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### Title

A Study of Group Portraiture: The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp (1632)

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### Author

Handojo, Debora

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Dr.  
Department of

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Dr. Richard Cardullo, Howard H Hays Chair and Faculty Director, University Honors  
Interim Vice Provost, Undergraduate Education

## **Abstract**

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## General Historical Context

The seventeenth century was a period of extraordinary change throughout the world. Between the Renaissance age of the sixteenth century and the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century was a tumultuous transition marked by numerous revolutions and crises.

Beginning with the Renaissance, it was a time in which the world was expanding, led by the economic and intellectual leadership of Italy and Spain. During the age of discovery, empires grew as countries were exploring the seas and colonizing the new world, sparking the growth of mercantilism throughout Europe.<sup>1</sup> With newly established trade routes between the Americas, Africa, and Asia, sixteenth century Europe was experiencing great economic prosperity and rising political influence in a newly globalized world.<sup>2</sup> Soon within the populace of rising entrepreneurs was a confrontation with the hegemonic Catholic church. The Roman Catholic church was the principal religion of Europe for centuries, wielding spiritual, political, and economic power. The head of the church, the Pope, was long regarded as the ultimate authority on earth. Believed as being the sole individual capable of leading people to heaven, popes throughout history were able to govern their papal states unchallenged.<sup>3</sup> Immortalizing their significant influence, the church was a major patron and subject of Renaissance art. With paintings and numerous cathedrals decorated by the craftsmanship of masters such as Leonardo

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<sup>1</sup> Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2001), 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Ken, "The Age of Discovery: Explorers of the Renaissance," Hubpages Inc., 2014, <https://owlcation.com/humanities/The-Age-of-Discovery-Explorers-of-the-Renaissance>.

<sup>3</sup> Steven Zucker and Beth Harris, "Reformation and Counter-Reformation | Europe 1300-1800," Khan Academy, 2018, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/renaissance-reformation/protestant-reformation1>.

da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael, the Catholic church was prominently represented in the cultural eye.<sup>4</sup> In the sixteenth century however, economic participants began to adopt an “Erasmianism” attitude towards the religion, rejecting the parts that conflicted with leading a profitable lifestyle. More in line with the growing daily demands of capitalism, Protestantism rose, challenging Catholicism in the cultural sphere.<sup>5</sup> The religious phenomenon among the rising middle class was reflective of a larger growing dissatisfaction with the Catholic church; the height of this period of dissatisfaction resulted as the Reformation. Dissent of the Catholic church was evident prior to the Reformation; however, it was through the contributions of Martin Luther under favorable circumstances that Protestantism was able to take hold of the public.<sup>6</sup> In particular, the political environment during this period had numerous rulers interested in reclaiming power and land from the papacy. With the support of the public and various government leaders, the Reformation movement enacted an attack on the influence of the Catholic church, including through acts of iconoclasm. Art in the sixteenth century, in parallel to the cultural decline of a major patron, underwent changes in perception and topic. As religious art, viewed as idolatry, were being destroyed, art began to shift towards more variation, including secular topics and subjects from the middle and lower economic classes.<sup>7</sup> Within the same

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<sup>4</sup> History.com Staff, "Renaissance Art," A&E Television Networks, 2010, <https://www.history.com/topics/renaissance-art>.

<sup>5</sup> Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2001), 3.

<sup>6</sup> Steven Zucker and Beth Harris, "Reformation and Counter-Reformation | Europe 1300-1800," Khan Academy, 2018, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/renaissance-reformation/protestant-reformation1>.

<sup>7</sup> Alois Riegl, *The Group Portraiture of Holland* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art & the Humanities, 2000), 101.

century, the Catholic church launched a response through the Counter Reformation. The Catholic response included a reaffirmation of the controversial doctrines, a campaign to spread Catholicism throughout the newly globalized world, and a mission to rebuke heresy, through methods such as the Inquisition.<sup>8</sup> It was through this period of intolerance of non-Catholic individuals that various members of the elite and skilled class emigrated to other areas of Europe, including to Holland.<sup>9</sup>

Transitioning into the seventeenth century, the revolutions and crises that began to develop in the Renaissance continued to characterize the entirety of the next century. The Frondes in France, the Puritan Revolution in England, the Revolt of Portugal, and the Palace Revolution in the Netherlands, crises were occurring around the world. However, differing from the impact of revolutions in the sixteenth century, the series of crises that occurred in the seventeenth century would produce a much more significant effect on European society. Under vastly different circumstances from the prior century, the events of the seventeenth century would ultimately break and change society. As empires had grown during the Renaissance, bureaucracy grew in parallel to accommodate to the system of administrative centralization. However, the growing number of officers eventually led to corruption within the Renaissance State, an offense that would be at the expense of the country. After war and an economic depression, society developed a hatred of the court, bureaucratic corruption, and the Renaissance itself. It was through a series of conditions, within the religious, economic, and political spheres,

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<sup>8</sup> Steven Zucker and Beth Harris, "Reformation and Counter-Reformation | Europe 1300-1800," Khan Academy, 2018, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/renaissance-reformation/protestant-reformation1>.

<sup>9</sup> Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2001), 72.



that the seventeenth century became to be characterized as a period of crisis of the state, in relation to society.<sup>10</sup>

### The Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century

Analogous with the rest of Europe, the seventeenth century was a period marked by remarkable societal upheaval and growth for the country of the Netherlands. In the sixteenth century, the country was predominantly rural, dependent on agriculture and fishing.<sup>11</sup> The forefront of cultural and economic development was based in the southern region, the Habsburg empire of Spain. The country remained under Spanish control until the Northern Revolt in 1579, resulting in the divide of the nation between north and south. The southern region was under the authority of the Spanish and the influence of the Catholic church. The Northern provinces formed the Union of Utrecht, led by William I, Prince of Orange, a Protestant. The aspirations of the northern society were for religious tolerance, a government consisting of a constitutional monarchy and a States-General, and national unity. Following the murder of William I and unsuccessful attempts to find a replacement monarch, the Union of the Utrecht eventually became the Dutch Republic in the early seventeenth century. Upon the conclusion of the Eighty Years War between Spain and the Netherlands, spanning between 1568 and 1648, the newly emerged society soon experienced an illustrious rise of culture and economic prosperity, an era known as the Dutch Golden Age. Many factors, emanating from the political, economic, and social spheres, contributed to the phenomenon. One major contribution was the influx of immigrants the Netherlands experienced in the seventeenth century. As a result of widespread

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<sup>10</sup> Trevor-Roper, 80.

