenth-century textbooks, from cartoons to colonial exhibitions, and from architecture to twentieth-century photographs and films. In sum, almost the entire educational technology available before the Internet Age was present. Moreover, in two introductory texts Hans-Ulrich Grunder addressed the negative image of images as dangerous for children and youngsters and António Nóvoa put the visual in the context of the new cultural history of education. After the conference and the publication of the special issue of *Paedagogica Historica*, the use of the visual in the study of the history of education increased and contributed substantially to the variety of sources now used within the new social and cultural history of education.⁴ This was, apart from developments within the history of education, due to a variety of developments in various other academic disciplines such as art history, iconography,⁵ cultural history, and cultural anthropology. Also, the enormous impact of the Internet and social media in particular after the year 2000 should not be underestimated. In other words, next to the cultural turn, history of education also underwent a visual turn.⁶

Within this visual turn, several approaches of images developed, two of them present during the ISCHE conference and in the special issue.⁷ Those

4 On social and cultural history of education, cf. António Nóvoa, “On History, History of Education, and History of Colonial Education,” in *The Colonial Experience in Education. Historical Issues and Perspectives*, ed. António Nóvoa, Marc Depaepe, and Erwin V. Johanningmeier (Gent: C.S.H.P., 1995), *Paedagogica Historica Supplementary Series* 1: 23–61. On the use of images in history of education, see for example Jody Crutchley, Stephen G. Parker, and Sian Roberts, “Sight, sound and text in the history of education,” *History of Education* 47 (2018): 143–147. An introduction to the special issue of the same title: Karin Priem and Inés Dussel, “The visual in histories of education: a reappraisal,” *Paedagogica Historica* 53 (2017): 641–649. An introduction to the special issue of the same title: Kate Rousmanière, “Questioning the visual in the history of education,” *History of Education* 30 (2001): 109–116; Jeroen J.H. Dekker, “Images as representations. Visual sources on education and childhood in the past,” in *Paedagogica Historica* 51 (2015): 706–709; Jeroen J.H. Dekker, *Het verlangen naar opvoeden. Over de groei van de pedagogische ruimte in Nederland sinds de Gouden Eeuw tot omstreeks 1900* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2006).

5 Cf. António Viñao, “Iconology and Education: Notes on the Iconographic Representation of Education and Related Terms,” in *The Challenge of the Visual*, ed. Marc Depaepe et al., 75–91.

6 Cf. Ulrike Mietzner, Kevin Myers, and Nick Peim, *Visual History. Images of Education* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005).

7 Apart from images, also objects in general recently received more attention in cultural history and history of education; see for example Annette Caroline Cremer and Martin Mulso, ed. *Objekte als Quellen der historischen Kulturwissenschaften. Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung*

two approaches are in the words of Franz Pöggeler *Bildung durch Bilder*, or education by images, and *Bildung in Bildern*, or education in images.⁸ *Bildung durch Bilder* is about the positive and negative educational power of images and originated in educational studies. *Bildung in Bildern* uses images as sources for the history of education and this approach originated mainly from outside the educational sciences in the fields of cultural history, art history, iconography, and cultural anthropology. While this distinction seems to be clear, research practice turns out to be more complex with, for example, also the historical study of images apart from contributing to their role in the educational process in the past also contributing to the history of education as such.⁹

That being said, this chapter focuses on *Bildung in Bildern*, or on the use of images as sources for the history of education, but this does not mean that the sources could not also have an educational intention as such; quite on the contrary, as we will see below in section three. The chapter's title suggests that visual sources could be dangerous, seductive, and innovative. This happened earlier with other new sources. In 1946, personal documents were characterized as "the most dangerous of all sources" by the Amsterdam professor of history Jan Romein in a reaction to his Amsterdam colleague Jacques Presser, who applauded such sources and coined the term "ego-documents".¹⁰ New sources that try to join the party of the traditional written sources are initially considered suspect, or at least considered as less strong in providing evidence, and, as a result, scientifically dangerous. But eventually, they could be innovative, adding new evidence and new insight to the history of education.

In section two, we will turn to the dangerous – do they provide strong enough evidence? – and seductive – through their potential of bringing the re-

(Köln: Böhlau, 2017), with a suggestion to approach objects in four ways, as illustration, argument, theme, and source (see pages 17–19).

8 Franz Pöggeler, "Bildung in Bildern. Versuch einer Typologie pädagogische relevanter Bildformen," in *Bild und Bildung. Beiträge zur Grundlegung einer pädagogischen Ikonologie und Ikonographie*, ed. Franz Pöggeler (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 1992), 11–52. See recently Rita Hofstetter and Bernard Schneuwly, "Teaching culture and emotions. The function of art in Vygotsky's theory of child development (1920–1934)," in *Images of education. Cultuuroverdracht in historisch perspectief*, Hilda Amsing et. al. (Groningen: Uitgeverij Passage, 2018), 182–194; and Ian Grosvenor, "'A joyful idea reborn'. Aesthetic education in a time of crisis," in *Images of education*, 208–219.

