The theatre of emotions: the success of Spanish drama in the Low Countries (1617-1672)

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Introduction

Comedia Nueva: *A Warm Welcome*

'Welcome! Take a seat and enjoy the show.' When the usher speaks these words, they are not meant merely as a formality. Whether it concerns a cabaret, a ballet, a comedy, or even a tragedy, producers and theatre-makers hope to treat spectators to a pleasurable performance for aesthetic and financial reasons alike. This is as true today as it was in the seventeenth century. In the Dutch Republic, the level of entertainment was the most important indicator of the popularity and quality of a play in the *Amsterdamse Schouwburg* (Amsterdam Public Theatre): unpopular plays were quickly removed from the repertoire as the spectators simply exerted their influence by showing up to, or staying away from, the performance of a certain play.[1] In the interplay of actors and spectators, the performance becomes a powerful event that can emotionally and psychologically change spectators, who are, then, empowered to immediately respond with admiration or distaste by laughing, cheering, sighing, groaning, sobbing, applauding, yelling either 'bravo' or 'da capo', or whistling and booing.[2]

Locally, the Dutch playwrights Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679), Pieter Cornelisz Hooft (1581–1647), Samuel Coster (1579–1665), and Gerbrand Adriaensz Bredero (1585–1618) had ushered in a 'Golden Age' of Dutch literature from around 1600 onwards; and in the Habsburg Netherlands, the Antwerp playwright Guilliam van Nieuwelandt (1584–1635) applied the same poetical precepts as his Northern colleagues. Their dramas especially have been regarded as influential in Dutch literary history and it is generally held that these playwrights left indelible marks on Dutch society; Vondel's *Gysbreght van Aemstel* (1637), for example, is well-known as one of the apexes of Dutch seventeenth-century literature.[3]

Yet in recent years, the research of Frans Blom and Olga van Marion has shown that the 'home-grown' plays of these local playwrights were not the perennial favourites—or at least not the only favourites—of the average seventeenth-century theatre visitor. They uncovered that it was not the tragedies by Vondel, but rather the Dutch adapta-

1 Oomen-Delhaye 2019, 145. This was, however, not exclusive to the Low Countries; see also Ravel 1999, 214–215; Blanning 2002, 106–109.

2 Fischer-Lichte 2014, 19.

3 See, e.g., Porteman and Smits-Veldt 2008, 215–228, and elsewhere.

tions of *comedias* by the Spanish playwright Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio (1562–1635) that were performed more frequently in the Amsterdam Public Theatre.[4] The popularity of Lope de Vega was for a long time unmatched in the Amsterdam Public Theatre and arguably in the Low Countries at large. And alongside the *comedias* of Lope de Vega, those by Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600–1681), Antonio Mira de Amescua (1577–1636), Guillén de Castro y Bellvís (1569–1631), and Juan Pérez de Montalbán (1602–1638) were also on average more popular than the 'home-grown' repertoire of the Dutch playwrights.[5] The Spanish *comedia nueva* was a dramatic genre that the Dutch and Flemish[6] spectators kept returning for; the romantic plots of *comedia nueva* apparently delighted them enormously in its popular adaptations for the stages of Amsterdam, Antwerp, and Brussels. That is, the plays written by the important Dutch and Flemish authors were diminished in popularity in favour of international theatre of which the Spanish *comedias* formed the majority. In this study, therefore, I look for several explanations as to why specifically the Spanish *comedias* entertained Dutch and Flemish spectators as much as they did, and sometimes even more than many 'home-grown' plays. What, for Dutch and Flemish spectators, was the appeal of international theatre, and more specifically of the Spanish *comedia nueva*?

Comedia Nueva on Tour in Europe

The Spanish *comedia nueva* is as a genre already extraordinary in itself: Lope's *comedias*, for example, are characterised by high-tempo action, romantic plots, deception, and disguise. Their extraordinary nature became only more obvious when Lope's plays were transferred and translated to other contexts and started to uniquely interact with the cultural artefacts of the new context, whether this was the improvisation theatre of the *commedia dell'arte* in Italy, the institutionalised *Comédie-Française* in France, William Shakespeare's popular theatre in England, or the neostoic Senecan-Scaligerian tragedies in the Low Countries.[7] The *comedias* were adapted, admired,

4 Jautze, Álvarez Francés, and Blom 2016, 16; Van Marion and Vergeer 2016, 41–43; Blom and Van Marion 2017, 158–159, and 2021, 7–8; Blom 2021a, 9–10.

5 Jautze, Álvarez Francés, and Blom 2016, 16.

6 I use 'Flemish' here in its modern conception as comprising the whole of the Dutch-speaking community of Belgium in the demographic region of Flanders. When speaking of 'Flemish' this is, therefore, rather a linguistic reference that includes the historic Duchy of Brabant (Brussels and Antwerp) and the County of Flanders.

7 For the influence of *comedia nueva* on the literatures of Italy, France, England, and the Low Countries,

appropriated, and scrutinised in ways that are common among all forms of cultural transfer.[8] Therefore, acts of cultural transfer have the power to shift boundaries in the cultural system of the receiving culture, such as the creators of this analytic model, Michel Espagne and Michael Werner, explain.[9] Cultural transfer originates from the understanding that the transfer of cultural products is mostly a reconstruction of the receiving culture, which by importing foreign ideas responds to a specific native situation or to current trends (*Konjunktur*).[10]

The transfer and exchange of cultural products, such as the *comedia nueva* shows, is a process that has shaped and reshaped European literatures in the early modern period and can be understood as a 'transcultural history of Europe and ultimately as Europeanization.'[11] For the Low Countries, the Spanish *comedia nueva* was, apart from the French tragedies, English revenge tragedies, and Italian pastoral plays, of great importance for the establishment of an internationally focused theatre culture in Amsterdam, Antwerp, and Brussels. Blom describes its role in Amsterdam particularly in his book *Podium van Europa* (2021, 'The Stage of Europe'). In his study on Amsterdam's theatre, Blom takes an international perspective, while including in his narrative *all* influences from abroad and at home that contributed to the development of Dutch theatre life in the early modern period. He demonstrates that the *comedia nueva* was but one of many different forms of international theatre besides English revenge tragedies and French classicistic drama. Nevertheless, the *comedia nueva* was among the most influential genres to shape Dutch theatre life.[12]

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see D'Antuono 1999, 2–3; Cioranescu 1999, esp. 49–52; Loftis 1999, 102–103, 110; Walthaus 1999, 155–156; Dumas 2008, 3–6, 21, 29–30, and 2017, esp. 108–110.

8 The theory of cultural transfer, transmission, and exchange, and *histoire croisée/Verflechtungsgeschichte* is discussed by Espagne and Werner 1985 and 1988; Werner and Zimmermann 2006; Schmale 2012; De Clippel and Vermeylen 2015.

9 Espagne and Werner 1985, 508. Slightly different from cultural transfer is the idea of *histoire croisée*. Werner and the sociologist Bénédicte Zimmermann argue that *histoire croisée* can explain how, when two cultures or entities meet, a cross-section emerges and both entities are affected (Werner and Zimmermann 2006, 30–50). Following Álvarez Francés, I argue that *histoire croisée* lacks applicability to 'cases of cultural transfers in one direction,' which does not make it a better alternative to the cultural transfer method within exchange relations, 'but [rather] an answer for a different set of circumstances' (2013b, 12).

10 Espagne and Werner 1985, 505.

11 Schmale 2012.

12 Blom and Van Marion 2017 and 2021, 69; Blom 2020 and 2021a, 9–11, 426–428.

A New Art of Writing Plays

In its original Spanish context, the *comedia nueva* was already extraordinary and reflected a changing Spanish society. This led members of the *Academia de Madrid* to scrutinise the genre as a reaction to shifting boundaries in Spain's cultural system, much in the same way that critics in France and the Low Countries would do when the *comedia nueva* was adapted there. They believed that watching such a play, or listening to poetry in general, might negatively influence public morality. In Madrid, however, the critique proved unsuccessful. Following the dramatic tradition of Aristotle's *Poetica* and Horace's *Ars Poetica*, playwrights and dramaturgs such as Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Thomas Wilson in England, Pierre de Ronsard and Pierre Corneille in France, and Theodore Rodenburgh and Joost van den Vondel in the Dutch Republic composed their own poetic treatises to silence these critics. Likewise, Lope de Vega composed his poetical defence *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo* (1609, 'The New Art of Writing *Comedias* in This Time'), writing that the audience would enjoy plays best if playwrights complied with the audiences' tastes rather than strictly obeying the rules of poetry:

> And I write in accordance with the art, which those people
> Invented who strive for the vulgar applause [vulgar aplauso],
> Because, since the people pay for the *comedias*, it is just
> To speak foolishly to them to satisfy their taste.[13]

With these words, Lope de Vega set the tone: he devised comedies that satisfied the taste of his audiences. This meant that he did not adhere to any dramaturgy as prescribed by classical playwrights or his contemporaries. One such major difference from classical dramaturgy was that all *comedias* were essentially tragicomedies, which Lope described as a 'Minotaur of Pasiphae,' or Terence mixed with Seneca.[14] To this end, he said that he banned both Terence and Plautus from his study and created a new form of theatre which was neither a true comedy nor a true tragedy. Through

13 Lope de Vega [1609] 2003, vv. 45–48. All translations of these and other passages from the *Arte nuevo* are my own, but for a full understanding of what Lope means I have also consulted the Dutch translation of Erik Coenen. The original Spanish text of the *Arte nuevo* reads: 'y escribo por el arte que inventaron / los que el vulgar aplauso pretendieron, / porque, como las paga el vulgo, es justo / hablarle en necio para darle gusto.'

