Legs Fit for a King

Masculinity in the Staging of the Dutch Restoration Monarchy, 1813-1819[1]

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This article explores visual strategies of legitimisation deployed in the establishment of the Dutch Restoration monarchy. It asks how these visual strategies were shaped by historically specific notions of masculinity and simultaneously helped shape such notions. Concentrating on the first state portrait of William I as King by Joseph Paelinck painted in 1818, it argues that this portrait was part of a 'staging' of the Dutch Restoration monarchy. In the absence of *ancien régime* claims to legitimacy, Restoration monarchies needed to have recourse to theatrical means of legitimisation, but also had to make sure not to provoke associations with the theatrical elements inherent in old regime monarchies. The representation of the King's body in the state portrait, drawing strongly on neoclassical and revolutionary conventions, invoked notions of masculinity centring around political virtue and naturalness. As such, the King's body, and the masculinity it represented, helped undo the artificiality associated with monarchy and lent a sense of reality to the staging of the Dutch Restoration monarchy.

How to make a King? A cursory glance at the literature reveals that even when monarchy as such was taken to be natural and legitimate, as in the crafting and heyday of French royal absolutism, making a King required strenuous and elaborate work in the realms of ritual and representation.[2] Under conditions in which monarchy had lost its status as the self-evident and given political form of society, or never possessed it in the first place, this work presumably became even harder. It then also became more easily recognisable as such, as a deliberate effort to give a specific type of political rule an appearance of naturalness it did not possess in and of itself.

Writing about Restoration France, Sheryl Kroen argues that under such conditions, monarchy could exist 'only as the result of an elaborate staging'.[3] This phrase captures nicely both the amount of work required to make a King in the post-Revolutionary world, and the degree to which this work could be identified as evoking a political reality, rather than merely confirming it. Kroen argues that, in the absence of natural or divine claims to legitimacy, the Restoration monarchy was forced to try to produce legitimacy for itself through elaborate and carefully scripted public ceremonies. By having recourse to theatrical means of legitimisation, however, the monarchy ran the risk of provoking and confirming the critique through which it had lost its legitimacy in the first place, that is, the Revolutionary argument that the monarchy was *mere* fabrication, deception, theatre.[4] In post-Revolutionary political culture, theatricality had become both the only ground on which monarchy could rest and the firm ground for arguments aimed at is destruction. In this context, the legitimisation of monarchy required a very careful handling of the tensions and contradictions that inhered in its staging.

Perhaps 'staging' is also an appropriate term for the making of a monarchy and its King during the Dutch Restoration era, but 'elaborate' is definitely not: or at least, so it would seem, judging by a tradition in writing Dutch modern political history that starts from the assumption that this history is played out in a somewhat rundown and smallish theatre in a provincial backwater of Europe, where the scripts performed by second rate actors in shabby costumes have usually been written elsewhere. On this stage, the most one can expect to see are 'small gestures', as the title of an influential overview of modern Dutch political history would have it.[5] The assumption that in the theatre of Dutch politics things are necessarily staged rather modestly, in some instances, fosters an inability to see such staging at all. This is the case with the making of the Dutch Restoration monarchy in the years 1813-1815 when a Prince of the House of Orange returned to the Netherlands

1   I thank H.M. the Queen for permission to consult relevant papers at the Koninklijk Huisarchief, The Hague, and Ms H. de Muij-Fleurke for the efficient way she made these available to me. I would also like to thank the editors of BMGN - *Low Countries Historical Review*, and an anonymous reviewer for useful comments on an earlier version of this article.

2   Ralph E. Giesey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France* (Genève 1960); Louis Marin, *The Portrait of the King* (Minneapolis 1988); Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven, London 1992).

3   Sheryl Kroen, *Politics and Theater: The Crisis of Legitimacy in Restoration France, 1815-1830* (Berkeley, etc. 2000) 38. For a related approach centred around the notion of an 'imagined' Restoration: Natalie Scholz, *Die Imaginierte Restauration. Repräsentationen der Monarchie im Frankreich Ludwigs XVIII* (Darmstadt 2006).

4   *Ibid.*, 7.

5   Remieg Aerts et al., *Land van kleine gebaren. Een politieke geschiedenis van Nederland 1780-1990* (Nijmegen 1999).

and, unlike his ancestors did not take up the position of 'stadholder' in a republic, but became the King of a newly created monarchy. The efforts to harness support and create legitimacy for the new monarchy and its King through ritual and representation have received remarkably short shrift from Dutch political historians. A professional habitus that tends to downplay the relevance of metaphors of theatre for writing Dutch political history helps to explain this in part.[6] The relative success of the Dutch constitutional monarchy, which turned out to be both long-lived and stable, needs to be taken into account here as well. Projected backwards to the years of its foundation, this success retroactively confers a self-evidence and naturalness upon the Dutch monarchy it did not necessarily possess at the time of its making. The self-evident and natural nature of monarchy in the Netherlands, to some degree, must be understood as the effect of the ways in which it was initially staged – however modestly.

This article explores the staging of monarchy in the Netherlands around the time of its establishment (1813-1819). Its ambitions are limited. Of the various kinds of work performed in the realms of ritual and representation, it will concentrate in particular on the strategies of legitimisation that can be identified in one historical artefact, the 1818 state portrait of King William I by Joseph Paelinck. It asks how these visual strategies of legitimisation were shaped by historically specific notions of masculinity – and simultaneously helped shape such notions.[7] As such, this article builds on Joan Scott's influential argument to centre efforts to historicise gender on its role in the

6 An important exception in this respect is Jaap van Osta, *Het theater van de Staat. Oranje, Windsor en de moderne monarchie* (Amsterdam 1998). However, Van Osta situates the emergence in the Netherlands of the 'theatre of state' – the elaborate public ceremonies and festivities that served to establish the monarchy as a *national* monarchy – in the 1880s (31). He does write that the introduction of monarchy in the Netherlands was 'remarkable' and 'far from self-evident' (76), but does not apply metaphors of theatre in his analysis of the strategies of legitimisation used during its establishment. He argues that the 1813 monarchy rested on widely shared public support that resulted from the historically 'inherited charisma' of the House of Orange and the nature of William I's rule as a synthesis of traditional and revolutionary politics and governance (78).