9 Cf. the *micro storia* by Noah W. Sobe, "Illustrating American progressive education. The cover illustration of John Dewey's 1899 *School and Society*," in *Images of education*, 141–154.

10 Jan Romein, *De biografie* (Amsterdam: Ploegsma, 1946), 204, quoted by Arianne Baggerman and Rudolf Dekker, "'De gevaarlijkste van alle bronnen'. Egodocumenten: nieuwe wegen en perspectieven," *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 1 (2004): 8–9.

searcher almost face to face with people in the past – aspects of visual sources by looking at their complex relationship with educational reality. In section three, we will concentrate on seventeenth-century emblematic books as examples of dangerous, seductive, and innovative visual sources. In section four, it will be concluded that visual sources could be dangerous, seductive, and innovative, but that those aspects could apply to most sources for the history of education and childhood.

Imaging Educational Reality

It is only via sources that we can come closer to the past. By indirect observation of the past, sources deliver clues or traces that refer to aspects of reality. It is true that for contemporary history, oral history interviews seem to deliver a more direct observation of the past. While such interviews could give us important information about the historical actor's individual experience of what once happened, it should, however, be realized that those interviews were not produced in the past but in the present with the interviewee no longer in the situation and the position, for example as a child, of the past. Hence, oral history can never be the voice of the past as sometimes promised, but only a voice from the present about the past with individual reflections and memories on past behavior, experiences, and events.¹¹

Contact with the past will mostly be realized by looking at sources produced in that very past. Such sources could roughly be divided into categories such as written sources, visual sources, and material objects (among them those from archaeological research). Looking at those sources, and sometimes even touching them, brings the historian closer to people in the past. Research about the *Ancien Régime* cannot rely on visual sources such as photographs, films, radio, TV, and finally the Internet; hence looking at the faces of people is only possible by studying pictures, such as paintings, drawings, and emblems. Such sources could draw you in another time, could suggest direct contact with people and

¹¹ Paul R. Thompson, *The Voice of the Past. Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978). See for the value of oral history interviews for historical child abuse and violence against children Christiaan Ruppert, Catrien Bijleveld, Mariëlle Bruning, Jeroen J.H. Dekker, Jan Hendriks, Trudy Mooren, Carol van Nijnatten, Wim Slot, and Micha de Winter, *Onvoldoende beschermd. Geweld in de Nederlandse jeugdzorg van 1945 tot heden* (Den Haag: Commissie Onderzoek naar Geweld in de Jeugdzorg, 2019).

patterns of behavior of that time, and so cause the experience of historical sensation.¹²

According to the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga (1872–1945) in his essay *The task of the history of culture*, historical sensation resulted from “what happens between the historian and the past”. It could also be formulated as historical contact, which “can be provoked by a line from a chronicle, by an engraving, a few sounds from an old song.”¹³ Although historical sensation could be caused by various sources, Huizinga himself experienced it in its strongest way while looking at art by Jan Van Ecyk, Rogier Van der Weijden, and Hugo Van der Goes in an exhibition in Bruges in 1902.¹⁴ The use of such master pieces of art for direct contact with the past could be complex because of the existence of published interpretations. Yet, according to Ankersmit, experiencing them “as if a whole civilization saw it for the first time” remains possible.¹⁵ As a matter of fact, getting contact with the past should not be taken literally. This is not about a time machine available for historians but about a methodological habitus that could make it easier to get insight in the past.

No doubt this historical sensation could be realized easier through the seduction of visual sources. When doing this with seventeenth-century Dutch images, the researcher has to cope with radically changing interpretations of art historians about the relationship of these sources in particular (family) portraits and genre painting, with reality.¹⁶ Dutch painting and drawing from the second half of the sixteenth century began to focus more on aspects of daily life, partly due to the Calvinistic Reformation and its 1566 iconoclastic outbreak, known in Dutch as the *Beeldenstorm*. As a result, genre painting, in particular, flourished according to Wayne Franits “on the prodigious scale that one finds in the Neth-

12 Cf. Bram Kempers, “De verleiding van het beeld. Het visuele als blijvende bron van inspiratie in het werk van Huizinga,” *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 105 (1992): 30–50.

13 Huizinga translated by Frank R. Ankersmit, *Sublime Historical Experience* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 120–121.