14 Lope de Vega [1609] 2003, vv. 174–180.

this variety the genre not only resembled nature, but was also beautiful and delighted its audiences. Lope de Vega is therefore celebrated as the father of the Spanish *comedia nueva*, a form of theatre that catered to the wishes and expectations of the spectator rather than to the learned ideas of humanists and dramaturgs about what tragedy and comedy ought to be. In Spain, Lope is reputed as 'el fénix de los ingenios' ('the phoenix among poets/geniuses').

Spanish playwrights who followed Lope's example—and perfected his dramatic model—included Antonio Mira de Amescua, Tirso de Molina, Cristóbal de Monroy y Silva, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón y Mendoza, Juan Pérez de Montalván, Alonso de Castillo Solórzano, Diego Jiménez de Enciso, and Guillén de Castro y Bellvís, to name but a few playwrights of the *Siglo de Oro*—the Spanish Golden Age. Notably, the most important Spanish playwright of the generation after Lope's was Calderón, who built on Lope's work but changed the genre according to his own vision as well. Lope and the playwrights of his 'school,' like Calderón all achieved many box-office successes in the *corrales de comedias* of Madrid, Alcalá de Henares, Seville, Valencia, and Barcelona, and throughout Spain's American colonies.[15]

The Transfer of Comedia Nueva to the Low Countries

Before long, the *comedias* were introduced to the theatres of Paris, London, Brussels, Antwerp, and Amsterdam, sometimes in their original language, but more often in a translated or adapted version. Yet, first the texts of the *comedias* had to be available in the Low Countries, especially the anthologies (*partes*) of the most popular plays. These *partes* were transferred to the Low Countries because middlemen, such as booksellers and literati, recognised the commercial potential of these Spanish plays. Therefore, they took on 'the impediments caused by borders and barriers, obstacles such as transaction and opportunity costs including tariffs, guild regulations' and geo-political factors, such as the ongoing armed conflicts between Spain and the Dutch Republic.[16]

In Antwerp, Lope's first two *partes de las comedias* were printed in 1607 and 1611 in the original language for the exiled Sephardic-Jewish community in Northern Europe.[17] For the first time, Spanish plays were available in the Low Countries and these anthologies formed the basis for the genre's success in this region. After these

15 See, e.g., De Armas 2004; Thacker 2007.

16 De Clippel and Vermeylen 2015, 7; see also Henke 2008, 6–8.

17 These *partes* are Lope de Vega, *Las comedias del famoso poeta Lope de Vega Carpio* (Antwerp: Martinus Nucius, 1607) and *Segvnda parte de las comedias de Lope de Vega Carpio* (Antwerp: Andreas Bacx, 1611b).

anthologies reached Amsterdam—a city with a large Sephardic population—this city functioned as a hub from where the *comedia nueva* could spread further northeast to Baltic cities, notably Copenhagen, Stockholm, Hamburg, Bremen, Lübeck, and Danzig, but also further inland to the rest of the Holy Roman Empire as far as Munich and Vienna.[18] The same applied to the first two *partes* of Calderón's *comedias*, which were also sold in the Habsburg Netherlands.[19] Translators, such as the Sephardic Jew Jacob Baroces who lived and worked in Amsterdam, used these *partes* by Lope de Vega and Calderón to make prose Dutch translations, which playwrights then used in turn for their rhymed adaptations. Alternatively, some playwrights, such as Claude de Grieck, used the *partes* as direct sources for their own plays.[20]

Otherwise, the Brussels court accommodated a large Spanish entourage of diplomats, administrators, and military officers before whom the troupe of Spanish actor Francisco Lopez performed the *comedias*, far from home yet in their original language, as early as 1615 or 1616.[21] As such, Brussels functioned as a culture centre wherein foreign arts filtered through elite circles to reach the local Dutch-speaking audience as Blom and Van Marion make clear.[22] After the Dutch-speaking population of Brussels was introduced to the *comedia nueva*, adaptations made by Brussels playwrights were also staged in the Amsterdam Public Theatre and vice versa.

Yet other playwrights used an intermediate text in French for their adaptations, such as Johan van Heemskerck did for his *De verduytste Cid* (1641, 'The "Dutchified" Cid'), which is a translation of Pierre Corneille's *Le Cid* (1637). In turn, Corneille's play is an adaptation of Guillén de Castro y Bellvís' *Las mocedades del Cid* (1605–1615, 'The Younger Years of the Cid'). The database ONSTAGE, which brings together an overview of all performances and revenues of the Amsterdam Public Theatre from its establishment in 1638 until 1940, shows that among all genres, the Spanish *comedia nueva* became most popular.[23] Among the Spanish plays, those of the 'Madritsche Apoll' ('Apollo of Madrid', as Lope was known in Dutch) were the particularly well-liked.[24]

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18 De Keyser 1925, 22; De Baere 1945, *passim*; Jautze, Álvarez Francés, and Blom 2016; Blom 2021a, 190–191, 275, 2021b and 2021c.

19 Vergeer 2020a and 2020b.

20 Jautze, Álvarez Francés, and Blom 2016, 32–35; Vergeer 2020c, 322.

21 De Keyser 1925, 22.

22 Blom and Van Marion 2021, 33–34.

23 For a discussion of the possible uses of ONSTAGE, see Blom, Nijboer, and Van der Zalm 2020; see also ONSTAGE 2015, Analysis/Popularity charts.

24 Jautze, Álvarez Francés, and Blom 2016, 14–16; Álvarez Francés 2013a, 24–26, and 2014, 4–6.

Comedia Nueva within a Nationalist Discourse

As popular as *comedia nueva* was in the seventeenth century, it is virtually unknown today. Next to none of these plays are present in the literary canon of the Low Countries despite their cultural significance. For a long time, these plays of Spanish origin seem to have simply been forgotten. This was in part because of nationalistic tendencies in the nineteenth century, and in part because of a deeply ingrained Hispanophobia in Dutch culture, which was fed by the Spanish Black Legend (*leyenda negra*)—the theorised historical discourse consisting of anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic propaganda dating back to the 16th century—as demonstrated by Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez' discussion on the influence of Spanish drama in the Low Countries.[25]

This is not to say that this bellicose discourse has never been challenged. In the first issue of *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde* ('Journal of Dutch Language and Literature') in 1881, literary historian Jan te Winkel wrote that he found it puzzling that the influence of Spanish literature on Dutch literature was only sporadically discussed although, as he perceived it, it had been at least three times as influential as Italian or English literature.[26] The theatre and literary historian Jacob Adolf Worp also addressed the Spanish *comedia nueva* in his *Geschiedenis van het drama en van het tooneel in Nederland* (1907, 'History of the Drama and Theatre in the Netherlands'). He mentioned the appeal of *comedia nueva*, saying that in particular 'the romantic plots, the unexpected turns of events, the big vicissitudes, the stage effects, and the fantastic events in Spanish drama pleased the spectators.' In short, Worp posited that 'the non-classical tragedy and the "plays with a happy ending" ['bly-eynded-spel'] had always fascinated theatre visitors more than the dramas with a more stringent artform and little action.' Worp acknowledged that masterpieces of *comedia nueva*, which were of better quality than the Dutch 'home-grown' plays of the first half of the seventeenth century, were admirable, even though the *comedias* had suffered through the translation process. In his opinion, their long-standing popularity was unsurprising.[27]

Apart from Te Winkel and Worp, attention to the influence of Spanish *comedia nueva* on Dutch literature has appeared few and far between. In 1922, Jan van Praag

25 Rodríguez Pérez 2016, 2–3;see also her VIDI project on literary Hispanophilia and Hispanophobia in the Dutch Republic and England (2016–2020). In the context of this project, she has published various articles and an edited volume.

26 Te Winkel 1881, esp. 61–62.

27 Worp 1907, 396–397.

offered an exhaustive overview of all the *comedias* translated to Dutch, as did Simon Vosters in 1955.[28] Despite their efforts, however, most literary and theatre histories published in the Low Countries thereafter exclude or trivialise the influence of *comedia nueva* in the Northern Netherlands. Karel Porteman and Mieke B. Smits-Veldt do discuss *comedias* in their 2008 history of Dutch literature, and they acknowledge that about half of the sixty new plays introduced in the Amsterdam Public Theatre between 1638 and 1650 were either 'translations and adaptations from French' that were 'often inspired by Spanish matter,' or translations and adaptations directly from Spanish. Yet, this acknowledgement was not followed with an extensive discussion of these plays in the following pages. Instead, Porteman and Smits-Veldt focus on the 'home-grown' Dutch authors of original plays with a particular attention to Vondel.[29]

The influence of *comedia nueva* in the Habsburg Netherlands is, however, discussed more extensively by Porteman and Smits-Veldt, but it seems sometimes to be framed as a failure of Flemish playwrights to produce their own original repertoire; they are referred to as 'productive playwrights in rhetoricians' chambers in decline.'[30] In other cases, Porteman and Smits-Veldt overlook the Spanish origins of several adaptations, noting that plays such as Van Heemskerck's *De verduytste Cid*, Van Germez' *Vervolgde Laura* (1645, 'Persecuted Laura'), and De Grieck's *Den grooten Bellizarius* (1654, 'The Great Belisarius') are adaptations from original French plays by Corneille and Rotrou, missing the Spanish connection.[31] For the period between 1650 and 1672, Porteman and Smits-Veldt continue to describe the influence of the Spanish *comedia* on the Dutch repertoire, but claim that after 1665 the French plays with their sterner structures began to increasingly dominate the repertoire in the Amsterdam Public Theatre.[32] By this, they tend to underestimate the importance of the Spanish *comedia* and overestimate the dominating role of French literature. This interpretation does, however, draw upon a common historiographical theme: France has always been enthroned as *the* beacon for European literature, especially where it concerns drama, while the 'global' fame of Spain's literature is still often excluded and downplayed.[33]

28 Van Praag 1922; Vosters 1955.
29 Porteman and Smits-Veldt 2008, 377, 379–386, 530–545.
30 Porteman and Smits-Veldt 2008, 444–454.
31 Porteman and Smits-Veldt 2008, 389, 553, 730.
32 Porteman and Smits-Veldt 2008, 524–527.
33 As is also identified by Rodríguez Pérez 2020, 17.

