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The Netherlands

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

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### **Citation**

Vergeer, T. (2022, April 6). *The theatre of emotions: the success of Spanish drama in the Low Countries (1617-1672)*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3281853>

Version: Publisher's Version

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**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

## Touchy-Feely

### *The Embodied Expression of Emotions in Dutch Comedias*

When Queen Joanna enters stage in the second act of De Graef's *Joanna Koningin van Napels*, she is faced with an ultimatum to either marry Prince Andreas, the power-hungry royal from Hungary, or face an occupation by Hungarian forces. This ultimatum also implies that she must abandon her long-time lover Prince Lodewijck of Taranto. Which choice should she make? Joanna is emotionally conflicted and emotionally suffering. She embodies her emotions through the use of her singing voice, which for the moment must offer her some emotional relief, an *emotional refuge*. A significant part of her feelings are enveloped in physical language, language that originates in or is related to the queen's body, and also demonstrates the conflict between the Queen's Two Bodies: the natural body and the body politic, between which lies a tension. On the one hand, the queen is a woman with personal, embodied desires and ambitions; on the other, she is a political, symbolic, and 'eternal' figure with a duty to her subjects.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, Joanna must reconcile the existence of her two bodies, and copes with her internal conflict through an emotionally expressive song.

The audience thus hears the queen sing that her soul, in pining for her lover, is being dissolved ('versmelt') in her own tears. She fashions her emotions as a chemical reaction between her inward soul and the outward expression of her body's tears. The fact that her tears are explicitly also 'salty' only adds to the severity of those emotions. Spectators can almost taste the tears on her lips:

JOANNA.        I have tested your loyalty by a ruse,  
                       And I shall highly reward your loyalty;  
                       After I will crown with this crown  
                       The head of him for whom my soul laments  
                       Melted in sad and salty tears.<sup>2</sup>

1 For the philosophical-political concept of the King's Two Bodies in premodern European politics, see, e.g., Kantorowicz 1957, 7–15. For a specific application of the concept to Lope's *La reina Juana de Nápoles*, see Salvi 2005.

2 De Graef 1664, 14: 'KONINGIN. Ick heb door list uw trouw beproeft, / En zal uw trouw op 't hoogst

Her tongue is chained, love has stung her like a bee, her heart must be reined in like a horse, her bosom can only be unlocked by a key, and her passion burns in the flames of Troy's fiery love as was discussed in Chapter 3 in reference to Joanna's song. The queen's emotions are embodied, physical. Spectators must have found this one of the most touching and relatable scenes in the play. How were these embodied emotions portrayed by actors on stage considering that these emotions had to be convincing in order to engage and move spectators?

Queen Joanna's language is interspersed with references to her body. The body is generally already a reference point for the construction of emotional language: as pain manifests itself in a specific place in the body, we produce language that is suitable to describe the pain's physical effect. To describe how emotions are constructed as embodied, I rely on Scheer's concept of *emotional practices*: these are emotional behaviours that we have learned at a young age and are, as such, recognisable within our own cultural context.<sup>3</sup> Thus, Queen Joanna's emotional practices had to be understood by the Dutch audience. To ensure the power of her emotions is conveyed, she expresses her inner conflict between doing what is socially expected of her as queen, and what she desires as an individual woman. She is aware of the taboo associated with excessive, unrestrained emotions: love has carried her away to a place unknown ('Waer toe heeft my de min vervoert?') and she desperately seeks someone capable of restraining her (overly) loving heart ('Wie kan een minnend hart betoomen?'), providing an outlet for the suffering that has resulted from her 'goal conflict'.<sup>4</sup> Her song reflects how the body (and her body in particular) is socially situated within her culture—that is, the Dutch culture, which counts here as an *emotional regime*—where emotional excess is always deemed dangerous and undesirable. This, of course, echoes the many inner struggles demonstrated in *dramatis personae* on the Dutch stage.<sup>5</sup>

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beloonen; / Naer dat ick met dees kroon zal kroonen / Het hooft, om wien mijn ziel bedroeft / Versmelt in droeve zilte tranen.'