14 Ankersmit, *Sublime*, 126.

15 Ankersmit, *Sublime*, 127. The paragraph on historical sensation is based on Jeroen J.H. Dekker, “Mirrors of reality? Material culture, Historical Sensation, and the Significance of Images for Research into Long-Term Educational Processes,” in *Educational Research: Material culture and its representation*, ed. Paul Smeyers and Marc Depaepe (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014), 35–36.

16 This paragraph is based on Jeroen J.H. Dekker, “The Restrained Child. Imaging the Regulation of Children’s Behaviour and Emotions in Early Modern Europe: The Dutch Golden Age,” in *Images of the European Child*, ed. María del Mar del Pozo Andrés and Bernat Sureda García, Special Issue of *History of Education and Children’s Literature* 13 (2018): 21–24.

erlands”.¹⁷ Becoming “more true-to-life”,¹⁸ those pictures did have for many art historians an “ostensible capacity to proffer unmediated access to the past”, or, in Huizinga’s words, historical sensation. They were “direct transcriptions of the mundane experiences of contemporary Netherlanders”¹⁹ and were considered as almost mirrors of reality.

In the twentieth century, this paradigm of interpretation of Dutch genre paintings became weaker and, instead another paradigm, the iconological approach inspired by Erwin Panofsky’s *Studies in Iconology* from 1939, gained significance. The images now evolved from reality mirroring pictures to puzzles of complex messages.²⁰ Art historian Francis Haskell even wrote that “even images formerly assumed to depict only what could have been seen by an ‘innocent eye’ were in fact the products of conscious or unconscious manipulation: Dutch genre scenes and still lives, for instance”.²¹ From the 1980s, however, this paradigm was also contested. It was argued that the strong emphasis on complex symbols was incompatible with “the realistic look of Dutch art”.²² This new paradigm was strongly advocated by the art historian Jan Baptist Bedaux, in his contribution, *The Reality of Symbols*, in which he, just as usual prior to the iconological turn, pointed to the realistic aspects of Dutch painting and drawing.²³

While this debate was often technical, methodical, and addressed the relationship between emblems and paintings, the meaning of symbols and their seemingly decreasing influence during the seventeenth century, it also was a debate about the fundamental issue of the relationship between source and reality. Were the images mirroring reality, or puzzles of complex symbols, or perhaps ref-

17 Wayne Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth Century Genre Painting* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2008 or 2004), 261; note 3 on secular painting.

18 Josua Bruyn, “A Turning-Point in the History of Dutch Art,” in *Dawn of the Golden Age, Northern Netherlandish Art 1580–1620*, ed. Ger Luijten et. al. (Amsterdam/Zwolle: Rijksmuseum/Waanders, 1993), 112–121.

19 Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth Century*, 1.

20 Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth Century*, 4.

21 Haskell, *History and its Images*, 5. Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology. Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972 or 1939).

22 Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth Century*, 5.

23 Jean Baptist Bedaux, *The Reality of Symbols. Studies in the Iconology of Netherlandish Art 1400–1800* (’s-Gravenhage/Maarssen: Gary Schwarz/SDU, 1990), 112–113. Cf. Willem Th.M. Frijhoff and Marijke Spies, *1650. Bevochten eendracht* (The Hague: SDU, 1999); Jean Baptist Bedaux, “Introduction,” in *Pride and Joy. Children’s portraits in the Netherlands 1500–1700*, ed. Jan Baptist Bedaux and Rudolf E.O. Ekkart (Gent/Amsterdam/New York: Ludion and Abrams, 2000), 19–22; Jeroen J.H. Dekker, Leendert F. Groenendijk, and Johan Verberckmoes, “Proudly raising vulnerable youngsters. The scope for education in the Netherlands,” in *Pride and Joy*, 43–60; Dekker, “Mirrors of reality?,” 38–40.

erences to the reality of symbols? It seems that the theory of representation could help in this issue.²⁴ In the interpretation of philosopher and historian Frank Ankersmit,²⁵ a representation of reality does not mean mirroring reality, but refers to various aspects of reality.²⁶ This means that both real people, among them children, parents, and educators, and ideas and messages on patterns of behavior belong to historic realities. Thus, both visual sources about real people and genre paintings and prints about messages on patterns of behavior could enable the historian of education to engage in a closer contact with the realities studied, not by mirroring those realities but by referring to aspects of them.²⁷

The Evaluation of Visual Sources: Emblems on Parenting and Education

In this section, danger, seduction, and the innovative value of visual sources are shown by evaluating two seventeenth-century emblems through three source characteristics: 1) its strength, 2) its educational meaning, and 3) its relationship with educational reality. This evaluation is inspired by the stages of a classic iconographical analysis of a) the image's authenticity, date, and the artist's identity, b) the image's main elements, c) the image's subject-matter and meaning, and d) the relationship of the image to the cultural context. Stating the meaning of the image, stage c, involves knowledge of the symbol language of the specific period, to be found in contemporary art theory publications, such as Cesare Ripa's popular painter's guide and texts by the French painter Charles Le Brun (1619–1690), explaining to the reader how to interpret the expression of the pas-

24 See for the following Jeroen J.H. Dekker, "Images as representations. Visual sources on education and childhood in the past," *Paedagogica Historica* 51 (2015): 706–709.