In other overview works, *comedia nueva* is not discussed at all, such as in *Een theatergeschiedenis der Nederlanden* (1996, 'A Theatre History of the Low Countries') edited by Erenstein et al., nor in the *In reprise* (2020) collection of essays on Dutch and Flemish theatre edited by Rob van der Zalm et al. Histories of Dutch literature and theatre generally suggest that playwrights in the Northern Netherlands gradually moved from rhetorician drama towards a strict classicism culminating in the work of the literary reformers of the Amsterdam society 'Nil Volentibus Arduum.' Long-lasting 'baroque' traditions in literature have often been ignored, since they could easily destabilise the teleological narrative of how classicistic discourses began to dominate Dutch theatre life during the seventeenth century. This paradigm of Dutch scholarship has been recently changing, however.[34]

All in all, publications that specifically deal with Spanish drama in the Low Countries have remained few: in the 1980s and 1990s, Spanish drama has been mainly discussed in light of the place it takes in the oeuvre of early modern Dutch authors, such as Marijke Meijer Drees' study on Thomas Asselijn, and Wouter Abrahamse's study on Theodore Rodenburgh.[35] Anna de Haas has examined Spanish plays in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, when French-Classicistic literature was in fashion in the Dutch Republic.[36] Internationally, Henry Sullivan and Rina Walthaus in particular have discussed Spanish theatre in the Low Countries.[37] For a long time, Walthaus was the last to have published research on the influence of the Spanish *comedia* on Dutch theatre.

The Spanish Turn in Dutch Literary Studies

When ONSTAGE uncovered that not Vondel and Hooft, but rather Lope de Vega was the most popular playwright in seventeenth-century Amsterdam, Blom and Van Marion had opportunity to once again draw attention to the influence of *comedia nueva* in the Low Countries, this time supported by quantitative data. Some of their publications about the influence of Lope de Vega and Calderón on Dutch theatre include their shared publication 'Lope de Vega and the Conquest of Spanish Theater

34 A counter-perspective is offered by Frans-Willem Korsten in his *A Dutch Republican Baroque* (2017, *passim*), and by Stijn Bussels in his contribution 'Dutch Classicism in Europe' to *The Cambridge Companion to the Dutch Golden Age* (2018, 311–313).

35 Meijer Drees 1989, 36–44; Abrahamse 1997, 83–107.

36 De Haas 1996b, 251–252, and 1997, 131–133, 135–136.

37 Sullivan 1980, 1983, and 2002; Walthaus 1999.

in the Netherlands' in *Anuario Lope de Vega* (2017) and in their Dutch *Spaans toneel voor Nederlands publiek* (2021, 'Spanish Theatre for a Dutch Audience'). As mentioned above, Blom had previously discussed the influence of Spanish *comedia* in his *Podium van Europa*, stating that among the various international forms of seventeenth-century theatre, *comedia nueva* was one of the most popular genres staged in the Amsterdam Public Theatre.[38]

Working together with a team of students and PhD candidates (including myself), Blom and Van Marion discovered that the Spanish *comedias* enjoyed revivals almost every season.[39] Van Marion and I have, furthermore, argued that the abundant display of emotions in the Spanish adaptations excited the audiences time and again.[40] Moreover, Álvarez Francés has demonstrated how printers added Lope's name to the titlepages of the plays' printed texts as a marketing strategy, even when he was not the original author of the adaptation; his name alone would help these plays sell.[41] My study is part of this 'Spanish turn' in Dutch scholarship of early modern literature. However, instead of focusing on the artistic and cultural industry as Blom and Van Marion have done, I specialise in the emotional effects of the adaptations of the Spanish *comedia nueva*.

Blom and Van Marion conducted their research in the same period that Rodríguez Pérez led a project on literary Hispanophilia and Hispanophobia in the Dutch Republic and England. Her research likewise points to the major role of *comedia nueva* in Dutch theatre life and she urges for new research, arguing that most existing studies are outdated and provide hardly any analysis of the repertoire and its reception in the Low Countries.[42] The research of Rodríguez Pérez, Rena Bood, and Sabine Waasdorp lays bare processes that create hostile images of Spain in England and the Netherlands, but also stresses that figurations of Spain 'fluctuate within a broad spectrum of phobia and philia.'[43] My study is clearly situated on the philia side of the spectrum. Nevertheless, even in the adaptations of *comedias*, which can be counted among the examples of Hispanophilia, there exist traces of Hispanophobic narratives as both Blom and Bood have discussed.[44] As such, we can never fully ignore the debates around the *leyenda negra* when we discuss Spain or Spanish culture from a Dutch (or English) perspective.

38 Blom and Van Marion 2017 and 2021, 8–13; Blom 2020 and 2021a, 10–11.
39 Jautze, Álvarez Francés, and Blom 2016.
40 Van Marion and Vergeer 2016, 49–52, and 2021.
41 Álvarez Francés 2014, esp. 9–13.
42 See e.g., Rodríguez Pérez 2016, 4–5, and 2020, 11–12, 17–18, 20–23.
43 Rodríguez Pérez 2020, 21.
44 Blom 2020, 131–134; Bood 2020b, 149–152.

And yet, I choose to leave the Hispanophobic remarks that Dutch playwrights made largely for what they are. While this study certainly deals with an aspect of Hispanophilia, the spectrum between philia and phobia does not form the leading framework. I do not look at the popularity of the plays on the basis of the Flemish and Dutch fascination with Spain despite the difficult and complex stance towards that country—that is, the thing which is supposed to be bad can also fascinate—but rather on the basis of the *comedias*' merits and their ability to fascinate and move audiences. In fact, the Spanish sources of the Dutch adaptations were not always mentioned by the translator/adaptor or the publisher; it also remains unknown whether the spectators always knew that they were watching a Spanish play.[45]

The Aim and Scope of This Study

In this study I primarily build upon the aesthetic presumptions that Worp made in 1907 about *comedias* in saying that the romantic plots, unexpected turns of events, big vicissitudes, stage effects, and fantastic events in these Spanish plays pleased their spectators.[46] I use Worp's claims as a starting point for my discussion of how and why *comedia nueva* became the most popular genre in the theatres of Amsterdam, Antwerp, and Brussels during the seventeenth century. For this, I look at many different aspects that continuously return in the Dutch adaptations of *comedias*. At the same time, I look for the changes that the Dutch adaptors made to better cater the Spanish plays to their Dutch and Flemish audiences. As Van Marion and I have argued, the playwright Rodenburgh combined elements from *comedias* with traditional theatrical techniques used by rhetoricians in the Low Countries. Thus, he reinvented 'Dutch theatre by combining old and new poetics': he expressly focused on the inner agitations of the characters in the Spanish originals, inserted love songs in his plays, and used various verse forms resembling the erudite language of Lope's originals, while also depending on the spectacular power of *tableaux vivants*.[47] Otherwise, to ask the question of why *comedia nueva* became such a popular genre, and even more popular than most other theatre genres for that matter, is in fact to also ask how *comedia nueva* differs from Dutch 'home-grown' plays. In other words: this study deals with the aspects of

45 Van Marion and Vergeer 2016, 41.
46 Worp 1907, 396–397.
47 Van Marion and Vergeer 2016, 43.

comedia nueva that are the same and different from what Dutch audiences knew from Vondel's oeuvre, the Senecan-Scaligerian plays, the horror and spectacle plays, or the plays written by Nil Volentibus Arduum. This study aims to sufficiently account for *comedia nueva*'s popularity in the Low Countries.

This popularity can possibly be explained by the emotional matter of these plays and by the emotional effects that *comedias* may have had on the spectators. The Hispanist Melveena McKendrick argued in her book *Theatre in Spain 1490–1700* (1989) that emotions are especially intense—even exaggerated—in *comedia nueva* and that 'love and honour are the two overriding matters of immediate concern.' She writes that this offered a formula, made necessary by market forces, which represents 'in its detail as well an adjustment to the preferences of audiences and the circumstances of the contemporary theatre.' Furthermore, *comedias* met the 'desire of the public for a theatre of escapism which would lead them out of the world of everyday reality into a world of romance.'[48] This was confirmed by Van Marion's and my study of the emotional effects of Rodenburgh's adaptations, in which plays 'woelingen'—meaning the infinite stirring of bodily and mental sensations, otherwise called inner agitations—take centre stage.[49] Therefore, I posit here that Spanish drama had the ability to also attract Dutch audiences through its primary focus on, and display of, emotions. This emotional focus kept the spectators coming back for more.

