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**'De Storm der Hartstogten Woedt': The works of Johannes Jelgerhuis Rienkszoon as a source of stagecraft for the historically informed performer**

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## Part One

### Chapter 1, The works of Johannes Jelgerhuis

This chapter focuses on the initial part of my first research question: What can Johannes Jelgerhuis's less-known works add to a better understanding of Jelgerhuis's acting treatise *Theoretische lessen*, of his approach to acting and of his acting style? Building on information discussed in Dutch primary and secondary sources on Jelgerhuis, I use citations from and comparison with Jelgerhuis's lesser-known works to examine the reliability of the content in his manuscripts, and to delve deeper into specific aspects of his acting style and approach to teaching. This in-depth discussion later informs my experimentation with acting techniques and staging processes in Chapters 2–4. The interpretation of Jelgerhuis's works requires an analysis of his observations on acting, painting, and teaching, as well as of his opinions and tastes (whether supported by knowledge and professional experience, or influenced by personal reasons).

Interpretation of these layers also necessitates an understanding of various terms and concepts used by Jelgerhuis and his contemporaries to describe ideals regarding the arts, acting, and the theatre. In preparation of Chapters 2–4, I have selected eight terms and concepts needed to better understand Jelgerhuis's treatise, his less-known works, and his stagecraft. These terms will be placed into context, as I discuss various facets of Jelgerhuis's oeuvre and his professions.<sup>1</sup> To do so, I selected only those works that help provide the scaffold for the subsequent chapters on training, teaching, and stagecraft. This means that the content featured in this chapter merely scratches the surface of Jelgerhuis's oeuvre, including his paintings and drawings, the information in his manuscripts, published sources, and so on.

#### 1.1 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The terms — painterliness, contrast, attitude, *welstand*, truth, naturalness, ease, and gracefulness — all are manifest in Jelgerhuis's oeuvre, his acting practice, and teaching. Because the translation and discussion of these terms according to the way Jelgerhuis uses them requires some contextualization, I present them throughout various sections of the present chapter, organized as follows:

- The first set of terms — *schilderachtig*, *contrast*, *attitude*, and *welstand* — introduces the importance of visual aesthetics and decorum for the stage. They link the realms of painting and acting, and are an integral part of section 1.2. concerning Jelgerhuis's painting profession.

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<sup>1</sup> For biographies on Jelgerhuis, see for instance Hendrik Theodoor Boelen, 'Johannes Jelgerhuis, Rienzoon', in *Noord- en Zuid-Nederlandsche Tooneel Almanak voor 1878* (Bom, 1878), 138–157; see also a catalogue to accompany an exhibition of 1970 on Jelgerhuis and his works: *Johannes Jelgerhuis rzn. acteur-schilder* (1969); and D'Ailly, 'Johannes Jelgerhuis Rienksz'. I refer mainly to the latter, as it is the most detailed.

- The term *waarheid* frequently returns in Jelgerhuis's oeuvre, and serves the purpose of examining/exploring his search for truth in costuming at the Amsterdam Schouwburg. I revisit this term in the sections on acting and teaching, as it also concerns Jelgerhuis's reflections on character interpretation and truthfulness in performance.
- The last set of terms — *natuurlijkheid*, *gemak*, and *gratie* — directly concerns movement and character interpretation, and illustrates Jelgerhuis's view on naturalness, ease, and gracefulness in performance. These terms are part of section 1.4, 'Acting styles: past - present - future', which examines acting practices on the early nineteenth-century stage.

In reviewing the terms and their definitions, I refer as much as possible to examples from Jelgerhuis's works; citing all the sources relevant to these terms is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

## 1.2 JELGERHUIS - THE PAINTER

This section concerns the connection between painting and acting, to view the generally acknowledged importance of visual sources for performers in Jelgerhuis's time through the lens of his own works and practice. As Jelgerhuis's qualities as a professional painter and draughtsman influenced his work as an actor and teacher, his engravings and costume designs are an important source of information for anyone studying stagecraft inspired by Jelgerhuis's sources.<sup>2</sup>



Figure 1, Hendrik Willem Caspari, *Portret van Johannes Jelgerhuis Rienksz.* (c. 1790–1829), ink wash, Rijksmuseum, objectnummer RP-T-1940-535  
<https://id.rijksmuseum.nl/200309531>

Most relevant to this dissertation are Jelgerhuis's published and unpublished theatre-related illustrations, including engravings, sketches, and drawings. Ranging from costume designs and historical dress to images relating to actors, acting, and stage perspective, his illustrations are an

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<sup>2</sup> A detailed account of Jelgerhuis's painting career and oeuvre is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but can be found in A. G. Schulte, 'Johannes Jelgerhuis als beeldend kunstenaar' in *Johannes Jelgerhuis rzn. acteur-schilder* (1969), pp. 12–32.

important aid to interpreting his written texts, and serve as sources on costume, movement, and posture, in the practice-based chapters of this dissertation.

The worlds of painting and acting at the time influenced each other not only in the Netherlands but also throughout most of Europe.<sup>3</sup> Observations on the interchange of inspiration between the aesthetic ideals in paintings and in theatre are present in international theatre reviews and treatises of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>4</sup> In his *Eloquence of the Body*, Herman Roodenburg describes the ‘close bonds between the arts of acting and painting, with rhetoric or rather the “eloquence of the body” as a shared language or intertext’.<sup>5</sup> This shared language essential for understanding both Jelgerhuis’s lesser-known works and his acting treatise. Jelgerhuis transferred his artistic knowledge to the stage, to his own classroom, and ultimately into his acting manual. Rules relating to the perspective of the stage and the auditorium, for example, are present in the very first chapter of his acting treatise. In other chapters, he draws attention to the details that improve the posture and stage presentation of actors. He also shows an awareness of the full picture which encompasses visual elements on the stage that contribute to the enchantment of the audience, such as costume, sets, and stage comportment. In doing so, he frequently refers to paintings, sculptures, and painting treatises, by, among others, Charles Le Brun (1619–1690) and Gerard de Lairese’s (1640–1711).<sup>6</sup> In fact, many of his illustrations are direct copies from treatises and works of art. Like other painter-actors before him, such as Jan Punt (1711–1779) and Marten Corver (1727–1794), Jelgerhuis considered drawing skills an asset to the actor.<sup>7</sup> Theatre critics too, aware of his other profession, praised and recognized the craft in his painterly portrayal of various roles.<sup>8</sup>

Jelgerhuis’s skills as a draughtsman and engraver enabled him to draw examples during his lessons on acting theory and gave him the freedom to engrave his own treatise. The extant draughts for his engravings in the *Theoretische lessen* show only minor differences with the final result in the

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<sup>3</sup> Barnett selects and assembles a range of examples — including passages by Jelgerhuis — showing ‘the pictorial interest and beauty of the actor’s postures’ and the relationship between the two art forms. See Barnett ‘The Performance Practice of Acting’, part V (1980), pp. 1–8; and Barnett, *The Art of Gesture*, pp. 122–127. For examples of singers and actors using the visual arts as inspiration for their movements on-stage, see Joseph R. Roach, *The Player’s Passion*, pp. 68–73.

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, Herman Roodenburg’s *The Eloquence of the Body, Perspectives in gesture in the Dutch Republic* (Zwolle: Uitgeverij Waanders b.v., 2004), pp. 149–152.

<sup>5</sup> Roodenburg, *The Eloquence*, pp. 149–153.

<sup>6</sup> Le Brun, *Methode*, Dutch translation by De Kaarsgieter as *Afbeelding der Hertstogten*.

<sup>7</sup> Roodenburg, *The Eloquence*, pp. 150–152. Punt and Corver were both trained as engravers as well as actors; Corver, Punt’s pupil, favoured a more simple and nuanced style of acting compared to that of Punt, whose delivery was still in the style of grand, sweeping gestures and loud and grandiloquent declamation. See Golding, *Classicistic acting*, pp. 238, 240, footnotes 6, 11, 12. For a biography of both actors, see Ben Albach, *Jan Punt en Marten Corver. Nederlandsch tooneelven in de 18e eeuw* (Amsterdam: P. N. van Kampen en zoon N. V., 1946).

<sup>8</sup> *De Tooneelkijker*, 4 vols (Amsterdam: Delachaux, 1816), 1, p. 245, 533; *De Tooneelkijker*, 4 vols (Amsterdam: Delachaux, 1817), 2, pp. 52, 298; *De Tooneelkijker*, 4 vols (Amsterdam: Delachaux, 1818), 3, 441; *Het kritisch lampje, Lectuur voor alle standen* (Amsterdam: J. C. van Kesteren, 1823), p. 11.

treatise.<sup>9</sup> The reader can therefore be confident that the illustrations are as Jelgerhuis intended them (contrary to other treatises, in which the author and illustrator are not the same, and details between the plates and the text differ).<sup>10</sup> For Jelgerhuis, an education in drawing skills led to an understanding of the concepts and terms discussed below, necessary in the visual arts and on-stage: the trained eye would improve an actor's taste and be advantageous for their movements on-stage, choosing or improving their costume, and for creating beautiful tableaux.<sup>11</sup>

### 1.2.1 *Schilderachtig* and the *schildery*

Jelgerhuis's manuscripts and his treatise reveal his attention to the full picture, the *schildery* (the painting) in creating groupings on stage as well as in monologues. The word '*schilderachtig*' can signify 'like a painting' or can indicate, as specified by the painter Gerard de Lairese, 'het schoonste en uitgelezenste' (the most beautiful and excellent), in other words, '*het geene waardig is geschilderd te worden*' (that which is worthy of being painted).<sup>12</sup> I use the translation 'painterly' in most cases because it suggests more movement than the static 'pictorial' or 'picturesque'.<sup>13</sup> The *schildery* and movement can coexist on-stage: actors performing in this style need to be aware of the *schildery*, the full picture, within the context of the theatrical space and their fellow actors on-stage, which they create through their every movement. Reference to the *schildery* in Jelgerhuis's oeuvre often refers to the aesthetic quality in a performance, a scene, or at a single moment, when the movements and positions of the actors are so beautiful and balanced within the scenery that a 'screenshot' would result in a beautiful painting in itself. Franz von Akáts describes the ideal harmony between the various elements on stage as follows:

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<sup>9</sup> See, for instance, '28 tekeningen door Jelgerhuis voor "Theoretische Lessen over de Gesticulatie en Mimiek"', (1827–1830), ink, pencil, oiled paper, Amsterdam, Allard Pierson, theatre collection, GD246, t00001085.000.

<sup>10</sup> For a detailed discussion of discrepancies between Gilbert Austin's notation in his treatise *Chironomia* of 1806 and the illustrations in the accompanying plates, see Wentz, '*Mechanical Rules*', pp. 53–54. For the annotated poem and the plate with illustrations in Austin's treatise, see Austin, *Chironomia*, pp. 368–370, and plate 12.

<sup>11</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. ix.

<sup>12</sup> Gerard de Lairese, *Het Groot Schilderboek*, p. 418.

<sup>13</sup> The term *schilderachtig* is translated by scholars as 'picturesque', 'pictorial' and/or 'painterly'. Lyckle de Vries translates it as 'painterly' as well as 'picturesque' and shows the different opinions on and the development of the Dutch term in his *Gerard de Lairese: An Artist between Stage and Studio* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998), pp. 129–130, 212 and Lyckle De Vries, 'Gerard de Lairese: The Critical Vocabulary of an Art Theorist', in *Oud Holland – Journal for Art of the Low Countries*, 117 (2004), 1/2, 79–98, (p. 83). 'Picturesque' is also used by Roodenburg in *The Eloquence*, p. 158. Dene Barnett translated the German equivalent, 'malerisch', as 'pictorial' in: Dene Barnett, 'The Performance Practice of Acting', part V, (1980), p. 7.

*Die Scenik ist eine Malerei mit lebendigen Figuren, durch den Ausdruck der Stimme, der Geberde, und der wirklichen Malerei, nemlich Dekorationen und andere Zuthaten in Verbindung gebracht; demnach muß sie einen Theil der ästhetischen Theorie der Malerei kennen und beachten.*<sup>14</sup>

The theatrical scene is a painting with living figures, connected by the expression of the voice, of the gesture, and real paint, namely the decorations and other elements [of the tableau]; therefore [the relevant] part of the aesthetic theory of painting must be known and respected.

Akáts here indicates not only the similarities between the stage and painting but also the main difference: the moving elements, including the voice and the gestures. In fact, however still and painterly a scene or a tableau is, the actors are alive, they breathe. When imagining additional stage elements to those described by Akáts, one can include the candle light creating shimmering in the air. Within the painterly aspects, the picture on-stage always contains movement.

The following terms (*contrast*, *attitude*, and *welstand*) at times occur as seemingly synonyms in the works of different authors (including Jelgerhuis), which complicates the work of defining them precisely. I discuss the slight differences between these terms to facilitate interpretation of the *Theoretische lessen* and further reading of this dissertation, in particular regarding the exploration of embodiment informed by these concepts in acting and training (Chapters 2–4). It may be helpful to consider that *welstand* and *attitude*, although occasionally used as synonyms for *contrast*, are, in most cases, more usefully considered as umbrella terms which ideally include *contrast*.

### 1.2.2 Contrast

Jelgerhuis's use of the words *contrast*, also referred to as '*de contrasten*' (the contrasts) builds on the terminology as applied in the treatises by painters such as Karel Van Mander and De Lairese.<sup>15</sup> The correct application of contrast results in a balanced variation between the parts of the body: one hand held higher than the other, one arm contracted and the other elongated, one foot turned to the side and the other pointing forward, and so on.<sup>16</sup> Figure 2 (left and right) by Jelgerhuis shows the first figure standing with foot positions and arms parallel (to be avoided on-stage) and the

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<sup>14</sup> Franz von Akáts, genannt Grüner, *Kunst der Scenik in ästhetischer und ökonomischer Hinsicht theoretisch, praktisch und mit Plänen [...]* Als Handbuch für Intendanten, Privat-Direktoren, Kompositeure, Kapellmeister, Regisseure, Opernsänger, Schauspieler, Theatermaler und Meister, und für Alle, die bei der Leitung des Theaters betheiligt sind (Wien: Anton Mausberger, 1841), p. iv.

<sup>15</sup> See Karel van Mander, *Het Schilder-Boeck* [...] (Haerlem: voor Paschier van Wesbvsch, 1604) [https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/mand001schi01\\_01/colofon.php](https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/mand001schi01_01/colofon.php) (accessed 8 June 2024); and De Lairese, *Het Groot Schilderboek*.

<sup>16</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 45, 52. Although not a term Jelgerhuis himself uses, *contrapposto* is likely to be a better-known term than its Dutch equivalents. In international sources on painting and sculpture *contrapposto* indicates a contrasting disposition of the hips, arms, and shoulders, in order to achieve an asymmetrical ideal of a graceful balance in the body (dating back to the ancient Greeks). The concept and the rules of *contrapposto* appear time and again in treatises by Van Mander, De Lairese, and Jelgerhuis, but under the denominations of *contrast(en)*, *attitude*, and *welstand*.

second standing with contrast in the position of the arms, the legs, and even between the direction of the head and that of the torso.

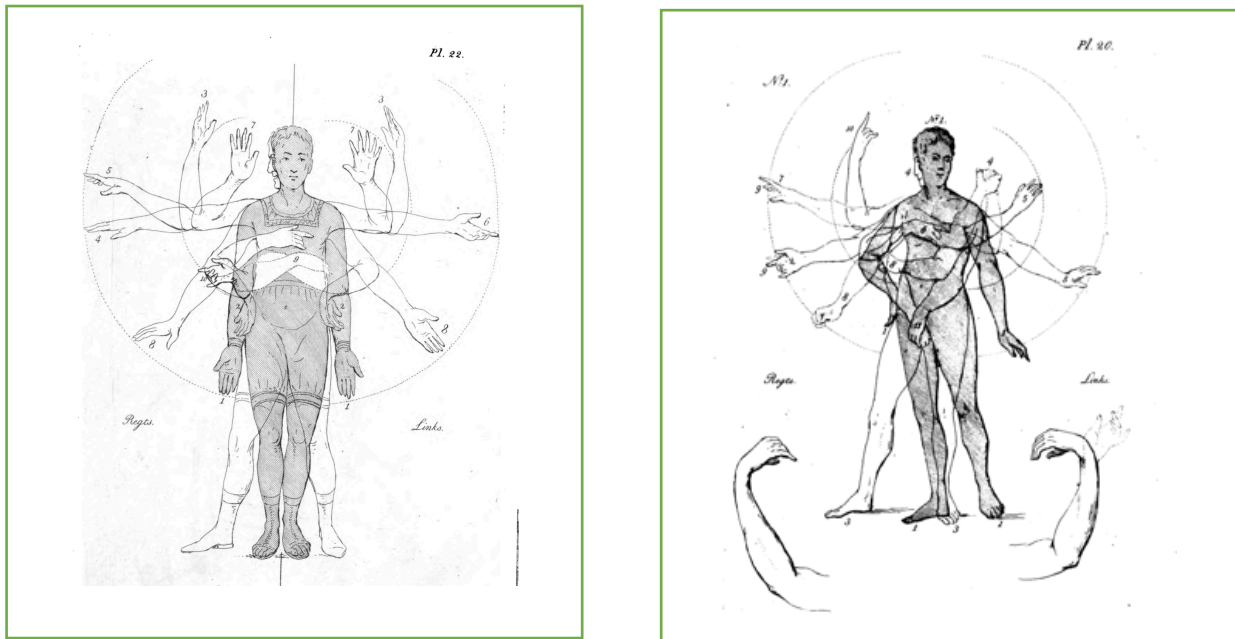


Figure 2 (left), Engraving of parallel gesticulation and foot positions. Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, plate 22; (right): Engraving of gestures and attitudes with contrast. Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, plate 20.

According to Jelgerhuis, contrast is also to be sought in the larger context on stage, as '*niets is lelijker, dan dat twee Acteurs eveneens staan, omdat de contrasten zoowel in het gebeele tafreel moeten heerschen, als in een bijzonder personaadje; hierop moeten wij leeren letten, als wij e n s c e n e s t a n*' (nothing is more hideous, than two actors standing in the same position, because the contrasts must reign in the entire picture as they do in a single character; we have to learn to pay attention to this when we are on-stage). Actors, then, are to strive for contrasting variation between their own gestures and those of other actors, ensuring that the same gestures are not performed in unison. This search for contrast also applies to the composition of scenes featuring a grouping of actors (one actor kneeling, for instance, another sitting, and a third standing).<sup>17</sup> On a smaller scale, contrast can even be achieved between the shape of the hands and fingers.<sup>18</sup> A good *attitude* features these contrasts.<sup>19</sup>

### 1.2.3 Attitude

Most attitudes presented in Jelgerhuis's acting manual can be described as full body stances (or rather, arrangements of the body, including attitudes while seated or lying down), which follow the

<sup>17</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 90; for contrast in groupings, see plate 31 on p. 113.

<sup>18</sup> For contrast in the hands and fingers, see Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 92, 98.