7 For earlier explorations of the role of a rhetoric of masculinity, both linguistic and visual, in the making of the Dutch monarchy and the rule of William I: Maria Grever, 'Van Landsvader tot moeder des vaderlands. Oranje, gender en Nederland', *Groniek* (2002) 131-150; Stefan Dudink, 'Masculinity's Many Works: "Hegemonic Masculinity" and Dutch Nationalist Visual Culture around 1830', *Kritische Berichte. Zeitschrift für Kunst- und Kulturwissenschaften* 35 (2007) 6-15; Stefan Dudink, 'After the Republic: Citizenship, the Military, and Masculinity in the Making of the Dutch Monarchy', in: Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann and Anna Clark (eds.), *Representing Masculinity: Male Citizenship in Modern Western Culture* (New York, Houndmills 2007) 89-108.

establishment, legitimisation and contestation of various power relations.[8] Here, Scott's argument will be taken up as part of a wider approach of political history which aims to radically historicise the constitutive elements of political modernity by tracing the historical processes in which they were culturally constructed.[9] The visual elements of political culture hold centre stage in this article, which will try to demonstrate how the portrait of the first Dutch King 'engendered rather than merely reflected political [...] meanings' and power relations.[10]

The portrait of the King

The making of a monarchy and a King in the Netherlands, after French imperial authorities and troops had started to leave the country around mid-November 1813, proceeded in a piecemeal fashion.[11] This was partly the result of fear on the part of the future King to appear too eager to establish a monarchy and place himself at its head. Shortly before his return to the country from exile in Britain, his mother, the politically savvy Prussian Princess Wilhelmina, had warned him not to create the impression he desired the title.[12] After landing on the Dutch coast at Scheveningen on 30 November 1813, initially Prince William conspicuously avoided the term 'King' and aimed no higher than the title of 'sovereign ruler' ('soeverein vorst'). As such he was ceremonially installed in Amsterdam during a solemn assembly of the country's dignitaries on 29 March 1814. Only as domestic resistance to his rule proved to be negligible and Europe's great powers showed themselves willing in the aftermath of the battle at Waterloo, to condone William's monarchical ambitions, did he confidently assume the title of King. On 21 September 1815, he was inaugurated as King in Brussels, one of the seats of government of a new Kingdom that by then no longer consisted only of the territory of the

8 Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York 1999) 42-50. For a very inspiring programme for the history of masculinity that partly builds on Scott's argument: Mrinalini Sinha, 'Giving Masculinity a History: Some Contributions from the Historiography of Colonial India', *Gender & History* 11 (1999) 445-460.

9 Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge 1990) 4-7.

10 Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey, 'Introduction', in: Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey (eds.), *Visual Culture: Images and Interpretations* (Hannover, London 1994) xv.

11 For a recent, excellently contextualised, account of these events: Matthijs Lok, *Windvanen. Napoleontische bestuurders in de Nederlandse en Franse Restauratie (1813-1820)* (Amsterdam 2009) 25-73.

12 N. Cramer, 'De kroon op het werk van 1813', in: C.A. Tamse (ed.), *De monarchie in Nederland* (Amsterdam, Brussels 1980) 13.

former Dutch Republic, but also included that which had been the Austrian Netherlands.

Drawing on many of the conventions for the representation of European Kings, Joseph Paelinck's 1818 state portrait of King William I was one of the first of the latter's portraits in which he was depicted as King – wearing an ermine robe and surrounded by royal regalia – rather than as military commander, as had been the case up until that point.[13] As such it can be read as self-assuredly confirming both William's royal status and the existence of the monarchy he headed. In this light, it appears as the given destination of a route that had led directly to this very portrait – transforming the cautious manoeuvring amidst the contingencies of domestic and international politics of the previous years into a path of necessity. If the less than straightforward nature of the journey of the years *since* 1813 casts doubt on this representation of William's ascendency to royal status, the political and military history of the period *before* 1813, and the ways in which these shaped the political fate of his family and himself, does so even more.

With the downfall of the once glorious Dutch Republic, that set in during the early 1780s, came the downfall of the House of Orange, headed at that time by Williams father, William V.[14] As Princes in a republic, occupying the position of 'stadholder', the successive male heads of the House of Orange had represented something of an anomaly in the political structures of the Dutch Republic. A key to political survival for the Princes of Orange in a political context shaped by struggles for power between the stadholders and provincial and national Estates was not to arouse the suspicion of harbouring

13   In 1818 Dutch painter Willem Bartel van Kooi also made a state portrait of William I as King, it is not clear which of these two was produced first. For an overview of the state portraits of William I: Lisette Fühler, *Een vorstelijk portret. De staatsieportretten van koning Willem I* (Unpublished MA thesis, Art History, Utrecht University s.a.). For Paelinck, see: Denis Coekelberghs and Pierre Loze (eds.), *Om en rond het neo-classicisme in België, 1780-1830* (Brussels 1986) 193-196. In 1819 Paelinck produced an very similar portrait on which William points to a map of Java. This portrait, intended to be send to Batavia, routinely appears in Dutch publications on William I – an effect of its place in the collection of the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum – whereas the 1818 portrait, now in the collection of the Brussels City Hall, is hardly ever used in Dutch

histories of the Dutch monarchy. An analysis of the two portraits that integrates metropolitan and colonial history in one analytical framework by studying the meanings of both portraits in both histories, unfortunately, is beyond the scope of this article. For the 'Batavia portrait' see Susan Lêgene, *De bagage van Blomhoff en Van Breugel. Japan, Java, Tripoli en Suriname in de negentiende-eeuwse Nederlandse cultuur van het imperialisme* (Amsterdam 1998) 134-135.

14   For overviews of this period: Remieg Aerts, 'Een staat in verbouwing. Van republiek naar constitutioneel koninkrijk 1780-1848', in: Aerts, *Land van kleine gebaren*, 11-95; Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall 1477-1806* (Oxford 1998); Margaret C. Jacob and Wijnand W. Mijnhardt (eds.), *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca, London 1992).

ambitions of monarchical power and status. Instead, efforts to maximise power had to rely on the deployment of the myriad of prerogatives that came with the position of stadholder in the highly decentralised and corporatist world of the Dutch Republic. After a democratic revolution followed by civil war and a return to power by a vengeful stadholder and his supporters had shaken this world to its core, French occupation in 1795 delivered the final blow to the Dutch *ancien régime*. Forced into exile with his family, the end of the Republic spelled the start of a long and insecure journey for a young Prince hoping to find a suitable place for himself and his house in a constantly shifting European political context. As the Netherlands were placed under increasing French supervision, culminating in Napoleon first making his brother King in 1806 and finally annexing the country in 1810, William tried his luck in obtaining subsequently Prussian and French patronage. Unable to permanently secure territories of substantial size to rule over, he turned to the British in 1812. They showed themselves willing to consider him as a serious candidate to govern the Netherlands after a future French defeat[15]: and so it happened. It would be very hard to claim however, that this outcome was in any sense to be expected. If anything, the fundamental transformations of political legitimacy and of the European model of the state, the redrawing of borders and the shifts in European power relations during and after the Napoleonic wars, and the ways all this affected the Netherlands and the fortunes of the House of Orange, had made this outcome rather unlikely.