<sup>11</sup> Donald J. Harreld, “The Dutch Economy in the Golden Age (16th – 17th Centuries),”, Economic History Association, 2018, <https://eh.net/encyclopedia/the-dutch-economy-in-the-golden-age-16th-17th-centuries/>.

religious persecution occurring in Catholic-dominated regions of Europe, many Protestants and other persecuted populations emigrated to the northern region of the Netherlands, seeking the unique religious freedom upheld by the new government. A critical detail regarding the immigrant population was the high economic potential and sheer quantity of these individuals.<sup>12</sup> In addition to the established wealth of the immigrant population, Protestant ideals and work ethic, particularly Calvinism, further helped produce a populace capable of generating and maintaining economic wealth.<sup>13</sup> The simple increase in population led to increased societal demand. In order to have an adequate supply of nourishment to sustain the population, there would be a shift to market gardening and an increase in grain trade. The increased trade would eventually give rise to the exploration of other shipping and trade routes. During the seventeenth century, numerous industries thrived, including: The North Sea Herring Fishery, sugar refining, tobacco processing, and international trade. The Netherlands participated in the European trend of expansion as they began shipping around the globe to Russia, the Mediterranean, the Americas, Africa, and Asia. The United East India Company of the Netherlands secured a lucrative monopoly on trading rights in Asia. The increase of shipping and trade also resulted in the rise of related industries, such as ship building and brick making<sup>14</sup>. Immigrant entrepreneurs and elite members also had a significant impact in local society. In the area of education, wealthy merchants and entrepreneurs adopted an active role as they supported multilingual curriculum

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<sup>12</sup> Dagmar Freist, “The ‘Dutch Century’,” Leibniz Institute of European History (IEG), 2012, <http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/models-and-stereotypes/the-dutch-century>.

<sup>13</sup> Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2001), 24.

<sup>14</sup> Donald J. Harreld, “The Dutch Economy in the Golden Age (16th – 17th Centuries),”, Economic History Association, 2018, <https://eh.net/encyclopedia/the-dutch-economy-in-the-golden-age-16th-17th-centuries/>.

and supplies. In a global-oriented education system, students were being prepared to continue the growth international trade and cultural exchange. Influencing the social aspect of society, the elite introduced a new form of expression of wealth via ostentatious architecture, literature, and art. The Dutch Golden Age was especially expressed in the enormous quantity of art that was produced during the time, an estimated eight to nine million paintings produced between 1580 to 1800. The combination of an influx of skilled painters from the southern region of the Netherlands and the increased cultural value of art held by the newly immigrated elite resulted in the development of a widely inclusive art market. People of many social classes participated in the art market. Overall, society experienced a rise in the middle class with the increase of merchants, ship owners, craftsmen, and many other notable professions. By the end of the seventeenth century, half of the population was living in urban environments. The seventeenth century was a period characterized by astonishing growth, politically, economically, and culturally, for the Dutch Republic.

### **Art Historical Context**

Religious tension stemming from the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation deeply penetrated European society, manifesting in various cultural outlets such as architecture, music, and visual arts. Within the campaign to reaffirm the authority of the Catholic Church, the visual arts were embraced as a key role to guiding the public. The new Catholic biblical art was designed to distinguish the Church through direct and compelling narrative.<sup>15</sup> Catholic Counter-Reformation art recruited masters such as Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Annibale Carracci, and Giovanni Battista Gaulli. Religious compositions were characterized by bold

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<sup>15</sup> “Catholic Counter-Reformation Art (1560-1700),” Encyclopedia of Art History, 2018, <http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/history-of-art/catholic.htm>.

contrasts of light and dark, dramatic realism, and dynamic movement.<sup>16</sup> Catholic Counter-Reformation art has become highly synonymous with the art of the seventeenth century termed as “Baroque”. The artistic demands related to the revival of the Catholic church allowed for the development of the new style. An integration of influential sources, art was also being inspired by both a desire to break away from the Mannerist style of the previous century and the rising popularity of Caravaggism. Mannerism was an artistic style that arose following the Renaissance. Prominent artists within this style of art included Raphael, Michelangelo Buonarroti, and Parmigianino.<sup>17</sup> The portrayal of individuals through Mannerism yielded elongated proportions, exaggerated anatomy, and convoluted poses. Mannerist works emphasized “self-conscious artifice” over realism.<sup>18</sup> The style declined in the late sixteenth century with the revaluation of naturalism by Italian artists such as Caravaggio.<sup>19</sup> Caravaggism, the painting techniques popularized by Caravaggio, became a critical influence in Baroque art, prominent in the works of Diego Velazquez and Rembrandt van Rijn. A rejection of conventional idealization, the style employs bold realism through dramatic shadows and light. The improvement to the three-dimensionality of figures and the enabling of greater emotional

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<sup>16</sup> Esperança Camara, “Baroque Art in Europe, an Introduction,” Khan Academy, 2018, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/monarchy-enlightenment/baroque-art1/beginners-guide-baroque1/a/baroque-art-in-europe-an-introduction>.

<sup>17</sup> “Mannerism,” Artcyclopedia, 2018, <http://www.artcyclopedia.com/history/mannerism.html>.

<sup>18</sup> “Mannerism,” National Gallery of Art, 2018, <https://www.nga.gov/features/slideshows/mannerism.html>.