<sup>19</sup> For a range of examples discussing stage postures (including sitting, kneeling, and lying down) from Jelgerhuis's *Theoretische lessen* and other treatises, see the section on 'Contrast and assymetry as the basis of good stage posture', in Barnett's 'The Performance Practice of Acting', part V (1980), pp. 8–29.



rules of the contrasts (such as the second figure in Figure 2).<sup>20</sup> The attitude is more than a momentary image only; in fact, it can include a passionate state and therefore feature movement of the eyes, of the arms and hands, and of the body.<sup>21</sup> Jelgerhuis adopts the term *attitude* only in his *Theoretische lessen*, alongside the word ‘stand’ (stance), which he uses instead in all his other writings.<sup>22</sup> In the *Theoretische lessen*, Jelgerhuis applies the terms *standen* and *attitudes* both separate and interchangeably (referring to a physical position previously mentioned as stance with the term *attitude*).<sup>23</sup> His use of the term *attitude* seems to stem from his knowledge of the painting treatises, whereas *stand* is used by actors and theatre critics to describe visual aspects of acting, often in the combination ‘*standen en gebaren*’ (stances and gestures).<sup>24</sup> By naming the stances and the gestures, theatre critics show that these elements of acting were judged and observed as specific skills, just like the voice and facial expression. Though both *stand* and *attitudes* can refer to seated or prone positions as well as standing postures, in the *Theoretische lessen* Jelgerhuis uses the term *attitude* more frequently to describe situations including the physical expression of a passionate state.<sup>25</sup> He gives examples, for instance, of an attitude for ‘*de gramschap*’ (anger) (see Figure 3, the figure on the right), and for collapsing on a table in despair.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> To describe the *attitude*, Jelgerhuis refers to rules by Van Mander and De Lairese, yet his citation is identical to a passage in Simon Styl’s ‘Het leven van Jan Punt’. Both Jelgerhuis and Styl refer to the painting treatises of De Lairese and Van Mander, but both painters’ descriptions of the *attitude* are more detailed. See Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 39–40; and Simon Styl, ‘Het leven van Jan Punt’ in *Levensbeschrijving van eenige voornaame meest Nederlandsche mannen en vrouwen, [...] negende deel* (Amsterdam: van der Plaats, 1781), p. 54. For van Mander’s description of the *actitude*, see Van Mander, *Het Schilder-Boeck*, chapter 4. For de Lairese’s definition and illustration, see De Lairese, *Het Groot Schilderboek*, pp. 28–29, plate A; for additional definitions of *attitude*, see the Dutch historical dictionary, *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*, s.v. ‘*attitude*’, <https://gtb.ivdnt.org/iWDB/search?actie=article&wdb=WNT&id=S004815&lemma=attitude&domein=0&conc=true> (accessed 3 June, 2024).

<sup>21</sup> For the description for prolonged anticipation, for instance, which includes walking back and forth, and restless, flickering eyes, see Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 151 plate 4; for the gladiator’s holding his sword with a shaking hand, see pp. 74–75.

<sup>22</sup> The term *attitude* is used mainly in the first part of the *Theoretische lessen*, but in the second part (page 120 and onwards), starting with a new season of lessons on facial expression and the passions, Jelgerhuis changes terminology and speaks mostly of ‘*beeldje*’ (statuette or figure) or directly of ‘*hartstocht*’ (passion) to indicate full body figures.

<sup>23</sup> For both terms applied seemingly interchangeably, see Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 55, 82; for the terms used separately as *attitudes* and *standen*, p. 76; for Jelgerhuis’s summary of the *attitudes* previously defined as *standen*, see pp. 65, 71.

<sup>24</sup> Marten Corver, *Tooneel-aantekeningen vervat in een omstandigen BRIEF, Aan den Schrijver van het Leven van JAN PUNT [...]* (Leyden: Cornelis Heyligert, 1789), pp. 24, 26; *De Tooneelkijker*, 1 (1816), p. 76, 127; ‘Verslag der Tooneelvertooningen van W. Bingley, te Amsterdam; door de schrijvers van den Tooneelkijker’ (Amsterdam: Delachaux, 1817), p. 21; *De Tooneelkijker*, 3 (1818), p. 23.

<sup>25</sup> For a sitting attitude, see Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 46 and plate 4.

<sup>26</sup> For ‘*de gramschap*’, see Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 54 and plate 8; for collapsing on a table in despair, see p. 64 and plate 14.’

In his description accompanying plate 8 (Figure 3), Jelgerhuis differentiates between the two terms, pointing out a small transition from the restful state of the '*stille standen*' (stances in stillness) of the figures in the middle of the plate, to the *attitude* for anger on the right, which is shown also in its facial expression.



Figure 3, Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, plate 8

Jelgerhuis also includes examples based on the commedia dell'arte characters by the etcher and draughtsman Jacques Callot (1592–1635). These lively attitudes contain much contrast and movement and the actors are advised not to hold them, but to quickly move out of them.<sup>27</sup> Hereafter, I will mainly apply the term *attitudes*, except when citing a passage including the word *stand*, which I will then translate as 'stance'.

#### 1.2.4 *Welstand*

The term *welstand* appears frequently in Jelgerhuis's *Theoretische lessen*, and is used with different shades of meaning. In this section I provide an in-depth discussion of *welstand*, so that the reader may get a feeling for the richness of the term and the optional nuances that best suit my citations of Jelgerhuis throughout this dissertation. Translating the word *welstand* is problematic, as the concept does not exist in English, and a concise definition does not always suffice, as the term changes meaning according to its context. I will therefore provide a general definition of *welstand* as an umbrella term, applicable to both the citations and my application of the term in this dissertation. An introductory discussion of *welstand* offers further context and features translations by others, which vary as they refer to subjects concerning painting or acting. Although the precise nuance of *welstand* intended by Jelgerhuis remains ambiguous in many a passage, his use of *welstand* refers overall to that which looks good, beautiful, and/or graceful and stands in opposition to that

<sup>27</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 93–94, plate 24.

which is exaggerated, affected, stiff, parallel, and/or bad taste.<sup>28</sup> For the purpose of this dissertation, then, I define *welstand* as ‘that which looks good’; a concept referring to beauty in form, harmonious proportions, and/or expression.<sup>29</sup> Within the visual painting that is the stage, the umbrella term *welstand* can contain single aspects or combinations of stage-related elements such as movement, painterliness, good bearing, decorum, facial expression, costuming, and *contrast*.<sup>30</sup>

Jelgerhuis extends his use of the word *welstand* to facial expression, movement, the shape of the hands and fingers, the proportions of the theatre (the house and the stage), and to use good taste to guide one’s choices regarding costume.<sup>31</sup> The exact shade of its meaning, then, depends on the context. Cultural historian Roodenburg points out how both in treatises on painting and in texts concerning acting the terms *contrasten*, *welstand*, and *schilderachige houding* (painterly posture) were used interchangeably.<sup>32</sup> *Welstand* in the attitude of an actor, a statue, or a painted figure, ideally includes *contrast*, yet the term *welstand* cannot be interpreted as a synonym. As art historian Lyckle de Vries states in a detailed discussion on *welstand* in the realm of painting: ‘any aspect of painting can affect its *welstand*’, and ‘*welstand* is more than the sum of its details’.<sup>33</sup> These insights on *welstand* transferred to the realm of theatre are true also for the actor’s delivery on-stage. Returning to *welstand* in painting, De Vries, in his book *How to create beauty, De Lairese on the theory and practice of making art*, describes *welstand* as presented in Gerard de Lairese’s *Het Groot Schilderboek*, an important painting treatise of the time:<sup>34</sup>

*Welstand* results from the coherence and interaction of all components of a work of art, beauty being one of them (1:109). Human beauty, De Lairese feels, creates a great force

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<sup>28</sup> Kyropoulos similarly translates *welstand* as ‘looks well’ or ‘presents itself well’, which is functional, but does not provide enough nuance for the present dissertation, see Kyropoulos, ‘Teaching Acting to Singers’, p. 32.

<sup>29</sup> In Dutch, the phrases ‘*fraaiheid van vorm*’ (beauty of form) and ‘*schoonheid van voorkomen*’ (beauty of appearance) proposed in the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* (Dictionary of Dutch language) provide a suitable alternative to my use of *welstand* in the following chapters. For these and additional definitions of *welstand*, see *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*, s.v. ‘*welstand*’, <https://gtb.ivdnt.org/iWDB/search?actie=article&wdb=WNT&id=M085328&lemma=welstand&domein=0&conc=true>; (accessed 7 April 2025).

<sup>30</sup> Barnett (advised by Leny Gillisen) translated *welstand* as ‘good bearing’ in the context of a specific article, see Dene Barnett, ‘The Performance Practice of Acting’, part V (1980), p. 32.

<sup>31</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 34, 98, 103, and 119. Jelgerhuis defines good taste as ‘*alles wat welstand geeft en met de waarheid gepaard kan gaan*’ (everything that gives *welstand* and that can be paired with truth), see *Theoretische lessen*, p. 235.

<sup>32</sup> Roodenburg, *The Eloquence*, pp. 158–159; see also his article in Dutch: Roodenburg, “‘Welstand’ En “Wellevendheid”: Over Houdingen, Gebaren En Gelaatsuitdrukking in de Schilderkunst, de Toneelkunst En de Rhetorica: De Inbreng van Het Classicisme’ in *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* (NKJ) / *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art*, 46 (1995), 416–439.

<sup>33</sup> De Vries’s article is very helpful for a better understanding of this term with regards to De Lairese’s *Het Groot Schilderboek*, yet, he finally translates *welstand* as ‘optimal quality’, which is not useful in the present discussion on acting. See De Vries, ‘Gerard de Lairese’, pp. 81–82.

<sup>34</sup> Lyckle de Vries, *How to create beauty, De Lairese on the theory and practice of making art* (Leiden: Primavera Press, 2011), pp. 35–36; De Lairese, *Het Groot Schilderboek*.

and an elegant *welstand* in the mind of knowledgeable spectators (1:174), from which we may conclude that *welstand* is in the eye and mind of the beholder.<sup>35</sup>

What is important about this definition is the acknowledgement of the many components involved in an image of *welstand*, including the view of the spectator. In the context of the theatre, fellow actors and expert spectators in the audience may appreciate the visual aesthetics of *welstand* in a performance or critique its absence. Dene Barnett, who cited extensively from Jelgerhuis's *Theoretische lessen* in *The Art of Gesture* (1987),<sup>36</sup> observed that *welstand* often signifies

decorum in its classical sense of idealized beauty resulting from harmonious proportions and order, a beauty which elevated art above nature, and which was a primary objective of all the arts.<sup>37</sup>

The harmony, not only in the object, but when possible also in its surroundings, is created by the balance between various elements in a painting, a sculpture, or on-stage. Because of its elevation above nature, it ideally includes '*welgevoeglijkheid*' or '*betamelijkheid*' (decorum or what is considered proper).<sup>38</sup> All of these aspects of *welstand* must be present in the craftsmanship of the painter and sculptor, and in the actor's body and mind, for actors paint/sculpt with their own bodies. However, these definitions are not quite sufficient when referring to acting, as this craft includes movement, which *welstand* must accompany at all times.<sup>39</sup> For this reason, I have included movement and expression in my definition above.

Several examples in this chapter will show that an understanding of *welstand* is considered an asset in the work of the artist (painters, sculptors, and actors). In acting, it is the means whereby actors can express a character's narrative not merely according to the actors' feeling in the moment, but according to the notion of representing Nature '*minder zoo als zij is, dan wel behoorde te zijn*' (less as she is, than as she should be).<sup>40</sup> Crucial for the present dissertation and the following chapters on stagecraft is Jelgerhuis's following explanation regarding *welstand* and emotion:

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<sup>35</sup> The numbers between parentheses follow the original citation and refer to the page numbers in De Lairese's *Het Groot Schilderboek*, see Lyckle de Vries, *How to create beauty*, p. 36.

<sup>36</sup> In *The Art of Gesture*, Barnett translated *welstand* as decorum with the definition cited above, adding the term *welstand* in brackets after his translation. In this manner, the reader is presented both with a guideline by an expert on the topic, and at the same time can form their own opinion. See Dene Barnett, *The Art of Gesture*.

<sup>37</sup> Barnett, *The Art of Gesture*, pp. 98–99.

<sup>38</sup> The moral and societal implications of *welstand* fall beyond the scope of my dissertation and cannot be pursued here. I am aware that since Jelgerhuis's time, actors and artists have developed very different views on what constitutes an ideal relationship between beauty, *mores* and art, yet I am concerned in this chapter with the *Zeitgeist* of Jelgerhuis's period, rather than of the present.

<sup>39</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, xiii.

<sup>40</sup> The cited phrase in context suggests that *welstand* was also closely connected with good taste '*den slechten smaak die te algemeen heerscht, leeren verbannen en welstand bewaren, de Natuur leeren afbeelden, minder zoo als zij is, dan wel behoorde te zijn*' (learning to ban the bad taste which all too generally dominates, and maintaining *welstand*, so as to depict Nature less as she is, than as she should be). See Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 119.

*Laat ik dus aantoonen dat zich zoo maar vol gevoel neder te storten op eenen tafel, niet voldoende is. De welstand moet eenwig de Tooneelkunstenaar in zijn werk op zijde staan, zonder zijn gevoel te schaden of te verminderen, zal het ooit den naam van fraai verkrijgen.*<sup>41</sup>

Let me therefore demonstrate that to fling oneself emotionally onto a table, is not enough. *Welstand* must always accompany the work of the stage artist, without damaging or reducing his emotions [underscore my emphasis], for it to be seen as beautiful.

The application of *welstand* does not imply acting without emotion, it is about the way emotions are presented to the audience. Managing or monitoring one's emotions for the sake of *welstand* is not just applicable for collapsing on a table in despair. Jelgerhuis gives a similar, but more detailed explanation for acting in general in the introduction:

*zonder kennis van den welstand, volgt men slechts den loop der natuurlijke aandoeningen, en geraakt ter prooije aan overrompeling van gevoel, naar mate men aandoenlijker, levendiger van gewaarwordingen is, en brengt dan, tegen wil en dank, somtijds de misselijkste figuren voort. Ziet daar waarom het gevoel door kunst tot welstand moet worden terug gebragt, zonder het gevoel of de gewaarwordingen te verzuken of te kort te doen.*<sup>42</sup>

without knowledge of *welstand*, one only follows the course of natural feelings, and one becomes prey to overwhelming emotions, the more sensitive and lively one's perception are; and that sometimes leads, against one's own better judgement, to making the most nauseating shapes with the body. That is why art must distil emotion into *welstand*, without neglecting or undervaluing feeling or perceptions.

For Jelgerhuis, knowledge of *welstand* (in its sense of 'nature improved') safeguards actors from emotional and physical exaggeration on-stage — he uses the words '*outreren*' (to exaggerate) and even '*convulsioneren*' (moved by or moving with forcefully contracting, involuntary movements).<sup>43</sup> Apart from uncontrolled movements and dramatic emotional excesses, another way of trespassing the limits of *welstand* on-stage would be the actors' portrayal of physical disability for comic purposes. Regarding the engravings of six attitudes he copied from commedia dell'arte characters by Jacques Callot, Jelgerhuis cautions against the imitation of the last figure. In his view, its 'defective and lame' figure (which may be seen in real life), would generate the audience's pity instead of laughter, and should never be used on-stage.<sup>44</sup> The search for an expressive and moving

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<sup>41</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 64.

<sup>42</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. ix.

<sup>43</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 67, 85.

<sup>44</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, plate 24, figures 1–5, see also pp. 93–94). The sixth figure resembles both Callot's etching of 'Collo Francisco' and 'Ratsa di Boio', see Jacques Callot, 'Cicho Sgarra - Collo Francisco', in *Balli di Sfessania*, (c. 1622), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 57.650.304(10) <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/681457> (accessed 10 January 2025); for Ratsa di Boio, see 'Smaraoło cornuto - Ratsa di Boio', in *Balli di Sfessania* (1622), etching, RISD Museum, 49.080.4, [https://risdmuseum.org/art-design/collection/smaraoło-cornuto-ratsa-di-boio-490804?return=%2Fart-design%2Fcollection%3Fsearch\\_api\\_fulltext%3DJacques%2520-callot%26op%3D%26page%3D3](https://risdmuseum.org/art-design/collection/smaraoło-cornuto-ratsa-di-boio-490804?return=%2Fart-design%2Fcollection%3Fsearch_api_fulltext%3DJacques%2520-callot%26op%3D%26page%3D3) (accessed 7 February 2025).

acting style that encompasses the many elements of *welstand* without exaggerating, will be one of the main guidelines linking the following chapters on stagecraft.

Having discussed the definitions and translations by De Vries and Barnett, I close my discussion of *welstand* by mentioning Golding's translation of Jelgerhuis's *Theoretische lessen* of 1984. Golding adapts the translation of *welstand* to each circumstance in the text, offering insight into the many facets and functions of the term.<sup>45</sup> His translations include: 'aesthetic propriety' (p. 242); 'decorum' (pp. 269, 360, 361); 'theatrical decorum' (p. 269); 'graceful appearance' (p. 382); 'decorous posture' (p. 375); 'rules of art' ('*regelen van welstand*': p. 307); 'let us combine graceful and truthful comportment' ('*paren wij den welstand aan de waarheid*': p. 307); and 'aesthetically pleasing' (p. 339). Each of these translations fits under the umbrella term of beauty in *welstand*. However, by translating the term differently each time, as Golding does, without providing the original term, the reader is not informed of the full range of possible meanings in certain passages. Because Jelgerhuis often leaves room for ambivalence as to the precise nuance of *welstand* he intends in a given sentence, the resulting content in Golding's work is at times inexact or incomplete.<sup>46</sup>

### Coda

In delineating various interpretations of the terms *contrast*, *attitude*, and *welstand*, I have demonstrated that, although they contain overlapping elements and were occasionally used interchangeably, there are nuances to all these terms. Each of them must be interpreted within the specific context of the period, the genre, the author, and at times even within a single monograph.

### The first set of definitions in Summary

A good actor's stage behaviour, including attitudes on-stage will be arranged with *welstand* and according to the rules of contrast, depicting nature 'as it should be'; it will distil emotions to their essence, but will not exceed the rules of *welstand* by displaying exaggerated emotions and facial expressions, nor will the attitude trespass against decorum in other ways. *Welstand* will also be discernable in the actors' graceful quality of movement and in their tasteful costumes. These components, ideally balanced, will make the attitude '*schilderachtig*' (worthy of being painted).

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<sup>45</sup> See Golding, *Classicistic acting*, for instance, pp. 242, 269, 307, 360, 361, 375, 382.

<sup>46</sup> This is even more so when he omits the translation of *welstand* altogether. See Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 34 and Golding, *Classicistic acting*, p. 263.

### 1.3 JELGERHUIS - THE COSTUME DESIGNS

The following discussion touches on Jelgerhuis's contribution to costume reform in the Netherlands and examines the accountability of his written work regarding costume and costume illustrations. I link Jelgerhuis's skills as a draughtsman to the practicalities of the theatre and discuss the term *waarheid* in relationship with his studies on costume history in search for 'truthful costumes'. This preliminary research lays the groundwork for my section on costume design based on Jelgerhuis's illustrations in the second case study (Chapter 4), where costume creation is part of the characterization process and has direct consequences on my movements on-stage.



Figure 4, Jelgerhuis, costume design (n.d.), sepia, aquarel, Allard Pierson, theatre collection, GD10-52, t000810.000

In his ideas about costume, Jelgerhuis combines the expertise from his painting and acting professions to contribute to the improvement of the full picture on-stage, and to represent the character as he conceived the playwright to have intended.

*Groote Auteurs hebben voor hunne tooneelwerken bepaald, hoe zij hun personaadje wenschten gekleed te zien; het bewijst hoe belangrijk dit in hunne oogen was. Het toilet veroorzaakt de geheele begoocheling, het is van het uiterste belang, en ik verwaarloosde het nooit.*<sup>47</sup>

Great authors have decided how they wanted their character to be dressed in their plays; it proves how important they felt that this was. The costume completes the enchantment; it is of the utmost importance, and I never neglected it.

Zealous to improve the *schilderij*, the living picture that is created on the stage, Jelgerhuis applied his knowledge of the sources from his painting background to improve and create his costumes in accordance with *waarheid* (truth).