Further, emotions are perhaps more important in *comedias* than in Dutch 'home-grown' plays, if we are to believe one of the foremen of the literary society Nil Volentibus Arduum: the Dutch playwright Andries Pels argued in 1681 that moral instruction always prevailed above emotional effect. In his opinion, a play that moved the spectators but did not admonish them, missed the aim of all plays ('het wit van alle Spélen').[50] The emphasis placed on the passions in *comedias* suggests that emotions had a more positive influence on the lives of the characters, and by extension on the lives of the spectators, than the 'home-grown' texts generally claim. McKendrick argues that *comedia nueva* responded to 'particular psycho-social circumstances' and allowed the Spaniard through images of heroism, epic achievements, and individual self-assertion 'to burnish his self-image and go away reassured.' The romantic plot of Spanish drama 'typically depicts protagonists who are able eventually to impose themselves upon the obstacles or difficulties which threaten their well-being and to

48 McKendrick 1989, 74.

49 Van Marion and Vergeer 2016, 49–52, and 2021.

50 Pels 1681, vv. 1138–1149; see also Konst 1996, 144.

win through to some satisfactory solution.'[51] To the contrary, it has been repeatedly argued that the Dutch 'home-grown' plays promote emotional restraint and emotional moderation in spectators as well as an emotional acceptance of one's fate such as literary historian Jan Konst has famously argued for Dutch Renaissance tragedy: Dutch drama primarily seems to stress the dangers of unbridled emotions for people's mental and physical health within a neostoic frame.[52] While both Spanish and Dutch 'home-grown' drama aimed to reassure its audiences, the ways that emotional peace was obtained for the characters and spectators differed.

This view has been challenged for the Dutch context by Freya Sierhuis, who argues that Dutch literature (including theatre) from the early modern period is anything but restrictive with regards to emotional expression. Having studied a diverse range of texts from the early modern period including political pamphlets, libel verse, and plays, she contends that Dutch and Flemish people in the early modern period used emotions to contrast their experiences with the emotional styles that the culture's norms imposed on them:

> The availability of authoritative intertextual and cultural models of emotional expression [...] allowed for a mediated expression of agency and subjectivity that stand in marked tension with the dominant culture's norms, or perhaps, register the divergent energies generated by the co-existence, within the literary work and within the culture at large, of contradictory impulses. It was this element of contradiction and ambivalence in early modern thinking about the passions that allowed for individuals to interpret their affective experiences against the grain and in ways that often ran counter to culturally scripted or gendered norms.[53]

Using Sierhuis' insights, this study tests the assumption that the popularity of *comedia nueva* in the theatres of the Low Countries can be explained as a reaction to the neostoic morale of 'home-grown' drama. *Comedia nueva* seems to have been more successful in its objectives by offering spectators an abundant display of emotions.

51 McKendrick 1989, 74.
52 Konst 1993, 22–46, and 2003, 27–119.
53 Sierhuis 2016, 361.

Periodization of This Study

To analyse how *comedia nueva* came to be so successful, I have chosen 1617–1672 as the period of study for both the Dutch Republic and the Habsburg Netherlands. I have selected this time period of fifty-five years for several reasons. First, the lion's share of Spanish *comedias* adaptations, sixty-two plays (of which I discuss more than half), were produced and published between 1617 and 1672, both in the Northern and Southern Low Countries: forty-five in the Dutch Republic and seventeen in the Habsburg Netherlands.[54] In the Dutch Republic, *comedias* were primarily translated, adapted and presented to spectators in two stages: the first phase between 1617 and 1619, initiated by the playwright-diplomat Rodenburgh as chairman ('factor') of the rhetoricians' chamber De Eglentier ('The Eglantine'); and the second phase between 1641 and 1672, with playwright-glazier Jan Vos as director at the helm of the Amsterdam Public Theatre for an exceptionally long period of nineteen years between 1647 and 1667.

In the Habsburg Netherlands, these phases are limited to the second period. In Brussels, the success of Spanish plays extend to the period between c. 1645 and 1668, with De Grieck as its most productive agent.[55] It is true, however, that the poetical model of *comedia nueva* was already picked up in Antwerp by the Hispanophile playwright Cornelio de Conincq in the 1630s, when he wrote three plays inspired by Lope's poetics, but the heyday of *comedias* in the Antwerp area lasted from 1659 to 1672.[56] The playwright Antonio Francisco Wouthers was the foremost author in Antwerp and the rhetorician Cornelis de Bie in the nearby town of Lier. After 1672, the enormous production of new adaptations of Spanish *comedias* diminishes significantly in both the Dutch Republic and the Habsburg Netherlands, after which the repertoire is more or less consolidated.

While playwrights were most productive at adapting *comedia nueva* between 1617 and 1672, there are additional reasons to limit research to this period specifically and to not go beyond the year 1672. In the Dutch Republic, 1672 marks the closing of the Amsterdam Public Theatre for a period of five years until 1677, after which the poetics

54 See Alblas 1894, 67; Van Praag 1922, *passim*; Te Winkel 1924, 55–58; Jautze, Álvarez Francés, and Blom 2016, *passim*; Van Marion and Vergeer 2016, 41; Blom and Van Marion 2017 and 2021, 70–79; ONSTAGE 2015. After 1672, another twenty-three *comedias* were adapted in Dutch; see Van Praag 1922, *passim*; ONSTAGE 2015.

55 De Keyser 1925, 21; De Baere 1945, *passim*.

56 See Ferket 2016, 64–65.

of the board of directors changed significantly.[57] The year 1672 equally marks the end of the production and adaptation of *comedia nueva* in the Habsburg Netherlands with the last print issue of a newly devised *comedia* that is known to us today.[58]

Choosing 1672 as the end date of my study has several implications. I will not discuss the changes that the Amsterdam society of poets, Nil Volentibus Arduum, made to several *comedias* in their own poetical vision, and yet, I will still use Nil Volentibus Arduum's critiques from time to time for the insights these texts can offer into the nature of the Dutch adaptation of *comedia nueva* before Nil Volentibus Arduum handled them. Moreover, Nil Volentibus Arduum propagated the French-Classicistic tragedy and sometimes even removed Spanish plays from their repertoire: the heyday of the Spanish *comedias* were consequently over.[59] Neither is the continued interest for Spanish plays in eighteenth-century Antwerp and Brussels discussed. In Antwerp, the weight shifts towards the Italian opera after 1682. Meanwhile, Brussels' theatre companies began to stage a miscellany of different plays: passion and resurrection plays, spectacles, French plays, original comedies, and of course *comedias* of which De Grieck's *Samson, oft edel-moedighen Nazareen* (1660, 'Samson, or Magnanimous Nazarene') remained the most beloved.[60]

Corpus

When deciding which plays to discuss from the period 1617–1672, I take into account that not all adaptations from Spanish were actually successful. For *comedias* staged at

57 In 1672 (the Disaster Year), the Amsterdam Public Theatre closed its doors because of the war with France, Cologne, Münster (the Franco-Dutch War), and England (the Third Anglo-Dutch War). When the Amsterdam Public Theatre reopened in 1677, the new board of directors included members of the classicistic society of poets Nil Volentibus Arduum.

58 The *comedia* is Cornelis de Bie's *Den groote Hertoghe van Moskovien*. It was performed in Lier, but printed in Antwerp in 1672. Strictly speaking, one play was printed even later. De Bie's *Alphonsus en Thebasile* was printed in Antwerp in 1673, but it had already been performed in Lier in 1659, as the title page clearly states. In 1673, the play was likely first printed, but the *comedia* was adapted thirteen years earlier. I choose to let the premiere date of a play—if available—be leading.

59 De Haas 1996b, esp. 253; De Haas 1997, 131–133; Hogendoorn 2012, 24. In the following, I add nuance to this, however.

60 For Amsterdam, see ONSTAGE 2015; e.g., Willem Godschalk van Focquenbroch's *Min in't lazarushuys* (1683)—an adaptation of Lope de Vega's *Los locos de Valencia*—was performed until 1818; after 1760, especially in October. For Brussels, see De Baere 1945, *passim*. De Baere notes 1802 as latest date for a performance of De Grieck's *Samson, oft edel-moedighen Nazareen* (c. 1660), an adaptation of Juan Pérez de Montalván's *El valiente Nazareno*. For more on Antwerp, see De Paepe 2008a, 237–240, and 2008b, 28–29.

the Amsterdam Public Theatre, I used the database ONSTAGE to determine whether a play was successful. The database measures a play's success according to play revenues and whether the plays were reprogrammed over the course of several years. Furthermore, this study only focuses on the translations and adaptations of originally Spanish *comedias*: plays that were translated with the use of an intermediate text in French are included in the corpus, but those based on the model of *comedia nueva*, but which are in fact Dutch originals, are not. This means, for example, that Corneille's *Le Cid* as an adaptation of De Castro y Bellvís' *Las mocedades del Cid* is included in the corpus, but De Conincq's three plays inspired by Lope's poetics are not.

In this study thirty-six plays are discussed in total: twenty-four from the Dutch Republic and twelve from the Habsburg Netherlands. Where it concerns the plays published and performed in the Dutch Republic, I have taken into account, as much as possible, their popularity as indicated in ONSTAGE's popularity charts. Yet, I have also included plays which I found particularly interesting because they coincided with an important event in the Amsterdam Public Theatre, such as the festive reopening in 1665 after the theatre was remodelled. Catharina Questiers, the only female adaptor of *comedias* in the Dutch Republic, delivered the opening play for this event; several of her works are included in my corpus, as are four plays by the pioneer Rodenburgh.[61] Additionally, when consulting the popularity charts in ONSTAGE, I used relative selection criteria to decide which plays to include in my discussion: I asked ONSTAGE to not list the most popular plays for the period 1617–1672, but rather to list them according to the premiere date of every *comedia*. This is to account for the fact that the earlier adaptations, such as Rodenburgh's plays, had a longer run than the newer adaptations, which did not have the same opportunity to be staged as often.