<sup>19</sup> “Mannerism Style of Art (C.1520-1600),” Encyclopedia of Art History, 2018, <http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/history-of-art/mannerism.htm>.

depth and characterization, attributed to the techniques of Caravaggism, would continue to define Baroque art.<sup>20</sup>

In northern, newly Protestant countries, art was being heavily influenced by the disruption of the Catholic Church. Paintings depicting religious scenes, once a major source of commission, were no longer within the popular culture now dictated by the modest ideals of Protestantism. As a result, paintings emerging from this period were able to diversify in terms of style and themes. The chief replacement of the lost source of patronage was the growing middle class, prosperous from the economic growth of the seventeenth century and eager to validate their status through portraiture.<sup>21</sup> Nowhere in the seventeenth century did art prosper under new societal conditions as it did in the Netherlands; this period characterized by an exponential production of paintings is known as the Dutch Golden Age. Dutch paintings classified into seven major categories: biblical, mythological/historical, landscapes, still life, portraits of the elite, portraits of city guards, and marine paintings.<sup>22</sup> Portraits were the most profitable, on account of their prearranged pricing and the additional income from taking up apprentices specifically interested in the genre of portraiture. Portraits were a necessity in both the public and private sphere of Dutch society. Portraits were especially in demand to decorate the private homes of the growing elite. Events necessitating commissions included: engagements, births, deaths, graduations, and

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<sup>20</sup> “Caravaggism (C.1600-50) Painting Techniques Used by Caravaggio: Chiaroscuro, Tenebrism,” Encyclopedia of Art History, 2018, <http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/history-of-art/caravaggism.htm>.

<sup>21</sup> Esperança Camara, “Baroque Art in Europe, an Introduction,” Khan Academy, 2018, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/monarchy-enlightenment/baroque-art1/beginners-guide-baroque1/a/baroque-art-in-europe-an-introduction>.

<sup>22</sup> “17th Century Dutch Art Painting,” European Heritage, 2018, <http://european-heritage.org/netherlands/alkmaar/dutch-art-painting-17th-century>.

commemorating professional individuals and associations.<sup>23</sup> The style of Dutch art produced in the seventeenth century developed its own unique identity, termed as “Dutch Realism”. Major influences behind the unique approach were derived from Flemish painting, particularly the perfected realism techniques of Jan van Eyck, and the naturalism of Caravaggio.<sup>24</sup> Dutch art was highly detailed and focused on secular, everyday themes. Portraiture lacked embellishment, in favor of depicting Holland through a lens of naturalism.<sup>25</sup> The influence of Dutch Realism would spread beyond the Netherlands, influencing art throughout Europe and the Americas.<sup>26</sup> Overall, the seventeenth century Baroque era of art was a period highly influenced by the religious and economic environment of the time, depicted with dramatic movement and intense realism.

### **Group Portraiture**

To participate in a group involves a delicate negotiation between the individual and the entity of the organization. Members are contributing, both physically and metaphysically, towards the identity of the group. It is no wonder that within the history of the artistic representation of this subject, of groups, that artists have varied in their approach. In its infancy, group portraits were approached as a collection of individual portraits. Take for instance, *The Pilgrims to Jerusalem from Haarlem* (1528), by Jan van Scorel (Figure 1).<sup>27</sup> In the traditional manner, individual

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<sup>23</sup> William H. Wilson, *Dutch Seventeenth Century Portraiture: The Golden Age*, (Sarasota, FL: John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 1980), 7.

<sup>24</sup> “Dutch Realism (C.1600-80),” Encyclopedia of Art History, 2018, <http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/history-of-art/dutch-realism.htm>.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Sutton, “Appearance and Reality in Dutch Art,” (presentation, Views on Dutch Painting of the Golden Age, New Haven, CT, October 8, 2015).

<sup>26</sup> William H. Wilson, *Dutch Seventeenth Century Portraiture: The Golden Age*, (Sarasota, FL: John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 1980), 44.

members of the group are organized in an unnatural, linear arrangement. There is little overlapping of bodies, each being allotted space for full display. Each figure yields their own coat of arms above their depiction, further retaining their individual identities. Cohesion within the group is achieved by their association to a common, external corporation.<sup>28</sup> Symbols of membership commonly created the unity of early group portraits.<sup>29</sup> In view of the overall image, the impact of the group portrait is slightly disconcerting. The group is disjointed as each member stares outside of the image at the viewer, vying for individual recognition. In consequence to the unique image concept of early group portraiture, the genre has held weak influence in both present art historical scholarship and in its past historical context.<sup>30</sup> Prior to the seventeenth century, group portraiture remained largely isolated to the country of Holland. It would then be within the environment of Holland that the genre would evolve to be an immensely influential medium through which culture and identity could be fashioned.

*The Group Portraiture of Holland*, by Alois Riegl, is a significant and comprehensive documentation of the progression of group portraiture as it occurred in Holland. The first group portraits originated from religious commissions, most notably of the Jerusalem Brotherhood.<sup>31</sup> However, with the advent of the Reformation and iconoclasm in the sixteenth century, the

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<sup>27</sup> Alois Riegl, *The Group Portraiture of Holland* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art & the Humanities, 2000), 60.

<sup>28</sup> Riegl, 62.

<sup>29</sup> Ann Jensen Adams, *Public Faces and Private Identities in Seventeenth-Century Holland: Portraiture and the Production of Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 214.

<sup>30</sup> Alois Riegl, *The Group Portraiture of Holland* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art & the Humanities, 2000), 63.

<sup>31</sup> Riegl, 67.

subjects of group portraiture transitioned towards secularism. Secular commissions included those of civic guards, anatomy lessons, and regent groups.<sup>32</sup>

We now begin with first period of group portraiture between the years of 1529 and 1566, as defined by Riegl. Exemplifying the state of group portraiture during this period is a painting by Dirk Jacobsz, *Civic Guard Group Portrait of 1532* (Figure 2).<sup>33</sup> Immediately, the shift in religious affiliation is evident. Civic guard organizations were a revival of the militia, originally constructed in the early sixteenth century to fight for independence from Spanish rule and disbanding later in the century upon completion of their ambitions.<sup>34</sup> Without the need to fight, members joined civic guard organizations for social reasons. These companies worked in the community through means such as funding children's homes, reform schools, and hospitals. Cultural conditions then reinforced the popularization of these groups, as value was associated with the acquisition of officer positions in these charitable civic organizations.<sup>35</sup> Subsequently, these organizations would regularly commission group portraits to memorialize and reinforce their cultural presence, significantly contributing to the rising activity of group portraiture. Returning to the painting, the organization of the individuals remains unnaturally linear, in reference to the early approaches of the genre. Each guard is preoccupied with their own ambition, to be honored individually. Unity is achieved through the similarity of clothing, symbolic of a shared membership. The painting serves as effective illustration of early group

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<sup>32</sup> Riegl, 101.

<sup>33</sup> Riegl, 126.