### 1.3.1 *Waarheid*

The following discussion of the term *waarheid* is intended to help to interpret its references in relation to the theatre, including acting, costumes, the stage sets, and the content of a theatrical piece. The term *waarheid* and its equivalent in other languages was used throughout Europe in the centuries previous to Jelgerhuis's life and during his career, for instance, in treatises and other works concerning acting and other forms of art, in reviews by theatre critics, and in memoirs or letters by theatre practitioners, such as Hippolyte Clairon.<sup>48</sup> The term's different meanings mostly overlap or correspond with its definition as true and truthful (as consistent with the facts or in accordance with the insights of the intellect), as opposed to a lie or an error.<sup>49</sup> *Waarheid* concerning choices in costume, for instance, can indicate its being consistent with historical facts (as far as accurate historical facts were available at the time).<sup>50</sup> There can be *waarheid* in the actors's or poets's rendering of historical or fictional facts in a play (both in plays based on historical events and/or

<sup>47</sup> Johannes Jelgerhuis Rz., *De tooneelspeler J. Jelgerhuis Rz., in zijne voornaamste Treurspel-Rollen, op den Amsterdamschen Schouwburg vertoond sinds 25 jaren* (Amsterdam: Gebroeders van Arum, 1832), p. 12.

<sup>48</sup> See, for instance, De Lairese, *Het Groot Schilderboek*, pp. 95, 168, 299, 317; Engel, *De kunst van nabootzing*, transl. Konijnenburg, 2, pp. 108, 147, 150, 174; *De Tooneelkijker*, 1 (1817), pp. 68, 144; *De Tooneelkijker*, 3 (1818), p. 207; 'zoekt altoos de waarheid' (always search for the truth): Claire Hippolyte de la Tude (Clairon), *Mémoires d'Hyppolite Clairon et réflexions sur l'art dramatique, publiés par elle-même* (Paris: F. Buisson, year VII [1798–1799]), translated into Dutch by Elizabeth Bekker, widow Wolff as *Gedenkschriften van den actrice Hippolite Clairon en aanmerkingen over de tooneelkunde door haar zelf uitgegeven* [...] (The Hague: Isaac van Cleef, 1799), p. 189. See also 'Van de Waarheid van gebaren' (of the truth of gestures) and 'Hinderpalen voor de waarheid der Recitatie' (obstacles to the truth in recitation) in Jacob Ploos van Amstel, *Aanleiding tot de uiterlijke welsprekendheid, op den kansel, voor de balie, in 't bijzonder leezzen, doch voornaamlijk op het Tooneel* (Amsterdam: Izaak Duim, 1766), pp. 75, 93 — this work is mainly based on the translations of three sources: Pierre Rémond de Sainte Albine, *Le Comédien* [...] (Paris: Desaint & Saillant, 1747); Jean-Léonor de Grimarest, *Traité du récitatif* [...] (Paris: Jaques le Fevre, and Pierre Ribou, 1707); and Luigi Riccoboni, *Dell'arte rappresentativa capitolì sei* [...] (London: n. pub., 1728).

<sup>49</sup> For these and other definitions of *waarheid*, see the Dutch historical dictionary, *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*, s.v. 'waarheid', <https://gtb.ivdnt.org/iWDB/search?actie=article&wdb=WNT&id=M083319&lemma=waarheid&domein=0&conc=true> (accessed 6 February, 2024).

<sup>50</sup> See citation above 'De kleeding wordt meer en meer waarheid' (the costumes are getting closer and closer to the truth), Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', p. 111.



in fictional plays). Similarly, *waarheid* can indicate a resemblance true to the character portrayed — a rendition that seems to match the inner person as true to nature or to real life.<sup>51</sup> In these examples, the search for *waarheid* is related to the rules for ‘*waarschijnlijkheid*’ (verisimilitude/plausability), as each aspect of theatre which diverts from its own *waarheid* can diminish the credibility of the performance for the spectator. But *waarheid* can also encompass a sense of being faithful to the self and of authenticity.<sup>52</sup>

### 1.3.2 Costume reform

This section provides a brief overview of costume reform in the generations before and during Jelgerhuis’s time, with sections of Jelgerhuis’s document ‘Antwoord op de vraag’ of 1808 as a guiding source.<sup>53</sup> In this document, Jelgerhuis formulates his thoughts in order to answer the following question: ‘Antwoord op de vraag: Welke was de verleden staat van het Nederlandsch Tooneel; welke is de tegenwoordige, en welke zoude die behooren te zijn?’ (Answer to the question: What is the past state of the Dutch stage; what is the present [state], and what should it be?). He reflects on the mistakes of the past, the imperfections of the present, and on possible solutions as the way forward to improvement. The topics he touches on include repertoire, the purpose/social function of the theatre, declamation, acting, (these four will be discussed later in this chapter), and costume.

In *Jan Punt en Marten Corver*, a biography of two famous Dutch actors of the generations previous to Jelgerhuis, Ben Albach describes the costumes worn on the Dutch stage during most of the eighteenth century.<sup>54</sup> These costumes were related to specific character types: the hero of a Greek tragedy, for instance, would generally wear a ‘habit à la romaine’ (with panniers and a powdered wig), whereas actresses wore a *theatraal kleed* (theatrical dress; a dress with a wide skirt and pannier, and with a fashionable hairdo).<sup>55</sup> French fashion and theatre practice had been the main example for the costumes on the Dutch stage for both man and women, but the Netherlands lagged behind in comparison to the innovations made in Paris. The French actors François-Joseph Talma (1763–1826) and Hippolyte Clairon (1723–1803) had contributed to a costume reform at the Comédie Française, with the aim of creating a closer resemblance between the costume and the historical dress worn at the time and place in which a play was situated.<sup>56</sup> In *The Players’ Advice to Hamlet: The Rhetorical Acting Method from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, David Wiles refers to

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<sup>51</sup> ‘Acteurs zijn niets dan beuzelaars, indien zij de waarheid niet aan het licht stellen’ (actors are nothing but blabbermouths if they do not bring the truth to light), Jelgerhuis, ‘Antwoord op de vraag’, p. 108.

<sup>52</sup> For *waarschijnlijkheid* (verisimilitude) concerning Dutch theatre practices in the eighteenth century, and its relationship to specific subjects such as nature, decorum, and historical truth, see De Haas, ‘De wetten’, pp. 33–36 and 73–83.

<sup>53</sup> Jelgerhuis, ‘Antwoord op de vraag’, pp. 104–126.

<sup>54</sup> Albach, *Jan Punt en Marten Corver*.

<sup>55</sup> Panniers are a pair of frames used to expand the skirt of a dress at the hips. For more on *theatraal kleed*, see Albach, *Jan Punt en Marten Corver*, p. 28.

<sup>56</sup> François-Joseph Talma was a famous actor at the Comédie Française; Hippolyte Clairon (*Claire-Josèphe-Hippolyte Lérés de la Tude*) was a leading actress at the Comédie Française. Jelgerhuis refers to her *Mémoires* on several occasions in his works. See Clairon, *Mémoires*.

Clairon's belief that 'truth of declamation was linked to truth of costume.'<sup>57</sup> She also stated in her *Mémoires* of 1798–1799 that drawing skills were advantageous for actors, as it would help them develop painterliness, 'always needed on the stage, both in their attitudes and in their costume'.<sup>58</sup> Jelgerhuis, acquainted with the Dutch translation of Clairon's *Mémoires*, cites this passage in his *Theoretische lessen*.<sup>59</sup> It becomes clear that knowledge of visual arts and the ability to draw are not mere accomplishments but can have an actual impact on the actors' performance — namely, on their costume and on the painterliness of their movements.

In the Netherlands, it was Marten Corver who made a start toward the improvement of theatre costumes. This reform, however, took decades. Jelgerhuis elaborates on this period of transition as follows:

*de kleeding was nog niet wat zij wezen moest. De Grieksche helden waren nog in zijde en satijn, vol pailletten en galon. Achilles was gepoederd en met witte zijden linten in de haren, wijde, groote mouwen aan het kleed, en aangebonden heupen voor de plooiing van den schoot van het wijde kleed [...]. Zóó verwaarloosde men toen het zoeken naar waarheid, terwijl men meende haar reeds te bezitten, en de leerlingen der schilderkunst stonden met spotredenen in den mond over deze dwalingen. De lessen, die zij dagelijks bekwamen, regtvaardigden dit.*<sup>60</sup>

the costumes were not yet what they should have been. The Greek heros were still in satin and silk, full of sequins and braid. Achilles was powdered and had white silk ribbons in his hair, a gown with large, wide sleeves [*wijde, groote mouwen aan het kleed*], and tied-on hip-pads [*heupen*] for the pleating of the skirt of the wide garment. [...] This is how people neglected the search for truth, while thinking they already had it, and the painting students filled their mouths with insults concerning these errors. The lessons they received daily, justified this.

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<sup>57</sup> David Wiles, *The Players' Advice to Hamlet: The Rhetorical Acting Method from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. 147.

<sup>58</sup> 'Il serait à souhaiter que tous les acteurs eussent au moins un peu de connaissance du dessin, ils sentiraient plus aisément l'importance de l'ensemble de toute une figure ; le pittoresque, toujours nécessaire au théâtre, leur serait plus facile à trouver, et pour leurs attitudes et pour leurs vêtemens.' Clairon, *Mémoires*, p. 62.

<sup>59</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 278; Clairon, *Gedenkschriften*, transl. Wolff, p. 49.

<sup>60</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', p. 107.

The print in Figure 5 was a well-known depiction of the actor Jan Punt as Achilles in Jelgerhuis's time and shows the wide sleeves and the pleated skirt in Jelgerhuis's description.<sup>61</sup>



Figure 5, *J. Punt, in het Caracter van Achilles [...]* (1770),  
Rijksmuseum, print, RP-P-1906-153, FMP 4310

The historical mismatches on-stage (not only of the costumes in the play but also between the costumes and the stage sets) were observed and commented on by art students and other members of the audience (who had the privilege of having gathered some information on the ‘truth’ in historical dress through printed sources, painting lessons, illustrated Bibles, or by other means).<sup>62</sup> Gradually, costume reform continued, albeit not as quickly in some styles of dress as in others. Many costumes were still far from the historical ‘truth’ at the time Jelgerhuis joined the Amsterdam acting company. He writes, among his observations on the present state of the Dutch stage (c. 1808), that there still was a discrepancy in the costumes for Dutch plays. The actors in the play *Jacoba van Beijeren*, for instance, wore costumes that ‘lay three centuries apart’.<sup>63</sup> Alternatively,

<sup>61</sup> <https://id.rijksmuseum.nl/200400086> (accessed 22 January 2024).

<sup>62</sup> Jelgerhuis, ‘Antwoord op de vraag’, p. 106.

<sup>63</sup> Jelgerhuis, ‘Antwoord op de vraag’, p. 112. For *Jacoba van Beijeren*, see Jan de Marre, *Jacoba van Beieren, Gravin van Holland en Zeeland. Treurspel* (Amsteldam: Izaak Duim, 1736).

costumes for repertoire situated in Greek and Roman times made better progress: the heroes exchanged their habit à la romaine for tunics and mantles, and, slowly, the actresses renounced the *paniers* for costumes reflecting the simpler silhouette associated with Greek and Roman dress. Jelgerhuis attributes the improved situation not only to the efforts of Corver and Talma, but also to the fact that actors who were his contemporaries consulted paintings and illustrated books on costume history as sources for costume.<sup>64</sup>

*De kleeding wordt meer en meer waarheid. De kunst-schilders hebben het hunne hiertoe bijgedragen. De broeder van Talma, een degelijke kunstenaar zijnde — zoo men verhaalt —, vormde den smaak zijns broeders en hij volgde. De antieken werden zoowel door mannen als vrouwen geraadpleegd, en zoo werden de schilderstukken der beste meesters de vraagbaken voor de Tooneelkunstenaars. De werken van Caelin: » [sic] Gewoonte der aloude volken”, worden thans in handen der beste Hollandsche Acteurs gevonden, zoodat zij met een oog van beklag op de kleedij van Punt en Passé neerzien.<sup>65</sup>*

The costumes are getting closer and closer to the truth. The painters have contributed to this. Talma's brother, being a decent artist — so it is said — moulded his brother's taste and he followed. The ancients were consulted by men as well as women, and thus, the art works of the best masters became the point of reference for stage artists. The works of Caelin [sic]: *Gewoonte der aloude volken*, is at present to be found in the hands of the best Dutch actors, so that they look down upon the costumes of Punt and Passé with contempt.

This paragraph suggests that Jelgerhuis was not alone in applying painting treatises and paintings as sources to create his costume. But he was the only actor of his generation (in the Netherlands) to dedicate half a treatise to costumes for actors. The engravings by Charles-Nicholas Cochin (1715–1790) in *Gewoonte der aloude volken* (a Dutch translation of the French by Michel-François Dandré-Bardon) are a recurring source of reference for costumes in his unpublished writings as well as in his treatise of 1827–1829.<sup>66</sup>

Among Jelgerhuis's ideas for improvement in his document of 1808, he envisions how the theater might hire a knowledgeable person to inform and instruct the audience concerning the upcoming performance and to provide the actors with information about the dress and customs regarding the play at hand, as this person would have access to a theatre library.<sup>67</sup> Years later, in his treatise (following his lessons of 1824–1828), he expresses his ideas with more precision than in his document of 1808. Jelgerhuis himself had become the person to inform the students (albeit only on the topics of acting theory and costume) on how '*door de kleeding op het Tooneel den onderscheiden volksaard (karakter) en leeftijd aftebeelden, in de onderscheidene tijdperken der geschiedenis*' (by means of the costume, to depict on-stage the different national characteristics and the character's age in the

<sup>64</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', p. 112.

<sup>65</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', pp. 111–112. Jelgerhuis refers to the Dutch actor Carel Passé (1741–1791) who acted at the Amsterdam Schouwburg from 1774 onwards.

<sup>66</sup> Michel-François Dandré-Bardon, *Costume des anciens peuples à l'usage des artistes* [...] (Paris: Jombert jeune, 1784), transl. into Dutch by anonymous author as *Gewoonten der aloude volken* [...], 4 vols (Amsterdam: Allart en Holtrop, 1786).

<sup>67</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', pp. 117–118.

different eras of history).<sup>68</sup> For, as he states in his treatise: ‘*men raadpleegt de waarheid tevens alleen in hooge oudheid, aan antieke beelden, en in latere tijden aan kostbare fraaije schilderijen en prenten*’ (one only consults the truth of ancient times through observing ancient statues, and of later times, through precious paintings and prints).<sup>69</sup>

### 1.3.3 The scholar

To give an idea of material Jelgerhuis might have envisaged for the theatre library, one might list the sources mentioned in Jelgerhuis’s published and unpublished works.<sup>70</sup> These sources provide an indication of the available information and knowledge on which Jelgerhuis could have based his opinions, and therefore on the sources theatre practitioners working with Jelgerhuis’s works could consult to inform their (historically informed) practice. Moreover, they allow for comparison between the original sources and Jelgerhuis’s reference to them, thereby providing a means to assess his interpretation as well as his accountability in referencing.<sup>71</sup> In his manuscript *Consepten* (Appendix G), which will be presented and discussed in section 1.6 on teaching, Jelgerhuis’s cites the sources he deemed important to share within a pedagogical context. He generally shows professional integrity when citing or using illustrations of other painters or authors as examples in his *Theoretische lessen* (in fact, he may also have taken pride in his reference to other sources). In his section on costume, Jelgerhuis mentions sources such as Montfaucon, Le Frank van Berkhey, Lens, Winkelman, and Bar.<sup>72</sup> Several costume illustrations lack a precise reference to their source, however, even when they are a clear copy. Jelgerhuis’s still critiques the incorrect costumes of his youth in the *Theoretische lessen* and although even at the time of the treatise not all actresses were willing to wear Greek dress without a corset, he praises the improvements that had taken place.<sup>73</sup> His teaching position at the theatre in those years had enabled him to share his knowledge of sculptures and sources with young actors, teachers, and others interested who attended his lessons and, through his treatise, with a much wider audience even after his death.

### 1.3.4 Jelgerhuis’s costumes

Having described Jelgerhuis’s observations concerning outdated costumes, and having touched upon his aim to achieve *waarheid* (truth) in his costume research, I also want to draw attention to

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<sup>68</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 186.

<sup>69</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 278.

<sup>70</sup> In an attempt to do this, I have listed more than a hundred items including sources and art objects. However, I was as yet unable to trace all the items on the list, and pursuing to complete it would have been too time consuming a task for this dissertation. I remain hopeful that this search will be completed and published by myself or others in the future.

<sup>71</sup> Jelgerhuis shows strong opinions and at times emotional reactions in his four comparative manuscripts, but the verifiable facts such as dates, titles of plays, and names of actors and actresses align (correct spelling not considered) with data found in other contemporary sources.

<sup>72</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 187; Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741), Johannes le Francq van Berkhey (1719–1812), Andreas Cornelis Lens (1739–1822), Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768), and Jacques-Charles Bar (1740–1811). Golding’s English translation of Jelgerhuis’s *Theoretische lessen* features more complete information on the authors and (potentially intended) sources in footnotes: Golding, *Classicistic acting*, pp. 396–398.

<sup>73</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 199, 277.

art historian Frithjof van Thienen's mention of Jelgerhuis's deviations from historically correct costumes.<sup>74</sup> Van Thienen ascribes this not only to incorrect information in the sources or Jelgerhuis's occasionally faulty interpretation of those sources. He also gives an example in which Jelgerhuis allowed for slightly bending the historical truth in the service of theatrical effect. Such examples show how Jelgerhuis negotiated between Jelgerhuis the knowledgeable painter and Jelgerhuis the actor, who was aware of the practicalities of the theatre. In some situations, he laid aside his painter's knowledge in favour of the on-stage appearance. In his *Toneel Studien* manuscript of 1811, for instance, he chose a darker colour of hair and beard in deference to good taste or of the '*Schilderagtige Uijtwerking*' (painterly effect).<sup>75</sup> Although the *Theoretische lessen* reveal his satisfaction regarding the present ameliorated state of the costumes, Jelgerhuis still found room for improvement.<sup>76</sup> He continued his quest to refine theatre costume throughout his career, by, for instance, instructing the students, by documenting in his private journals the costumes of foreign theatre companies visiting Amsterdam and by writing about the costumes he selected for his favourite roles. In his illustrated private journals, Jelgerhuis depicted actors from various countries in acting poses, often flanked by written details on costume and appearance such as fabrics, hair, ornaments, and so on.<sup>77</sup> Most of the sketches are in colour, documenting not only the shape but also the colour of the costumes. Before assessing these colours to be as exact copies of the originally used fabrics, however, I compare the coloured engravings with information in the accompanying written texts or with other copies of the same illustration, whenever possible.<sup>78</sup>

### 1.3.5 Unpublished costume designs

The annotations in Jelgerhuis's unpublished individual costume designs reveal his active participation in the creation of costumes for himself and, possibly also, for others. His notes show his attention to detail and to his selection of garments and accessories that were available in the theatre's costume archive, whereas Jelgerhuis's notes to himself cast light on his thoughts informing the costume design. One of the most detailed costume designs is the Sketch for Sofar in *Ninus de tweede*, see Figure 6.<sup>79</sup> This handwritten text on this design reveals that Jelgerhuis owned

<sup>74</sup> Frithjof van Thienen, 'Jelgerhuis en het "historisch" of "exotisch" kostuum', in *Johannes Jelgerhuis rzn. acteur-schilder* (1969), pp. 39–43.

<sup>75</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 180, 184–185. I considered the possibility of such deviations and choices of artistic freedom when consulting Jelgerhuis's engravings and writings on costume for my own costume design in the second case study (Chapter 4). Yet, his occasional artistic choices regarding the costume were no hindrance to my following Jelgerhuis's design: my aim was not for the costume to be historically correct from today's perspective, but for the costume to recall the style used on-stage in the early nineteenth century, so as to see its effect in a historically informed theatrical setting.