Painted after almost forty years of unprecedented political and military upheaval, Paelinck's state portrait of King William I could not simply represent the monarchical order of things as the given and inevitable outcome of the events of the preceding four decades. In 1818, it was impossible for it to appear as merely *confirming* a self-evident status quo; it could only try to *evoke* this political reality as given in a seemingly assertive gesture that attempted to both ward off the uncertainties of the past and call forth a secure future.

This gesture was repeated time and again. A programme of 'mass production' of (state) portraits of King William I to be put on display in government buildings preceded and followed his inauguration – a programme that ended the lull that had beset the production of state portraits in the Dutch Republic during the last quarter of a century of its existence, and continued the habit of publicly displaying portraits of the current ruler introduced to the country under French occupation.[16] Some of these paintings were royal commissions, others were ordered by local authorities. A remarkable number of William's state portraits were made for town halls and other public buildings in the Southern provinces of the country.[17] Serving both the King's desire

15   J.A. Bornewasser, 'Koning Willem I', in: C.A. Tamse (ed.), *Nassau en Oranje in de Nederlandse geschiedenis* (Alphen aan den Rijn 1979) 229-272.

16   Marie-José Ong-Corsten et al., *Het Nederlands Staatsieportret* (Nijmegen 1973) 24-25.

17   Fühler, *Vorstelijk portret*, 31.

for authority and legitimacy in a part of country where he could not readily assume to possess these, and a willingness on the part of members of southern local elites to express loyalty to the new King, some of these portraits were in several ways co-productions. Although painted on the initiative of local authorities, they required the King's permission and cooperation, in particular his willingness to pose for an artist, and presumably the King had considerable influence in deciding which artist was to be granted the commission and how he was to be depicted.

When the Brussels city government decided in 1818 to have a state portrait painted of, by then, *King* William, it was no coincidence that the job went to Joseph Paelinck, who had by that time established himself as the court's favourite painter.[18] Already in 1814, William had seemed to agree with the opinion of those around him that the state portrait Paelinck had done for him that year was to be preferred to a portrait painted earlier in 1814 by Mattheus Van Bree.[19] The letter to his sister Princess Louise in which he expressed this view, does not mention the reasons for this preference. A look at the two 1814 paintings however, is quite suggestive of the way the future King preferred to be seen. Although in the two paintings he is dressed in a similar general's uniform, the ensemble of high boots with tassels, long tight trousers, high cut coat with epaulettes, and sash around the waist seems to envelop two different bodies. In Van Bree's rendition of William, his slightly protruding belly and somewhat sagging pose do not suggest the determination and will to rule which his emphatically more athletic and upright body exudes in Paelinck's work. Rather than having William gaze at his subjects directly with a benign and friendly expression, as Van Bree did, Paelinck gave him an imperious sideway glance that hardly acknowledged the presence of the spectator, whose point of view was considerably lower than it was in Van Bree's work. If all of this was not enough visual support for the rule of a freshly installed sovereign, Paelinck put an impressive sheathed sabre in William's left hand – instead of the rolled up piece of paper Van Bree had him holding. Paelinck received the impressive sum of 3,000 guilders for the 1814 portrait. This was more than the King paid for any other portrait in these years and, as was stated explicitly, the sum served to express the high regard in which the King held Pealinck's talents.[20]

18 Coekelberghs and Loze, *Om en rond het neo-classicisme*, 194.

19 *Correspondentie van de stadhouderlijke familie 1777-1820* V. Johanna W.A. Naber (ed.) (The Hague 1936) 258.

20 Koninklijk Huisarchief The Hague (hereafter KHA), Archief Thesaurie, inv. no E8-IIIa -2, 106, 8 April 1815. Subsequently Paelinck requested to be appointed the King's painter. For reasons that cannot be reconstructed from the archival material this request was not granted, but he was instead appointed the queen's painter. For the request: KHA, Archief Hofcommissie Brussel, inv. no E1d-II-16-no 66.B, 28 July 1815. For the appointment: KHA, Archief Hofcommisssie Brussel, inv. no E1d-I 1-2-no 13, 16 September 1815.

Joseph PAELINCK 1781-1839
GUILLAUME I, ROI des PAYS-BAS
WILLEM I, KONING der NEDERLANDEN
1818

The state portraits painted from 1814 onwards were part of the staging of the Dutch Restoration monarchy. This staging also took place on the canvas of these paintings individually, as in Paelinck's 1818 state portrait. The elements of the conventional state portrait, coalesced into a fixed scheme since Titian's sixteenth-century 'invention' of the genre, appear to the viewer as constituting a theatrical stage for the rhetorical proclamation of the depicted person's status.[21] Framed by drawn curtains with tassels and against a backdrop of dark draperies, the stage has been set with a throne and a table on which three further props are on display, the required attributes of a King – crown and sceptre – and of the general, in this case his lavishly feathered hat. At the centre of the stage, which suggests a modest degree of elevation, stands the King. His costume consists of the fourth conventional attribute of the genre – the ermine robe – and a general's dress uniform. The main 'action' on this stage, apart from the full-length depiction of William I, is his pointing with the index finger of his right hand to a copy of the Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, a gesture that contrasts with the sense of timelessness the stock elements of the state portrait are designed to evoke and situates it in a specific historical context.

Paelinck's portrait engaged in a staging of monarchy. At the same time however, it managed to avoid an overly theatrical representation of the new monarchy and its King, which would have resulted in undermining its claim to constituting a given and inevitable political fact. That the portrait succeeded in doing so becomes clear when compared to the state portraits of other monarchs of this period. Several of these, in art historian Robert Rosenblum's words, 'always seem out of joint with the images of their pre-Revolutionary ancestors'. The portraits which antedate the Revolution successfully created a link between the monarch depicted and his ancestors, resulting in a representation of dynastic continuity that granted legitimacy. The post-Revolutionary paintings on the other hand, feel more like a 'wilful revival' of an ever more distant past that resurrected it only for a moment without producing the desired lasting sense of unbroken continuity. In drawing on 'the swagger and luxury associated with an [...] eighteenth-century world', state portraits such as Paul Guérin's 1820 portrait of Louis XVIII, or Thomas Lawrence's 1822 portrait of George IV, imported the old regime pictorial conventions of the genre into

◀ Joseph Paelinck, William I, King of the
Netherlands, 1818.
City Hall, Brussels.