3 Scheer 2012, 200; Reddy 2001, 118–122, 125–126.

4 De Graef 1664, 14.

5 Konst 1993, 31, 35–38, 44, 50–53. Outside of theatre, this is also attested by Sierhuis. When Hooft grieves at losing his wife and only child in a letter to his friend and poet Tesselschade Roemers, he denounces Seneca's stoicism, which he had so ardently propagated in his plays *Geaerd van Velsen* and *Baeto*. Instead, Hooft 'places love as embodied, and grief, being coterminous with memory, as constitutive of identity.' The same emotional struggle between mind and body is reflected in Roemers' own commemoration of her husband and daughter's deaths written eleven years after Hooft's letter. According to Sierhuis, 'Her poem fashions grief and tears simultaneously into an inescapable fact of embodied life, and as a form of self-imposed spiritual servitude, a paradox invited by the double dualism of soul versus body and spirit versus flesh' (2016, 343–344).

Naturally, Joanna's conflict was staged by an actor who displayed the Queen's emotions and brought the 'goal conflict' to life, in turn affecting audiences: contemporary humoural theory assumed that passions circulated both within and between bodies. This meant that within the confined space of the theatre, the actor's emotion transferred, like a contagion, to 'the bodies of the spectators in a quite material view of the operations of affect, based on agreement of the spirits and humours of actor and audience,' as Kristine Steenbergh argues.<sup>6</sup> Her assessment follows that of Katherine Rowe concerning the relationship between emotions and the humours:

These sympathies occurred between bodies as well as within them. Thus a playgoing audience that recognized the *topos* of 'weeping queens' would have understood conformation of their own humors as the logical extension of the emotion script. The active spirits in a player's body were understood to move an auditor's mind by a kind of classical *enargeia*, passing through the eyes and ears to excite similar physical motions.<sup>7</sup>

Within the framework of this belief system, Lope wrote that the playwright should 'paint' soliloquies in such a way that every speaker is transformed, and in turn moves the auditor, by being moved themselves.<sup>8</sup> We can, therefore, see that theatre is a medium that relies on *emotion language*, spoken by an actor using both voice and body to communicate with spectators. By drawing on Scheer regarding this bodily aspect of theatre, and by following Erika Fischer-Lichte's considerations of theatre as performative medium, I focus in this chapter on theatre as an *embodied medium* to explain how Dutch adaptations of *comedias* were so effective at harnessing emotion, a quality which contributed to their outstanding popularity.<sup>9</sup>

In theatre, the actor's gestures, movements, and expressions all actively draw attention to the character's emotional conflicts. Furthermore, these gestures, movements, and expressions must be 'larger than life' to be clearly visible to spectators, and also because actors express certain *bodily* emotions that are otherwise suppressed outside the safe and controlled space offered by the theatre. Emotions are not only the 'habits emerging where bodily capacities and cultural requirements meet,' as

6 Steenbergh 2014, 99–100.

7 Rowe 2003, 58.

8 Lope de Vega [1609] 2003, vv. 274–276.

9 Fischer-Lichte 2000; 2014, 18–46; Ramakers 2004, esp. 127–128.

Scheer puts it, but the gestures, movements, and expressions that outwardly express them can also explicitly and intentionally deviate from the ‘automatic movements, impulses, and activations [...] learned practice, acquired through mimesis’ that are part of each actor’s stagecraft.<sup>10</sup> That is to say, spectators see the actor’s body and the emotions that it showcases; they can both recognise and interpret it as something that produces and conveys meaning on the basis of familiar cultural codes and modes of expression. These codes and modes have been recorded many times in books of acting, rhetoric, the meaning of gestures, art, and simply in daily life.<sup>11</sup> With his or her technical training on how to use the body during acting, an actor can convey a purely emotional message, or even moralistic message about how emotions should be handled. Indeed, the body can be disciplined in such a way.<sup>12</sup> This is, at least, what Rodenburgh argued in response to other playwrights who he believes only cared that their audiences cheered and laughed: ‘I regard it much more laudable that eyes are tearing up at the sad examples and that hearts are moved by moralising acts.’<sup>13</sup>