<sup>76</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 277.

<sup>77</sup> For illustrations and comments on the costume and hair of French actors, see Jelgerhuis, *Schetsende Herinneringen*, for Talma's wig as Achilles, see pp. 24–25; on costume fabrics, p. 35; for sandals, p. 48. For illustrations and observations of dresses, and for decoration of the stage and horses brought by an English acting company, see Jelgerhuis, *Iets over het Engelsche Toneel*.

<sup>78</sup> The colours in the copy at the Amsterdam Municipal Archives as well as the series of twelve prints on Google books seem faithful to the text.

<sup>79</sup> Spelled 'Zofar' in the play text of 1815, Charles Brifaut, *Ninus de tweede, treurspel* [...] (Amsterdam, Abraham Mars, 1815), transl. Jan van 's Gravenweert.

certain garments (see the annotation for ‘*myn tunik*’ [my tunic] and ‘*myn ygen broek*’ [my own trousers]) and that he intended to reuse parts of costumes from previous productions (‘*het kopere kurasje van Van Hulst*’ [the copper cuirass of van Hulst]; ‘*Saaye buysje uit Omasis*’ [serge jacket from Omasis]).<sup>80</sup>



Figure 6, Costume design for Sofar in Ninus II,  
Allard Pierson, theatre collection, GD3-25, t000777.000.

<sup>80</sup> For more details about this costume design, see *Jobannes Jelgerhuis rzn. acteur-schilder* (1969), pp. 113–114; With ‘Omasis’ he refers to Baour-Lormian, *Omasis*, transl. Westerman.





Figure 7 (left), Costume sketch for Sofar in *Ninus II*, Amsterdam, Allard Pierson, theatre collection, GD3-24, t000776.000; Figures 8 (middle) and 9 (right), Cochin's engravings in Dandr -Bardon, *Gewoonten der aloude volken*, transl. anonymous, vol. 4, plates 23 and 28.<sup>81</sup>



Figure 10, Charles Le Brun, *La bataille d'Arbelles*, detail, (c. 1668–1669), oil painting, Louvre, INV 2895, MR 1916.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Dandr -Bardon directly refers to Le Brun's *La bataille d'Arbelles* (Figure 10) in his accompanying text to plate 28 (Figure 9).

<sup>82</sup> Jelgerhuis possibly also took inspiration from Charles Le Brun's *La bataille d'Arbelles* (Figure 10) for the colours of his costume in Figure 6, as the blue tunic, the white puffed sleeves, and the belt strongly resemble the dress of the running Persian in this painting.



The handwritten text accompanying two sketches for Sofar's costume on Figure 7 (probably copies of Cochin's engravings in Dandré-Bardon's *Gewoonte der aloude volken*, Figures 8 and 9) shows evidence of Jelgerhuis's attention to the historical accuracy of the costume: '*invallende gedachte voor 't kleed van Sofar*' [...] '*Nazien bij Romijn de Hooge en Luyken of 't mag*' (sudden idea for the gown of Sofar' [...] 'check with Romijn de Hooge and Luyken if it is allowed').<sup>83</sup>

In my first case study (Chapter 3) I will show that Jelgerhuis also refers to the engravings of Jan Luyken and Cochin in his manuscript *Toneel Studien* of 1811, when describing his efforts to realize historically informed costumes for his favourite roles. Jelgerhuis's writings and costume illustrations, particularly of his early period (1808-1811) and his last two publications (1827–1827 and 1832), provide several examples both of the changes that were made during Jelgerhuis's lifetime and of customs and costumes that remained unaltered. His annotations alongside the costume illustrations reveal aspects of theatre practices behind the scenes at the Amsterdam Schouwburg, such as his having garments of his own and the practice of reusing garments from previous productions. The combination of Jelgerhuis's published and unpublished works demonstrates not only that Jelgerhuis had a say in the creation of his own costume, but also that he encouraged young actors to make informed choices regarding their own costumes.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Romeyn de Hooghe (1645–1708) was an etcher and painter. Jan Luyken (also referred to as Johannes Luiken)(1649–1712) was a poet, lithographer and book illustrator. For more information on this sketch, see *Johannes Jelgerhuis rzn. acteur-schilder* (1969), pp. 113–114.

<sup>84</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 186.

#### 1.4 ACTING STYLES: PAST - PRESENT - FUTURE

This section presents Jelgerhuis's views on subjects such as the purpose of the theatre, the repertoire, acting, and declamation in the context of the changing theatre practices in the Netherlands at the time. This background information serves to discuss Jelgerhuis's acting style and those of other actors, to improve interpretation of his treatise and lesser-known works.



Figure 11, Jelgerhuis, illustration of himself as Gijsbrecht van Aemstel, *Toneel Studien*

To understand the discussions on acting, movement, and interpretation by Jelgerhuis and his contemporaries better, I introduce and discuss the last set of terms: *natuurlijkheid*, *gemak*, and *gratie* — hereafter referred to as naturalness, ease, and gracefulness — with the aid of citations from Jelgerhuis's manuscripts and other historical sources. These three terms as well as the informed interpretation of Jelgerhuis's works will inform my search for and experimentation with acting techniques inspired by his treatise and manuscripts in the following chapters on stagecraft. Along with secondary sources and sources contemporary with Jelgerhuis, his document 'Antwoord op de vraag' of 1808 is again a key source, as it provides insight into the situation at the Amsterdam theatre as he perceived it. I close this section by casting light on Jelgerhuis's observations on the theatre practices of Dutch, French, and English acting companies visiting Amsterdam between 1811 and 1817.

### 1.4.1 Repertoire and the purpose of the theatre

Jelgerhuis opens his ‘Antwoord op de vraag’ of 1808 by commenting on the state of the theatre over the previous twenty-five years as a ‘*steeds toenemende tenonderbrenging van alles wat e d e l, s c h o o n, e n g r o o t i s*’ (an ever-increasing downfall of everything that is noble, beautiful, and grand).<sup>85</sup> This downfall is due largely, he contends, to the changing repertoire that saw the performances of tragedy reduced in favor of German dramas, melodramas, and German and French operas. To Jelgerhuis, for whom tragedy was the highest form of theatre, the result was a ‘deviation from the actual aim of the theatre: truth’ because the lighter repertoire neither developed the audience’s taste nor increased their knowledge.<sup>86</sup> He remarks that ‘*waarheid en historiekunde heerschten geenszins in de voordracht der daad, noch in de wijze van spel, noch in de kleeding*’ (truth and the science of history were neither represented in the way of acting, nor in the costumes).<sup>87</sup> As with his ideas on costume, Jelgerhuis also reflected on topics including the repertoire, acting, and declamation, on the current situation and potential improvements to meet the ultimate aim of the theatre’s ideal purpose:

*Vooreerst dient als vaste waarheid voorop te staan, dat het doel van den Schouwburg moet zijn, volksverbetering, leering, beschaving, vorming van den smaak en het besef van schoone kunsten en wetenschappen aan de onbeschaafde menigte in te prenten, terwijl de man van smaak en verstand zich er wezenlijk vermaakt. Al deze gewigtige doeleinden moeten, spelende, bereikt worden, en dus nimmer uit het oog worden verloren, noch door het Bestuur, noch door de Tooneelspelers, zo min als door de dichters.*<sup>88</sup>

First and foremost, it must be established as an absolute truth, that the purpose of the Theatre must be the elevation of the common man, education, civilization, the cultivation of taste and to impress the awareness of the fine arts and sciences on the uncivilized masses, while the man of taste and intellect really enjoys himself. All these important aims must be reached while acting, and therefore never be lost sight of, neither by the directors, nor by the actors, and not less so by the poets.

Ideally, beautiful and truthful performances, representing the emotional development of the characters, would improve the spectators’ minds, morals and tastes even as it provided enjoyment. This would be valuable both for the lower and middling classes, who might not otherwise have the time or opportunity to educate themselves, and for the upper classes, for whom the theatre was a source of entertainment.<sup>89</sup> For Jelgerhuis, achieving these ideals necessitated improvements to various aspects of the theatre; he therefore suggested possibilities for elevating the repertoire

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<sup>85</sup> Emphasis follows the original. See Jelgerhuis, ‘Antwoord op de vraag’, p. 105.

<sup>86</sup> Regarding the repertoire and the changing taste of the audience, see Henny Ruitenbeek, *Kijkcijfers: De Amsterdamse Schouwburg 1814–1841* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2002), pp. 13–14.

<sup>87</sup> Jelgerhuis, ‘Antwoord op de vraag’, p. 105.

<sup>88</sup> Jelgerhuis, ‘Antwoord op de vraag’, pp. 115–116.

<sup>89</sup> Jelgerhuis, ‘Antwoord op de vraag’, p. 116.

and opening a school to improve the quality of acting.<sup>90</sup> These thoughts would not only directly influence the visual performance and delivery of the performer (as will be discussed regarding beautiful and truthful acting practices, in Chapters 2–4), but also the preparatory process and choices regarding the interpretation of one’s role (as became clear to me in searching for the noble character of Proserpina, described in the second case study (Chapter 4).

#### 1.4.2 Developments in acting style

Alongside shifts in repertoire and costume reform in the second half of the eighteenth century, came changes in acting and declamation. The following delineation of these changes describes part of the groundwork on which I base my decisions relating to acting style in chapters 2–4. In fact, comments rejecting the previous and outdated style in favour of the new (such as those by Jelgerhuis and his contemporaries), are valuable pointers to understanding the early nineteenth-century acting style in the Netherlands.

Descriptions of actors such as the abovementioned Jan Punt, Marten Corver, and François-Joseph Talma provide insight into these shifts in acting style. Comments on their performances documented by theatre critics, actors, and other spectators reveal the trends of the time and allow for comparison with Jelgerhuis’s writings. In 1785, the poet, writer and publisher Arend Fokke Siemonsz, for instance, signaled a change from the declamatory style (older, and more suitable for verses of high quality) to the more natural style (which he calls acting).<sup>91</sup> Two decades, later, Jelgerhuis cites Corver’s writings of 1789, which criticizes Punt’s almost chanting mode of declamation and the droning delivery of verses called ‘*Hollandschen Heldentoon*’ (Dutch heroic tone).<sup>92</sup> Corver had started using a more natural declamatory style, although he declined the honour of its invention, stating that many actors before him (including Punt in his early days) had declaimed in this way: ‘*eenvoudig op de rede en de natuur gegrond: zonder geweld*’ (without violence, but simply, based on nature and on reason). In short, Punt’s style of acting was associated with the earlier, oratorical acting style, whereas Corver is considered a leading figure in the transition toward to a more natural style (termed by some as neo-classicism), and eventually, to a romantic style evident towards the end and following Jelgerhuis’s career.<sup>93</sup> Because Jelgerhuis’s treatise contains

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<sup>90</sup> Jelgerhuis was not the only one concerned about the repertoire at the Amsterdam theatre. Its organization tried to offer performances which would please the audience and bring in the money, yet attempted to reduce ‘onzedelijk’ (lewd) repertoire. See Ruitenbeek, *Kijkcijfers*, p. 168.

<sup>91</sup> Anna de Haas, ‘Opvoeringen van Vondels *Gysbrecht* in de achttiende eeuw’, in *Mededelingen van de Stichting Jacob Campo Weyerman*, 39, (2016), 1, 157–172 (pp. 159–160). I would like to thank Anna de Haas for providing me with this and other information in the beginning of my studies.

<sup>92</sup> Jelgerhuis, ‘Antwoord op de vraag’, p. 106; for Corver on chanting delivery, see Corver, *Tooneel-aantekeningen*, pp. 158–159; for chanting delivery and the ‘*Hollandse heldentoon*’, see Albach, *Helden*, pp. 54–55.

<sup>93</sup> For the acting tradition previous to Jelgerhuis, see Roodenburg, *The Eloquence*, pp. 147–156. For more information on the transitions in acting style on the Dutch stages see, for instance, Albach, *Helden*, pp. 54–76; for Corver’s writings about Punt, see Corver, *Tooneel-aantekeningen*. For Alfred Simon Golding’s three chapters on what he terms as acting in the symbolic, rational, and sensible mode, see Golding, *Classicistic acting*, pp. 71–141.

no content on declamation, contextualization of the few hints in his less-known works are the main means to better understand Jelgerhuis's ideas on this topic.

Several pupils and colleagues of Corver became excellent actors, such as Ward Bingley (1757–1818) and Johanna Cornelia Ziesenis Wattier (1762–1827), and their generation made tragedy flourish on the Dutch stage when Jelgerhuis joined the Amsterdam Schouwburg. Yet, no matter to what degree Corver's influence resulted in a more natural acting style, Jelgerhuis's concept of natural acting was transformed after having seen Talma perform in 1811 and on earlier occasions.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, the idea of the natural was under continual revision. As David Wiles writes in his *Player's Advice to Hamlet*:

In a persistent reiteration, successive generations have applauded themselves over the way their modern acting has become more 'natural', at the expense of an older style variously dismissed as rhetorical, declamatory, artificial or insincere.<sup>95</sup>

Even during the period of Bingley and Wattier between 1795 and 1820, described by theatre historian Ben Albach as the '*grote periode van het Amsterdamse Toneel*' (the great period of the Amsterdam stage), Jelgerhuis writes that, although the costumes had improved after Talma's performances in the Netherlands, the acting was still far from what it should have been.<sup>96</sup>

### 1.4.3 'Naturalness', 'ease', and 'gracefulness'

Jelgerhuis's concept of naturalness with regard to acting and declamation can be better understood by studying his starting points, his taste, and his practical experience. Developing a sense of the degree of naturalness intended by Jelgerhuis when referring to acting is important for performers aiming to experiment with Jelgerhuis's acting techniques. His unpublished works, in particular, reveal his desire for a more natural approach. Because the concept of naturalness on-stage is not so easily defined, changing according to time, place, and persona, I analyse content from Jelgerhuis's document of 1808 and two of his illustrated journals (*Schetzende Herinneringen* of 1811 and *Beschouwingen* of 1817) as well as reviews from other contemporary sources to better discern his approach.<sup>97</sup> These illustrated manuscripts provide a unique view of French and Dutch stagecraft of the time from the perspective of an experienced man of the theatre. I briefly introduce both manuscripts here, as selected passages from these works contribute to my discussion on naturalness. Following the paragraphs on naturalness, I will return to the manuscripts to discuss their content regarding stage practices in section 1.4.4, 'Jelgerhuis on Dutch, English, and French stage practices, 1811–1817'.

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<sup>94</sup> Apart from Talma's performances in 1811, Jelgerhuis probably saw at least one of his performances in 1797, 1803, and 1806. See Albach, "'de volmaakste Acteur'", p. 31. See also Worp, *Geschiedenis*, p. 254.

<sup>95</sup> Wiles, *The Players' Advice*, p. 174.

<sup>96</sup> Both Worp and Albach dedicate an entire chapter to this period. See Worp, *Geschiedenis*, pp. 226–254, and Albach, *Helden*, pp. 97–114. For Jelgerhuis' comment, see Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', p. 111.

<sup>97</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Schetzende Herinneringen* and Jelgerhuis, *Beschouwingen*.

The manuscript *Schettzende Herinneringen* of 1811 documents several theatre performances at the Amsterdam Schouwburg featuring four famous French actors, organized on the occasion of Emperor Napoleon's visit to the Netherlands in 1811. Jelgerhuis compares the French actors to Dutch actors—including Jean François Talma—and discusses stage practices, costume, and acting style.<sup>98</sup> In his unpublished illustrated journal *Beschouwingen* of 1817, Jelgerhuis describes eighteen performances by the Koninklijke Nationale Tooneelsten (Royal National Players) from The Hague under the direction of the actor manager Ward Bingley.<sup>99</sup> Anonymous theatre critics of the periodical *De Tooneelkijker* (The Opera Glasses) also attended most performances of Bingley's company, and published their opinions in a volume dedicated to their visit.<sup>100</sup> Jelgerhuis's words can therefore be weighed against theirs.<sup>101</sup> In Jelgerhuis's *Beschouwingen*, for instance, he praises Bingley's performance of Talland in *Het Geweten*, and the detailed account of this rendition by writers of *De Tooneelkijker* praises Bingley's natural performance:<sup>102</sup>

*Hoe kunnen wij hem in die rol genoeg prijzen [...] wij zouden U moeten zeggen, dat zijne droefheid niet in schreeuwen, zijn angst niet in geschrei of gegil, of zijne krankzinnigheid niet naar de onbeschoftheid van eenen beschonken zeeman geleek; dat zijn sterven niet afschuwelijk, maar natuurlijk en zacht was; dat al de gemoedsbewegingen, in zijne rol voorkomende, niet alleen in zijne stem, maar ook op zijn gelaat, in zijne gebaren en zijnen stand te ontdekken zijn.*<sup>103</sup>

How can we praise him enough [...] we would have to tell you that his sorrow was not expressed by screaming, his fear not by crying or shouting, or that his madness did not resemble the rudeness of a drunken sailor; that his dying was not horrible, but natural and gentle; that all the passions that appeared in his role were not only to be discovered in his voice, but also in his face, his gestures and his poses.

This description has similarities to Jelgerhuis's observations of Talma in *Schettzende Herinneringen*, where he made a conscious decision to focus on Talma and to omit commenting on the other actors unless they performed unpredictably. His initial criticism of Talma was replaced by admiration and recognition of his craftsmanship. Talma did not wear much makeup, and Jelgerhuis reports that his face could turn pale when he exhibited suffering, something that Jelgerhuis had never seen in another actor.<sup>104</sup> He spoke his monologues as if he truly were alone on stage, in a

<sup>98</sup> For more information on this event and on the French actors, see Chevalley, 'Politique et Théâtre; Albach, "de volmaakste Acteur"', pp. 11–19; and Neuman, 'Three Jelgerhuis Manuscripts', pp. 115, 117–118, 121–123.

<sup>99</sup> Arent van Halmael Jr., *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van het Tooneel, de Tooneelspeelkunst, en de Tooneelspelers, in Nederland* (Leeuwarden: Suringar, 1840), p. 68.

<sup>100</sup> 'Verslag der Tooneelvertooningen' (1817).

<sup>101</sup> Although the opinions expressed by *De Tooneelkijker* and by Jelgerhuis in *Beschouwingen* in regard to The Hague Company performances occasionally differ, the factual content of both texts is identical. When *Beschouwingen* is placed in the context of other contemporary sources, such as playbills, newspapers, and published texts of the plays, it becomes clear just how trustworthy Jelgerhuis's data is. See Neuman, 'Three Jelgerhuis Manuscripts', pp. 120–121, 132–133, 138–141.

<sup>102</sup> August Wilhelm Iffland, *Het Geweten, Tooneelspel*, Dutch transl. by Jan Willem Jacobus Steenbergen van Goor (Amsterdam: Dóll, 1802).

<sup>103</sup> 'Verslag der Tooneelvertooningen' (1817), p. 14.

<sup>104</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Schettzende Herinneringen*, pp. 6, 23, 44.

soft, yet audible and intense tone of voice that Jelgerhuis found remarkable. Talma knew how to build up his role, and never articulated passages beyond the limit of his voice range. Jelgerhuis describes Talma's rendition of Rhadamiste's dying scene in Crébillon's *Rhadamiste et Zénobie* as natural and with ease:<sup>105</sup>

*Talma speelde voortrefflyk, zyn sterven was over schoon natuurlijk en het spel was gemakkelijck [...] Hij sprak sagt en afgebrooken, eijndelijck duidlyk en klaar, en zonk eensklaps in elkander en scheen dood te zyn.*<sup>106</sup>

Talma played [Rhadamiste] remarkably well, his dying [was] more than beautifully natural and he played with ease [...] He spoke softly and brokenly, then finally loudly and clearly, and suddenly collapsed, seemingly dead.