21 For the conventions of the state portrait:
Marianna Jenkins, *The State Portrait: Its Origin and Evolution* (New York 1947) 1; Christopher Lloyd,

'Portraits of Sovereigns and Heads of State', in:
Citizens and Kings: Portraits in the Age of Revolution
(London 2007) 60; Ong-Corsten, *Nederlands Staatsieportret*, 23; for the nineteenth-century state portrait of monarchs and its adaptation to the post-Revolutionary political context: Rainer Schoch, *Das Herrscherbild in der Malerei des 19. Jahrhunderts* (München 1975) 89-133.

a post-Revolutionary world in which these no longer applied. As Rosenblum argues, this resulted in these paintings creating the impression of a 'theatrical performance'.[22] To be more precise, the theatrical performance that took place on these canvases was an *overly* theatrical performance that failed politically, in the sense that it did not manage to hide or diminish its very theatricality.

In this respect Paelinck had an easier job. The obstacle to an effective staging of monarchy in a post-Revolutionary world that his colleagues could not manage to overcome did not stand in his way. He was not forced to visually create a sense of monarchy's unbroken dynastic continuity where this continuity had been shattered or was permanently at risk of being shattered. The strategies of legitimisation around William I's ascendancy to the throne did invoke the *dynastic* continuity of the House of Orange, but they could not claim William rightfully occupied his place in a long line of *Kings*. After all, there had never been a monarchy to which the new King needed to be seamlessly connected. What might appear as a weakness of the new monarchy – the absence of historical foundations for a monarchy – in this respect turned out to be an asset. Since there was no monarchical past to be evoked, the overly theatrical gestures that served to link the present to a past with which it would necessarily fail to connect itself, could be avoided. As a result, the staging of monarchy succeeded in the sense that it did not call attention to its theatrical nature in a manner that would jeopardise its political effectiveness.

One aspect of the self-defeating theatricality of the post-Revolutionary state portraits that tried too hard at connecting with the past was the opulent and ostentatious nature of the manner in which their subjects were dressed. Their dress still adhered to the rules of a court sartorial culture of 'splendour' instead of being adapted to the post-Revolutionary culture of (military) 'service' and its promotion of the (military) uniform as the preferred mode of dress for Kings and their male entourage.[23] The splendour of ermine, silk, velvet and brocade, embroidered with silver and gold thread, was the splendour that had confirmed the royal status of these monarchs' eighteenth-century predecessors. Draped around the bodies of early nineteenth-century Kings of the Restoration era, these fabrics tended to produce a costume that signalled their wearers' performance in a historical play that tried to revive the past but beyond the duration of the play, failed to do so. Characteristic of this mode of dress was the fact that under the layers of fabric most of the King's body was invisible, it was 'hardly discernible through the cascading folds of voluminous robes'.[24] Other than the lower two thirds of one or both

22 Robert Rosenblum, 'Portraiture: Facts versus Fiction', in: *Citizens and Kings*, 16.

23 For the European court cultures of 'splendour' and 'service', the competition between them and the post-Revolutionary dominance of service:

Philip Mansel, *Dressed to Rule: Royal and Court Costume from Louis XIV to Elizabeth II* (New Haven, London 2005) 18-36, 77-102.

24 Lloyd, 'Portraits', 60.

of the King's legs, most of his body was hidden from view. In contrast, Paelinck had draped William I's ermine robe around his body in such a way that, apart from his shoulders, left arm, and approximately a third of his torso, all of the King's body is revealed. Judging by a newspaper article that reported on the completion of the portrait, the message of this rejection of theatrical display and of the focus on the King's body came across. The newspaper applauded Paelinck for his 'full length' depiction of the King in 'natural grandeur'.[25] The King, too, appeared to be pleased with the portrait. He gave permission for it to be included in the 1820 Salon of Ghent.[26] At this salon a selection of contemporary art works was exhibited that clearly served the purpose of providing the new state and its monarch with legitimacy by cultural means. Amidst works of art that seemed to have been chosen for their ability to evoke a sense of the Northern and Southern past as a shared history, portraits of the King, the Crown Prince and of several of their ancestors figured prominently.

The King's legs

Confidently holding centre stage, framed by the curtain-like position and shape of the King's robe, in the 1818 state portrait the King's male body is the carrier of a set of political meanings that assist in the definition of the nature of this Restoration monarchy and its legitimisation. A good starting point for an exploration of this male body's historical specificity and the political meanings attached to it are the King's legs. Brightly lit, clad in white trousers the shiny whiteness of which is accentuated by the black leather of the King's boots and the dark blue fabric of his coat that frame them horizontally, the King legs – and lower body – invite the spectator's gaze to focus on them. A remarkable feature of these legs is their – suggested – length. This length is produced by the trousers' tightness, which accentuates length rather than width, by the high cut of the front of the King's tailcoat, which results in an upward elongation of the legs and by the moderate height of the shafts of the boots, which do not reach the knees. The black leather boots cut the legs in two but as they situate the break well below the knee, this results in only a modest shortening of the legs. Moreover, the creases in the trousers between the knee and shaft of the boot suggest the trouser legs run on into the boots, adding to the overall suggestion of length.

In order to appreciate the impression of length all of this lends the King's legs it is helpful to imagine the effect on the representation of his legs of a piece of clothing he does not wear, but could well have worn – a

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25 *Journal de la province de Limbourg* 30 June 1818.

26 L. de Bast, *Annales du Salon de Gand et de l'Ecole Moderne des Pays-Bas* (Gand 1823) 22-24.

pair of breeches. Breeches cut men's legs in two at the knee, and their low waistbands further shortened the length of their wearers' legs. Standard wear for many eighteenth-century men, and for those from the higher ranks specifically, breeches with silk stockings were worn as a rule by Kings on pre-Revolutionary state portraits. They also featured on some Restoration state portraits, in particular those that sought to establish an unbroken link to a pre-Revolutionary past, such as the paintings of Louis XVIII and George IV mentioned earlier.

In Paelinck's portrait the new Dutch monarchy rests on an unconventionally long pair of legs clad in a long-legged pair of trousers that would not have been part of his ancestors' wardrobes. His father, Stadholder William V, often had to make do without the lower parts of his legs – at least this was the case in a substantial number of his official portraits where he was depicted from the knee up. Where all the state portraits of King William I depict him full-length, only a relatively small number of state portraits of his father do so.[27] In two portraits he is depicted in grand monarchical style, wearing an ermine robe and, underlining the Stadholder's position of commander of navy and army, armour covering his upper body and upper legs. In one other portrait he wears half-armour over breeches.[28] Affirming the remarkable extension and solidification of the Stadholder's power achieved by his father, William IV, these 'monarchical' and martial portraits however, are outnumbered by state portraits that avoid the convention of full-length depiction with its politically increasingly problematic associations of monarchy.[29]

27 For the state portraits of King William I: Fühler, *Vorstelijk portret*. My conclusions about the portraits of Stadholder William V are based on an inventory of his portraits in the database of the Netherlands Institute for Art History (www.rkd.nl) and in the catalogue of paintings of the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum (P.J.J. van Thiel et al., *Alle schilderijen van het Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, Haarlem 1976)).