25 See Frank R. Ankersmit, *Meaning, truth, and reference in historical representation* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2012); Frank R. Ankersmit, "Representatie als cognitief instrument," *Algemeen Nederlands Tijdschrift voor Wijsbegeerte* 103 (2011): 243–262; and Frank R. Ankersmit, *De navel van de geschiedenis. Over interpretatie, representatie en historische realiteit* (Groningen: Historische Uitgeverij Groningen, 1990). Cf. P.B.M. Blaas, "Op zoek naar een glimp van het verleden. De geschiedfilosofie van Frank Ankersmit," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 119 (2006): 377–386.

26 Ankersmit, "Representatie," 246–249 and 250–252.

27 See Eddy de Jongh and Gert Lijten, *Mirror of everyday life. Genreprints in the Netherlands 1550–1700* (Amsterdam/Gent: Rijksmuseum/Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1986). Cf. Joseph Wachelder, "Chardins Touch. De kunst van het spelen," in *Images of education*, 30–32.

sions in the face, in general, and in the eyebrows, in particular.²⁸ For the remainder, the meaning of symbols should not be over-interpreted for becoming less crucial and more an addition to the painting during the seventeenth century, while being crucial for the meaning's interpretation in sixteenth century paintings.²⁹

The above proposed three-fold evaluation of emblem characteristics is an educational application of this iconographical method. The first characteristic, the source's strength and usefulness, is about the results of iconographical research into a series of topics: its authenticity to assure that we do not have to do with a forgery, its date, and the author's or artist's identity, so that the source can be related to a period of history, and, if possible, to an artist, the identity of the people represented in the image, so that we know with whom we could come face to face – not an issue with genre paintings and emblems as sources on patterns of behavior –, the artist's educational intentions, and finally the source's public reception. The strength and usefulness of a source depends on the outcome of those criteria, but is not simply adding up, for e.g. a popular source with thus major impact could be evaluated as strong even if scoring low on the other criteria with the exception of authenticity. The source's second characteristic, its educational meaning, forms the educational application of the iconographical investigation into subject-matter and meaning of the image and includes the enumeration of the main elements of the source. The source's relationship with educational reality, its third characteristic, is the educational application of relating the source to its cultural context. Below follows the presentation of the source and its evaluation by those three criteria.

28 See Dekker, "The Restrained Child," 25–27. On Le Brun see Peter Harrison, "Reading the passions: The fall, the passions, and dominion over nature," in *The soft underbelly of reason: The passions in the seventeenth century*, ed. Stephen Gaukroger (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 49–78 (see page 61); Hugh Honour and John Fleming, *A World History of Art* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2009, 7th edition), 604. According to Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions. An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 19, Le Brun's "taxonomy of facial expression" was used until the nineteenth century.

29 Cf. Jeroen J.H. Dekker, *De pedagogische ruimte in de tijd* (Groningen: Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2019), 5–8.

The Source: Mirror from the Ancient and Modern Time by Jacob Cats

Emblem books differ fundamentally from paintings, as they combine text with image, and because of their large readership. The topics in both sources are often based on the same popular proverbs, and then contain the same educational meaning. Jacob Cats (1581–1660) authored most popular Dutch emblem books on moral and educational issues. He wrote them by adopting and adapting the existing and very popular *ars amatoria* style. One of his emblem books, *Spiegel Van den Ouden ende Nieuwen Tijd* [Mirror of the Ancient and Modern Time, further abridged as *Mirror*] was published in 1632, and contained texts written by Cats and pictures made by Adriaan van de Venne. Moreover, it contains more than 1,600 proverbs in various languages.³⁰ Each emblem is entitled after a proverb, and its meaning is extensively explained in a text full of quotes in several languages, including many quotes from the Bible and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Part I of *Mirror* consists of seven emblems mentioned by Cats *Opvoedinghe van kinderen* [Child rearing] and 45 emblems on *Eerlicke Vryage* [Fair courtship]. For the evaluation of the source, emblems IV and VII on, respectively, child rearing and courtship were selected. Together they represent the main educational message of Cats: educating young children and instructing them at the right time in a context of parental and marital love as parental duties; and finding a partner by avoiding the moral dangers and pitfalls of courtship.³¹ Courtship was also treated extensively in the emblem book *Sinne- and minnebeelden*.³² After the five emblems in *Mirror* on parenting and child rearing, two emblems form the transition to the second topic of courtship and its dangers. Emblem VI, “Es musz ein ieder ein par narren Schuhen vertretten, wo nicht mer” [One must wear a pair of shoes from a jester, before one is truly wise] is about the *sui generis* character of youth as a phase of enjoying life, of learning, and of making mistakes, also in matters of