Jelgerhuis's admiration of Talma's soft, yet intense and audible declamation can be further illustrated by comparing it to his assessments of stage behaviour in the Amsterdam Schouwburg company in his document of 1808. Jelgerhuis deplores the audience's applause for loudly declaimed passages, a response that, in turn, compels actors to resort to 'exclamando' (shouting) — a kind of vocal exaggeration that results in a loud and unnuanced performance.<sup>107</sup> Jelgerhuis's censure of exaggeration indicates a contemporary ideal of 'naturalness' in acting, but Jelgerhuis uses the term 'naturalness' in two antithetical ways. Though he adopts it to describe a performative ideal, Jelgerhuis also uses it pejoratively in *Beschouwingen* to describe Bingley's wild behaviour in the comedy *De Snijder en zijn Zoon* when he beat another character on stage with a stick and used the familiar personal pronouns 'jij' and 'jouw,' instead of the more respectful 'gij' and 'u', which were in the original text.<sup>108</sup> According to Jelgerhuis, such a lack of decorum (made possible by the dramas in prose) 'verlaagt het toneel' (degrades the theatre), and leads to 'onvoegzame natuurlijkheid' (unbecoming naturalness/unseemly naturalness).<sup>109</sup> He is similarly displeased with several scenes in recently performed melodramas, giving examples including on-stage battles that fill the theatre with gun smoke, and the rough manner in which mine workers tie their guard to a pole.<sup>110</sup> Jelgerhuis's warning against the portrayal on-stage of a physically disabled body (as depicted in the attitude by Callot) also showed his care in avoiding directly copying examples that are 'geheel uit de natuur verwekt' (entirely generated by nature) for the purpose of being laughed at.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon, *Rhadamiste et Zénobie* (1711). Jelgerhuis refers to the Dutch translation of the play. See De Crébillon, *Rhadamistus en Zenobia*, transl. by Abraham Bogaert (1713).

<sup>106</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Schettzende Herinneringen*, pp. 26–27.

<sup>107</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', pp. 111, 121–122. As Roodenburg points out, Justus van Effen (1684–1735 — founder of *De Hollandsche Spectator*, a periodical on theatre reviews (1731–1735)) already criticized the 'onmanierlijk geschreeuw' (unmannerly shouting) on-stage in 1732. See Roodenburg, "Welstand" En "Wellevendheid", p. 432.

<sup>108</sup> Franz Fuss, *De Snijder en zijn Zoon*, Dutch transl. by anonymous author (Dordrecht: Wanner, 1797); Jelgerhuis, *Beschouwingen*, no page numbers.

<sup>109</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Beschouwingen*, no page numbers.

<sup>110</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', p. 113.

<sup>111</sup> See section 1.2.4 on 'welstand'.

Jelgerhuis opposed imitation of the disabled (to cause derision), physical aggression, and coarse language on stage as forms of realistic ‘naturalness’ because, in his mind, they thwarted the moral function of the stage. Setting a good example for audience members was important to Jelgerhuis. His belief that the theatre served a pedagogical role reveals itself in his manuscripts and publications in the form of precise ideas of what should and should not be presented on stage.<sup>112</sup> Such a concern explains his contrasting concepts of ‘naturalness’. On the one hand, the term refers to an ideal of grace and ease in gesture and declamation (nature improved); on the other, to an undesirable realism, an improper way of crudely representing life.<sup>113</sup> Jelgerhuis’s passionate pursuit of aesthetic outer form and perfection in his treatise, alongside his dismissal of exaggeration and realism, might easily overshadow his call against stiffness and for simple freedom of movement. By engaging practically with the information both from his manuscripts and the treatise, I have found that one can learn to sense when intense emotions lead to exaggeration, perhaps that exaggeration which Jelgerhuis warns against. At the same time, it becomes possible to experience how expression of emotion and freedom of movement need not be jeopardized by the search for an ideal outer form. The reader is encouraged to bear this in mind when reading the following passages; like the passage on Talma’s beautifully natural acting from Jelgerhuis’s manuscript, the following examples show again how he associates the natural with the ideal in his treatise:

*De volkomenheid optespooren en die voortedragen, dat is het doel en moet het blijven; het moet af zijn, in stand en houding, in gaan, staan en zitten, in Gesticulatie en in gelaatsstreken, in houding der handen en vingeren, plaatsing der voeten, toon en modulatie der stem; [...] kortom, in alles wat de kunst vordert om natuurlijk en fraai te zijn.*<sup>114</sup>

To search for perfection and to perform it, that is and must remain our goal; it has to be perfected in attitude and posture, in walking, standing and sitting, in gesticulation and facial expression, in the position of hands and fingers, the positioning of the feet, the tone and inflection of the voice; [...] in short, in everything art requires in order to be natural and beautiful.

*Even als men de toonen der stem tot welluidendheid dwingt, zonder onnatuurlijk te zijn, zoo moet men de uiterlijke gebaren des gelaats tot welstand brengen en te gelijk natuurlijk blijven, overeenkomstig het karakter, hetwelk men voorstellen moet, opdat bezwijmen en dood zoo verschrikkelijk niet voorgesteld worden, dat het afzigtelijk zoude zijn.*<sup>115</sup>

Just as one forces the tones of the voice to sonority without being unnatural, so must one guide the facial expression to *welstand* and at the same time remain natural, corresponding with the character that one has to represent, so that fainting and death are not portrayed as so terrible as to be hideous.

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<sup>112</sup> Jelgerhuis refers to the theatre as a ‘*school voor beschaving*’ (a school for civilization) in his ‘Antwoord op de vraag’, p. 114.

<sup>113</sup> Advice on acting naturally on-stage can be found in Ploos van Amstel’s *Aanleiding*, pp. 120–128.

<sup>114</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 105.

<sup>115</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 119.



These two excerpts show how Jelgerhuis draws the students' attention to various aspects of the craft. Practice was the tool to enable actors (even the most gifted by nature) to attain the level of craftsmanship necessary for expressing a character's passions and emotions seemingly naturally and with ease, but with *welstand*, in a higher and nobler form than in real life.<sup>116</sup> On the same page of the treatise, Jelgerhuis also mentions the other facet of naturalness (not refined by practice), associated with overt realism:

*Want het is niet genoeg om, gedreven door gevoel, nu maar natuurlijk te schrijven, te lagchen, vergramd te zijn; neen, men kan daardoor walgelijk en afzigtelijk worden, en het zoude echter natuurlijk zijn.*<sup>117</sup>

For it is not enough to cry naturally, to laugh, and be angry, driven by feeling; no, one can thereby become revolting and hideous, and yet it would be natural.

The actor's instinct is not enough; one must embody an ideal form of nature, which is a product not of spontaneity but of practice. This ideal form of nature, also referred to as 'reality perfected' or 'nature improved'<sup>118</sup> is not a concept solely connected with Dutch theatre. Nor is Jelgerhuis alone in opposing exaggeration and in regarding the theatre as a school for civilization: his language and preference for these concepts are in keeping with contemporary discourse. Although, to my knowledge, Jelgerhuis was not acquainted with the following sources, I provide a few parallels to international sources of his time, so as to place these concepts in an international context.<sup>119</sup> For instance, in the acting manual *Regeln für Schauspieler* (rules for actors) — compiled in 1803 by the two actors Karl Franz Grüner and Pius Alexander Wolff, and later edited and published with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's permission — provides an example of the concept of naturalness on the German stage: '*Zunächst bedenke der Schauspieler, daß er nicht allein die Natur nachahmen, sondern sie auch idealisch vorstellen solle, und er also in seiner Darstellung das Wahre mit dem Schönen zu vereinigen habe*' (Next, the actor should realize that he should not only imitate nature, but represent its ideal, and thus he must unite truth and beauty in his representation).<sup>120</sup> Similarly, Jelgerhuis's stage ideal also unites the concepts of truth and beauty; a mere imitation of real life is not sufficient. As regards exaggeration, the English painter Joshua Reynolds, in the process of promoting the ideal representation of nature in his *Discourses* of 1778, writes of acting, 'I must observe that even the

<sup>116</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. vii.

<sup>117</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 119.

<sup>118</sup> For 'nature improved', see, for instance, Kyropoulos, 'Teaching Acting to Singers', pp. 76–82; for 'Stage characters as Reality perfected', see Claudio Vicentini, *Theory of Acting. From Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*, transl. by R. Bates and A. Weston (Napoli: Marsilio & Acting Archives, 2012), pp. 65–68.

<sup>119</sup> For a discussion of natural, realistic, exaggerated, and noble stage behaviour of opera singers in France, see Laura Moeckli, "'Nobles dans leurs attitudes, naturels dans leurs gestes": Singers as Actors on the Paris Grand Opéra Stage', in *Sänger als Schauspieler: Zur Opernpraxis des 19. Jahrhunderts in Text, Bild und Musik*, 5, ed. by Anette Schaffer, Edith Keller, Laura Moeckli, and others (2014), 11–40 (pp. 34–40).

<sup>120</sup> The manual *Regeln für Schauspieler* lists clear guidelines for actors, including general rules of pronunciation and delivery. See *Regeln für Schauspieler* in *Goethes Werke*, WA 1.40 (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1901), 139–168, see § 35 (p. 153); see also § 80 (p. 166).

expression of violent passion is not always the most excellent [...] Violent distortion of action, harsh screamings of the voice [...] are, therefore, not admissible in the theatric art.<sup>121</sup> The English essayist and theatre critic, William Hazlitt, argues in his essay ‘On Actors and Acting’ (1817) that because the theatre models aesthetic and social ideals, it serves an educative function: ‘The stage is an epitome, a bettered likeness of the world [...] The stage not only refines the manners, but it is the best teacher of morals, for it is the truest and most intelligible picture of life.’<sup>122</sup> What such connections reveal is the pervasiveness of these concepts, which were in many ways cross-cultural. Jelgerhuis’s manuscripts are important because they demonstrate that a theatre practitioner like Jelgerhuis was conversant with these ideas, both in their more abstract sense, as he articulates them in his *Theoretische lessen*, and in their applied sense, as he links them to the actual acting practices of the French and Dutch performers in the two manuscripts.

#### 1.4.4 Jelgerhuis on Dutch, English, and French stage practices, 1811–1817

This paragraph reveals a selection of Jelgerhuis’s remarks on differences between French, English, and Dutch acting practices, most of which Jelgerhuis does not cover in his treatise. A more complete discussion is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but can be found in my article ‘Three Jelgerhuis Manuscripts’. In this article, I compare the two journals *Schetzende Herinneringen* of 1811 and *Beschouwingen* of 1817, introduced above, with Jelgerhuis’s illustrated journal *Iets over het Engelsche Toneel* of 1814.<sup>123</sup> The latter contains his reactions to performances in Amsterdam by English actors who came to perform in Amsterdam (in 1814). Regarding casting solutions, for instance, he registers disappointment of the occasional malfunctioning and rather stagnant practices at the Amsterdam Schouwburg compared to those he observes in the Dutch theatre company from The Hague.<sup>124</sup> Comparisons such as these cast light upon the shifts of acting practices over time, and on the difficulty of replacing traditional practices for new ones. Awareness of the timing of these shifts within each (international) acting company can assist theatre practitioners working with historical sources in making informed decisions. The following observations on entrances, exits, and blocking on-stage, for example, serve as background information for exercises and staging experiments in chapters 2 and 3.

Jelgerhuis critiques what he perceives as a general inattentiveness to the painted perspective of the stage sets, writing that the French actors’ entrances through the flats, which represented walls, instead of through the doors were inappropriate and against the rules of painting, because such entrances interrupted the scenic illusion.<sup>125</sup> Jelgerhuis would later consolidate these thoughts in his *Theoretische lessen* in the chapter on entrances and exits, where he advises actors to ‘avoid entering from the wings, when no doors are painted on them. It would otherwise give the impression of

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<sup>121</sup> Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses*, ed. by Edward Gilpin Johnson (Chicago: McClurg, 1891), discourse 13, p. 319–320.

<sup>122</sup> William Hazlitt, ‘On Actors and Acting’ (1817) in *Hazlitt on Theatre*, ed. by William Archer and Robert Lowe (New York: Hill and Wang, 1957) p. 133.

<sup>123</sup> Neuman, ‘Three Jelgerhuis Manuscripts’. For Jelgerhuis’s manuscript of 1814, see Jelgerhuis, *Iets over het Engelsche Toneel*.

<sup>124</sup> Neuman, ‘Three Jelgerhuis Manuscripts’, pp. 130–134.

<sup>125</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Schetzende Herinneringen*, p. 15.

breaking through the walls. If there are doors, one should use them, and enter from there.’<sup>126</sup> His concern for maintaining the illusion by respecting the stage sets again illustrates the close connection between painting and the theatre. His admiration concerning the blocking of the English actors in comparison with Dutch and French theatre practice also provides information on more than one side. The English seemed ‘*bevryd van die zichtbaare order die op het Fransche en hollandsche toneel heerscht*’ (freed from that visible order that reigns on the French and Dutch stage): their organized, yet seemingly free positioning, spread over the entire stage, made asides seem ‘*zeer mooglyk en waarschynlyk*’ (possible and probable).<sup>127</sup> Increasing the probability was significant, as it would add truthfulness (*waarheid*) to the scene. Asides were considered problematical, because it was believed unlikely that the comment of the character speaking the aside should be audible to the audience but not to the character standing near him or her.<sup>128</sup>

Jelgerhuis’s three manuscripts make it clear that Jelgerhuis was not one for revolutionizing stage practices but for refining and improving them, in favor of naturalness and probability within the borders of *welstand*. The casting and staging solutions he witnessed in other companies inspired him in his lifelong search for improving the performance practices of his own company, an interest also apparent in his intensive research into and documentation of period costume, and in his attention to acting skills.

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<sup>126</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 38.

<sup>127</sup> Neuman, ‘Three Jelgerhuis Manuscripts’, pp. 131–132, 135.

<sup>128</sup> Anna de Haas discusses this and other eighteenth-century opinions concerning asides. Her citations of Dutch sources offer two solutions to the unlikelihood of asides: 1. the speaking character, temporarily overcome by emotion, bursts out in a short comment, which the other does not hear, 2. the aside spoken words should consequently be artfully dissimulated. See De Haas, ‘De wetten’, p. 147.

### 1.5. JELGERHUIS, THE ACTOR

This section on Jelgerhuis's acting is a direct preparation for the first case study (Chapter 3), which includes further analysis of his acting technique and role interpretation. To evaluate Jelgerhuis's own accounts of portraying his roles, and to provide an impression of his acting style on the audience, I examine first how theatre critics experienced his acting first. I then provide information on his manuscript *Toneel Studien*, in which Jelgerhuis describes his own acting. The latter manuscript contains passages that are crucial to estimate the significance of the imagination and of *waarheid* in Jelgerhuis's acting, and therefore in my exploration of acting techniques through practice in the following chapters.



Figure 12, Jelgerhuis, illustration of himself as Avogaro, *Toneel Studien*.

Theatre scholars including Van Thienen, Boelen, and Albach have written about Jelgerhuis's acting style; as such, I will only give a short introduction here and focus mainly on specific examples and aspects relevant to the following chapters.<sup>129</sup> Albach describes the dual aspects of Jelgerhuis's acting style: form and emotion.<sup>130</sup> The set of rules associated with Neoclassicism and the visual arts informed a style of broad gestures, elevated declamation, contrast and beauty, through which Jelgerhuis was able to move the audience. The rules of stage decorum were no hindrance to

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<sup>129</sup> See Frithjof van Thienen, 'Met vuur en Waardigheid- Johannes Jelgerhuis als acteur', in *Johannes Jelgerhuis rzn. acteur-schilder* (1969), 33–38; Boelen, 'Johannes Jelgerhuis, Rienkzoon', pp. 145–146; and Albach, *Helden*, pp. 102–105.

<sup>130</sup> Ben Albach, 'Johannes Jelgerhuis over zijn rollen in *Gijsbrecht van Aemstel*: Twee van zijn *Toneelstudien* ingeleid en uitgegeven', in *Spektator*, 17 (1987–1988), 415–430 (p. 419).

creating an intense yet truthful and plausible portrayal of the characters, and to creating performances that inspired members of the audience to write about them with admiration and fascination. The following is in preparation for Part Two on stagecraft (Chapters 2–4), which investigates Jelgerhuis's acting style through practice.

### 1.5.1 Jelgerhuis' acting described by others

Jelgerhuis performed different types of roles in various genres throughout his career, which he listed in two notebooks.<sup>131</sup> According to most reviews and secondary sources, he was a master at portraying tyrants and other characters with a disposition for strong, often negative emotions, such as Avogaro, Siméon, and Nero (in *Gaston and Bayard*, *Omasis*, *of Jozef in Egypte*, and *Epicharis en Nero*), but he could also portray noble characters and created moving moments when showing a character's vulnerability (Koning Lear, Zopir in *Mohamet*, Philips de Goede in *Jacoba van Beieren*, and again, Siméon).<sup>132</sup> Jelgerhuis was not only praised for his painterly appearance (costume and presumably, make-up) and qualities which revealed his knowledge of painting.<sup>133</sup> Other qualities repeatedly praised are his clear declamation, his understanding of a role, and the emotional portrayal of the character portrayed as described, for instance in this passage by theatre critics *De Tooneelkijker* of 1817:

*Jelgerhuis speelde zijnen roem waardig; zijne alleenspraak [...] verrukte alle toeschouwers; waarachtig! hij is schilder en menschenkenner. Gelukkig, de dichter, die zoo zijne verzen uitgesproken hoort!- Dat Henke zich, door dankbare leergierigheid, de lessen van Snoek en Jelgerhuis waardig moge maken, wenschen wij van harte.*<sup>134</sup>

Jelgerhuis's performance was worthy of his fame, his soliloquy [...] mesmerized the entire audience; truly! He is painter and understands humanity. Happy the poet, who hears his verses delivered thus! We sincerely wish that Henke, by being gratefully eager to learn, may make himself worthy of the lessons of Snoek and Jelgerhuis.

Jelgerhuis's acting is depicted here as exemplary for less experienced actors (regarding the visual aspect of acting as well as the interpretation of character). Moreover, by naming Jelgerhuis in the same sentence as Andries Snoek, the first actor of the Amsterdam Schouwburg at that time, the author of this passage suggests their equal worth as models to be studied. The Dutch actor Louis-

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<sup>131</sup> Fons Asselberg listed the roles Jelgerhuis performed, counting more than two hundred premiered roles in various genres. See *Johannes Jelgerhuis rzn. acteur-schilder* (1969), pp. 217–225. For the notebooks, see Johannes Jelgerhuis, *Rollen Boek. Gespeelde Rollen als Acteur te Amsterdam [...]* (1805–1818), manuscript, Amsterdam, Allard Pierson, XI G 7; and Johannes Jelgerhuis, *2de Rollen Boeken. gespeelde Rollen. aantekeningen van de dood van Vele Acteurs en Actrices en gebeurde Zaken* (1817–1830), manuscript, Amsterdam, Allard Pierson, XI G 6.

<sup>132</sup> See Voltaire, *Mohamet, Treurspel [...]*, Dutch transl. by Anthony Hartsen (Amsterdam: Izaak Duim, 1770). See also De Marre, *Jacoba van Beijeren*; and see Albach, *Helden*, pp. 103–104.

<sup>133</sup> I here include praise for his 'painterly' gestures and attitudes. I discuss stage attitudes and gestures in detail in Chapters 2 and 4.

<sup>134</sup> The punctuation follows the original, see *De Tooneelkijker*, 2 (1817), p. 52.