Dutch adaptations of *comedia nueva* are fortified with embodied emotions. By foregrounding specific emotions in an embodied way, playwrights could problematise their position, role, and permissibility in Dutch and Flemish culture. Emotions that are embodied and expressed by an acting body can effectively foreground these emotions in spectators, reminding them of their own lived experiences of these emotions. From this perspective, I also discuss the performances of actor (and playwright) Adam Karelsz van Germez, Ariana van den Bergh, and Susanna van Lee, who arguably contributed to the success of *comedia nueva* in the Low Countries. I am primarily interested in the techniques that these actors used and how their performances may have affected spectators.

Further, in the discussion that follows I consider how actors may have embodied the emotions vocalised and visualised in Van Germez’ *Vervolgde Laura*, Vos’ *De beklagelycke dwangh*, and finally Wouters’ *De verliefde stiefmoeder*. I discuss how emotional language is converted into corresponding physical gestures, body movements, and poses, and draw on the slightly earlier work of rhetoricians Jan van Mussem in

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<sup>10</sup> Scheer 2012, 202.

<sup>11</sup> This is the argument that Ben Albach follows in his study of Dutch comedians in the Low Countries and beyond (1977, 38–39). See, furthermore, Fischer-Lichte 2014, 33–34.

<sup>12</sup> This concept is also current in Kuijpers and Van der Haven 2016, 7–8. They consider early modern emotions in the context of the military and the battlefield, and how disciplining, drilling, and allocution contributed to emotional management among troops.

<sup>13</sup> Rodenburgh 1619, 189: ‘ick achtet veel lofbaerder dat de ooghen traenen door droeve voorbeelden, en de herten bewegen door stichtige bedryven.’

Rhetorica, *dye edele const van welsegghene* (1553) and Matthijs de Castelein in *De const van rhetoriken* (1555), and painter Karel van Mander in *Het Schilder-boeck* (1604). This contemporary evidence demonstrates that the emotional practices in *comedias* drew on a common cultural experience. The success of *comedia nueva* in the Low Countries also relied heavily on the performances of theatre stars, who with their fame helped *comedias* become what I believe to be the most significant seventeenth-century genre in terms of its embodied expression of emotions.

### Van Germez: The Spirited, Young Lover

The play *Vervolgde Laura*—an adaptation of Lope's *Laura perseguida* and Rotrou's *Laure persecutée*—by actor and playwright Adam Karelsz van Germez is a good starting point to discuss how Van Germez brought the textual emotions of his character Prince Orantee alive. Not only was Van Germez 'one of the most eloquent actors of his time' according to Brandt, he also interpreted the role of the spirited, young lover numerous times while acting in many *comedias* adapted from Spanish, and also in his own *Vervolgde Laura*.<sup>14</sup>

Being the most famous actor in his time, Van Germez often performed the leading role in *comedias*. According to the *Parsonaadjeboek* ('Book of *Dramatis Personae*') of the 1658/9 theatre season, some of his roles in addition to Prince Orantee in *Vervolgde Laura* had included Count Lodewijck in Rodenburgh's *Cassandra en Karel* (1617), Don Rodrigo in Van Heemskerck's *De verduytsde Cid* (1641), Count Astolfo in Vos' *Gedwongen vrient* (1646), Prince Carel in De Fuyter's *Verwarde hof* (1647), Count Henryck in Vos' *De beklaaglycke dwangh*, King Anthony in De Wijse's *Voorzigtige dolheit* (1650), and Duke Alexander in Dullaart's *Alexander de Medicis* (1653).<sup>15</sup> Many of these plays had already premiered many years before Van Germez' roles were recorded in the 1658/9 *Parsonaadjeboek*. Ben Albach expects, therefore, that Van Germez played those 'young lover' roles beginning sometime between 1640 and 1650, although he was already well into his forties.<sup>16</sup> Being the star that he was, he regularly performed the protagonist in the Dutch adaptations of Spanish *comedias*, which could have had enormous impact on the genre's importance and popularity.