For the Habsburg Netherlands, on the other hand, I selected almost all extant *comedias* available to have a large enough corpus to test my hypothesis that Spanish drama had the ability to attract Dutch and Flemish audiences through its primary focus on and display of emotions.

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61 See also Alblas 1894, 67. Apart from Rodenburgh's four adaptations *Casandra Hertoginne van Borgonie, en Karel Baldeus* (1617, translation of Lope's *El perseguido*, 1590), *Hertoginne Celia en Grave Prospero* (1617, translation of Lope's *El molino*, 1593), *Ialourscheſtudenten* (1617, translation of Lope's *La escolástica celosa*, 1596–1602), and *'t Quaedt syn meester loondt* (1618, translation of Aguilar's *La venganza honrosa*, 1616), Alblas mentions that the theme of *Hoecx en Cabeliaus* (1628) is largely the same as in Lope de Vega's *La llave de la honra* (1614–1619) and his *El mayor alcalde, el rey* (1620–1623). *Keyser Otto den derden en Galdrada* (1616–1617) has largely the same plot as Lope's *La mayor victoria* (1615–1624; likely 1620–1622). It is as of yet not verified that these plays by Rodenburgh are actually adaptations or translations of Lope's plays.

The thirty-six plays—of which I give an overview momentarily—belong to three major subgroups of *comedias* as commonly used in scholarship on Spanish theatre. From time to time I use this taxonomy to differentiate between the various sorts of plots available in the Low Countries, and to discuss finer nuances between the plays. I follow the critical reflection and taxonomy of Jonathan Thacker as he used it in his *A Companion to Golden Age Theatre* (2007).[62] Thacker differentiates between three major groups of Spanish plays: comedies, serious plays, and religious plays.[63]

In Thacker's taxonomy, there is a large variety of serious drama, which revolves around themes such as honour and vengeance, or regarding the lives of kings and history. The former are *dramas de honor* and the latter *dramas históricos*, which can be either complete dramatisations of history or merely contain subtle references to events from the past.[64] For the Dutch corpus, I consider these together because of their similar conflicts between love and honour. In this category of *dramas*, the mythological plays (*comedias mitólogicas*) are also included: as the plots often derive from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, these plays often deal with serious matter and were especially popular spectacles in the court of Felipe IV.[65]

Then, there are *comedias de capa y espada* (cloak and dagger plays). As a genre, these are known to generally have a happy ending, often staging a marriage as the festive dénouement. This category includes two types of *comedia*. The first is *comedia urbana*, the city play, which is 'set in towns and cities of Spain (most frequently Madrid) and in a notional present day.' The second is *comedia palatina*, the palace play, which can also 'be located in other lands, in a courtly setting and [is] peopled with characters of a higher social class: dukes, countesses and marquises.' Thacker explains, however, that both kinds of *comedias* may be typed as *comedias de capa y espada* for their similar content and trajectories. *Comedia de capa y espada* was also the most commonly adapted subgenre in the Low Countries.[66]

The third major group, religious plays, were less popular in the Low Countries and mostly adapted in Flanders. Many of these plays, generally called *comedias de santos y bandoleros*, do not have poetically just endings, but 'the positive associations of martyrdom allowed the discrepancy' from the just endings typical of *comedias de capa*

62 Thacker 2007, 143–146.
63 Thacker 2007, 146.
64 Thacker 2007, 148–149.
65 Thacker 2007, 149.
66 Thacker 2007, 150.

y espada and *dramas*.[67] One example from the group of religious plays is the adaptation of Calderón's *La devoción de la cruz*, *De devotie van Eusebius tot het H. Kruys* (1665) by Wouthers. Two other Dutch religious plays in my corpus were inspired by the Bible: De Grieck's *Samson* and Serwouters' *Hester* (1659). Finally, De Grieck's adaptation *Den grooten Bellizarius* belongs to a group that reflects church teachings in a sustained way (*dramas religiosas*).[68] I will not, however, analyse the religious content of these plays in this study.[69]

Other groups mentioned by Thacker are *comedias pastorales* (pastoral plays), *comedias de figurón* (a scoundrel or fool's play; comparable to the Dutch genre *schelmenroman*), and *comedias burlescas* (burlesque; Shrove Tuesday plays, or farces). Examples of the two former categories do not exist in the Dutch language area, at least for the period 1617–1672, while there is only one example of the last category in the time period I am discussing: De Grieck's *Don Japhet van Armenien* (1657), which is an adaptation of Alonso de Castillo Solórzano's *El marqués del Cigarral* (1634). The play mocks the romantic plots of *comedia de capa y espada* and the honour motives of the protagonists, which makes it an interesting case study in itself but it was a highly unpopular play with a mere six performances in the Amsterdam Public Theatre, which makes it unfit for my inquiries into the popularity of *comedia nueva* in the Low Countries.[70] In summary, different types of Dutch-language *comedia nueva* can be distinguished as follows:

1. *Dramas*:
   a. *dramas de honor* (honour plays);
   b. *dramas históricos* (history plays);
   c. *comedias mitólogicas* (mythological plays);
2. *Comedias de capa y espada* (cloak and dagger plays):
   a. *comedias palatinas* (palace plays);
   b. *comedias urbanas* (city plays);
3. *Comedias de tema religioso* (religious plays):
   a. *comedias de santos y bandoleros* (saints and brigands plays);
   b. *comedias bíblicas* (biblical plays);
   c. *dramas religiosas* (religious drama).

Following Thacker's taxonomy of the Spanish originals, and while keeping the Dutch context in mind, I have categorised the Dutch *comedias* in my corpus according to three

67 Thacker 2007, 147.
68 Thacker 2007, 147.
69 I will instead address the religious content in a separate publication.
70 See ONSTAGE 2015.

TABLE 0.1 Categorisation of *comedias* in the Habsburg Netherlands according to taxonomy

1. Dramas	2. Comedias de capa y espada	3. Comedias de tema religioso
Vrye Lief-hebbers der Rymer-Konste, *Het leven is maer droom* (1647)	Cornelis de Bie, *Alphonsus en Thebasile, oft her-stelde onnoosel-heydt* (1659)	Claude de Grieck, *Den grooten Bellizarius* (1654)
Antonio Francisco Wouthers, *De verliefde stiefmoeder oft de gestrafte bloetschandt* (1665)	E.D.S.M., *Spaensche comedie De mislukte liefde, en trouw van Rugero prins van Navarren* (c. 1661)	Claude de Grieck, *Samson, oft edel-moedighen Nazareen* (1660)
Claude de Grieck, *Cenobia, Met de Doodt van Kaizer Aureliaen* (1667)	Antonio Francisco Wouthers, *Den volmaekten ridder* (c. 1665)	Antonio Francisco Wouthers, *De devotie van Eusebius* (1665)
Claude de Grieck, *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe, oft geen grooter Toovery als Liefde* (1668)	Cornelis de Bie, *Armoede vanden graeve Florellus, oft lyden sonder wraeck* (1671)	
Cornelis de Bie, *Gheweldighe Heer-spchappye Vanden onrechtveerdighen Boris Ghedempt ende gehstraft door den jonghen Prince Demetrius Als eenighen en rechten Erfgenaem van het groot Hertoghdom van Moskovien* (c. 1672)		

main groups as outlined in Table 0.1 for the Habsburg Netherlands, and Table 0.2 for the Dutch Republic. Since few of the Spanish originals of the Dutch adaptations have been extensively researched in Spanish scholarship (Spanish scholarship has primarily focused on other better known plays by Lope and Calderón), the taxonomy of my corpus is based on my own findings and interpretations. I have supplemented these with Abrahamse's qualification of Rodenburgh's plays.[71]

The above classification of Dutch-language *comedias* already illustrates the preferences of Dutch adaptors and audiences. It seems, by sheer number, that *comedias de capa y espada* were particularly popular among Dutch spectators, with their abundant acts of disguise, cross-dressing, song, farcical intrigue, and concluding marriages, although the *dramas de honor* were no less popular in the Dutch Republic in my study period (1617–1672). In the Habsburg Netherlands preferences were more diverse, but *comedia de capa y espada* and *drama de honor* were also important genres there.

71 Abrahamse 1997, 83–107.

TABLE 0.2 Categorisation of *comedias* in the Dutch Republic according to taxonomy

1. Dramas	2. Comedias de capa y espada	3. Comedias de tema religoso
Theodore Rodenburgh, *Casandra Hertoginne van Borgonie, en Karel Baldevs* (1617)	Theodore Rodenburgh, *Ialourscbe studenten* (1617)	Johannes Serwouters, *Hester, oft verlossing der jooden* (1659)
Theodore Rodenburgh, *'t Quaedt syn meester loondt* (1618)	Theodore Rodenburgh, *Hertoginne Celia en grave Prospero* (1617)	
Johan van Heemskerck, *De verduytste Cid* (1641)	Adam Karelsz van Germez, *Vervolgde Laura* (1645)	
Joan Dullaart, *Alexander de Medicis, of 't bedrooge betrouwen* (1653)	Isaac Vos, *Gedwongen vrient* (1646)	
Vrye Lief-hebbers der Rymer-Konste, *Sigismundus, prinçe van Poolen* (1654) [same as: *Het leven is maer droom* in Table 0.1]	Leon de Fuyter, *Verwarde hof* (1647)	
Catharina Questiers, *Casimier of gedempte hoogmoed* (1656)	Isaac Vos, *De beklaagelycke dwangh* (1648)	
Johannes Serwouters, *Den grooten Tamerlan, met de doodt van Bayaset de I, Turks Keizer* (1657)	Jan Zoet, *Zabynaja, of vermomde loosheid* (1648)	
Dirck Pietersz Heynck, *Don Louis de Vargas, of edelmoedige wraek* (1668)	Joris de Wijse, *Voorzigtige dolheit* (1650)	
Adriaen Bastiaensz de Leeuw, *De toveres Circe* (1670)	Catharina Questiers, *Den geheymen minnaar* (1655)	
Hendrick de Graef, *Den dullen ammirael* (1670)	Dirck Pietersz Heynck, *Veranderlyk geval, of Stantvastige liefde* (1663)	
	Hendrick de Graef, *Joanna Koningin van Napels of Den trotzen dwinger* (1664)	
	David Lingelbach, *De spookende minnaar* (1664)	
	Catharina Questiers, *D'ondanckbare Fulvius en getrouwe Octavia* (1665)	
	Joan Blasius, *De malle wedding* (1671)	