Jacques Veltman (1817–1907) provides another telling description of Jelgerhuis's acting in *Ines de Castro* by Reijnvis Feith of 1793:

*Ik zag zijn hand, zoekend naar zijn ponjaard onder den mantel. Mijn bloed stolde in me, want ik las in zijn oogen 'Moord', in zijn verwrongen gelaat zag ik de misdaad. Ik schrok er van, en toen hij haar doorstak, dook ik vol schrik onder de bank. Ja! dát had Jelgerhuis, hij sleepte je mee! Zonder te spreken, wist hij te toonen, wat hij ging doen. Hij was een man, die je deed meeleven, die je de illusie van werkelijkheid gaf – hij was een groot artist!*<sup>135</sup>

I saw his hand, groping for the poniard under his coat. My blood froze in my veins, for I read 'Murder' in his eyes; I saw the crime in his contorted face. I started and, when he stabbed her, I was so frightened, I dived under the bench. Yes! That is what Jelgerhuis did: he carried you away! Without a word, he showed you what he was planning to do. He was a man who made you empathize, who offered you the illusion of reality – he was a great performer.<sup>136</sup>

This text, documenting the memory of Veltman after his retirement, as he recalls having seen Jelgerhuis as a fourteen-year-old boy, shows a side to Jelgerhuis's acting style which cannot be suspected by reading the *Theoretische lessen* only. Although it is a personal view of one member in the audience, possibly slightly altered over time, it suggests an intensity in Jelgerhuis's acting that was not easily forgotten.

One point of criticism is noted by most authors of Jelgerhuis's biographies: he tended to raise his voice too much, resulting in screaming. This was due not just to raising his voice beyond its capacity or to the passionate interpretation of his more dramatic roles, but probably also to the tendency of the times (discussed above) to induce applause by raising the voice in dramatic passages. This review of Jelgerhuis's rendition of Nero in 1817, draws attention to his excellent performance notwithstanding his screaming:

*Jelgerhuis speelde voor Nero; het is bekend, dat hij deze rol meesterlijk vervult; en ook bij deze vertooning heeft hij zulks bewezen; zijne wanhoop over de teleurstelling in het ontdekken der namen van de zamengezworenen was zoo natuurlijk, en zoo tragisch tevens, zonder in het minst laag te zijn, dat hij te regt den grootsten lof heeft weggedragen: ook het aller- moeyelijkst vijfde bedrijf, waar hij de laagheid van den lafbartigen en onttroonden dwingeland bij zijne trotschheid in de vorige bedrijven zoo wel heeft weten te doen afsteken, was uitstekend; hoezeer zijn geschreeuw ons eenigzins hinderde.*<sup>137</sup>

Jelgerhuis played Nero; it is known that he plays this part with mastery; and again he has proved to do so in this performance; his despair about the disappointment at his discovery of the conspirators' names was so natural, and at the same time so tragic, without being mean, that he rightfully received the greatest praise; the most difficult fifth act too, where

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<sup>135</sup> Justus van Maurik, *Toen ik nog jong was* (1887), cited in Albach, 'Johannes Jelgerhuis over zijn rollen', p. 419.

<sup>136</sup> Translation by Dr. Julia Muller.

<sup>137</sup> *De Tooneelkijker*, 2 (1817), p. 19.

he managed so well to contrast the baseness of the cowardly, dethroned tyrant with his pride in the previous acts, was excellent; however much his shouting bothered us slightly.

These reviews and others can be compared with Jelgerhuis's own writings about the roles of Avogaro, Nero, and five other roles in his illustrated notebook *Toneel Studien*. Chapter 3 features such comparisons in Jelgerhuis' role of Siméon in the play *Omasis, of Jozef in Egypte*. Analysis of his own studies are also key to interpreting his view on acting practices of others (such as Talma and Bingley), as described in his manuscripts and his treatise.

### 1.5.2 Jelgerhuis's acting described by himself: *Toneel Studien*

Of all Jelgerhuis's extant unpublished works, the manuscript *Toneel Studien* presents the most detailed and intimate record of his own acting technique and performance practice.<sup>138</sup> His coloured illustrations and his reflections on costume are a valuable addition for envisioning him on-stage in the actions he describes. Written in 1811, after Jelgerhuis's first six years at the Amsterdam Schouwburg, the *Toneel Studien* reveals his passion for and dedication to his new profession, and also a desire to document and share his knowledge. In those years, he performed in more than one hundred and fifteen different roles, the majority of which were new to him; but this period was also extremely trying on a personal level, as Jelgerhuis lost six close relatives.<sup>139</sup> As he states on the title page, he wrote most of the 1811 manuscript while sitting at the sickbeds of various members of his household.

In the preface, Jelgerhuis expresses his wish to reveal the hard work of the performer offstage, so that this information may be shared with his contemporaries and available to future generations. In this way, he imagines that the manuscript will help counteract the ephemerality of performance and serve as a memento for the reader/spectator.<sup>140</sup> He explains that Hyppolite Clairon,<sup>141</sup> Jean Mauduit Larive,<sup>142</sup> and Johann Jacob Engel,<sup>143</sup> had already written about the actor's profession before him, but no Dutch actor had taken up this task until now. His chosen characters are all from Dutch tragedies or from tragedies translated into Dutch: Koning Lear (in *Koning Lear*); Avogaro (in *Gaston en Bayard*); Gysbrecht van Aemstel and the Bode (both roles from *Gysbrecht van Aemstel*); Siméon (in *Omasis, of Jozef in Egypte*); and Nero (in *Epicharis en Nero*).<sup>144</sup> Of those six roles,

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<sup>138</sup> I refer mainly to the *Toneel Studien* manuscript in Amsterdam. As the study of Siméon diverges only very slightly (mainly in spelling) from the *Tonneel Stúdien* manuscript in Gent, I only mention the latter when a difference in content seems relevant to this dissertation.

<sup>139</sup> D'Ailly, 'Johannes Jelgerhuis Rienksz', p. 228.

<sup>140</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 2.

<sup>141</sup> Clairon, *Gedenkschriften*, transl. Wolff.

<sup>142</sup> Jelgerhuis refers to the French actor Jean Mauduit Larive, who by this time had published *Réflexions sur l'art théâtral* (1810), *Cours de déclamation, divisé en douze séances* (Paris: Delaunay, 1804), and *Cours de déclamation prononcé à l'Athénée de Paris*, (Paris: Delaunay, 1810). Larive's *Cours de Déclamation* was published into Dutch only after Jelgerhuis's death as *De Kunst van Declameren* (Leeuwarden: Suringar, 1856) but Ben Albach points out that the treatise was known in the Netherlands before that date. See Albach, 'Johannes Jelgerhuis over zijn rollen', p. 429.

<sup>143</sup> Engel, *De kunst van nabootzing*, transl. Konijnenburg.

<sup>144</sup> Shakespeare, *Koning Lear*, transl. De Cambon after Ducis; Pierre-Laurent Buirette de Belloy, *Gaston en Bayard*, transl. Jan Gerard Doornik; Joost van den Vondel, *Gysbrecht van Aemstel*; Baour-

only Jelgerhuis's study of Koning Lear was published during his lifetime, in 1832, whereas Gysbrecht and the Bode were not published until 1987 by theatre historian Ben Albach.<sup>145</sup> The studies relating to the roles of Avogaro, Nero, and Siméon are as yet unpublished.

### 1.5.3 *Toneel Studien* and *Tonneel Stúdien*: two versions

There are two extant handwritten and illustrated versions of the *Toneel Studien*: one held at the conservatory library in Antwerp, and a fair copy at the Allard Pierson theatre collection in Amsterdam.<sup>146</sup> I hereafter refer to the draft held in Antwerp as *Tonneel Stúdien*, following Jelgerhuis's first spelling of the header on that version's title page. The title *Toneel Studien* will refer to the fair copy held in Amsterdam, following that manuscript's first spelling of the title. Having given up hope of publication, Jelgerhuis had the fair copy (*Toneel Studien*) bound so as to preserve it, and show it to an art-loving friend, once in a while.<sup>147</sup> The *Tonneel Stúdien* held in Antwerp can be seen as a draft, with alterations such as added words above or in between lines of the original text, as well as words and even entire passages crossed out. In addition, this version contains additional sections of text, some of which are written on loose pages of different formats (probably inserted later), and Jelgerhuis's description of a seventh role: the role of 'Filips' (Philips de Goede) in the play *Jacoba van Beieren*.<sup>148</sup> The index also reveals Jelgerhuis's intention to add another role: that of Xamti in *Het Weeshuis van China*.<sup>149</sup> The illustrations common to both manuscripts are almost identical, yet the *Tonneel Stúdien* contains an additional 'Eerste schetse voor het portraittje van Leentje Snoek' (first draft for a portrait of Leentje Snoek) and a watercolour of a figure (probably Avogaro)

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Lormian, *Omasis*, transl. Westerman; Gabriel-Marie Legouvé, *Epicharis en Nero*, Dutch transl. by Pieter Johannes Uyenbroek.

<sup>145</sup> See Jelgerhuis, *De tooneelspeler J. Jelgerhuis Rz.*; and Albach, 'Johannes Jelgerhuis over zijn rollen', pp. 416–417.

<sup>146</sup> Johannes Jelgerhuis Rz., *Toneel Studien Bevattende Ontwikkelingen der Gedachten van Onderscheydene Toneel Studien Welke slegts tot op de helft van het Voorgenomen plan zijn afgeschreeven door den Hollandschen Toneel Speeler J. Jelgerhuis Rz. Dezelven zijn meestal geschreeven by ziekte mijner huisgenoten, en zittende tot derzelver oppassing en gezelschap* (Stage Studies Containing Reflections on Various Stage Studies, of which Only Half of the Predetermined Plan Has Been Completed by the Dutch Actor J. Jelgerhuis Rz. These were for the most part written during illness of my housemates, and sitting [by them] to tend and keep them company) (1811), manuscript, Amsterdam, Allard Pierson, theatre collection, BK-B-10. For the manuscript in Antwerp, see Johannes Jelgerhuis Rzn, *Tonneel Stúdien. bevattende Ontwikkelingen Der Gedachten van Onderscheydene toneel studien welke slegts tot op de helft van het voorgenoomen plan zijn afgeschreven, door den Hollandsche Toneelspeeler J. Jelgerhuis Rzn. dezelve zijn meestal geschreven bij ziekte myner huisgenooten . en zittende tot derzelver Oppassing en Gezelschap*, manuscript, Bibliotheek Koninklijk Conservatorium, Antwerpen, S-TN-JELGE-handsch-1.

<sup>147</sup> Jelgerhuis, preface to *Toneel Studien*.

<sup>148</sup> De Marre, *Jacoba van Beieren*.

<sup>149</sup> Reviews in *De Tooneelkijker* of 1816 and 1818 lauded Jelgerhuis's portrayal of the characters and his painterly stances in both roles, mentioning Filips as his 'favourite role'. See *De Tooneelkijker*, 1 (1816), p. 533 and *De Tooneelkijker*, 3 (1818), pp. 140, 441. Jelgerhuis chose to perform the role of Xamti in *Het Weeskind van China* — a Dutch translation by Johannes Nomsz of Voltaire's *L'Orphelin de la Chine* (1755) — at the celebration of his twenty-five years at the Amsterdam Schouwburg. See D'Ailly, 'Johannes Jelgerhuis Rienksz', p. 237.



with an unfinished background in pencil.<sup>150</sup> As the page numbering of the *Tonneel Stúdien* is confusing (many numbers have been corrected, and not all pages are numbered), and the text is often difficult to decipher, I will hereafter refer mostly to the fair copy *Toneel Studien*.

My first case study (Chapter 3) builds on the analysis of Jelgerhuis's acting style with his role of Siméon as its starting point. Doing justice to all the information in both manuscripts, however, is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Concerning the three roles that have been published — Koning Lear, Gysbrecht, and the Bode — I only wish to add the following observation: the role of the Bode (the messenger) is different from the other studies, as Jelgerhuis points out that its focus is mainly on declamation rather than stage action.<sup>151</sup> Jelgerhuis's study of 'De Boode [sic]' is an important addition to his treatise in which vocal delivery is not mentioned, yet the style of declamation for the Bode is not directly transferable to other roles nor representative of Jelgerhuis's acting style in general. As an example of Jelgerhuis's thought process, I selected two topics — both related to *waarheid* and *waarschijnlijkheid* (verisimilitude or plausability) — from his unpublished study of Avogaro, in *Gaston en Bayard*: thoughts on character, and the concept of the fourth wall in soliloquies.

#### 1.5.4 School for civilization and the preparation of a role

In-depth research and the internal creation of a role are essential to the process of preparation for most stage performers, but few Dutch actors' accounts of their creation process in the early nineteenth century remain. The *Ton(n)eel Stu(û)dien* manuscripts cast light on Jelgerhuis's search for the motives behind the actions of characters he portrayed. Several descriptions show Jelgerhuis's urge to inform the reader of the thought process behind the creation of Avogaro, a character whose behaviour is (to Jelgerhuis) far from ideal: '*Zie daar al wat ik mij te binnen bragt om de Wraak over het geleeden leed . - [sic] de list en laagheid Eener 't Zaamensweering verschoonlijk te maaken*' (Behold all I brought to my mind to excuse the revenge for the pain suffered - the deception and baseness of a conspiracy).<sup>152</sup> As in the following passage, Jelgerhuis shows a need to justify the missteps in Avogaro's behaviour to the audience:

*Zie daar het Character van Avogaro - zie daar al wat te gelijk in mij om moest gaan, om dit wel af te beelden, en hoe affgrijslijk zijne woede zij, die was't mogelijk bij mijne aanschouwer te regtvaardigen*<sup>153</sup>

<sup>150</sup> The costume is identical to the illustration of Avogaro in both versions, but the posture of the Avogaro in the *Tonneel Stúdien* is less active and the figure is wearing a hat; The portrait of Leentje Snoek is probably Helena Snoeck (born Snoek) (1764–1807), actress and sister of the actor Andreas (also Andries) Snoek. See Anna de Haas, *Snoek, Helena*, in: *Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*, <https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/SnoekHelena> (accessed 30 July 2025). In composition and features it strongly resembles the portrait of this actress in a stipple engraving of 1808 by Ludwig Gottlieb Portman. See the Rijksprentenkabinet, *Portret van Hélène Snoeck*, object number RP-P-OB-65.665 <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.227904> (accessed 6 May 2024).

<sup>151</sup> De Haas, 'Opvoeringen', pp. 159–160. De Haas refers in this article to Jelgerhuis's study of the Bode, published by Albach, in 'Johannes Jelgerhuis over zijn rollen', p. 427.

<sup>152</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 36.

<sup>153</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 37.

behold Avogaro's character - regard everything that had to happen in me simultaneously to express this properly, and, however abhorrent his anger may be, it was possible to justify it [his anger] to my audience.

These passages suggest Jelgerhuis's sense of responsibility for representing truth on-stage as well as his concern with presenting the inner struggles of humans (and mythological figures) through what he considered the right lens. Jelgerhuis's search for a rendition which shows the character truthfully and completely does not merely consist in a clean delivery of the text; it also entails searching the play-text (and context) for a psychological explanation. This explanation may be found in the character's past or present circumstances, that make the character's anger, rage, or the path leading him to commit evil deeds, more understandable to the audience.<sup>154</sup>

Jelgerhuis explains, for instance, the reason behind Avogaro's behaviour as indicated in the text by the playwright: Avogaro's hunger for revenge stems from having seen his wife and son being murdered before his eyes, the same reason that triggers his anger and makes Jelgerhuis take his voice to an extreme volume.<sup>155</sup> He also writes how the pain behind Avogaro's anger can persuade the audience to take pity on the tyrant (even after his frightful tirade) but only until he goes too far in the very next section.<sup>156</sup> Although Jelgerhuis describes the fright and the compassion potentially experienced by the audience during Avogaro's outburst of anger, he mentions neither catharsis, nor the eighteenth-century belief that the '*nuttige*' (useful) function of plays and of the theatre should include a process of purification through the passions of fright and compassion.<sup>157</sup> It is not certain if Jelgerhuis's representation of the tyrant in this manner comes purely from his desire to understand and show the character to its fullest, or whether his choice of representing the passions and character in this way is influenced by his faith in the actual ability of actors to contribute to increasing the moral values of the audience.

### 1.5.5 Soliloquies and the fourth wall

Another aspect of the actor's responsibilities as described by Jelgerhuis, is to make the story clear to the audience. In a reflective passage he explains how soliloquies can serve, 'however unnatural' they may be, to show 'the development of the character's thoughts' and to clarify 'the further continuation [of the play] to the spectator'.<sup>158</sup>

*Daar dezelfven [...] Slechts tot het spel behooren [...], mag men mijns oordeels dezelve ook Zoo ver van de natuur verweijderen, dat men die bij 't luyde gesprek aan zijne aanschouwers Richt, alsof men vooronderstellen moet met Engel,\* Eene gewaande Muur die het toneel sluijt.*<sup>159</sup>

<sup>154</sup> Many of his roles represented men known through historical sources or mythology, however inaccurate at times. For purely fictional characters there was no context except the play-text.

<sup>155</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 36, 43.

<sup>156</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 36, 37, 42.

<sup>157</sup> De Haas, 'De wetten', pp. 243, 262–270.

<sup>158</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 50.

<sup>159</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 50–51; Jelgerhuis himself inserted a footnote here: '\**Kunst van Nabootzing*', referring to Engel, *De kunst van nabootzing*, transl. Konijnenburg, vol. 2, p. 179.

As they [the soliloquies] [...] belong only to acting [...], one is allowed, in my opinion, to remove them so far from Nature, that one directs them at the spectators while speaking out loud, as if one should presume with Engel\* that an imaginary wall closes off the stage.

Where Jelgerhuis refers to (the Dutch translation of) Engel's treatise, Engel rightfully refers back to Denis Diderot (1713–1784), who is still considered today as the first to introduce the idea of an imaginary fourth wall in his *Discours sur la poésie dramatique* of 1758.<sup>160</sup> This sequence of citations shows how this concept, which was developing throughout Europe in Jelgerhuis's time, also reached the Netherlands. The fourth wall, which typically excludes interaction with the audience, may be a self-evident concept for actors today, but for Jelgerhuis in 1811 this concept was an aid in his finding a compromise between what was considered natural in Nature (in real life) and on stage. Jelgerhuis's repeated mentioning of monologues as being 'unnatural' seems, similar to the precarious asides, to be based on eighteenth-century ideas related to *waarheid* and *waarschijnlijkheid* as discussed by Anna de Haas in 'De wetten van het treurspel', on avoiding (long) monologues in plays. Her citations on this topic show the opinion that soliloquies were not allowed unless the character was out of his mind, or affected by heightened and (preferably) varied emotions.<sup>161</sup> Decades later, Jelgerhuis is still searching for solutions to make the monologues acceptable to his reader and convincing to the audience, and even, perhaps to himself. The combination of the separate reality that is the theatre and the fourth wall made it more plausible to speak the verses as loudly as required in the theatre even though this would rarely correspond with real life:

*de mensch vervoerd of door droefheid of door vreugde of Swanger gaande gedagten van een groot ontwerp en alleen gelaaten zal wel enkele woorden uyten maar niet luyde spreken [.] Van deeze Waarheid eenigzints afftedwaalen vordert het Toneel.*<sup>162</sup>

A person, transported by sadness or by joy, or pregnant with great thoughts, and, left alone, will utter some words, but will not speak loudly. To diverge slightly from this Truth is what is needed in Theatre.