<sup>34</sup> Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2001), 37.

<sup>35</sup> William H. Wilson, *Dutch Seventeenth Century Portraiture: The Golden Age*, (Sarasota, FL: John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 1980), 44.



portraiture. Towards the end of the first period arose the emergence of genre painting, a diversion from the tradition of religious art. Genre painting would serve to influence historical and group portraits, with its preference to illustrate everyday scenes and the emotive element of figures. Most significant of the imparted pictorial conceptions was the emphasis of external coherence over internal coherence.<sup>36</sup> This principle can be demonstrated in the painting by Pieter Aertsen, *Market Scene* (Figure 3).<sup>37</sup> The seller gazes towards the viewer outside of the image, rather than the more likely customers found elsewhere within the scene. The customers are focused outside of the painting as well, isolating themselves from possible connections to be made within the image. As with many group portraits of the first period, unity is established through the coherence made externally.

The second period occurs between 1588 and 1624. This period experienced a particular rise in anatomy lesson and regent group portraits.<sup>38</sup> At this time, many professions began to establish guilds centered around their occupational identities. In particular, the Amsterdam Guild of Surgeons had significant impact on the community and group portraiture. Beginning in 1555, the guild regularly hosted public anatomy lessons led by prestigious master surgeons, known as the Praelector. Surgeon assistants would be directly manipulating the body, obtained from the recent execution of criminals.<sup>39</sup> The venue for these events was the anatomical theatre, necessary

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<sup>36</sup> Alois Riegl, *The Group Portraiture of Holland* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art & the Humanities, 2000), 169.

<sup>37</sup> Riegl, 170.

<sup>38</sup> Riegl, 194.

<sup>39</sup> A. C. Masquelet, "The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Tulp," *Journal of Hand Surgery* 30, no. 4 (2005): 379.

to accommodate the large number of students and spectators that would attend. To maintain the integrity of the corpse, dissections were typically held in winter.<sup>40</sup> It would become tradition for the dissections to be documented through group portrait. An example of the anatomy group portraits of the second period is *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Sebastian Egbertsz* (Figure 7). As can be seen, group portraits remained to be organized in a linear manner with individuals gazing outside of the portrait. However, in contrast to past images, the surgeons are notably engaged in an activity, their absentminded hand gestures replacing the function of the symbol in early group portraits. The returning gaze of the viewer unites the group, a phenomenon of external coherence.<sup>41</sup> Beyond the effect of increasing physical production, anatomy lesson group portraits would help shape the identity of the occupation itself.

The third and final period of group portraiture encompasses the years between 1624 and 1662. Group portraiture has transitioned to utilize dramatic narrative to create inner unity. Outer unity is achieved through subordination to a mediator, a member of the group that gazes to the viewer and effectively extends an invitation to the narrative of the image. *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* by Rembrandt van Rijn illustrates the character of group portraits of the third period (Figure 4). Unity is created through similar appearance and common participation in the anatomical lesson. The surgeons are organized in a pyramid shape, promoting a subordination uncommon to the traditional linear pattern of early group portraits. There is heightened attention to the visual demeanor of the individuals, conveying the psychological aspect of group cohesion.

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<sup>40</sup> Rina Knoeff, "Dutch Anatomy and Clinical Medicine in 17th-Century Europe Dutch Anatomy," EGO Europäische Geschichte Online, 2012, <http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/models-and-stereotypes/the-dutch-century/rina-knoeff-dutch-anatomy-and-clinical-medicine-in-17th-century-europe>.

<sup>41</sup> Alois Riegl, *The Group Portraiture of Holland* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art & the Humanities, 2000), 196.

The gaze of each member varies, corresponding to the function of each. By the third period of group portraiture, artists were able to find a meaningful balance between establishing individual presence and creating a fluidity between individuals and the surrounding space. Throughout the seventeenth century, the conventions of group portraiture underwent an intensive process of experimentation, resulting in the variety of conventions seen today.

### **Visual Analysis of *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* (1632)**

At the heart of The Hague is the Mauritshuis museum, home to a world-renown collection of paintings from the Dutch Golden Age. Among the collection is *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, painted by Rembrandt van Rijn. The portrait was commissioned in January of 1632 by the Amsterdam Guild of Surgeons.<sup>42</sup> Since 1555, the guild has hosted public anatomy lessons featuring the dissection of an executed criminal. Typically, anatomical work was to be done by surgeon assistants while the chief surgeon, called the “praelector”, oversaw the dissection.<sup>43</sup> In the group portrait, Rembrandt strays from this convention; He depicts the praelector, Dr. Tulp, actively conducting the dissection of the arm. This is the first anatomy portrait to depict the praelector performing the dissection.<sup>44</sup> The right hand of Dr. Tulp, utilizing forceps, manipulates the muscle tendons of the corpse. His left hand is in a peculiar position; The wrist is intentionally extended, and the fingers are rigid and partially flexed in an abnormal

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<sup>42</sup> “Rembrandt Van Rijn, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp*, 1632,” Mauritshuis, 2018, <https://www.mauritshuis.nl/en/discover/mauritshuis/masterpieces-from-the-mauritshuis/the-anatomy-lesson-of-dr-nicolaes-tulp-146/>.

<sup>43</sup> A. C. Masquelet, “The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Tulp,” *Journal of Hand Surgery* 30, no. 4 (2005): 379.

<sup>44</sup> William H. Wilson, *Dutch Seventeenth Century Portraiture: The Golden Age*, (Sarasota, FL: John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 1980), 175.

manner. The left hand of Dr. Tulp is demonstrating the function of the flexor digitorum superficialis, the same muscles being maneuvered by the right hand. The surgeons gaze intently at both hands of the praelector. Jacob de Witt watches the hand of the corpse<sup>45</sup>. Mathys Calkoen looks at the left hand of Dr. Tulp. His posture suggests that he is looking downwards. The disconnect between his eye and his posture suggests that he is following the hand of the praelector.<sup>46</sup> The left hand of Calkoen is mimicking the movement of the proximal interphalangeal joints.<sup>47</sup> Another noticeable diversion from the conventional practices of public anatomy lessons is the choice of dissection being illustrated. Traditionally, the order of incisions made are guided by the sequence in which body parts would rot. The first incision is made in the stomach. The anatomist then removes all the organs of the lower belly before moving to the middle belly above the diaphragm. At the end of the dissection is when the anatomist would explore the brain, sense organs, muscles, tendons, and bones.<sup>48</sup> Once again deviating from tradition, Rembrandt has illustrated a scene in which the first incision has been made to the left arm. The choice of dissection, most likely made by the patrons rather than the artist, reveals insight on the figures that had influenced Dr. Tulp as an anatomist. One figure is Julius

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<sup>45</sup> A. C. Masquelet, "The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Tulp," *Journal of Hand Surgery* 30, no. 4 (2005): 380.