28 Works by, respectively, Johan Georg Ziesenis (1767), Benjamin Samuel Bolomey (1770) and Guillaume Jean Joseph de Spinny (1771).

29 In the late 1740s, William IV achieved a remarkable expansion and solidification of the Stadholder's power that gave him a near-monarchical position, which is underlined by the use of the convention of the full-length depiction in some of his state portraits. This is the case in particular on Johann Valentin Tischbein's 1751 portrait of Willem IV. A state portrait by Pieter Frederik de la Croix of William V as a child (1753) also depicts him full-length and in monarchical style, resulting in a representation of the young prince as pre-figuration of the future adult and his status and political power – a status and power which however were not echoed on the majority of state portraits of the adult William V. For the full-length state portrait and its usage: Jenkins, *The State Portrait*, 14-17. On state portraits of children: Luba Freedman, 'Titian's Portrait of Clarissa Strozzi: The State Portrait of a Child', *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 31 (1989) 177.

▲
Johann Georg Ziesenis, Portrait of William V, Prince of
Orange-Nassau, ca. 1768-1769.
Mauritshuis, The Hague.

Most of the last Stadholder's official portraits did not show him full-length and seemed not to attribute a significant place or meaning to his legs – and the few portraits on which his legs were visible either hid them beneath armour or dressed them in *ancien régime* breeches. On Johann Georg Ziesenis' 1768 portrait of William V, the legs are cut off at the knee. The low front of the waistcoat make the legs seem even shorter, as does the orange sash which has been tied loosely below the waist and a slightly bulging belly. Cut off by the picture's frame, the depiction of the Stadholder's right leg suggests something of the effect on a man's legs of breeches worn with boots that reach up to or cover the knee: they are divided into two equally short parts.

King William I's legs had not been modelled after a clear ancestral precedent and did not invoke an unbroken dynastic continuity. Similar legs in closest proximity are those of a man who belonged to the period of rupture that immediately preceded William's rule – King Louis Bonaparte, appointed King of Holland by his brother in 1806 as a result of Napoleon's desire to obtain firmer control over the Netherlands, politics that lead to full annexation in 1810. In Charles Hodges' 1809 portrait of Louis Napoleon he wears the uniform of a Dutch colonel, decorated with the grand cross of the Royal Order of the Union, the order of knights Louis Napoleon began to establish almost immediately upon his arrival in the Netherlands in an attempt to create loyalty to his throne among the Dutch elite.[30] In this portrait, which was part of a wider effort to provide legitimacy for this monarch by stressing his desire to unite with the Dutch people, Louis' legs foreshadow those of William I. Louis Napoleon's legs also appear to be long as a result of wearing a pair of tight white trousers. They seem even longer than King William's because the front of Louis' waistcoat has been cut higher than that of William's tailcoat and the shafts of his black leather boots are lower than those of the Dutch King. Longer as Louis Bonaparte's legs might appear to be, they also bear a striking resemblance to those of William I – a resemblance that is also disquieting, for suggesting the provenance of William's leg's might, in some sense, be *French*. This would not likely to have been a comforting idea to the Restoration King. His claim to Kingship, after all, rested on the sense that a legitimately *Dutch* ruler had been united with a people who were truly his, and on the argument that his rule ended a long period of political upheaval and instability for which French revolutionary and dictatorial politics were to blame.

One branch in the genealogy of King William's legs leads, not just to France, but to its revolution and even to the more radical elements among its revolutionaries. The emergence of trousers as the preferred Western manner

30 George Sanders, 'Lodewijk Napoleon en de Orde van de Unie', in: Paul Rem and George Sanders, *Lodewijk Napoleon. Aan het hof van onze eerste koning, 1806-1810* (Zutphen 2006) 47-60.

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Charles Hodges, Louis Napoleon, King of Holland, 1809.
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

in modern times for dressing men's legs, and of the resulting male leg as long, one and undivided, cannot be reduced to a single origin. The trousers' hegemony did not originate with the *sans-culottes* ('without breeches'), although the mythology surrounding these radically republican artisans, small shopkeepers and tradesmen has proved spacious enough to accommodate this idea.[31] If not the sole point of emergence of modern menswear, the *sans-culottes'* adoption of long, loose, baggy trousers during the French Revolution is one of these points – and one that is relevant for the argument developed here. The *sans-culottes* took to wearing the trousers that were customarily worn by manual workers and turned them, together with a short jacket, wooden shoes and *bonnet rouge*, into a sign of ardent republicanism.[32] The outfit also signalled a specific kind of political masculinity. 'The rough costume of the working man became,', as Aileen Ribeiro argues, 'a badge of political virility and credibility'.[33]

Politically powerful as this sartorial expression of republican virility was, for many it was also too uncouth to emulate and in the later years of the revolution frighteningly reminiscent of the violence and excesses of the immediate past. The dress of the ideal moderate revolutionary as he emerged under Thermidor and the Directory, combined simplicity and dislike of ostentatious luxury on the one hand, with modest elegance and a sense of proportion on the other. He would combine a dark frock coat and a waistcoat with tight fitting pantaloons and a pair of boots that reached halfway up his calves.[34] The moderate revolutionary's tight-fitting pantaloons

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31   Richard Wrigley has argued that the *sans-culottes* outfit had a more prominent presence at the level of visual representation in idealising or satirical prints and paintings, than in social reality (Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances: Representations of Dress in Revolutionary France* (Oxford, New York 2002) chapter 5). For an argument that suggests a considerable number of men did don the *sans-culottes* 'uniform': Daniel Roche, *The People of Paris: An Essay in Popular Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley 1987) chapter 6. The French Revolution is attributed crucial significance in another persistent idea in the history of men's clothing. Following J.C. Flügel, historians often locate the origins of the 'great male renunciation' of an opulent manner of dress and the subsequent shift to a sober mode of male attire around 1800 to the French Revolution (J.C. Flügel, *The Psychology of Clothes* (London

1950) 110-111). For an assessment pointing to a longer term development to simplicity in male sartorial practices: David Kuchta, *The Three-Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity* (Berkeley, etc. 2002).

32   Aileen Ribeiro, *Fashion in the French Revolution* (London 1988) 85-86; Valerie Steele, *Paris Fashion: A Cultural History* (New York, Oxford 1988) 44-45, 47; Philippe Séguy, 'Costume in the Age of Napoleon', in: Katell le Bourhis (ed.), *The Age of Napoleon: Costume from Revolution to Empire, 1789-1815* (New York 1989) 52-55.

33   Ribeiro, *Fashion,* 85-86. For the politics of masculinity of the *sans-culottes* Sean M. Quinlan, 'Men without Women?: Ideal Masculinity and Male Sociability in the French Revolution, 1789-99', in: Christopher E. Forth and Bertrand Taithe (eds.), *French Masculinities: History, Culture and Politics* (Houndmills, New York 2007) 39-40.