Methodology: The History of Emotions

My hypothesis makes clear that the display of emotions in *comedias*, and the emotional effects these plays had on the spectators, form the central focus of my study. Scholarship on the history of emotions teaches us that emotions should be regarded as a historical category, meaning that the way that people express their inner feelings differs from place to place, and from time to time. Even the words to describe what an emotion is can differ, including the word 'emotion' itself, which is an eighteenth-century neologism: in the period central to my study, words used to refer to the concept of 'emotion' were diverse. They include the Latin words of *passio* (passion), *affectus* (affect), or *motus* (mood), which all indicate something like a movement or an affliction of the heart. Therefore, Dutch intellectuals in the seventeenth century also used the term *hartstocht*, which in Dutch literally means an inclination of the heart, as an equivalent for these Latin terms.[72]

Because there are many different 'emotion words,' it is unsurprising that there has been much discussion about which overarching concept to use when describing expressions of an emotional nature. The emotion historian Jan Plamper decides in his *The History of Emotions* (2015) to rather use our anachronistic term 'emotion' to denote the entire topic, as many if not most concepts of emotion are etymologically connected.[73] I will follow his example, both to avoid confusion and to remain closer to everyday usage of *emotion* in modern English, as well as in modern Dutch (*emotie*). The variety of 'emotion words' also demonstrates that every (historical) society has its *modus operandi* in response to their environment in a way that makes sense to them.

How, then, can a theory of emotions explain the popularity and success of *comedia nueva* in the Low Countries? As I argue, emotional life in the Low Countries existed around the axes of emotional control and emotional licentiousness. Historians of emotions have multiple times discussed the navigation that this requires of people by looking at how societies think about and handle emotions in different ways. Konst's work on the *hartstochten* in Dutch Renaissance tragedy has been influential in this regard for scholarship of the early modern period, and to this day is the most elaborate study on the passions in early modern Dutch tragedy. Through a rhetorical-emotional analysis, he opened up Dutch Renaissance tragedy for questions about emotions. The two strongest points of Konst's analysis are the introduction of the 'passion monologue' and his intertextual approach: Konst traces all viewpoints on emotions in these

72 Konst 1993, 1–2.

73 Plamper 2015, 11–12.

plays to philosophical, intellectual, and medical texts current to the seventeenth century. Konst identified an emotional intertextuality in Dutch tragedy by demonstrating how in the tragedies of Vondel, Hooft, Coster, and Bredero the ideas of Justus Lipsius, Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert, Johan van Beverwijck, and Jacob Cats are iterated, while these Dutch intellectuals in turn revert back to Greco-Roman philosophy and medicine texts.

Since Konst's research on the seventeenth-century Dutch tragedy, research on the history of emotions has evolved. Barbara H. Rosenwein suggests in her influential 2002 article 'Worrying about Emotions in History' that emotions should not be seen as forces striving for release, something that Konst was at the time still arguing. She describes how after the 1960s, cognitive psychologists see emotions not as irrational, but as part of a process of perception and appraisal. In the 1970s, social constructionism posited that emotions 'are constructed, that is, formed and shaped, by the society in which they operate.' In this view, the expression of emotions depends on language, cultural practices, expectations, and moral beliefs, while the display of emotions is bent, shaped, encouraged, or discouraged by society. According to Rosenwein, '[t]his means that *every* culture has its rules for feelings and behavior; *every* culture thus exerts certain restraints while favoring certain forms of expressivity.'[74] For the study of *comedia nueva* in the Low Countries, this insight shows how the originally Spanish genre was introduced as a reaction to the rules around feelings and behaviour. Moreover, it accounts for the fact that emotions operate in an environment that is continuously monitored and scrutinised.

Emotives

While my inquiries are indebted to Konst's pioneering work and I also often rely on his research, I would contend that Konst tried to explain the emotions of characters in various seventeenth-century Dutch tragedies primarily through the lens of a cultural, neostoic model in which emotions were positioned as potentially dangerous and needed to be controlled. Since Sierhuis, much like Rosenwein, has shown that there was not just one emotional model that governed how seventeenth-century people dealt with emotions, I rather adopt the concept of *emotives* as developed by William M. Reddy to analyse the emotions in *comedia nueva* and account for the variety of emotional models available in the early modern period.

74 Rosenwein 2002, 836–837.

Reddy fully developed his concept of the *emotive* in his seminal work *The Navigation of Feeling* (2001) in which he based his concept on social constructionist insights. The *emotive* is a linguistic concept, a neologism formed out of 'emotion' and 'motive', that is 'a type of speech act different from both performative and constative utterances, which both describes (like constative utterances) and changes (like performatives) the world, because emotional expression has an exploratory and self-altering effect on the activated thought material of emotion.'[75] By this Reddy means that emotions tell something about one's emotional state but also have a communicative value when the emotion is shared with someone else, such as the other characters on stage or the spectators gathered in the theatre.

In *The Navigation of Feeling*, Reddy's main assumption is that emotions are by definition a public affair and are instrumental to our physical and mental health, and are therefore dependent on the goals we set in life to maintain that health and obtain happiness. Throughout his work, Reddy thus primarily distinguishes between emotions that are expressed and feelings that are inward. Reddy goes as far as to say that an emotion can only be considered to be an emotion insofar that it is expressed. Then, the emotion utterance can change the social reality of the person who first expressed the emotion, because the conversation partner can react, in turn affecting their relationship.[76]

The *emotive* has conceptual utility for the analysis of *comedia nueva* (and other forms of theatre) in that it stresses the communicative aspects of emotions and draws attention to the emotion of the individual—as it is shaped by and constructed in opposition to cultural norms (the context)—rather than that it explains emotions within a specific cultural frame. For Reddy, emotions are a form of communication which combines the inward and personal aspects of emotions with the public expression of those emotions in language.[77] Since in drama everything is made explicit through language and gestures, the *emotive* can be effectively used to dissect emotions constructed in written source material by means of language. Then, we see how emotions can be part of a character's goal system and drive forth the plots in *comedias*. In Reddy's model, emotions are part of a continuous negotiation between people, and a navigation of individuals' goals. In this perspective, the theory of *emotives* adds to Konst's historiographical discussion of the *hartstochten* (passions) in seventeenth-century Dutch tragedy. The *emotive* further facilitates discussion of emotions that

75 Reddy 2001, 128.
76 Reddy 2001, 93–94.
77 Reddy 2001, 25–31, 40–45.

deviate from cultural norms (the dominant discourse) which Konst solely characterises as negative *exempla* for the stage.

I already mentioned that the *emotive* is a type of speech act. For this, Reddy builds on J.L. Austin's *speech act* theory as laid out in his work *How to Do Things with Words* (1962). While Reddy considers that emotions are inherently performative, Austin's foremost contribution to linguistics was the insight that not all statements are descriptive. As is well known, Austin distinguished two types of utterances: descriptive or *constative* utterances, and *performative* utterances that are used to accomplish something, as opposed to describing something. According to Austin, speech acts can either be successful or fail depending on context, which allow for certain types of speech acts, such as the 'I do' during a wedding ceremony. However, Austin did not recognise utterances about one's emotions as either being constative or performative. He dismissed them as being 'merely reports.'[78] Stepping into this lacuna, Reddy introduced the *emotive*, describing it as a *first-person, present tense emotion claim*. Reddy says of these emotion claims that they 'have (1) a descriptive appearance; (2) a relational intent; and (3) a self-exploring or self-altering effect.'[79]

The 'descriptive appearance' of first person, present tense emotion claims signals that emotives use emotion words as predicates to describe a personal state. Although emotion claims, such as 'I am sad,' appear to be semantically similar to constatives such as 'I have red hair,' one cannot derive from independent verification whether the emotion claim is *accurate*. In order to do this, one must recognise the coherence between the statement and other emotionally expressive utterances, gestures, and/or acts, which usually cannot be seen, heard, or sensed.[80] For the analysis of *comedia nueva* this enables me to categorically identify those sentences in which a character expresses an emotion claim. It is, in this sense, advantageous that early modern drama is very explicit where it concerns the expression of emotion words.

Returning to the above quotation, Reddy also argues that emotives have a 'relational intent,' since statements about emotions are generally part of (or designate) specific scenarios, relationships, or action orientations. 'To speak about how one feels', Reddy posits, 'is, very often, to make an implicit offer or gift, to negotiate, to refuse, to initiate a plan or terminate it, to establish a tie or alter it. To say "I am afraid of you" may be a way of refusing to cooperate with someone or a request for change in

78 Austin 1962, 78–79.
79 Reddy 2001, 100.
80 Reddy 2001, 100.

the relationship.'[81] For the analysis of *comedia nueva*, the relational intent of emotives provides for me an analytical framework through which to identify how characters come to a decision, or understand why they act the way they do. When a character's honour is hurt, the following murder of a rival can be related to those emotions originating from the dishonour, and can thus be understood by a (historical) audience, and myself as the interpreter of the text, as a 'valid' motivation to respond with violence.