<sup>46</sup> William Schupbach, *The Paradox of Rembrandts "Anatomy of Dr. Tulp"*, (London: Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1982).

<sup>47</sup> A. C. Masquelet, "The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Tulp," *Journal of Hand Surgery* 30, no. 4 (2005): 380.

<sup>48</sup> Rina Knoeff, "Dutch Anatomy and Clinical Medicine in 17th-Century Europe Dutch Anatomy," EGO Europäische Geschichte Online, 2012, <http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/models-and-stereotypes/the-dutch-century/rina-knoeff-dutch-anatomy-and-clinical-medicine-in-17th-century-europe>.

Casseri, an anatomist that, along with his successor, published several anatomical illustrations. The dissection being conducted by Dr. Tulp bears similarities to the dissections illustrated by Casseri, indicating a relationship and possibly the model used by Rembrandt.<sup>49</sup> The principal association to the dissection of the forearm are the theories of Andreas Vesalius, a revolutionary figure within the field of anatomy. Breaking the hegemonic status of the anatomic descriptions of Galen, Vesalius has been credited with the bridging of theory and practice within the teaching of medicine and anatomy. On the cover of his opus, *De Humani Corporis fabrica*, is a portrait of himself with a dissected forearm. The forearm, as supported by Vesalius, has been designated the chief instrument of the physician.<sup>50</sup> Illustrating Dr. Tulp in the same manner as Vesalius might suggest an attempt to convey the arrival of a new, revolutionary Vesalius figure, Dr. Tulp.<sup>51</sup> However, the consideration of the context of sixteenth and seventeenth century public dissections may suggest a different message attempting to be conveyed. The events were often preceded with a moralistic introduction. Anatomy was viewed to be towards the knowledge of God; the arm was regarded as the proof of God's presence in man. The demonstration of the muscles of the fingers may have been to emphasize the divinity of Creation.<sup>52</sup> A final figure that is associated to the image of the dissection of the arm is the Greek philosopher Aristotle.

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<sup>49</sup> William Schupbach, *The Paradox of Rembrandts "Anatomy of Dr. Tulp"*, (London: Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1982).

<sup>50</sup> A. C. Masquelet, "The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Tulp," *Journal of Hand Surgery* 30, no. 4 (2005): 380.

<sup>51</sup> Rina Knoeff, "Dutch Anatomy and Clinical Medicine in 17th-Century Europe Dutch Anatomy," EGO Europäische Geschichte Online, 2012, <http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/models-and-stereotypes/the-dutch-century/rina-knoeff-dutch-anatomy-and-clinical-medicine-in-17th-century-europe>.

<sup>52</sup> William Schupbach, *The Paradox of Rembrandts "Anatomy of Dr. Tulp"*, (London: Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1982).

Aristotle stated that hands are directly related to the intellect of man. The consideration of this association may suggest the attempt to exalt the scene and participants of the anatomy lesson as a pinnacle of modern knowledge.<sup>53</sup> Continuing the theme of innovations to group and anatomy portraits, Rembrandt has given each figure significant attention. In the far left is Jacob Colevelt, believed to have been added after the initial completion of the painting, intently gazing toward Dr. Tulp. To the right of Colevelt, Adrian Slabberaen looks over to the book in the lower right corner, a historical object of anatomy lessons and symbolic of the tradition of knowledge. Jacob De Witt, located to the right of Slabberaen, looks over the cadaver. The next over to the right is Mathys Calkoen, postured downwards with his eyes looking towards Tulp, the disconnect suggesting the act of following the moving hand of Dr. Tulp. In the rightmost surgeon, the different directions of the trunk and the head suggest that Hartman Hartmansz has changed his attention. He stares blankly in the direction of the book and the anatomy lesson. To the left of Hartmansz is Jacob Black, who appears to be looking at the left hand of Dr. Tulp. Finally, at the top of the pyramid is Franz Jacobsz van Loenen. Post investigation of the painting has revealed that Loenen was once depicted wearing a hat, the traces of which have left a vague dark spot around his head.<sup>54</sup> Loenen is also unique in his gaze, staring straight outside of the portrait and at the viewer as he points to the scene below him. He functions as a mediator, bringing external viewers into the internal narrative of the scene. Along with the use of a mediator, the representation of light in the anatomy portrait is exemplary of the state of Dutch Baroque art in the seventeenth century. Light is focused at the center of the painting, attracting the eye. The

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<sup>53</sup> A. C. Masquelet, "The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Tulp," *Journal of Hand Surgery* 30, no. 4 (2005): 381.

<sup>54</sup> Norbet Middelkoop, Marlies Enklaar, and Peter van der Ploeg, *Rembrandt Under the Scalpel: The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp Dissected* (Hague: Mauritshuis, 1998).

pure white of the starched collars communicates social status and unifies the individual surgeons under their profession. The mastery of technique and innovative approaches to the depiction of groups and anatomy lessons are made even more impressive with the knowledge that Rembrandt was only twenty-five years old during the making of this image.<sup>55</sup> Newly arriving in Amsterdam, the success of his first major commission led to the quick establishment of Rembrandt as one of the most influential artists in the history of the Netherlands and art itself. The image itself has become one of the most famous paintings of not only Rembrandt, but of anatomy lesson depictions, group portraiture, and art in general.