As discussed in the sections above on *waarheid* and 'Jelgerhuis's costumes' Jelgerhuis aims for the representation of Truth on-stage while being aware of practical elements inherent to stagecraft, which require slight deviations from what was described as *nature*. Having introduced the concept of the fourth wall and its implications for monologues to his reader, Jelgerhuis presents the way of acting as another essential element for performing monologues well:

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<sup>160</sup> The original concept as written by Diderot: '*Imaginez sur le bord du théâtre un grand mur qui vous sépare du parterre. Jouez comme si la toile ne se lavoit pas*' (imagine a large wall along the edge of the stage, which separates you from the audience. Play as if the curtain had not risen). See Denis Diderot, 'Discours sur la poésie dramatique' in *Le père de famille: comédie en 5 Actes, et en Prose, avec un Discours sur la poésie dramatique* (Amsterdam, n. pub., 1758), p. 86.

<sup>161</sup> De Haas, 'De wetten', pp. 143–147, in particular, p. 144, footnote 8.

<sup>162</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 51.

*Hoe onnatuurlijk de alleenspraaken ook zijn, Zoo Zijn Zij echter voor den Toneelspeeler hoogst belangrijk . - [sic] kragt en geest van voorstelling word al vast in deeze verEijst, het is een Compleet Schilderij met welk wel afftebeelden Een levendige geest alleen te regt kan koomen en in waarheid hier kan de Schilderij niet te levendig worden voorgedragen [;] sterke teekening der levendige gemoeds vreugde op het gelaat en standen en gesticulatie zijn de middelen om dit wel te speelen.*<sup>163</sup>

However unnatural the soliloquies may be, they are highly important to the actor, for which the strength and imagination are primary requirements; it is a complete Painting which one can only depict well with a lively mind, and in truth, the Painting cannot be presented vividly enough. Strongly expressed exuberance in the face and in stances and gesticulation are the means of conveying/performing this well.<sup>164</sup>

The monologue is the point at which one actor/actress is responsible for creating the full picture on-stage (within the context of stage sets, lighting, audience) through stances, gestures, imagination, facial expression, and declamation. From Jelgerhuis's writings in the *Toneel Studien*, it becomes clear that he prepared and studied these moments with care. His emphasis on the need of an actors's creative invention, their imagination, and expression of specific emotions is important when viewed in light of interpreting the teaching practices of Jelgerhuis's time in secondary sources, such as the following of 1977: 'Nergens werd de acteur—althans voorzover wij weten—op zijn fantasie, zijn gevoel en zijn eigen creatieve vermogen gewezen' (Nowhere was the actor - at least to our knowledge, - called upon to use his imagination, his feeling and his creative ability).<sup>165</sup> Although the author was well-informed, and cited various works by Jelgerhuis including the 1808 document, his remark shows that Jelgerhuis's documents on teaching must be compared with his manuscripts to appreciate his approach and his in-depth study of his roles beyond the visual aspect of the performance.

In the following chapters on stagecraft, imagination is the core element for the staging processes as well as acting exercises. In my first case study (Chapter 3), I discuss one of Jelgerhuis's monologues in detail and describe the process of putting this monologue into practice by using elements of acting as described in both his *Theoretische lessen* and his study of Siméon (from the play *Omasis, of Jozef in Egypte*) in the *Toneel Studien*. In both case studies (Chapters 3 and 4), I aim for a style of acting that is graceful and beautiful, yet natural according to my conception of *waarheid* (truth), in service of the higher aims of the stage.

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<sup>163</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 52.

<sup>164</sup> With 'sterke teekening der levendige gemoeds vreugde' (strongly expressed exuberance, [literally: strong depiction of exuberance]) Jelgerhuis seems to refer to Avogaro's monologue, in the final scene of Act II in De Belloy, *Gaston en Bayard, Treurspel* [...], Dutch transl. by Jan Gerard Doornik (Amsterdam: J. Helders en A. Mars, 1785), p. 44.

<sup>165</sup> Hans H. J. De Leeuwe, 'De toneelspelersopleiding in Nederland in de negentiende eeuw', in *Scenarium*, 1 (1977), 9–33 (pp. 12–13).

## 1.6 JELGERHUIS, THE TEACHER

This section on teaching unites Jelgerhuis's skills in painting, costume, and acting, as I consider these elements in connection with his teaching, as well as his ambitions for the improvement of the theatre, and of acting, in particular. By discussing examples from the *Theoretische lessen* I anticipate the subsequent chapters on stagecraft, in which I put Jelgerhuis's theory into practice and explore most of the actor's tasks.



Figure 13, Jelgerhuis, *Vrouwelijke personificatie van Theoretica / Bespiegeling* (1785–1836),  
etching, object number: RP-P-1878-A-2124,  
<https://id.rijksmuseum.nl/200209073>

Because sharing acting techniques and concepts based on Jelgerhuis's *Theoretische lessen* through teaching is a significant aim of Chapter 2 in particular, I also revisit the terms such as *waarheid* and *welstand* with reference to teaching. I then investigate the timespan of the concepts and techniques as taught by Jelgerhuis as well as their influence on following generations. To shed light on Jelgerhuis's developing thoughts and aspirations concerning an acting school and its potential curriculum, I introduce a transcription, translation, and discussion of his unpublished and rarely discussed manuscript *Consepten* (c. 1822). This document enables observation of the consistency in his ideas over time, as it optimizes comparison with his earliest documented ideas on teaching of 1808 with his subsequent lessons and his *Theoretische lessen*. On a larger scale, Jelgerhuis's thoughts

on teaching cast light on his ideas of an ideal education for the actor, thereby revealing more about the actor's profession and responsibilities than can be concluded from reading his separate works out of context.

### 1.6.1 The purpose of an acting school and education

When Jelgerhuis began his acting profession, there was no acting school connected with the Amsterdam Schouwburg. Young actors learned the craft in amateur theatre companies, and/or were taught privately by a more experienced actor until they were ready for their debut at the theatre.<sup>166</sup> The level of acting at the Amsterdam Schouwburg, however, was not consistent and did not reach the standards Jelgerhuis desired. Jelgerhuis's ideas for the improvement of the theatre through an organized structure for the education of young actors can be traced back to 1808, but only in 1824 were some of his ideas realized, after which his teaching endeavors were crowned with the publication of his *Theoretische lessen* between 1827 and 1830. Tracing the topic of education in Jelgerhuis's works generates insight into Jelgerhuis's approach to education and his developing ideas regarding the curriculum. This in turn allows for comparison between Jelgerhuis's ideas and 1) the opinions of more amply researched famous French actors such as Clairon and Lekain on how acting education should be structured, and 2) the curriculum of later acting schools in the Netherlands.<sup>167</sup> The opinions of these actors matter not only because they often had a direct influence on the actual curricula, but also because they show one of the conundrums that would continue to exist into the twentieth century: if the actors' career and success depend on their inborn genius/talent, then what is the purpose of an acting school and education?<sup>168</sup> Jelgerhuis discusses this problem, too, and although he is aware of the difficulties that come with teaching acting, as early as 1808 he is decidedly in favour of an acting school:

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<sup>166</sup> De Leeuwe, 'De toneelspelersopleiding', pp. 10; In 1805, Jacob Hartog Dessauer (spelled also as Dessaur) founded what was probably the first acting school in Amsterdam. This school was, however, not connected with the Amsterdam Schouwburg but served the 'Joodsch Hoogduitsche Tooneelgezelschap' and was called the 'Dramatische en lyrische kweekschool'. See De Leeuwe, 'De toneelspelersopleiding', p. 30, and Klaartje. E. Groot, 'Geliefd en gevreesd: Duits toneel in Nederland rond 1800', doctoral dissertation, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Groningen (2010), p. 67.

<sup>167</sup> Lekain, also known as Henri-Louis Cain (1729–1778) was a famous actor at the Comédie Française, who planned to set up a drama school in 1759 (a school for actors was not founded until 1784). His *Mémoires* were published posthumously in 1801. See the bibliography of Lekain on the website of the Comédie-Française, Portail Documentaire La Grange: <https://comedie-francaise.bibli.fr/ark:/63615/bnwpnnsj> (Accessed 16 July 2025).

<sup>168</sup> Marlies E. Ruijter, 'Het Voorportaal van het Amsterdamse Toneel' in *Ons Amsterdam*, (December 1999), 320–326 (p. 22), <https://onsamsterdam.nl/uploads/files/OA-1999-12-Het-voorportaal-van-het-toneel.pdf> (accessed 8 May 2024); In his chapter 'Training or talent: The Classical Debate', David Wiles discusses the relationship between acting techniques and talent, the latter also referred to as 'soul' by Lekain. See Wiles, *The Players' Advice*, see in particular p. 301, 329. Jelgerhuis uses the word talent as well as natural disposition, genius, and '*kracht van ziel*' (literal translation: 'strength of the soul') Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. v–vii. Golding translates this into 'spiritual power'. See Golding, *Classicistic Acting*, p. 238).

*Maar kweekelingen te vormen in eene kunst zonder regelen, is een der moeilijkste leeringen; want deze kunst is alleen genie en geen regelmatige daad. Echter is dit de eenige weg, die moet worden ingeslagen, ten einde tot eene volkomene verbetering te geraken.*<sup>169</sup>

But to train students in an art without rules is one of the most difficult things to teach; for this art is only genius and not a system. However, this is the only way, which must be taken in order to achieve a definite improvement.

It is possible that Jelgerhuis's remark about 'art without rules' in 1808 was already influenced by his reading *Gedenkschriften*, published in a Dutch translation in 1799 after the original *Mémoires* by Clairon.<sup>170</sup> Jelgerhuis later refers directly to Clairon's writing in the preface to his *Toneel Studien* of 1811 and cites her take on rules concerning the art of acting in the introduction to his lessons and his treatise (1827–1829).<sup>171</sup> Clairon's *Mémoires* are indeed not without rules ('*principes*', in her own words) and can serve the purpose of private study for actors. Yet, Clairon was against the conservatoire or school model: acting should be learned from an actor and by practice on-stage, not in the classroom.<sup>172</sup> Jelgerhuis on the other hand, evidently in favour of the school (and even the academic) model, explains the balance between talent and the application of knowledge:

*De lessen alleen, maken den Kunstenaar niet; maar daar, waar de natuurlijke dispositie gevonden wordt, daar vermogen de lessen veel, ongemeen veel, om het ruwe, vurige en heftige, te beschaven, te wijzigen en tot het ware doel te leiden, hem gratie en edelheid te geven, in alle zijne daden der uitvoering.*<sup>173</sup>

The lessons alone do not make the Artist; but there, where the natural disposition is found, there the lessons can do much, uncommonly much, to polish, modify and lead to the true purpose the rough, the ardent and the vehement, to give him grace and nobility in all his deeds during the performance.

Lessons on theory, then, are not enough: the students need to possess an element of talent, yet they will still benefit from additional information to complement their acting classes and to bring their craft to the highest level possible. For this purpose, and in the service of grace and nobility on-stage, Jelgerhuis shared his knowledge and the many sources on costume, acting, and painting in his lessons on theory.

### 1.6.2 Timeline

Learning about the reasons behind and the content of Jelgerhuis's acting education helps to interpret his *Theoretische lessen* as well as other sources contemporary to its time, such as theatre reviews and other treatises on acting. For theatre practitioners working with Jelgerhuis's sources, establishing when his techniques were used on-stage is essential for making choices regarding HIP,

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<sup>169</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', p. 122.

<sup>170</sup> Clairon, *Gedenkschriften*, transl. Wolff, p. 23; for the French original, see Clairon, *Mémoires*, p. 27.

<sup>171</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. vii.

<sup>172</sup> Wiles, *The Players' Advice*, p. 328.

<sup>173</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. vii.

as this knowledge informs the selection of the appropriate techniques corresponding to the right repertoire and time period. This section therefore presents Jelgerhuis's documents and activities relating to teaching over time. As a point of reference for the discussion below, the following list presents key events in chronological order.<sup>174</sup>

- 1808 Jelgerhuis's earliest documented aspiration for an acting school.<sup>175</sup>
- 1820 Founding of Het Genootschap voor Uiterlijke Welsprekendheid (Society for Public Eloquence), of which Jelgerhuis was a member.<sup>176</sup>
- 1820–1821 c. *Consepten* [...] (see Appendix G).
- 1821 Founding of the Fonds ter opleiding en verdere onderrichting van Tooneelkunstenaars voor den Stads Schouwburg te Amsterdam (hereafter referred to as 'Fonds').<sup>177</sup>
- 1824–1828 Jelgerhuis teaches theory in the winter months, from 21 October 1824 to 5 March 1828 at the 'Fonds'.<sup>178</sup>
- 1827–1830 Publication of Jelgerhuis's acting manual: *Theoretische lessen over de Gesticulatie en Mimiek*.
- 1836–1841 Final phase and closure of the acting school.<sup>179</sup>
- 1874 Founding of the Amsterdamse Toneelschool.<sup>180</sup>

### 1.6.3 Jelgerhuis's aspirations for an acting school, 1808–1821

Envisaging judicious investments in the future of acting, Jelgerhuis considers in his document 'Antwoord op de vraag' of 1808 the creation of an acting school in connection with the Theatre.<sup>181</sup> He writes that the oldest and most skilled actors should teach the students, with tragedy and comedy being taught separately and by different teachers, so as to avoid tragedians performing in comedies and vice versa, often with unsatisfactory results.<sup>182</sup> Jelgerhuis also reflects on international treatises (translated into Dutch) that could be used as teaching material: Blair's *Lessen over de redekunst*, Engel's *Over de gebaarden* and *De kunst van Tooneelspelen* by 'Reccorbonis [sic] and

<sup>174</sup> This concerns only his teaching related to acting.

<sup>175</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', pp. 122–123.

<sup>176</sup> For the organizers and the curriculum of this society, see De Leeuwe, 'De toneelspelersopleiding', p. 13.

<sup>177</sup> For more about the 'Fonds', see Ruitenbeek *Kijkcijfers*, pp. 88–92.

<sup>178</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. iii; Ruitenbeek, *Kijkcijfers*, p. 46, footnote 17.

<sup>179</sup> Ruitenbeek, *Kijkcijfers*, p. 91.

<sup>180</sup> For the curriculum and more information about this school, see De Leeuwe, 'De toneelspelersopleiding', pp. 20–21.

<sup>181</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', pp. 122–123.

<sup>182</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', p. 123.



Raimond'.<sup>183</sup> The subjects Jelgerhuis deems essential in 1808 are dance, drawing, and music, for 'zonder deze voorloopige kundigheden heeft men geen zekerheid, of het geluid buigzaam is, of de geest vatbaar is voor het begrip van stand, contrasten en actie van het menscheeld' (without these preliminary skills one has no certainty, whether the sound is flexible, whether the mind is amenable to the understanding of stance, contrasts and the movements of the human figure).<sup>184</sup> According to Jelgerhuis, the students's improvement in these subjects would show their potential in these basic requirements while potentially also revealing which students' minds might bring forth 'nieuwigheden' (innovations).<sup>185</sup> Only then, he continues, would there be hope for the shouting on-stage to be suppressed, as people would become 'vatbaar [...] voor fijn spel' (sensitive [...] to refined acting).<sup>186</sup> Jelgerhuis further desired a situation in which 'the actors should have more freedom to follow the prompting of their genius': 'de Tooneelspelers meer vrijheid hebben, de roeping van hun genie te volgen; oude gewoonten mogen hen daarin niet hinderen' (old habits should not be allowed to hinder them in this).<sup>187</sup> These words suggest not only Jelgerhuis's wish for innovation, but also hint at his frustration with the current practices and the level of competence at the theatre, such as the shouting on-stage and the casting errors mentioned above.

In his desire for improvement, Jelgerhuis's aspirations went beyond a mere school. He conceptualizes the theatre as becoming part of an Academy of the Arts, as a 'Tooneel-Academie' a (stage academy) with a library in which professors of *belles lettres* educate the students with history and other subjects (Jelgerhuis uses the word '*wetenschappen*' (sciences) relevant to acting).<sup>188</sup> Such an institution would guarantee the instruction of 'goede, kundige, Tooneelisten [...] die de waarheid tot leidsvrouw houden en de schoone natuur weten waar te nemen in hunne vertooningen' (good, competent actors, [...] whose guide is truth and who are able to respect beautiful nature in their performances).<sup>189</sup>

More than a decade passed before Jelgerhuis would see some of his practical ideas (though on a reduced scale) come into being, but his ideal of informed students who aim for truthful, natural, and beautiful acting was not weakened with the passing years. His next document concerning an acting school is the more practical *Consepten van opvoeding*, an unpublished document (c. 1821), in which he lists elements of his previous ideas as proposal for the curriculum of future acting students. The full transcription in Dutch and an English translation of this document can be found in Appendix G.

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<sup>183</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', p. 122; Hugo Blair, *Lessen, over de redekunst en fraaie letteren door Hugo Blair [...] Tweede, vermeerderde en verbeterde druk*, vol. 1 (Utrecht: G.T van Paddenburg en zoon, 1804), transl. by Herm. Bosscha. With Engel's 'Over de gebaarden', Jelgerhuis refers to Engel, *De kunst van nabootzing*, transl. Konijnenburg. With 'De kunst van tooneelspelen' Jelgerhuis probably refers to Ploos van Amstel's *Aanleiding*.

<sup>184</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', p. 122. On page 278 of the *Theoretische lessen*, Jelgerhuis cites Clairon regarding her observations on dance and drawing. See Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 278.

<sup>185</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', p. 123.

<sup>186</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', p. 123.

<sup>187</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', p. 124.

<sup>188</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', p. 123.

<sup>189</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', p. 123.

#### 1.6.4 *Consepten*, c. 1820–1821

‘*Consepten* . . . van opvoeding voor den tans voorhanden zijnde kwekeling. . . In toepassing te brengen voor Anderen [...] *Ontworpen voor t genootschap van welsprekenheyd te Amsterdam. en gesteld in handen des bestuurs. door J: Jelgerhuis Rzn.*’<sup>190</sup> The title of Jelgerhuis’s *Consepten* states that he constructed this document for Het Genootschap voor Uiterlijke Welsprekendheid (Society for Public Eloquence) of which Jelgerhuis had been an honorary member since 1820. It is possible that he wrote the *Consepten* for the curriculum of the Society itself, but as this Society already had a curriculum, it is more likely that the *Consepten* were intended for the curriculum of the ‘Fonds’ (the acting school), which was founded the next year. Strikingly, the French actor Jean-François Talma’s impact on Jelgerhuis is shown again in *Consepten*. The very first item on the list is the students’ acquisition of English and French, not only to read the required sources in their original language (Dutch), but to see Talma perform, if he were still alive.<sup>191</sup> Item two consists in the practice of these three languages. The next subjects in Jelgerhuis’s *Consepten* are geography of the ancients (for a better understanding of high tragedy) and drawing lessons (to organize the students’ stances with *welstand*, to make them knowledgeable about painting and engravings, and to develop their taste as to costume and the composition of ensembles).<sup>192</sup> Jelgerhuis suggests he might teach this subject, for which he proposes sources such as the *Fabelkunde* by Christian Tobias van Dam and Jean-Baptiste-Claude Delisle de Sales, and adds its mythology as a topic for discussion in the lessons.<sup>193</sup> Point five includes dancing lessons (to stand, to walk, to sit, and to move well) and attending fencing lessons (more to observe than for active participation). He also recommends the students’ free admission to the theatre, once a week, to see everything, including dance. Jelgerhuis also proposes himself as teacher of theory lessons, another weekly class in which the students would read selections from Blair,<sup>194</sup> Engel,<sup>195</sup> Clairon,<sup>196</sup> and Ploos van Amstel.<sup>197</sup> These lessons were to include discussions with the teacher about the materials read and examinations concerning declamation. At the last stage of the students’ apprenticeship, a small stage should be rented for practice in preparation for the real stage. Lastly, a role from a tragedy should be chosen (for examples of such roles, see Appendix G), so that the student might experience playing a full five-act play.

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<sup>190</sup> See Jelgerhuis, *Consepten* in Appendix G and Jelgerhuis’s written works in Appendix H.