30 Jacob Cats, *Spiegel Van den Ouden ende Nieuwen Tijd, Bestaende uyt Spreeck-woorden ende Sin-Spreucken, ontleent van de voorige ende tegenwoordige Eeuwe, verlustigt door menigte van Sinne-Beelden, met Gedichten en Prenten daer op passende; Dienstigh tot bericht van alle gedeelten des levens; beginnende van de Kintshey, ende eyndigende met het eynde alles vleech* ('s Gravenhage: Isaac Burchoorn, Boeck-drucker, 1632); a facsimile edition similar in appearance and format is available (Amsterdam: Facsimile Uitgaven Nederland NV, 1968).

31 See Jeroen J.H. Dekker and Inge J.M. Wichgers, “The Embodiment of Teaching the Regulation of Emotions in Early Modern Europe,” *Paedagogica Historica* 54 (2018): 58–65.

32 See Jeroen J.H. Dekker, *Educational Ambitions in History. Childhood and Education in an Expanding Educational Space from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century* (Frankfurt am Main /Berlin/Bern/Brussels/New York/Oxford/Vienna: Peter Lang, 2010), 59–64.

love.³³ Emblem VII, *Amor docet Musicam* [Love teaches Music] not only emphasizes Amor's necessity, but also anticipates, as we will see below, Amor's risks and pitfalls, the main topic of the next emblems of part one of *Mirror*.

The Source's Strengths and Weaknesses

Historians inspired by the positivistic criteria proclaimed by the famous nineteenth-century German historian Leopold von Ranke would probably decide about the strength of sources by measuring their distance to reality. As a result, sources, among them *belles-lettres*, hagiographies, and later on also ego-documents and visual sources, were neglected or evaluated as weak sources, as they were unable to tell "*Wie es eigentlich gewesen*". However, as argued above, the complex relationship between sources and reality makes that, on the one hand, no source mirrors reality, while, on the other hand, all sources have a relationship with aspects of reality. Source criticism works out differently for different sources like written and visual ones. Moreover, the strength of a source depends on its potential to answer research questions.³⁴ This point of view will guide my evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the two selected emblems from *Mirror* by Jacob Cats.

Determining authenticity, date, and identity of the artist is no problem for this source, in contrast to many paintings with date, name of the artist, and sometimes also the people represented remaining unknown.³⁵ This source was a bestseller and was distributed in large numbers with the name of author, artist of the images, publishing house, and year of publication on the title page. It is true that in editions after the seventeenth century, some changes could be observed, both in text and images. While important for research in the development of the source across historical time, this issue is not treated in this chapter, which focuses on the seventeenth century.³⁶

³³ Cf. Dekker, "The Restrained Child," 37–38.

³⁴ According to Marc Bloch, *Apologie pour l'histoire ou métier d'historien* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1975 or 1941), 66: "C'est une des tâches les plus difficile de l'historien que de rassembler les documents dont il estime avoir besoin".

³⁵ Cf. the anonymous *Portrait of a Family*, c.1668, see Dekker, *Educational Ambitions*, 50–51.

³⁶ A complete list of editions of the works of Cats is Jan Bos and J.A. Gruys, ed. *Cats Catalogus. De werken van Jacob Cats in the Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands* (The Hague: Royal Library of the Netherlands, 1996). For the historical change of an image see María del Mar del Pozo Andrés and Sjaak Braster, "An image travelling across Europe. The transformation of "The school in an uproar" into "Le désordre dans l'école"(1809–1855)," in *Images of education*, 84–97.

Not only the author's identity, but also his intentions are clear. Jacob Cats, one of the richest and most powerful men of the Dutch Republic and, for a long time, *Raadspensionaris* [Grand Pensionary] of the States of Holland and Zeeland (which could be considered a "prime minister" of the Dutch Republic), was a politician and no philosopher or theologian. He wrote his emblem books next to his function in politics and not for profit, although his emblem books turned out to become profitable. A faithful Christian, he was an educational moralist with a mission to tell people about an active and adequate parenting style that revolved around having patience with children and with their temporal weaknesses, but never drifting away from the Christian foundations of his educational advices.