34   Ribeiro, *Fashion,* 113-114.

were very different from the loose and baggy trousers of the *sans-culottes*.[35] Nevertheless, the long, undivided trousers legs of his pantaloons continued to signal a rejection of the aristocratic breeches, and served as a confirmation of the political identity of the moderate revolutionary as a true man of the people. The long trouser legs had come to represent democracy, or rather the democratic community of men who had done away with the sartorial signs of social superiority and replaced them with trousers that represented equality based on a shared masculinity.

The silhouette of the moderate revolutionary's dress exerted a great influence on men's fashion in the later years of the revolution. It also shaped the costume worn by the man whose mission it was to end the revolutionary turmoil. The costume Napoleon had designed for himself and his two fellow-consuls in 1799 consisted basically of the same elements and produced a similar body shape. Although made out of much more expensive fabrics, adorned with the accessories of power and embroidered with gold, Napoleon's costume as consul also consisted of a cut-away coat, tight white pantaloons and boots that reached no further than halfway up the calf.[36] With absolute power however, came a return to the sartorial style of the *ancien régime*. After 1805, Napoleon increasingly replaced pantaloons with breeches and he introduced a highly elaborate system of court and official dress reminiscent of the ceremony and opulence of the court at Versailles.[37] Nevertheless, in 1809 his brother in the Netherlands, in an attempt to appear as a good King who was both devoted and close to his people, had his portrait painted wearing a uniform in the same style as that of Napoleon consul's costume of 1799. Louis' uniform consisted of the same elements out of which the first consul's costume had been made up, and it produced a similar pair of legs. This portrait did not just refer back to the dress of the first consul in his days before absolute power, it also echoed the silhouette and legs of the moderate revolutionary and, although increasingly faintly, the manly and democratic trousers of the *sans-culottes*.

The King's body

If the provenance of William I's legs was potentially disquieting, the same thing holds for the rest of his body. Compared to his father's, as it appeared on Johann Georg Ziesenis 1768 portrait, the legs were not the only part of the body that distinguished the son's physique. In Paelinck's state portrait the King's waist is small, a fact that is accentuated by the tightly tied orange sash. In contrast, the loosely tied sash around his father's waist suggests a

35   *Ibid.,* 113.

36   *Ibid.,* 6-139.

37   *Ibid.,* 40; Séguy, 'Costume', 85-94.

considerable girth. Above the sash and from between the open fronts of the Stadholder's cut-away coat, the stomach protrudes, accentuated by a row of golden buttons on the bright yellow waistcoat. Framed by the sash and open coat-fronts, the Stadholder's belly is the centre of the image and not, as in the case of his son, the lower body beneath a small waist. Rising from this small waist, the King's upper body is broad shouldered. The Stadholder's upper body has narrow and sloping shoulders, a shape suggested by the cut-away coat without shoulder fillings or epaulettes. The high, upturned collar on the King's coat suggests his head rests on a long and powerful neck. No such impression is created by the modest, downturned collar of his father's coat. Pear-shaped and with no legs to speak of, the Stadholder represented an eighteenth-century male body shape – a shape that to modern eyes looks 'feminine', but could never be mistaken for such by the contemporary observer. His son, with an inverted triangle for an upper body, resting on a pair of long, slim legs embodied the physical ideal of masculinity that had emerged in the late eighteenth century and from that point on would occupy a prominent position in politics and fashion alike – the body of neo-classicism.

The body of the King had been modelled after the conventions for representing the male body as articulated by neoclassicism. Its shape, proportions and *contrapposto* pose closely followed those of the ideal male body of antiquity as it had been rediscovered for aesthetics and art theory by Johann Winckelman, for art itself by painters such as Jacques-Louis David and sculptors such as Antonio Canova, and for politics by French revolutionaries. A widely shared renewed awareness and appreciation of the antique in the late eighteenth century came with a shift in representations of ideal male bodies in painting and sculpture.[38] The Apollo Belvedere, available for admiration in the Vatican collections since the Renaissance, became the model on which many late-eighteenth century standing male portraits and statues were based.[39] Tailors embarked on a project of 'classicizing the actual figure', replacing the 'old short-legged pear-shaped body with a lean, well-muscled [...] body with long legs'.[40] The new male suit consisted of coats with padded shoulders, tapering to a small waist under short waistcoats and coat-fronts and of tight long trousers which covered the legs from the high waist to the ankle. As art historian Anne Hollander puts it, the new tailoring created 'a classic nude figure made entirely of wool, leather and linen'.[41] This was the figure

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Antoine-Jean Gros, Bonaparte as First Consul ca. 1801-1802.

Musée de la Légion d'Honneur, Paris.

38 For this shift and its gender politics: Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Male Trouble: A Crisis in Representation* (London 1997).

39 Anne Hollander, *Sex and Suits: The Evolution of Modern Dress* (New York 1995) 84-85.

40 *Ibid.*, 86, 88.

41 *Ibid.*, 95.

Paelinck, trained in the aesthetics of neoclassicism by Jacques-Louis David himself, in his turn, recreated, oil on canvas, in William I's state portrait.

The ideal neoclassical male body lent itself particularly well to function as a model for an early-nineteenth century, full-length state portrait of a King or another male figure of authority. Neoclassical renderings of antique examples such as the Apollo Belvedere often concentrated on bringing out the masculine authority inherent in these examples. The 'Belvederesque' poses in neoclassical representations of the male body suggested 'an authority based on [...] a mutually reinforcing self-control and control of the environment'.[42] However the neoclassical male body was not the exclusive property of monarchy. During the French Revolution the white marble surface of this body had become inscribed with the language of radically democratic politics. Politically speaking, the male body of neoclassicism was a multi-purpose entity. It could represent power and authority as concentrated in and emanating from the body of one ruler, but also help legitimise power's democratic dispersal over a multitude of male citizens. In revolutionary political culture the neoclassical male body symbolised crucial political virtues and was appropriated by the male revolutionaries for themselves. It represented, for instance, a mental and physical *régénération* that ended the decay and corruption of the *ancien régime*. The liberated spirits of free citizens were seen to live in manly bodies that had regained a classical beauty associated with liberty. Such regenerated male bodies were contrasted, not just with the bodies of women, but also with the deformed and corrupted physiques of the effeminate aristocracy, products of despotism and luxury.[43]

Another virtue that the neoclassical male body represented was that of transparency. In revolutionary political culture, transparency was always contrasted with 'sinister' interests. What was not immediately visible to the scrutinising eye of the revolutionary people and its leaders was quickly deemed suspect and an indication of the existence of interests that went against those of the nation.[44] The politics of transparency between citizens and their state, and between citizen and citizen, were also politics of the body. Bodies that appeared as non-transparent to the revolutionary gaze provoked suspicion. Behind obstacles to transparency, such as aristocratic excessive and luxurious clothes or the aristocrats' layers of fat, a truth of corruption was presumed to hide.[45] The lean nudity of the male neoclassical body by contrast,

42 Anthea Callen, 'Ideal Masculinities: An Anatomy of Power', in: Nicholas Mirzoeff (ed.), *The Visual Culture Reader* (London, New York 2001) 409.