<sup>191</sup> For the complete and more detailed list, see Appendix G.

<sup>192</sup> Although the students of the ‘Fonds’ did not receive drawing lessons, Jelgerhuis’s lessons on theory can be seen as a substitute, in which he recommended that they observe paintings as inspiration for the groupings of actors on stage. See Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 113.

<sup>193</sup> Christian Tobias Damm, *Einleitung in die Götter-Lere und Fabel-Geschichte* [...] (Berlin: Wever, 1776 [5th edn]), translated by anonymous author as *Inleiding in de Fabelkunde* [...] (Leyden, W. H. Gryp, 1786); Jean-Baptiste-Claude Delisle de Sales, *Histoire générale et particulière de la Grèce* [...] 13 vols (Paris, n. pub., 1783), transl. of vols 1–2 by Samuel Iperuszoon Wiselius as *Geschiedenis van Oud-Griekenland* [...] *met aanmerkingen en bijvoegzelen vermeerderd* (Amsterdam: Johannes Allart, 1808).

<sup>194</sup> Hugo Blair, *Lessen*, transl. Bosscha.

<sup>195</sup> Engel, *De kunst van nabootzing*, transl. Konijnenburg.

<sup>196</sup> Clairon, *Gedenkschriften*, transl. Wolff.

<sup>197</sup> Ploos van Amstel, *Aanleiding*.

### 1.6.5 Comparisons

Several of the subjects proposed by Jelgerhuis in *Consepten* are the same as those mapped out by Wiles in his comparison of the basic skills Lekain and Clairon listed for actors to ‘support the art of tragic declamation.’<sup>198</sup> Both Lekain and Clairon considered dance, language, history, geography, and music important. Lekain adds fencing to the list, whereas Clairon (as cited in section 1.3.2 on costume) thought drawing improved the expertise of actors.<sup>199</sup> This suggest that whether these actors promoted the concept of an acting school (Lekain and Jelgerhuis) or not (Clairon), their ideas about the basic skills required for actors were similar.<sup>200</sup>

Compared with the 1808 document, all the elements except music are included in Jelgerhuis’s *Consepten*.<sup>201</sup> Yet the *Consepten* do not refer to any practical lessons by private teachers, nor to the division between lessons for comedy and tragedy, which Jelgerhuis discusses in the 1808 document. It is likely that the individual practical lessons with an experienced actor were a self-evident core element of the training, and/or that this element of the curriculum had already been agreed upon. Jelgerhuis already wrote in 1808, for instance, that the first actress had invited apprentices; and at the ‘Fonds’, which opened in 1821, the actors Wattier, Snoek, Mayofski, and others were in charge of the individual acting lessons, divided into comedy and tragedy, as Jelgerhuis had pictured.<sup>202</sup> Jelgerhuis’s idea of 1808 concerning an acting department of an academic institution was not taken up. Apart from his lessons on theory (1824–1828) it is unclear how many subjects proposed in the *Consepten* were included in the curriculum of the ‘Fonds’, but he mentions the most important things to be learned from dance and fencing classes, touches on most theoretical points, and advises the students to see theatre performances. Foreign languages and drawing seem not to have been part of the curriculum at the ‘Fonds’.

### 1.6.6 *Theoretische lessen*, 1824–1830

As stated in the general introduction to this dissertation, Jelgerhuis’s treatise *Theoretische lessen* documents the material he discussed in his lessons at the ‘Fonds’. Having compared his sketches for the *Theoretische lessen* with the engravings in the work itself, and judging by Jelgerhuis’s precision in copying text on other occasions (making minimal or no alterations), the content of the

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<sup>198</sup> Wiles, *The Players’ Advice*, p. 329.

<sup>199</sup> Wiles, *The Players’ Advice*, p. 329. See also Clairon, *Mémoires*, pp. 62–65 (and Clairon, *Gedenkschriften*, transl. Wolff, pp. 49–51); Clairon specifies that actors without drawing skills were to consult painters and sculptors. See Clairon, *Mémoires*, p. 62 (and Clairon, *Gedenkschriften*, transl. Wolff, p. 49).

<sup>200</sup> For a list of the founding of the earliest acting schools in Europe and Russia, see De Leeuwe, ‘De toneelspelersopleiding’, pp. 9–10.

<sup>201</sup> According to Ruitenbeek, a music school opened in 1826, intended for the education of singers, teachers of music including singing, and singers in the genre ‘*zangspel*’. She indicates that some students attending the music school attended Jelgerhuis’s lessons. See Ruitenbeek, *Kijkcijfers*, pp. 91–92.

<sup>202</sup> Jelgerhuis, ‘Antwoord op de vraag’, p. 124 (the published text of 1808 has a few sentences in common (although these sentences seem to have been edited) with a loose page of the *Tonneel Stúdien* in Antwerp. The latter text is longer and less comprehensible, but the beginning of the text is the same). For the teachers at the Kweekschool, see *Theoretische lessen*, p. v.

*Theoretische lessen* probably closely resembles his actual lessons. I therefore occasionally cite material from the treatise referring to the lessons and vice-versa. In the Introduction to the *Theoretische lessen*, Jelgerhuis positions his subject within the acting school curriculum, explaining what he will teach, and how his lessons on theory will be useful. This information is important for this dissertation, as it helps to position his *Theoretische lessen* amidst his unpublished writings, and to understand why Jelgerhuis's manuscript *Toneel Studien* and the *Theoretische lessen* overlap on so few points.

Jelgerhuis makes the intention clear to share his knowledge (acquired through his education and profession as a painter) without interfering with the material taught in the students' individual, practical lessons (including declamation and diction of prose) given by the main subject teachers.<sup>203</sup> Indeed, Jelgerhuis does not cross the border of the student's practical acting lessons by discussing topics such as declamation and character building. This is where, for instance, Jelgerhuis's reference to sources on acting and declamation, such as Clairon, Larive, and Blair, mentioned in his other works of 1808 and 1811 are valuable indications for those interested in the practical application of the *Theoretische lessen*.

His idea of 1808 concerning the acting school as a means to improve the level of the theatre, is still present in his *Theoretische lessen*: he expresses his hope that his lessons will contribute '*tot bevordering der ware Tooneelbeschaving en voortplanting van gratie en edelheid in standen, bewegingen en sierlijke daden op het Tooneel*' (to the improvement of the true refinement of the stage and the advance of grace and nobility in stances, movement and elegant actions on the stage).<sup>204</sup> To this end, he gives examples from a wide range of sources on painting and acting, drawing a parallel between the painter and the actor: as they both aim '*de waarheid te doen gelooven, daar zij er ondertusschen niet is*' (to represent the truth where/although it is not actually present).<sup>205</sup> The stage is the living canvas, in which the acting students are the figures; they must gain a physical awareness to create '*Eene aaneenschakeling van aanhoudende schilderachtige beweging [...] hetwelk men met zich zelve maakt*' (a concatenation of continually painterly movement [...] that one makes with one's own self).<sup>206</sup> Jelgerhuis draws examples of statues and paintings to advance the students' perception of the rules of art, such as *welstand* and *contrast*. Concerning sculpture as inspiration for noble movement, he remarks: '*Slechts de oppervlakkige kennis van den Griekschen Apollo, - of van den Laocoon, [...] geeft ons de beste denkeelden, van onder pijn en smerten, nog edele en groote schilderachtige bewegingen, voortstellen*' (even the superficial knowledge of the Greek Apollo or of the Laocoon [...] gives us the best idea of how to represent noble and grand movements as in a painting, even while in great pain and suffering).<sup>207</sup> With practice, the attitudes and gestures of these figures can be used on-stage, as the actor '*schildert met zijn eigen persoon*' (paints with his own person).<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. vi.

<sup>204</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 87.

<sup>205</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. vi.

<sup>206</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. xiii, 42, 77.

<sup>207</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. viii.

<sup>208</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. xiii.

Another part of the living painting is the costume. Jelgerhuis points out its importance concerning the different historical eras and peoples represented in the plays.<sup>209</sup> He advises his students to assemble a portfolio of prints, not expecting them to buy or own the sources discussed in the lessons.<sup>210</sup> Regular study and observation of the prints would improve their taste regarding poses and stances, and would inform their knowledge of dress and the pleating of mantles.<sup>211</sup> Jelgerhuis himself assembled such a portfolio, entitled *Studiën van klederdragen voor alle tyden en volken* (Studies of dress and costume for all times and peoples), which provides an idea of what he intended. This unpublished work of fifty-nine pages, contains illustrations by himself, as well as more than fifty assembled pages with engravings by others such as Cochin and Jan de Bisschop (1628–1671).<sup>212</sup> The *Studiën van klederdragen* was to serve actors and painters as study material pertaining to men and women of all eras, ranks, and cultures.<sup>213</sup>

Costumes, *welstand*, and contrast serve the beauty of perfected nature, but they must be conducive to ‘representing the truth’. Sources on painting and the historical accuracy of the costume belong to the research which Jelgerhuis deemed mandatory for the informed actor, and in the service of the improvement of the theatre. These, and other elements such as facial expression, perspective, and even a hint of anatomy seem to have been the ‘scientific matters’ for which Jelgerhuis wished to provide a library accessible to the students, and to connect an acting school to the academy of fine arts. Knowledge is of the essence both to improve *welstand* on the stage and to find reasons behind the actors’ and the characters’ actions:

*Wij hebben het geluk wederom bij elkander te komen, om ons bezig te houden met wetenschappelijke zaken, die ons op het Tooneel zoo zeer van dienst kunnen zijn [...]. Het is eene afgedane zaak, hoe meerdere algemeene kennis de Tooneelspeler in zich vereenigt, hoe meerder gemak hij ondervindt, redenen van zijne handelingen te kunnen geven. Het is de bron der kracht waardoor hij zelf schept en daartelt. Het gevoel alleen vermag dat niet, want de kennis moet het regelen, of het is woestheid.*<sup>214</sup>

We are so fortunate as to meet again, to occupy ourselves with scientific matters that can be of such great service to us on stage. [...] It is an established fact that the greater the general knowledge an actor unites within himself, the easier he will find it to give reasons for his actions. It is the source of strength through which he himself creates and represents. Feeling alone cannot achieve that, for knowledge must regulate it, or else it is untamed [*woestheid*].

<sup>209</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 186.

<sup>210</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 188.

<sup>211</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 58–59.

<sup>212</sup> For Cochin, see Dandré-Bardon, *Gewoonten der aloude volken*, transl. anonymous. Jan de Bisschop was also known as Janus or Johannes Episcopus (1628–1671). His prints of antique statuary were published between 1668 and 1669 under the title *Signorum Veterum Icones*. For an example of these prints, see *Signorum Veterum Icones Per D. Gerardum Reynst Urbis Amsteladami Senatorem ac Scabinum dum viveret Dignissimum Collecta. Afbeeldingen Der Oude Beelden Bij een vergadert door De Heer Gerhard Reijnst in syn Leven Hoogwaardig Raad en Schepen der Stadt Amsteldam* (Amstelodami: Nicolai Visscher, n. d.) <http://resolver.sub.uni-goettingen.de/purl?PPN661108252> (accessed 13 March 2024).

<sup>213</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Studiën van klederdragen*.

<sup>214</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 185–186.

In sharing his theory with the students, Jelgerhuis hopes to enrich and unlock the talent they already possess, and to empower them to express and conceive their stage creations within an idealized acting style. His treatise is not only filled with praise for the sources he uses; he also criticizes and corrects other authors. Although praising and citing Engel's work, for instance, Jelgerhuis distances himself from Engel by pointing out a lack of understanding of the actor's craft, which only an actor — not a professor — can provide. According to Jelgerhuis, following Engel's manual too closely might result in '*automatische stijve bewegingen*' (automatic, stiff movements).<sup>215</sup> The value of Jelgerhuis's treatise in fact lies in the insertion of chapters on theatre perspective, make-up, and his extensive section on costume, and perhaps most importantly in the combination of the theoretical and the practical, with his own writing and illustrations, as seen through the lens of both painter and actor.

### 1.6.7 The Amsterdamse Toneelschool and Jelgerhuis's legacy, 1874

The 'Fonds' closed its doors in 1841, and it was more than thirty years before the next acting school opened. The Amsterdamse Toneelschool, founded in 1874, featured a three-year program, which included most of the lessons Jelgerhuis envisioned throughout the years: languages, mythology, singing, declamation, drawing, dancing and fencing, theatre history, art history and aesthetics, history of costume, character, facial expression, the passions, stage make-up, dress, and finally, full performance.<sup>216</sup> Jelgerhuis's legacy is apparent in nineteenth-century writings on the stage. His *Theoretische lessen* is amply cited and discussed in Kalf's *Schoonheidsleer des Tooneelspelers* of c. 1876 and Jelgerhuis's granddaughter Maria Johanna Kleine-Gartman (1818–1885), a famous actress in her time, taught '*voordracht en oefeningen op het toneel*' (delivery and exercises on the stage).<sup>217</sup> In Kleine-Gartman's teaching, searching for nature, naturalness, and truth in performance was still essential. She uses the latter two concepts specifically in a letter of 1884 to one of her students:<sup>218</sup>

*Lieve Adèle!*  
*Denk altyd aan deze waarschu-*  
*wing "meer eenvoudig en bescheiden*  
*denk nooit "er al te zyn, maar studeer*  
*steeds voort, en laat de natuur Uwe*  
*richting zyn, blyf altyd waar!*  
*tracht de waarheid aan het Effect te*  
*verbinden wat het tooneel en ook*  
*het Publiek noodig heeft, máár offer*  
*nooit de waarheid aan het Effect!"*<sup>219</sup>

<sup>215</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. xii–xiii.

<sup>216</sup> De Leeuwe, 'De toneelspelersopleiding', pp. 20–21.

<sup>217</sup> Martin Kalf, *De Schoonheidsleer des Tooneelspelers door Martin Kalf. Met platen* (Haarlem: W. C. De Graaf, c. 1876).

<sup>218</sup> Albach, *Helden*, p. 166; De Leeuwe, 'De toneelspelersopleiding', p. 21.

<sup>219</sup> Passage of a letter by Maria Johanna Gartman (widow Kleine), to her student Adèle Godoy, 1884, cited in Ben Albach, *Duizend jaar toneel in Nederland* (Bussum: C. A. J. van Dieshoeck, 1965), p. 72. For additional citations of Gartman, see De Leeuwe, 'De toneelspelersopleiding', p. 28.

Dear Adèle!  
Always remember this warning: “simpler and more modest  
never think “you are there already, but  
always continue to study, and let nature be your  
aim, always remain true!  
Try to connect the truth to the Effect,  
which the stage and also  
the public need, but never sacrifice  
the truth to Effect!

In the importance Kleine-Gartman attributes to nature and to finding the right balance between truth and effect, we can still recognize the lessons of her grandfather. But at the same time, there were new aspects to her teaching that indicate a moving away from the older style of Jelgerhuis and his colleagues. Albach, for instance, in his *Duizend jaar toneel in Nederland*, draws attention to a certain holding back compared with the passionate contrasts of the past, as seen in her letter above, as well as in her phrase ‘*alles waar het woordje té voor staat, deugt niet*’ (everything preceded by the word *too*, will not do) and to her preference for speaking clearly but quickly.<sup>220</sup> In her search for a more natural way of acting, Albach suggests that her work was pivotal in the newer developments, once again, towards more naturalism.<sup>221</sup> Still, or again, acting was moving towards the more naturalistic style, this time the acting style of the turn of the twentieth century.

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<sup>220</sup> Albach, *Duizend jaar toneel*, p. 73.

<sup>221</sup> Albach, *Duizend jaar toneel*, p 71.

## 1.7 CONCLUSION

Although Jelgerhuis's teaching can be seen as conservative — following the traditions of the previous decades and the aesthetic ideals based on rules dating back to Antiquity — his approach to costume was modern and he desired improvements to the theatre that were innovative, such as a more natural way of declaiming, staging and casting practices, and an acting school.

### 1.7.1 International context

The terms and concepts Jelgerhuis used (to describe visual ideals and decorum such as contrast, naturalness, and so on) in painting, acting, and teaching, were not confined to his own practice, to the Amsterdam Schouwburg, to Dutch theatre practice, and not even to Jelgerhuis's time: many of these terms (in their equivalent translations) can be found in European writings on art in the centuries previous and after Jelgerhuis's career. Dutch stage practice copied and followed French theatre practice, in particular. Jelgerhuis's concepts for teaching, although new for the Netherlands, were similar to those proposed in Paris by Lekain and Clairon, and were probably inspired by the writings of the latter. Jelgerhuis's *Consepten* shows that he was convinced by Talma's way of acting. So strong was his admiration of the French actor that he deemed observation of Talma's acting beneficial to acting education. Suggesting the students' attendance of Talma's performances (even if this meant traveling to Paris) was an active step towards achieving Jelgerhuis's ideals of the innovation and improvement of Dutch acting: it may have persuaded young actors that shouting did not have to be part of fame and excellence on-stage. The idea of acquiring foreign languages as a means to check the sources in their original language shows Jelgerhuis's awareness that elements may be lost or changed in translation and suggests his desire to receive correct information. It is also indicative of his idealism to give the future generations tools which he had not received in his own education.

### 1.7.2 Theory and practice

Both the 1808 document and the *Consepten* hint at Jelgerhuis's belief in a combined practical and theoretical education, which was confirmed in the introduction to his *Theoretische lessen*. He did not interfere with the practical side of acting taught by his colleagues, yet his thoughts on the practical aspects of the actor's craft are expressed in his unpublished documents. The idea of a small stage, on which students can get used to the sets, to walking on stage, and to experience the demands of playing a five act tragedy, demonstrates Jelgerhuis's endeavor to include practical experience in acting education. The acting school envisioned by him would have allowed for those who had had less experience to join the professional stage better prepared and at a higher level, potentially raising the overall standard of any production.

Placing Jelgerhuis's ambition of advancing truthfulness/*waarheid* into the context of costuming provides a way to assess his position on early nineteenth-century costume reform on the Amsterdam stage. This pursuit of more *waarheid* on-stage is an important motive behind Jelgerhuis's search for knowledge in painting treatises and in costume history and his interest in conveying this information to others. His search for *waarheid* in costume also demonstrates his active participation in conceiving holistic and truthful, yet dramatically effective creations of his



roles. By observing his attention to *waarheid*, we can also discern when Jelgerhuis's decisions align with new ideas in historical costuming and when he makes exceptions. Staying alert to and allowing for (unexpected) incongruencies with the rules of historical stage practice (once one has arrived at an interpretation of them) is important when balancing out aesthetic and practical choices. Section 1.3 on costume shows how Jelgerhuis negotiates between his ideals, the lack of historical information, and the practicality of the theatre—compromises which also occur today, not only in historically informed productions but in any production which needs to balance ideals, budget, and other practical concerns. Similarly, the information on Jelgerhuis's acting in the previous sections suggests how, of all the information in his documents on teaching and his private journals, nothing prepares the reader or scholar to suspect the intense acting style that he reveals in his *Toneel Studien*.

I keep this in mind as I explore the practical side of Jelgerhuis's teaching and acting style in the following chapters: I adapt elements of his theoretical lessons into exercises for stage performers in Chapter 2; in Chapter 3, I analyse and stage three scenes as described by Jelgerhuis in his *Toneel Studien*; in Chapter 4, I combine my knowledge garnered thus far with other techniques and in a different genre than Jelgerhuis's esteemed high tragedy. In Chapter 2 and 3, I focus on how I created elements of staging and training (as applied to teaching and collaborating with colleagues), informed by the concepts, rules, and ideals hitherto discussed. In Chapter 4, I apply the elements of training based on the rules to the creative processes prior to performance and in performance, so as to learn through experience when to bend or break them.