His educational ideas and advices were shared with an impressive readership. His emblem books became best and long sellers: ranked third on the seventeenth century bestseller list after the Bible and *De Imitatione Christi* by Thomas à Kempis. By reading those books and by trying to decode the meaning of image and text, it becomes possible to put ourselves into the position of this massive seventeenth-century readership. The books were popular as a result of several reasons: the combination of text and image made them attractive, because of the foundation of his advices on the Christian virtues of faith, hope and love, and the cardinal virtues of wisdom, justice, fortitude, and temperance (instead of on specific church bound principles) the emblem books were also sold outside of the Calvinist community, of which he was a devoted member, and finally the use of easy-to-learn rhymes.³⁷

The combination of text and image made the emblem books more attractive for the contemporary readers but also makes it stronger as a source. The image represents only a part of the meaning of the emblem, with the text providing extra and essential information. This makes the interpretation of the image of the emblem less speculative than the interpretation of genre paintings or drawings that come without complementary texts. The strength of emblem books, such as *Mirror*, while primarily intended for a Dutch readership, is its transnational and even European scope.³⁸ As mentioned before, *Mirror* contains more than 1,600 proverbs in several languages and numerous quotes from the Bible and from classic texts, such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

³⁷ See Jeroen J.H. Dekker, "Woord en beeld: Jacob Cats en de pedagogische cultuuroverdracht in de zeventiende eeuw," in *De gereformeerden en hun vormingsoffensief door de eeuwen heen*, ed. Jan W. Steutel, Doret J. de Ruyter, and Siebren Miedema (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2009), 47–65.

³⁸ Another popular emblem book by Cats, *Houwelick* [Marriage] from 1625 was written in Dutch only and intended for mothers.

It therefore seems that emblems from *Mirror* are a strong source for answers on questions about the educational discourse, and how this discourse, originally starting in philosophical texts in Greek and Latin and in mostly Latin written theological texts, in an almost playful form reached the broad middle class in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic.

The Emblem's Educational Meaning

The iconographic method could help historians when using emblems with images, often containing a hidden meaning.³⁹ This meaning could be reconstructed by first looking precisely to the image's elements and then to the accompanying text. In the words of James Hall: "the elements of a picture make not only a unity of design but contain a unity of meaning, sometimes not immediately recognizable."⁴⁰

In the middle of the image of emblem IV (Figure 1) stands a man caressing a swine that goes lying in the manure. Right behind him stand two women who look at him and at the swine. The younger woman, the arms crossed, is watching full of attention. An older woman, also watching full of attention, shows a look of disapproval, to be seen in the expression of her face. Her strained mouth and lowered eyebrows express abomination, so Le Brun would interpret it with his seventeenth-century way of looking. Moreover, she points with her right hand and a piercing index finger to the man and the swine. She clearly disagrees with man's behavior. At the background is a farmhouse. Outside are two other people, a woman also looking at the man and the swine but in the image without an expression on her face, and another person, probably a man who looks to the other side and therefore cannot see the man caressing the swine. The German title of the emblem (in the image below is also a Dutch translation), "*Wann man die Sauer kutzelt, so legt sie sich im dreck*", which means "When the swine is pampered, she goes lying in the manure". Still the emblem's image and caption together are not giving enough information to clarify its meaning. To interpret its meaning, the complementary text is needed. After reading this text, it turns out that the image is about bad education: the swine represents the child and the man is the parent. The emblem's message is that parents should, in their love for their children, not caress them too much, as pampering children is not educating them but, according to Cats, making children lazy, as is the swine. More disci-

³⁹ See further Dekker, "The restrained child," 25–27. See Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth Century*, 4.

⁴⁰ James Hall, *Dictionary of subjects and symbols in art* (London: John Murray, 1991 or 1974), x.



Figure 1: Emblem IV, “Wann man die Sauer kutzelt, so legt sie sich im dreck” [When the swine is pampered, she goes lying in the manure], Jacob Cats, *Spiegel Van den Ouden ende Nieuwen Tyt*, 1657 (Special Collections, University Library, University of Groningen).

pline and educational activism are necessary for children’s adequate development. The meaning of the emblem – the necessity of active parenting – becomes