43 Quinlan, 'Men without Women?', 34. For the revolutionary notion of regeneration: Mona Ozouf, 'La Révolution française et la formation de l'homme nouveau', in: *L'Homme régénéré: Essais sur la Révolution française* (Paris 1989) 116-157.

44 François Furet, *Penser la Révolution française* (Paris 1978) 86, 103; Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley 1984) 44-47.

45 Antoine de Baecque, *The Body Politic: Corporeal Metaphor in Revolutionary France* (Stanford 1993) 239-241.

served as the emblem of transparency. The Enlightenment's celebration of nature manifested itself here in the association of the naturalness of the nude male body with the virtue of transparency.[46] This body had nothing to hide; it showed, to all who wanted to see, the true nature of its inhabitant, the regenerated, virtuous and free male citizen of the republic.

On Paelinck's state portrait the King's body has been constructed out of neoclassical materials that even include the semi-nudity suggested by the tightness of the royal trousers. His legs and body also carry other references, some of which point back to the Napoleonic years, others to the revolution, in both its radical and moderate guise, that preceded them. None of these references are able to establish a fixed meaning of the King's body. They have to contend with each other, and with a 'preferred reading' of the meaning of this body that is guided by the painting's mobilisation of the visual tropes of neoclassicism for the purposes of monarchy.[47] The meaning of the King's legs and body in other words, is overdetermined; it cannot be reduced to a single cultural site from which it supposedly originates. As such, the painting's meaning is also unstable – culturally, as well as politically. What, if anything, guarantees the dominance of the preferred reading of the image and the repression of its potentially subversive elements? Why would a Restoration monarchy be represented as resting on a pair of legs that might wander off to a Napoleonic and revolutionary past it was supposed to have transcended? Do this male body and this pair of men's legs and the political masculinity they point to, support or work against the staging of the Dutch Restoration monarchy?

Regimes of theatricality

In order to answer these questions it is useful to return to this article's focus on the *staging* of Restoration monarchies and to begin to think more historically about practices of staging and theatre, as well as about the relation of these practices to politics and gender. The lean male nudity of revolutionary neoclassicism was deployed against aristocratic sartorial excesses, including those in which Kings indulged.[48] From this perspective the luxurious and voluminous robes of the pre-Revolutionary state portrait began to appear as

46   For the association of naturalness with transparency in the work and agenda for moral and political regeneration of Jacques-Louis David: Matthew Craske, *Art in Europe 1700-1830* (Oxford, New York) 168-169.

47   For the concept 'preferred reading': Stuart Hall, 'Encoding, Decoding', in: Simon During (ed.), *The*

Cultural Studies Reader (New York, London 1993) 90-103.

48   For the role of revolutionary notions of transparency in the destruction of the political legitimacy of Louis XVI: Scholz, *Imaginierte Restauration*, 24-37.

deceitful political theatre, as a masquerade of corruption. The effectiveness of this re-signification beyond the revolutionary moment made post-Revolutionary state portraits in a traditional vein, such as those of Louis XVIII and George IV, seem overly theatrical and therefore politically ineffective.

In their time however, the pre-Revolutionary state portraits of Kings, with the opulent dressing up of their subjects, had also been recognised as theatrical but they functioned under a different cultural regime of theatricality. Under this regime theatre was not *merely* theatre – an assemblage of appearances behind which reality hid – but theatre in a sense was *all*. Reality was seen as profoundly shaped by performances of a theatrical nature. Concentrating on eighteenth-century notions of identity and the self, historian Dror Wahrman argues that these were governed by an '*ancien régime* of identity'.[49] The leading assumptions of this regime were, first, that identity was not fixed but malleable, double, or replaceable. Second, and related to this, under this regime identity did not appear as resting on a stable and deeply seated inner core of selfhood. Rather, it was assumed to be a matter of positioning oneself, or being positioned, in an externally given matrix of identity. As a result of this positioning, identity was conferred upon a person – from outside. Wahrman argues that this regime of identity forces twenty-first century historians to take the notion of the *theatrum mundi* more literally and radically than they are accustomed to do.[50] If the eighteenth-century world was a stage, it was not one with reality and truth hiding backstage, masked by the on-stage performance. Literally *all* the world was a stage. Roles and performances were not mere artificial appearances masking a true self; the self was the result of these roles and performances.[51]

An interesting accessory in the externally given matrix of identity was the wig – an accessory that also is helpful in connecting Wahrman's argument to masculinity and politics. The wig is one of most evocative and enduring signs in a post-eighteenth-century imagination, shaped by late eighteenth-century satire and revolutionary propaganda, of an aristocratic world of artifice, luxury and general debauchery. In this imagination men's wigs represent effeminacy, techniques of seduction both skilful and deceptive, and sexual licentiousness. These meanings definitely also circled around the

49 Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, London 2004) 168.

50 Wahrman, *The Making,* 167.

51 Eighteenth-century theories of the theatre and acting corresponded in this respect with wider cultural assumptions about the theatrical nature of reality. Actors, for instance were assumed to transform into the character they did not play, but, in a sense, had become. See: Paul Friedland, *Political Actors: Representative Bodies and Theatricality in the Age of the French Revolutio*n (Ithaca, London 2002).

bewigged heads of eighteenth-century men, but in general the wig represented masculinity and male authority in particular.[52] By wearing a wig men of standing adopted the appropriate sign of this male authority, an authority that the wig conferred upon them. The wig was a crucial accessory in a performance of rank, authority and masculinity, in which these were constituted, rather than merely suggested. This performance, moreover, was identifiable as such – the wig was not supposed to resemble real men's hair. This fact, however, did not undermine the effectiveness of this performance. It could not do so in a culture in which performance was never merely performance but the site of the constitution of reality.