### **Portraits and Identity**

A portrait can be defined as a representation of a person. However, to assume that the function of the portrait is limited to the mere documentation of a human image is a gross oversimplification of its potential. In *Fictions of the Pose: Rembrandt Against the Italian Renaissance*, author Harry Berger, Junior provides insight into the hidden complexities of self-portraits. To commission and pose for a portrait is an intentional act of self-presentation to an audience. However, to present oneself is not simply done. Within the portrait, the subject is conveyed through a lens, through their poses that are linked to cultural interpretations and social discourse. In posing for a portrait, the subject performs a role in which they interpret themselves.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, in the traditional process of portraiture, the sitter is rarely physically

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<sup>55</sup> Beth Harris and Steven Zucker, “Rembrandt, The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp,” Khan Academy, 2015, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/monarchy-enlightenment/baroque-art1/holland/v/rembrandt-tulp>.

<sup>56</sup> Harry Berger, *Fictions of the Pose: Rembrandt against the Italian Renaissance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 171.

present during the painting process. The final portrait pretends that the sitter was there.<sup>57</sup> The fictitious reality of portraiture, the feigned presentation of the sitter in terms of their poses and physical presence, is what Berger has termed as the “fiction of the pose”.<sup>58</sup> The concept can be exemplified when looking at the *Mona Lisa* by Leonardo da Vinci (Figure 5). The fiction of the pose is intentionally made conspicuous as the painting represents “the hiddenness and complication of the drama of the posing consciousness”.<sup>59</sup> By depicting the sitter as fully aware of the presence of an audience, the pose becomes intentional for the sake of theatrics or rhetoric. While posing is intentional, Berger also introduces the act of absorption, the rejection of pose. There are two types of absorption: candid and distraction. Candid attempts to portray the subject as engaged in an action, oblivious to being painted. Distraction involves being posed in body but free in regard to the mind or consciousness.<sup>60</sup> In these types of portraits, the artist attempts to minimize the existence of the beholder in exchange for a heightened perception of genuineness of portrayal.<sup>61</sup> Absorption in portraits attempt to convey authenticity in the portrayal of the sitter; However, Berger concludes that this objectivity is fictitious as well. Ultimately, absorption is an act of posing with the attempt of achieving objectivity, an idealized mimesis.<sup>62</sup> It is evident that within portraiture is an intricate negotiation between image and the desired effect, to impart a lasting presence of the portrayed.

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<sup>57</sup> Berger, 174.

<sup>58</sup> Berger, 175.

<sup>59</sup> Berger, 181.

<sup>60</sup> Berger, 183.

<sup>61</sup> Berger, 182.

<sup>62</sup> Berger, 189.



The identity conveyed through portraiture goes beyond that of the personal realm, extending into communal identities. This phenomenon can be attributed to how identity is perceived in terms of and in relation to societally-shared categories and values. The terms are created through dynamic, interpersonal and intersubjective processes between the individual and the surrounding culture. Portraits are a source of some of the terms used to understand identity and relation to others, as they communicate through a language of visual signs and cultural codes.<sup>63</sup> In *Portraiture*, author Richard Brilliant articulates this exchange of meaningful indications of status and role. Through “cooperation”, portraits can be used to fashion identity. Portraits are able to reinforce social status, alluding to the social structures and cultural issues of their temporal context.<sup>64</sup> In *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth Century England*, author Marcia Pointon analyzes the role of portraiture in establishing the modern English state. Family portraits elevated the bourgeois family, securing their status as a public icon. Portraits were also used between the state and individuals in the construction of the state itself. Portraiture, and the stereotypes developed within the genre, were utilized in the “regulation, surveillance, and organization of the public”.<sup>65</sup> Through the representation of people through schemas, general terms derived from common experience, is an aspect of how artists shape identity.<sup>66</sup> The construction and portrayal of identities are a complex process that is not

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<sup>63</sup> Ann Jensen Adams, *Public Faces and Private Identities in Seventeenth-Century Holland: Portraiture and the Production of Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 23.

<sup>64</sup> Adams, 56.

<sup>65</sup> Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 1997).

<sup>66</sup> Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (Londres: Reaktion Books, 2008).

isolated to the confines of the individual; rather, identity is a social interactive process, built eclectically from both internal and external sources. Consequently, the potential of portraits to display identity is not limited to that of the sitter but can include the identity of the artist and associated institutions<sup>67</sup>.

### **Occupational Identity**

In the article *Portraits, People and Things: Richard Mead and Medical Identity*, author Ludmilla Jordanova investigates the importance of portraits for medical identity, using Richard Mead as a case study. Examining various pieces within the medicine-related art collection of Richard Mead, Jordanova explicates how these objects express links between people and institutions, creating a sense of continuity.<sup>68</sup> Portraits, along with other items, enable individuals to reflect upon their occupational identity. Especially for occupations that are multifaceted in nature, professions can provide opportunity for the creation of a unique culture and identity. These profession-related identities lead to the production of tangible representations, which in turn play a role in forming the culture of the profession. Portraits are commissioned by individuals and organizations. Many societies and professional bodies, its sitters united by common interests and occupation, commission portraits to commemorate their members and organization, displaying the finished piece in their professional settings.<sup>69</sup> Jordanova finds a pattern across the various collections of Richard Mead, a pattern that reveals the use of the art as

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<sup>67</sup> Ludmilla Jordanova, "Portraits, People and Things: Richard Mead and Medical Identity," *History of Science* 41, no. 3 (2003): 294.

<sup>68</sup> Jordanova, 303.

<sup>69</sup> Jordanova, 294.

support in debates about the status of physicians.<sup>70</sup> Apart from revealing the occupational-related identity of the individual, portraits can also be used to portray the occupational identity of the organization.

In group portraits, the identity of the individual can, to a degree, be surrendered to the construction of the identity of the group. Like the individual, groups and organizations are able to possess their own distinct identity that differentiates their body from the general masses. Group portraiture is the product of the act of self-presentation undertaken by these various groups. In *Public Faces and Private Identities in Seventeenth-Century Holland: Portraiture and the Production of a Community*, author Ann Jensen Adams investigates the style and cultural function of Dutch company portraits in relation to the private and social identities of their subjects. She uses the example of the *Drawing for the Company of Allaert Cloeck and Lieutenant Lucas Jacobsz Rotgans* (1630) by Thomas de Keyser (Figure 6).<sup>71</sup> In an earlier sketch, the poses of the individuals are dynamic and animated. Allaert Cloeck is posed with his arm outstretched, giving the order to assemble. Behind the officers at the center foreground are two men conversing. Another man facing away from the others holds a musket, smoke emanating from the gun. There are a cluster of men to the right in a variety of actions and poses. In a second drawing, one much closer to what would be the finished painting, the individuals have undergone dramatic change. The variation of poses has been narrowed down, opting for a redirection towards the central group. The costumes have been changed as well, every man is donning the

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<sup>70</sup> Jordanova, 307.