Finally, emotives are self-exploring or have a self-altering effect on the speaker. While psychologists agree that emotions involve widespread activations of thought materials, which for Reddy include any mental activations such as feelings and thoughts, translating these thought materials into words exceeds one's available attention capacity, so any attempt to summarise or characterise feelings will always fail. Straightforward emotion labels, such as 'I am happy,' are oversimplifications. Instead, the attempt to characterise an emotion in a few brief sentences is an endeavour affecting the activated thought material itself, but also endangering very important relationships, goals, intentions, and practices of the individual. Therefore, such an attempt may activate or alter yet other thought material.[82] In *comedia nueva*, the self-exploring or self-altering effects of emotives become most transparent when characters take centre stage singing emotional songs, or when they reflect on their feelings in their monologues, which Konst calls 'passion monologues.'[83] Then, it becomes clear that the collective of thoughts and feelings reflected upon in these emotional *intermezzi* help characters set goals, maintain goals, or to alter them altogether.

In short, Reddy explains that emotives have the capacity to both describe our state of mind and transform it, both on a communal and individual basis. According to Reddy, it is less important that we actually *feel* the emotions, but rather whether we *express* the emotions that we claim to have.[84] Then, both the actions of virtuous characters and those of the power-hungry and abusive characters who appear in *comedia nueva* can be assessed according to their good or bad intentions, independent of any preconceived ideas about the value and expression of emotions in early modern Dutch and Flemish society.

81 Reddy 2001, 100–101.
82 Reddy 2001, 101–102.
83 Konst 1993, 74–75.
84 Reddy 2001, 118–121.

Emotional Regimes and Emotional Refuges

I use Reddy's emotive to also expose a process in which characters in *comedia nueva*, and likewise their spectators, either conform to emotional and social norms or deviate from them depending on their goals. As noted by Reddy, the emotive can be used to describe emotions that are uttered in an extensive process of 'hundreds of past volitions and motivations' and are related to individual goals and desires.[85]

With this, Reddy lays the foundation for a re-conception of the relationship between the individual and the collective: individuals utter their emotives under differing circumstances and under differing political regimes. For the individual it is imperative to protect oneself from oppression, because of which one will already self-regulate their expression of emotions. Reddy gives the individual, who must successfully manoeuvre within this restrictive context, the agency to manage their own behaviour and emotional expression.

I use these insights to argue that the characters in *comedia nueva* must navigate and manage their emotions despite expectations and limitations put on them: a prince whose father wants him to marry a princess although he loves a common girl; a daughter whose father demands she marry the suitor that he has selected for her, although she loves another man; or a man who has to defend his honour against a power-hungry rival and therefore must scheme to survive. These situations can be explained by a set of concepts that Reddy introduced alongside his concept of the emotive, and by which he describes the social reality and circumstances under which people live and must manage their emotions. They are *emotional suffering*, *emotional liberty*, *emotional regime*, and *emotional refuge*.

Reddy places emotives in a constant dialogue with the normative style of emotional management established by political regimes, which themselves require those styles to survive; otherwise leaders risk scrutiny, marginalisation, or sanction. When the feelings of individuals do not correspond with the normative styles established by the regime, there exists a goal conflict, and the individual suffers while trying to conform their own goals with those of the regime. Reddy calls this *emotional suffering* and defines it as an acute form of goal conflict, by which the frames of conflict presented in *comedias* can be analysed: where the regime is represented by an authority figure, such as a parent or a king, the romantic lovers must suffer under the social norms that these authority figures impose on them.

85 Reddy 2001, 118–120.

The opposite of emotional suffering occurs when one experiences *emotional liberty*, which entails 'the freedom to change goals in response to bewildering, ambivalent thought activations that exceed the capacity of attention and challenge the reign of high-level goals currently guiding emotional management.'[86] As opposed to the freedom to make rational choices, Reddy identifies this as the freedom to undergo 'conversion experiences' and 'life-course changes' which involve numerous contrasting, often incommensurate factors. That liberty is what is on the line in *comedias*: it is what protagonists must fight for, as it is never simply given. Therefore, the concept of emotional liberty typifies that which protagonists must struggle for against the authorities—the *emotional regime*—to establish their social freedom.

Reddy defines an *emotional regime* as the result of a community's struggle for emotional equilibrium.[87] Because the community prioritises emotions, the collective is forced to do the same. Any political regime, then, needs to establish a normative order for emotions—that is, an emotional regime—if they desire to stay in power. The emotional regime is a means to establish a social hierarchy that governs rules for interaction and co-existence. It is only natural that the individual's emotional goals will conflict with the normative set of emotions at least once during their lifetime. Thus, such emotional regimes do not only exist in dictatorships.[88] It also is possible that an emotional regime only allows for a limited number of emotives, which are modelled through ceremony and official art forms—Reddy discusses the example of Louis XIV's austere court rituals and the royal supervision of the *Comédie-Française* in eighteenth-century France, but social expectations exist in every society. In such regimes:

> individuals have to utter these emotives in appropriate circumstances, in the expectation that normative emotions will be enhanced and habituated. Those who refuse to make the normative utterances [...] are faced with the prospect of severe penalties. Those who make the required utterances and gestures, but for whom the appropriate emotions are not enhanced or habituated, may seek to conceal their lack of zeal. If they are unsuccessful, they, too, face penalties.[89]

86 Reddy 2001, 122–123.
87 Reddy 2001, 55.
88 Reddy 2001, 108–110.
89 Reddy 2001, 125.

One may even seek self-deception, which is not insincere per se, but which is needed for the individual to meet society's norms. On the other side of the spectrum, there are regimes that are more lenient toward emotional navigation and only use strict emotional discipline in certain institutions (including the army, schools, priesthoods, government, et cetera). Many times, a society employs neither one nor the other, but finds a middle ground on the spectrum between a strict and lenient emotional regime, allowing for organised group-forming.[90] Such complex social orders can permit or tolerate the creation of relationships or localised organisations that provide a group of individuals with an *emotional refuge* as described by Ruddy:

> In these contexts norms are relaxed or even reversed; mental control efforts may be temporarily set aside. Affective connections, otherwise illicit, may be established, even celebrated. Such emotional refuges may take a great variety of forms, from private understandings, to informal sociability, to Carnival-type ritual, to international secret brotherhoods.[91]

This can even include the theatre as an institution, which for my discussion of *comedia nueva* can be understood as a reaction to the stricter emotional models propagated in 'home-grown' drama, especially in the tragedies of Hooft, Vondel, and Coster. Reddy argues that such emotional refuges may make the prevailing emotional order more liveable for some people, some of the time. At other times, they may still be the cradle of discord, contestation, conflict, and transformation.

In Western society, there indeed seems to be a 'grand narrative' of emotional restraint, wherein reason must contain uncontrolled passions. It seems that 'reason' or one of its many manifestations (such as knowledge) should regulate our natural impulses. In Reddy's framework, I regard this as an emotional regime. When Konst thus discussed the Dutch Renaissance tragedy and found that most playwrights propagated emotional self-control, this reflected a 'neostoic' emotional regime, as I discussed earlier. As Sierhuis argues, that there existed many different emotional styles and models alongside one another in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, despite popular belief, I regard the alternative emotional narratives as emotional refuges. I argue that *comedia nueva*, then, represented such an emotional refuge in

90 Reddy 2001, 125–126.
91 Reddy 2001, 128.

the theatre, which is to be regarded as a counter reaction to the austere form of contemporary literature. In my discussion, I do not regard every emotional regime to be political in the narrow sense, although Reddy's own discussion positions it that way through his contextualising it within political regimes. In the context of my study, however, an emotional regime *can* be political (as pertaining to the state), but this does *not* quintessentially have to be the case. By adapting Reddy's concepts within the context of my analysis, I can thus account for the fact that acts of cultural transfer have the potential to shift boundaries in the cultural system of the receiving culture, which by importing foreign ideas (here: *comedia nueva*) responds to a specific native situation and can offer its participants an emotional refuge.[92]

Emotional Practices

Although emotives have an explicit performative and communicative aim, they are also primarily constructed by means of language. By building on the work of Austin, Reddy looks at written emotions when speaking about emotions in history. The downside of such an approach of theatre is that the focus is redirected to the scripts, which were often sold as keepsakes, as programme leaflets, or as texts to be read.[93] Naturally, the texts that I analyse are crippled texts in that the scripts themselves offer only limited information about the actual historical performances that I am interested in. On stage, the actor brings movement to expressed emotions in a way that a script alone, in its written form, cannot deliver. Yet, the problem we face is that there are hardly any reviews or reader responses of the historical performances in the seventeenth century.