By the first years of the nineteenth century, the wig had fallen from grace. This was partly the result of the revolutionary political ideals of transparency and naturalness and of the criticism of sartorial artifice they entailed. The naturalness of the neoclassical male body also resided in its hair, which came to carry as much political weight as its legs did. In France, many revolutionaries no longer wore a wig or hair powder. They had their hair cut short, often in a coupe *á la Titus* in neoclassical style, a coupe Napoleon also adopted.[53] In Paelinck's 1818 state portrait too, William I wears his hair short in a natural and loose cut, whereas his father's 1769 portrait depicts him wearing a wig. In the years between the production of the two portraits a change had take place in men's hairstyles that represents a simultaneous shift in the cultural meanings of theatricality and performance and of the strategies of political legitimisation these meanings enabled. William's natural hair makes his father's wig, in retrospect, look artificial – which it had not done in 1769, when the wig had conferred male authority on the Stadholder and when it had not been necessary to deny the element of performance in this conferral. The King's natural hair suggests he occupies a political world beyond masquerade and artifice, in which the citizen gets what he sees, and in which this very transparency and rejection of artifice signify political virtuousness.

To argue that William I's hair and the neoclassical elements of his body belonged to a political world built on a rejection of the regime of theatricality

52 I draw here on the work of Marcia Pointon who argues that for men the wig was both a necessary 'sign of virility, station and decency', but also threatened to undermine these because of its religious, sexual and moral associations: Marcia Pointon, 'The Case of the Dirty Beau: Symmetry, Disorder and the Politics of Masculinity', in: Kathleen Adler and Marcia Pointon (eds.), *The Body Imaged: The Human Form and Visual Culture since the Renaissance* (Cambridge 1993) 188;

Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, London 1993) 128. This ambiguity in the wig's meaning was fully exploited by late-eighteenth century critics of the aristocracy and by revolutionaries, ending in its becoming a sign of non-masculinity, i.e. of effeminacy, artifice and deception.

53 Ribeiro, *Fashion*, 53, 67, 117, 122.

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Unknown artist, Prince William of Orange-Nassau
ca. 1808.
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

that preceded it, and that his hair and body represented a naturalness that serves to unmask the artifice of the past, is not to say that they actually *were* natural. His body is dressed in a style that is meant to *suggest* the lean, manly and natural nudity of neoclassicism. Moreover, the neoclassical male body was in itself a highly specific and idealised version of the male body that represented naturalness, but was not therefore 'truly' natural. Naturalness, in other words, is a suggestion that results from a specific stylisation. William I's hair was styled to suggest virtuous naturalness, the short and loose cut made it appear natural according to early-nineteenth century cultural conventions. That these conventions represented naturalness, but were not identical to it, is borne out by the fact that divergent conventions for the depiction of naturalness existed in the same era. During his years as a Prince without country, William had his portrait done by an unknown Berlin artist who painted the Prince with his own hair. The cut is short and loose, almost bordering on wildness. The wildness of the Prince's hair visually corresponds with the darkly clouded sky in the background, lending the Prince a romantic aura of the uprooted aristocrat in exile. This is naturalness of a different nature than that suggested by the King's natural and yet controlled hairstyle of 1818.

In the 1818 state portrait the King's body and hair were styled to suggest virtuous naturalness, together they were part of a performance of an idealised natural male body. The theatrical element in all of this, however, was denied and rendered invisible.[54] This invisibility of the theatrical aspects of the performance of nature is what distinguishes this performance from those of the old regime of theatricality. There the need to make invisible the artifice of the masquerade was absent, given the leading cultural assumption that literally of all the world was a stage.

However, although the King's body is represented in the style of natural neoclassicism, the staging of William I as King on Paelinck's 1818 state portrait is also guided by the assumptions of the *ancien régime* of identity and theatricality. The presence of the attributes of monarchy, and of the royal ermine robe in particular, point to the persistence of these old regime assumptions. The eighteenth-century *ancien régime* of identity, Wahrman argues, had its roots in pre-modern Europe where clothes, for instance, had been invested with the power to literally 'transnature' the wearer. Linked to the power of external authorities, the power of clothes to literally constitute identity applied to the livery of household servants, but also to the robes

54 On the performative character of modern 'natural' gender identities: Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, London 1990) 136. For the ways in which performances of modern masculinity in particular manage to appear as non-performative: Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham 1998) 235-236.

of monarchs.[55] Already greatly diminished by the late-eighteenth century, this power attributed to clothes lived on in a few specific settings. It was still being appealed to in royal coronation ceremonies, and also in the staging of monarchy in the post-Revolutionary world where the constitutive power of royal robes was no longer a given. In Paelinck's state portrait, William has been outfitted with a bright red robe, lined with ermine. With this robe, the old regime of theatricality enters the picture, where it encounters the neo-classically styled body of the King, governed by a new regime of cultural representation in which nature is performed at the same time that this performance is denied.

Masculinity and the staging of monarchy

On the canvas of the 1818 state portrait then, monarchy is staged simultaneously in two contradictory regimes of theatricality. One is of old regime provenance, explicitly theatrical and assuming that political reality is constituted in performance; the other is post-Revolutionary, grounded in a denial of its own theatricality and suggesting the given presence of a politically virtuous nature. At this point it might seem as if the exploration of the historicity of practices of staging and theatricality has led merely to a rephrasing of the questions posed earlier. Why would a staging of a Restoration monarchy resort to an unstable and potentially subversive set of images that seems incapable of securely providing it with legitimacy? An awareness of the presence of two regimes of theatricality in the portrait can help answer this question, provided the two regimes are not presumed to only and necessarily contradict each other. In 1818, the old assumption that it is through 'the putting on [...] of coronation robes that the monarch becomes a monarch' no longer holds.[56] The external authority deemed capable of inscribing monarchical power on the King's body through the putting on of the robe has been denied in the course of the revolutionary destruction of the traditional sources of monarchical legitimacy. In the absence of this external authority, political legitimacy now flows from the male body itself. The King's body is no longer transformed by its being covered in the ermine robe; this body, styled in natural, neoclassical fashion and carrier of associations of political virtue, inscribes meaning on the robe. The naturalness of the King's body undoes the robe's artificiality. The successful performance of a manly,

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55 Wahrman, *The Making*, 177-178. Here Wahrman draws in particular on Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge 2000).

56 Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, 2.

virtuous naturalness prevents the robe from appearing as a merely theatrical piece of costume and re-invests it with political power. This then, is the work performed by masculinity in the staging of the Dutch restoration monarchy in Joseph Paelinck's 1818 state portrait of King William I. Successfully appearing as natural and as emblematic of political virtue, it provided the theatre of the Restoration monarchy with credibility and made it 'real'. It reconciled the opposing forces that constituted the Restoration – but only temporarily.[57] In the longer run, the legs that were fit for a King turned out to be equally suited to support political projects of a more subversive nature. ◄

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57 For the contradictory nature of the Restoration regimes see the introductions to: David Laven and Lucy Riall, (eds.), *Napoleon's Legacy: Problems of Government in Restoration Europe* (Oxford, New York 2000) and Michael Broers (ed.), *Europe after Napoleon: Revolution, Reaction and Romanticism* (Manchester, New York 1996).