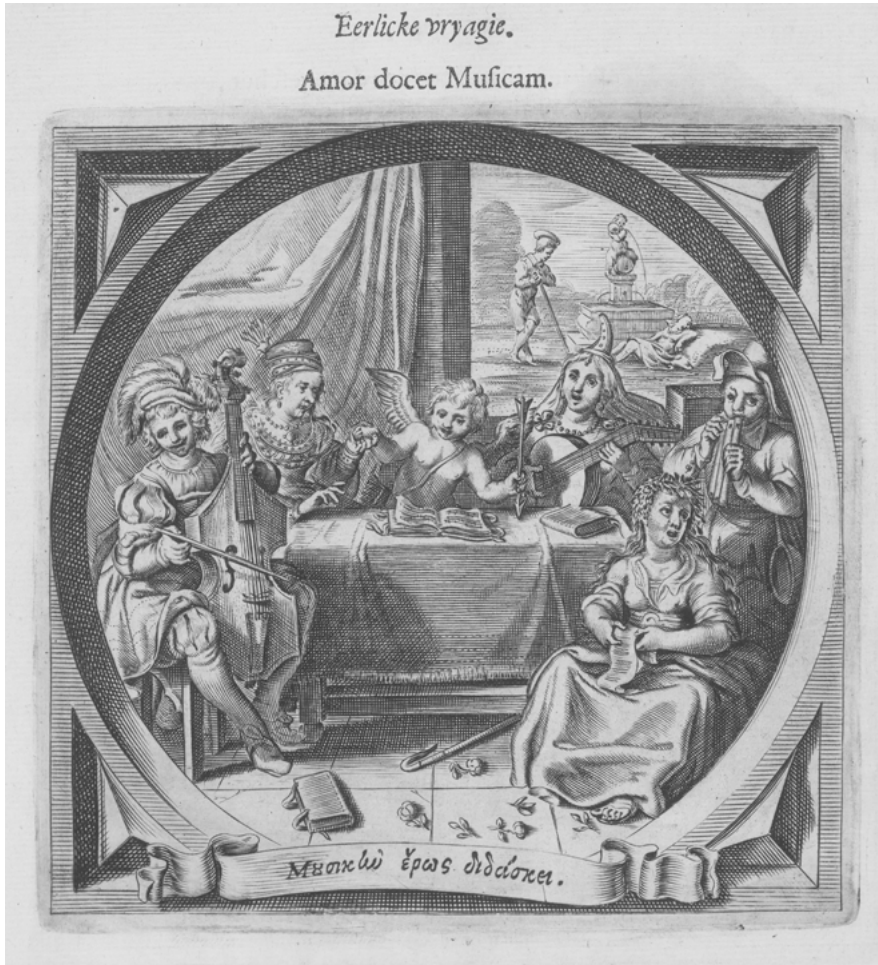


Figure 2: Emblem VII, *Amor docet Musicam* [Love teaches music], Jacob Cats, *Spiegel Van den Ouden ende Nieuwen Tyt*, 1657 (Special Collections, University Library, University of Groningen).

clear when combining the, initially perhaps funny, encoded image with the accompanying text.⁴¹

Also the meaning of emblem VII, *Amor docet Musicam* (Figure 2) is not immediately clear. The first impression of the emblem's image leads to the conclu-

⁴¹ Cats, *Spiegel*, Emblem IV, 10–11. Cf. Dekker and Wichgers, “The Embodiment,” 60–61.

sion that it is a representation of the Merry Family such as those by Jan Steen, who always depicted people playing on music instruments. Those images represent, however, the proverb *As the Old Sing, so Pipe the Young* on the impact of parental behavior on children. Emblem VII represents another proverb, namely *Amor docet Musicam*.⁴²

The image of this emblem tells about the fruitful working of love, in the text represented by Amor, son of Venus. In the image, he is mentioned with his name Eros, put in the Greek alphabet, and he sits prominently in the middle of the emblem behind a table, looking concentrated to a music book that is in front of him. On the table is another, closed book, which is perhaps a music book. In his left hand, Amor has an arrow; his other main attribute, the bow, is invisible. His right hand lays in the left hand of an older woman. This woman also looks concentrated at the music book. She does not play an instrument in contrast to the other four people in the main part of the image, who together form a music company of two boys and one girl playing music instruments and another girl singing. On her lap is the text of a song. When using Le Brun's seventeenth-century method of interpreting their emotional state by looking at the lifted mouth and cheeks and the widely opened eyes in their faces, we could conclude this is happiness. For the rest, in this case of making music faces also do show an expression related to efforts to play a specific instrument as for example with the boy playing the pan flute, which influences the position of his cheeks. Still, the youngsters seem to look rather happy, with one exception, that of the singing girl. Her eyes and mouth are widely open, but not only because she sings. Her facial expression seems to refer rather to fear, not because of not being able to properly sing, but of fear for Amor's arrow. Before her feet is a rose in little pieces and another closed book. Amor and the singing girl do look rather sensual when compared with the other people in the emblem. Moreover, if Amor's arrow should be raised and thrown, it should hit the singing girl. Through a window, we can see in the background another group of people. A young man or somewhat older boy, leaning on something that looks like a lance, looks longingly at an older girl or young woman lying on the floor, seemingly asleep before a small fountain. On top of it is a small cupid.