Therefore, I rely for this specifically on the concept of *emotional practices* introduced by cultural anthropologist Monique Scheer who explains that 'it is generally agreed that emotions are something people experience *and* something they do. We *have* emotions and we *manifest* emotions.'[94] Historians such as Reddy have often drawn on a cognitive approach, which implies that feelings, like thoughts, can be considered as a historical category, and are subject to change through the forces of society and culture. They tend to focus on emotions as a medium for communication. Thus, emotions 'appeared to be more or less determined by language.'[95] For

92 Espagne and Werner 1985, 505, 508.
93 Porteman and Smits-Veldt 2008, 377–378.
94 Scheer 2012, 195.
95 Scheer 2012, 196.

the performance aspect of my analysis I follow Scheer, who argues that thinking is not only achieved conceptually but also in the body's sensorimotor systems, 'so that things like bodily posture and gestures matter';[96] the body thinks along with the brain. Scheer draws on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, which considers that the 'body is not a static, timeless, universal foundation that produces ahistorical emotional arousal, but is itself socially situated, adaptive, trained, plastic, and thus historical.'[97]

The existence of a socially situated and historical body is, for example, apparent in the persistent medical paradigm of Galenic humourism, which held that the four bodily humours or fluids—blood, yellow bile (choler), black bile (melancholy), and phlegm—which were affected by a person's sex, age, social class, surrounding climate, and physical environment, must be kept in balance for a healthy body and mind.[98] Sierhuis acknowledged that contemporary belief in Galenism underlined the fully embodied perception of early modern emotions.[99] In this understanding of the body's workings in the early modern period, one is in imminent danger when this balance is out of tune, and the adding or removal of certain fluids or elements, physically or via the senses, was a necessary remedy. Within this paradigm, theatre could be either a poison or an antidote. Playwrights inspired by Lipsius' Neostoicism, such as Hooft, Coster, and Vondel, have especially propagated that emotions should be handled with care for their bodily effects.[100]

Scheer articulates that '[d]epending on where and when we live, we learn to keep our thoughts and feelings to ourselves (or not), to listen to our hearts (or our heads), to be "true to ourselves" and to know what we want.'[101] Much like Reddy argued, we are trained—conditioned even—to feel and express emotions in a way that is permissible within our specific culture: we navigate our feelings to cope with social expectations and stay in line with the dominant emotional regime (or place ourselves in opposition to it).[102] By drawing on Scheer's work to consider the bodily aspect of theatre, and by

96 Scheer 2012, 197.

97 Scheer 2012, 194.

98 See, e.g. Paster 2004, 4–5; Roodenburg and Santing 2014, 8–9.

99 Sierhuis 2016, 335. At the same time, Sierhuis adds a caveat when Galenic humourism is interpreted as a form of materialism, a 'humoral determinism.' Then, our embodied interpretation of emotions can come 'at the expense of losing sight of the complex relationship between body and soul, passion and cognition and between physical, mental and rational phenomena, such as pneuma.'

100 Konst 1993, 21, 23–25.

101 Scheer 2012, 200.

102 Reddy 2001, 118–122, 125–126.

following Erika Fischer-Lichte's considerations of theatre as a performative medium, I focus on theatre as an embodied medium.[103]

Emotional Responses of Spectators

As my inquiries are furthermore related to spectators' responses to *comedia nueva*, I also need a framework within which to discuss how the emotives and embodied emotions of characters (and their actors) are transferred and communicated beyond the stage. When focusing on the emotions of spectators, these concepts are in themselves insufficient. Therefore, I finally turn to the work of Dutch psychologist Nico Frijda, who introduced in *The Emotions* (1986) a useful distinction between two different sorts of emotions that are evoked by art: he spoke of *complementing emotions* to discuss emotions that are evoked by the *nature* of the artwork, such as sadness, happiness, joy, and suspense. Spectators experience these emotions because the theme or plot of an artwork stimulates them.

When discussing the emotions that are evoked by the *quality* of an artwork, Frijda used the term *responding emotions*, which include fascination, pleasure, wonder, and admiration. Responding emotions—or opinions—are experienced by spectators in reaction to the aesthetics of an artwork. For example, spectators may feel sad about Oedipus' fate, while they recognise the tragic quality of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* (c. 429 BCE). Both complementing and responding emotions, therefore, can be used to describe the nature of the emotions that an audience experiences.[104] Moreover, we should not forget about the passions of fear (*phobos*) and compassion (*eleos*) that Aristotle discussed in his *Poetics* as two paramount emotions that tragedy should stimulate through its characters, who are neither completely evil nor entirely good, but in-between, such as Oedipus.[105] Aristotle's emotional poetics were still leading in early modern Europe and should, therefore, not be disregarded.

To then make the step from the emotives that characters utter in a play to the emotions that are experienced by the spectators, I rely on Daniel Heinsius, who wrote in his *De tragoediae constitutione liber* (1611, 'On the Constitution of Tragedy') that people who regularly watch sorrow, have compassion 'in the right way and as it is proper.' Moreover, those who often watch something that elicits fear, are in the long run less fearful. Heinsius therefore calls the theatre 'a practice school of our emotions, which,

103 See Fischer-Lichte 2000, 2014, 18–46; Ramakers 2004, esp. 127–128.
104 Frijda 1986, 355–359.
105 Aristotle 1995, 46–47, 68–79.

because they are not only useful but indispensable in real life, have to be introduced there and elicited.'[106] From this, I also take that complementing emotions as they are represented by actors in *comedias* evoked in audiences the same emotions: the successful representation of fear should equally elicit fear in the spectator, whereas responding emotions, such as admiration and wonder, are either created by the structure of these plays or the *mise-en-scène* and the scenography. Therefore, the emotional effects of these plays must have been dependent upon the presence of specific emotions in the dialogue, the convincing representation of those emotions on stage, and the use of wondrous staging techniques and plot developments.

Approach and Structure of This Study

In this study I adopt a plural model of analysis, which is based on the work of theatre scholar Thomas Postlewait. I focus in the analysis on the four factors that Postlewait identifies as having contributed to the historical performance:

1. the agents (producers, actors, managers, set designers, et cetera);
2. the artistic heritage (the productions staged before and aesthetic traditions);
3. the reception (conditions of perception and evaluation by various people, such as critics, reviewers, and spectators); and
4. the world (the various contexts in which the theatrical production is inserted).

In turn, the theatrical event itself similarly affects these four contributing factors and is in tension with each of them, 'a series of dialogues and exchanges that the historian may chart.'[107]

Additionally, Postlewait proposes that the four factors also interact with each other and meet at the theatrical event. Likewise, there exists a historical influence in both directions between the event and the world, between the world and the reception of the play, between the artistic heritage and the event, between the artistic heritage and the reception, between the agents and the event, between the agents and the artistic heritage, and so forth. It is a break with what Postlewait sees as the

106 Heinsius 1611, 12–13: 'Ita qui miserias frequenter spectat, recte miseratur, & quemadmodum oportet. qui frequenter ea quae horrorem movent, intuetur; minus tandem horret, & ut decet. Quo & referenda sunt, quae in theatro exhibentur. quod affectuum nostrorum quaedam quasi est palaestra qui, cum non modo utiles in vita, verum etiam sint necessarii, praeparari ibi & oportet, & absolvi.' With thanks to Ton Harmsen for the translation.

107 Postlewait 2009, 9.

too limiting two-way division between text/event and context, and the opposition between documentary scholarship and cultural history.[108]

This approach is also based on the fact that *comedias* were first and foremost performed, as the texts only appeared in book-form simultaneously with or after the premiere of every *comedia*. Therefore, I start in Chapter 1 at the door of the Amsterdam Public Theatre, followed by the doors of the theatres of Antwerp and Brussels. I walk together with the spectators into the auditorium, reimagining their first impressions, combining information about the architecture of the respective buildings and the available and traditional staging techniques current in the Low Countries, while I describe how Dutch theatre-makers constructed a illusionary world through the staging of *comedias*. Subsequently, Chapter 2 discusses spectacle as a way of moving and fascinating the audience. The chapter continues with an overview of the developments in theatre architecture and the contemporary use of stage machinery, looking into the technical solutions and possibilities at the disposal of Dutch playwrights. Using the concept of *imagineering*, I account for the combination in spectacle of the viewer's imagination and the engineering of different stage effects by the aforementioned means of stage machinery, *tableaux vivants*, and stage props.

Chapter 3 moves to the construction of textual emotions. Here, I consider which emotions are more frequent in *comedias* than in canonical plays by, for instance, Vondel or Hooft. This chapter therefore uses quantitative data and techniques from digital humanities to discover where differences between specific plays can be found. Using this information about the frequency of emotions in *comedia nueva* as compared to canonical plays, Chapters 4, 5, and 6 are thematically based on and discuss three popular emotional motifs and several generic plots in *comedias* that were adapted in Dutch. In Chapter 4, I look at the Dutch and Flemish adaptations of *comedias de capa y espada*, *comedias urbanas*, and *comedias palatinas*, arguing that the plots of these plays became so popular because they were recognisable to the spectator: I identify five plot variations according to which all Dutch adaptations can be classified. In all cases, however, the honour-love theme proves to be predominant.

The Dutch and Flemish adaptations of *dramas de honor* are the subject of Chapter 5. There, I discuss the honour-vengeance motif in these plays as a counter-reaction to the popular idea that the desire for revenge should be suppressed, and passions controlled, as formulated in many canonical Dutch plays. I descend further into the texts

108 Postlewait 2009, esp. 9–19.

in Chapter 6, when I explore protagonists' subversive acts designed to change their social status and the hierarchy that limits their social emancipation. While introducing a new concept of *emotional rebellion*, I both expand and specify Reddy's framework for literary texts to highlight how certain social agents can change the emotional norms established by an authoritative voice. This chapter specifically addresses female emancipation by accounting for gender fluidity in the original Spanish *comedias* and the way this fluidity is restructured in the Dutch and Flemish adaptations.

Finally, in Chapter 7 I end my discussion on the stage again. I identify and describe the *embodied emotions* expressed by characters in *comedias*. By investigating the emotional practices that actors employed, I argue that actors could rely on commonly accepted gestures and facial expressions found in different sources, such as books of rhetoric and instruction manuals for painters, to enact the grand emotions of *comedia nueva*. Through this, the emotional conflicts of *comedias* could be successfully communicated beyond the stage.