<sup>71</sup> Ann Jensen Adams, *Public Faces and Private Identities in Seventeenth-Century Holland: Portraiture and the Production of Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 223.

same contemporary felt hat when in the first sketch they had a variety of hats and bareheaded figures. The narrative has been changed to a more traditional line up. The military apparel has been reduced to a minimum.<sup>72</sup> Adams offers an explanation for the conservative retreat demonstrated between the two drafts. As with many portraits, the change was made in the interest and benefit of the social and political interests of the portrayed. The central function of these shooting companies' institutions was to maintain civic order. The function of the group necessitated a particular image, one that would aid the establishment of credibility within civic life. Through this example, Adams offers insight into how the group subject consciously utilized portraits to convey the identity of their organization.

A particular group that has been involved in the usage of portraiture is the surgeon profession. Group portraits have an active role in the creation and maintenance of the boundaries, character, and function of voluntary corporations.<sup>73</sup> Portraits have been used strategically, at times utilizing caricatures to connect its subjects to the public.<sup>74</sup> Prior to the seventeenth century, the profession has been generally associated with poor quality and societal disdain. In the past, surgeons were more related to commercial trades as practicality was prioritized over academia within the field. The occupation only began to receive more professional autonomy in the eyes of the public in the sixteenth century. However, the stereotype would also evolve to depict surgeons in ostentatiously luxurious clothing. Surgeons would become associated with immoral practices,

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<sup>72</sup> Adams, 226.

<sup>73</sup> Adams, 217.

<sup>74</sup> Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

taking advantage of the poor and being indifferent to the suffering of patients.<sup>75</sup> With each development to the occupational identity, portraits captured the state of public perception. Portraits were not only a reflection of current identity, but also a means to reinforce perceptions. A particular portrait of interest within the lifespan of the surgeon profession is *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, produced by Rembrandt in the seventeenth century, which will be expanded upon in the next section. The innovative techniques and breaks from convention displayed in the group portrait would significantly influence both the genre of portraiture and the occupation identity of the medical surgeon.

### **The Innovation of *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* (1632)**

Commissioned by the Amsterdam Guild of Surgeons in 1632, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* was the fourth group portrait to join their collection of anatomical depictions. In comparison to its predecessors, the painting by Rembrandt can be considered dynamic and innovative to the traditions of group portraiture. To recognize the novelty of the painting, we must first begin with a brief description of its predecessors. The first painting commissioned by the guild was the *Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Sebastiaen Egbertsz* (1603) by Aert Pierson (Figure 7). Immediately, the image is notably reminiscent to the tradition of early group portraiture in which members were organized in a linear fashion to allow for individual recognition. Berger articulates the effect of the competitive posing as “desaggregation”.<sup>76</sup> While the group is united in how each sitter is competing for individual attention, the integrity of the group has been

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<sup>75</sup> Giorgio Bordin and Laura Polo D’Ambrosio, *Medicine in Art* (Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010), 212.

<sup>76</sup> Harry Berger, *Fictions of the Pose: Rembrandt against the Italian Renaissance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 334.

jeopardized. The second commission of the guild was *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Willem van der Meer* (1617) by M. K. van Miereveld (Figure 8). Attempting to overcome the threat of desaggregation, the members have been made to pretend to interact with their hands and eyes. The attention of the members is divided with some invested in the scene while others look out to the viewer. Berger summarizes the effect of this half-hearted coordination to be an undermining of the common action of surgery.<sup>77</sup> The third portrait to be commissioned by the guild was *The Officers of the Surgeons' Guild* (1619) by Thomas de Keyser (Figure 9). Three officers are involved, two officers look outward, and one of the figures gestures back towards the doctor. However, rather than appearing as an authentic depiction of the individual, the doctor comes off as a “sitter preoccupied in sustaining his pose”. Berger concludes that the image fails to be perceived as a narrative; rather, it pretends to narrate a particular event.<sup>78</sup> Thus far into the established gallery of the Amsterdam Guild of Surgeons, its commissions have demonstrated a theme of the desaggregation, created by the inability to balance the profiles of individual members. With each new iteration, the ratio of individuals that are dedicated to the scene and those dedicated to looking outside of the picture increases but to no avail in regard to eliminating the effect that has plagued the genre of group portraiture, until finally arriving to the fourth painting commissioned by the guild. The innovations of Rembrandt, the emphasis of absorption and lessening of theatricality, is made obvious by comparison. Successfully unifying the surgeons in a shared activity, Rembrandt achieves more internal subordination and dynamisms contrast to his predecessors.<sup>79</sup> In comparison to Pierson and the early traditions of group

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<sup>77</sup> Berger, 335.

<sup>78</sup> Berger, 338.

<sup>79</sup> Berger, 339.

portraiture, Rembrandt has rejected the customary grouping of surgeons in linear rows.<sup>80</sup> In comparison to all three of his predecessors, he has rejected the premise of every figure looking out of the picture. The decision to limit the number of mediators effectively contributes to greater internal coherence. Additionally, the painting marks the first time the praelector has been depicted performing the dissection.<sup>81</sup> In breaking from the established conventions of anatomy portraits, Rembrandt simultaneously disrupted the tradition of group portraiture as a whole, sparking new precedence in the image conventions of the genre.

In contrast to the influence Rembrandt had in the realm of art and group portraiture, his impact on the occupational identity of the medical surgeon has received much less attention in academic discourse. To fully grasp the profoundness of the impact, we must first consider how surgeons have been portrayed throughout history. Surgery begins millions of years ago, interacting within ancient civilizations. In Mesopotamia, surgeons were perceived as a pariah caste and failed procedures were harshly prosecuted, highly discouraging intensive surgical treatment.<sup>82</sup> In ancient China, surgeons were only allowed to perform simple, superficial procedures.<sup>83</sup> The development of the antagonized perception of surgeons is attributed to the cultural beliefs regarding illnesses and conduct with corpses. At this time, illnesses were thought to be divine punishments, executed by demonic spirits.<sup>84</sup> Corpses were regarded as sacrosanct

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<sup>80</sup> Rudi Ekkart, *Dutch Portraits the Age of Rembrandt and Frans Hals* (London: National Gallery, 2007), 175.