The image seems to communicate a double message. The inside main part of the image emphasizes the fruitful effects of Amor who does not use the disciplinary methods common at school but only love, as it is formulated in the accompanying text. Indeed, everything goes smoothly, as the children are seemingly

⁴² See Dekker and Wichgers, "The Embodiment," 62–63.

happy.⁴³ The unhappy singing girl is the first counterpart to this message. This counterpart is enforced in the outside part of the image that seems to refer to the dangers and pitfalls of love. That is the main subject of the next emblems of part I of *Mirror*. The double message characterizes the emblem as a transition emblem from rather optimistic to mainly warning messages.

The Emblem's Relationship to Educational Reality

The emblems have a twofold relationship with reality. First, their content refers to desired patterns of educational behavior and to parents, children, and youngsters with their specific roles in the educational process. Secondly, the emblems represent educational ideas present in the heads of many parents and future parents who read them and looked at them as a result of their great popularity. Historians of education can only catch a glimpse of the educational reality when using a single source. Therefore, it is better to use multiple sources for answering the same research questions. The historian of education should operate in those matters like a detective or a journalist. Within the social sciences, using various sources became a methodically accepted research method, which goes by the name of triangulation, only recently. Yet, it was already established in the historical sciences, especially for historians of education and childhood who are confronted with a serious problem of scarcity of sources.⁴⁴

The relationship of a specific source with reality is different in perspective, intention, and often also in interest.⁴⁵ Emblems as a source are special, in that they are a triple source consisting of a caption with information on the meaning, an image showing part of the emblem's story, and finally a text telling the story as a whole. In the case of *Mirror*, it also provides quotations from other sources onto which the emblem has been based. However, it remains wise to confront emblems with other sources, in particular with genre painting. The emblems in *Mirror* are about a specific proverb, mostly shown in the emblem's caption. Part of genre painting of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is also based on proverbs, often even the same ones. In the 1970s and 1980s, art historians even stated that genre paintings, such as those by Jan Steen, should be interpreted mainly from the meanings of emblems, such as those by Cats. This ap-

⁴³ Cats, *Spiegel*, Emblem VII, 19–22.

⁴⁴ Cf. Peter Stearns, "Challenges in the History of Childhood," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1 (2008): 35–42; Paula S. Fass, "Childhood and Memory," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 3 (2010): 155–164.

⁴⁵ Dekker, "The Restrained Child," 32–33.

proach was criticized strongly by art historians, such as Jean Baptiste Bedaux, who in *The reality of symbols* warned that historians cannot neglect the reference to the reality of those paintings, and should not exaggerate the complexity of the symbols in paintings and emblems. It still remains that genre painting and emblems often do cover the same educational themes. For example, active education, a fundamental theme in the emblem books by Cats and present in emblem IV, is also prominent in many genre paintings. This makes the emblem as a source even stronger, as representations of broadly shared ideas of the necessity of education and parental responsibility. Indeed, emblem books as sources in connection with genre painting show even more strongly that consciousness of the necessity of education was a central issue in the educational discourse of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries among philosophers, theologians, and in popular books and emblem books, such as those by the educational moralist Cats.

Conclusion

In drawing up a balance, it seems that all sources for the history of education and childhood, including written ones, could potentially be dangerous and seductive. Indeed, all sources represent only a segment of historical reality, or show one perspective. “New” sources are often initially considered as less strong and more dangerous than traditional and “tested” source materials. This has been the case with for example personal documents or ego documents that have a seductive dimension because of seemingly opening an intimate and private world, which was initially considered as dangerous because of not fitting the most important criterium for historical sources as stated in the nineteenth century by Leopold von Ranke, namely objectiveness. Eventually, personal documents became accepted as sources for historical research and that happened with visual sources too. Also those sources were initially neglected, even by the innovative historians of the Annales School that shifted many boundaries in historical research, but not this one. If used, visual sources in the history of education were mostly sources with the intention of *Bildung durch Bilder*, such as the famous *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* by Comenius and many illustrations in textbooks. Starting with the publication in 1960 by Philippe Ariès, the innovative outsider in French cultural history, visual sources became, although initially very slowly, part of the history of education too, now both for *Bildung durch Bilder* and for *Bildung in Bildern*. The last 20 years saw a fast acceleration of this process. The conference *Imagine* from 1998 in Kortrijk / Leuven stimulated this development through its great audience of historians of education. As with all sour-

ces, including digital images in this digital age, the emblems studied in this chapter could also be potentially dangerous if interpreted wrongly because of the sometimes complex puzzles present in the image. But they are also seductive for seemingly bringing the researcher face to face with patterns of behavior in the past. Therefore, as with all sources for the history of education, those emblems should also be evaluated by the criteria of source criticism so that it becomes clear that they would fit the research questions asked of them.

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