<sup>81</sup> Ekkart, 175.

<sup>82</sup> Knut Haeger and Roy Yorke, *The Illustrated History of Surgery* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), 19.

<sup>83</sup> Haeger, 28.

<sup>84</sup> Haeger, 18.

and the ability to perform autopsies were consequently prohibited.<sup>85</sup> As a result, advancement within the field of surgery was greatly inhibited, its limited knowledge of anatomy and development of procedures further adding to the defamation of the status of the surgeon. In the growth of Western civilization, natural scientific thought began to propagate.<sup>86</sup> The identity of the surgeon was divided, though remaining in low regards in Roman culture.<sup>87</sup> A positive achievement for the profession is attributed to a significant figure at this time, Galen, whose anatomical descriptions dominated European medicine for almost fifteen hundred years.<sup>88</sup> Unfortunately, the inaccuracies of his contributions, which were based on animal anatomical models, would later hurt the surgeon identity in the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages were a period of stagnation and decline for the surgical field as the church enacted a societal-wide return to religious medicine. Autopsies and an appreciation for the human anatomical structure would not be accepted until the Renaissance age, when Pope Sixtus IV restored the ability to perform autopsies and when artists rejected the gothic style of the previous century in favor of illustrating realistic body proportions.<sup>89</sup> However, the reputation of the Surgeon Guild was in decline in the fourteenth century, being forced to join the Guild of Barbers rather than the Guild of Physicians. It would take a positive encounter with King Henry VII by the first master surgeon, Thomas Vicary, for the Surgeons Guild to build a more reputable public perception.<sup>90</sup> The surgeon

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<sup>85</sup> Haeger, 28.

<sup>86</sup> Haeger, 38.

<sup>87</sup> Haeger, 48.

<sup>88</sup> Haeger, 58.

<sup>89</sup> Haeger, 95.

<sup>90</sup> Haeger, 100.



profession, throughout history, has been typically held in low regards because of its conflicts with various cultural values. The infamy of the profession translates to its few portrayals in art. *Home Amputation* exemplifies the depiction, and public perception, of surgeons in the early centuries (Figure 10). The surgeon is typically shown with crude tools. The patients don an expression of horror and pain. When the reputation of the Surgeons Guild began to rise around the fifteenth century, the portrayal of surgeons in art reflected the trend. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, surgeons would begin to experiment with new and more innovative approaches that would later improve patient outcome. It is then in the seventeenth century where we find *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* (1632). The reverent depiction of the surgeons greatly contrasts with past illustrations of the profession. The starched white collars and the richness of the clothing of the surgeons conveys their participation in a higher social class. The demeanor of each surgeon is carefully detailed with solemn expressions and noble curiosity. The image honors the intellectual achievement of Dr. Tulp and the profession of the medical surgeon like never before. The successful reception of the image, due to its previously stated introduction of innovative techniques, has led to its renown place in the history of art. I argue that its acclaim to notoriety does not exclude its association with the occupational identity of the medical surgeon. The transition from once being referred to as “sawbones” and “quacks” to esteemed medical professionals, is not to be overlooked.<sup>91</sup> Art plays a role in the creation and change of individual, group, and occupational identities in society. As discussed in previous sections, portraits fashion identity through the use and reinforcement of cultural values. As the reputation of the surgeon rose in society, art both reflected and bolstered its rising perception. Today,

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<sup>91</sup> Giorgio Bordin and Laura Polo D’Ambrosio, *Medicine in Art* (Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010), 212.

surgeons are held in high esteem and respected for their extensive knowledge of the human anatomy. Take for example the twenty-first century painting from “The Art of Surgery: Paintings by Joseph R. Wilder, M.D.” (Figure 11). The surgeon has become a hero, perceived as a noble profession in society. The depiction of the profession has dramatically changed in comparison to images from the earlier centuries. As history would indicate through various portraits, this positive view of surgeons stems from a relatively new trend in society that began around the sixteenth century. At the beginning of this change in trend, we find Rembrandt’s *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* (1632).

ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1. Jan Van Scorel, *12 Members of the Haarlem Brotherhood of Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 1528.

Oil on panel, 115 x 276 cm, Frans Halsmuseum, Haarlem, Netherlands.



Figure 2. Dirk Jacobsz, *Civic Guard Group Portrait of 1532*, 1532. Oil on canvas, 115 x 160 cm,

The Hermitage, St. Petersburg, Russia.



Figure 3. Pieter Aertsen, *Market Scene*. Oil on oak wood, 91 x 112 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.



Figure 4. Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, 1632. Oil on canvas, 169.5 x 216.5 cm, Mauritshuis Museum, The Hague, Netherlands.



Figure 5. Leonardo da Vinci. *Mona Lisa*, 1503. Oil on panel, 77 x 53 cm, Musee du Louvre, Paris, France.



Figure 6. Thomas de Keyser, *Drawing for the Company of Captain Allaert Cloeck and Lieutenant Lucas Jocabz Rotgans*, 1630. Pen and dark brown ink, gray-brown wash over black chalk, 20.1 x 40.68 cm, Statens Museum, Kunst, Copenhagen. Photo: Hans Petersen.



Figure 7. Aert Pietersz, *Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Sebastiaen Egbertsz*, 1603. Oil on canvas, 147 x 392 cm, Amsterdam Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands.



Figure 8. Michiel Jansz Van Miereveld, *Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Willem van der Meer*, 1617. Oil on canvas, 144 x 198 cm, Amsterdam Historical Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands.



Figure 9. Thomas de Keyser or Nicolaes Eliaszon Pickenoy, *The Officers of the Surgeon's Guild*, 1619. Oil on canvas, 135 x 186 cm. Amsterdam Historical Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands.



Figure 10. Granger, *Home Amputation*, 2013. Digital photograph, originally woodcut print, 900 x 771 pixels. Fineartamerica.com, originally surgical manual.





Figure 11. Joseph R. Wilder, *The Art of Surgery: Paintings by Joseph R. Wilder, M.D.*, 2002, Oil painting, Dartmouth Medicine Magazine.

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