14 Albach 1946, 50; 1977, 39–41. The quote reads in Dutch: 'een der welsprekendste Tooneelspeelderen van zijn tijd.'

15 See the *Parsonaadjeboek* 1658–1659, inv.nr. 429 in the Stadsarchief Amsterdam.

16 Albach 1977, 41.

Van Germez was also considered the most skilled of all the actors enlisted by the Amsterdam Public Theatre. As such, he must have known how to construct emotions textually in his own *Vervolgde Laura*, but more importantly, also how to act these emotions convincingly. His colleagues said more than once that he was a serious actor, dedicated to his job, with a resonant, sonorous voice, with which he deeply moved his audience.<sup>17</sup> Reyer Anslo writes, for instance, in his introduction to Van Germez' *Klaagende Kleazjenor, en doolende Doristee* (1647) that 'his tongue, which is so sorrowful and adept in speech, makes everyone cry, and breaks stone and steel.'<sup>18</sup> He compares the actor to Rome's legendary Roscius and Greece's Polus, both renowned for their eloquence. While Polus apparently generated genuine tears by appearing onstage with the his late son's urn in his hands, Van Germez did not need any such aids.<sup>19</sup> He says himself in his *Eduard, anders stantvastige weduwe* (premiered 1656; published 1660) that 'what the common man calls happiness was never in me.'<sup>20</sup> Albach concludes, therefore, that his melancholic nature resonated in his voice.<sup>21</sup> That melancholia apparently affected the audience time and again. Fellow actor (and *comedia* author) Leon de Fuyter describes in a sonnet added to Van Germez' *Vervolgde Laura* that his colleague 'pricks the hearts, and tickles them through the ears.'<sup>22</sup>

#### Embodying the Emotions of 'Vervolgde Laura'

With his vast experience, it was only natural that Van Germez played Prince Orantee in his own *Vervolgde Laura*. In this role, the actor had to display a full range of emotions, which culminate in a monologue in the fifth scene of the fourth act. Therefore, an analysis of this specific monologue demonstrates how Van Germez' emotional acting convinced his audience and moved them to compassion and empathy for the Prince. The monologue is fourteen verses long, and is therefore reminiscent of the classical sonnet.<sup>23</sup> In Spanish drama, the sonnet was used by characters expecting an

17 See Albach 1977, 39–41, 80–81, and Blom 2021a, 72, 92.

18 Anslo 1647, fol. A4<sup>r</sup>: 'zijn tong altijdt, zoo droef en wel ter taal, doet huylen al het volk, en barsten steen en staal.'

19 Anslo 1647, fol. A4<sup>r</sup>.

20 Van Germez 1660, fol. A3<sup>r</sup>: 'het geene den ghemeen man gheluk noemt, was nooit in mij.'

21 Albach 1977, 40.

22 De Fuyter 1645, fol. \* 8<sup>r</sup>: 'd'heren prikt, en kittelt door 't gehoor.'

23 This sonnet in *Vervolgde Laura*, however, is not in the same form as the Petrarchan sonnet, which often rhymes *abba abba cdc dcd*.

impending event;<sup>24</sup> in Petrarch's hands, the sonnet expressed the cruelty of a desired lover, whose rejected suitor speaks in verse. As an adaptation from the Spanish by way of the French *Laure persecutée*, Van Germez's *Vervolgde Laura* follows Rotrou's text in its application of both of these uses of the sonnet. The suitor is here Prince Orantee, and Laura is supposedly the cruel lover; Orantee speaks the monologue while expecting a renewed encounter with Laura, thus following the Spanish use of the sonnet as well.<sup>25</sup> By reciting the sonnet in this play, Van Germez could express the requisite emotions through the use of both his voice and his full body. He laments:

I am finally alone here. I can now freely pour out  
 My sorrow and love without hesitation! Oh my heart,  
 How do you hang in the scales with the pointer between both!  
 My honour uses force to take me from here!  
 Because as I see her there, however great my anger,  
 I fall silently to earth before her feet. Certainly,  
 A gaze from her would disarm me.  
 And if I lament, it will be through tears. How honour  
 And love make me look dejected! It will surely happen, as I approach her,  
 That she receives mercy: because such an enemy shows that he  
 Is inclined to make peace, when he is the first to visit. What to decide  
 In the face of the evil that transports me? Shall I expose myself  
 Before this door until the day finds me? I am ashamed!  
 Speak to her, though with a fake voice, and name.<sup>26</sup>

24 Lope de Vega [1609] 2003, v. 308: 'el soneto está bien en los que aguardan.'

25 In Lope's original *Laura perseguida*, Orantee speaks in *redondillas*, which are traditional octosyllabic stanzas made up of quatrains with a rhyme scheme of *abba* (as per Thacker 2008, 117). For the original monologue, see Lope de Vega 1614, fol. 19<sup>r</sup>. Lope writes in his *Arte nuevo* that *redondillas* are used for affairs of love; see Lope de Vega [1609] 2003, v. 312. In the French intermediate text, Rotrou had already restructured Orantee's monologue into fourteen lines, thus resembling a sonnet.

26 Van Germez 1645, 54: 'k ben eindelijk hier alleen. nu mag ik vry mijn smert, / En liefde, zonder schroom uitstorten! ô mijn hert, / Hoe hangd gy in de waeg met d'eev'naer tusschen beyde! / Mijn eer gebruikt geweld om my van hier te leiden! / Want zo ik haer dar zien, hoe groot mijn gramschap is, / 'k Val stom ter aerden voor 'er voeten neer. gewis / Een lonk van haer zou mijn de wapenen ontrukken. / En zo ik klaeg het zal door tranen zijn. hoe drukken / My, d'eer, en min! 't gaet vast, zo 'k haer genaek, dat zy / Gena verwerft: want zulk een vyand, toont dat hy / Tot vrede neigd, die eerst bezoekt. Wat dan besloten / In 't quaed dat my vervoerd? zal ik my hier ontblooten / Voor deeze deur tot my den dag hier vint? ik schaem / My! spreek 'er aen doch valsch van stem, en naem.'



This sonnet-resembling monologue strikes at a precarious moment in the play: although the prince thinks that his beloved Laura has been unfaithful, he is still drawn to her home. He feels sorrow that the woman he was going to marry betrayed him; he cannot fully believe what has happened as he still loves her; and he is also prepared to forgive her if she would appear before him. To navigate these inner conflicts, Van Germez had to alternate between intense and contradictory emotions in just one short, passionate monologue. When the prince enters stage, he is caught in an internal emotional conflict between his love and his sorrow. As he is alone, no obstacles stand in the way of his full expression of those emotions. He not only invokes his heart in this moment, but also uses vivid language to illustrate how his heart balances between his emotions. Meanwhile, Orantee's honour equally pressures the prince to leave his place outside Laura's home, before he gives in to her beauty or begins to cry. Both his honour and his love bring him pain.

How, then did Van Germez manage to express in just fourteen verses these very distinct emotions in succession or even at the same time? Apparently, love, sorrow, and honour are incompatible. Surely, it cannot have been an easy task, but he was a man of practice and experience. Yet, practice and experience are not tangible, but treatises and depictions in the visual arts (prints and paintings) are. Van Germez' acting may have benefitted from what was written on the expression of emotions in these contemporary sources. This is attested by Van Germez' colleague, Thomas Geritsz de Keyser, with whom he worked early in his career. De Keyser was a member of a famous family of painters and architects; he was the nephew of architect Hendrick de Keyser. Albach convincingly suggests that De Keyser was probably familiar with Karel van Mander's *Het Schilder-boeck* and the treatise therein on how to properly depict emotions. For centuries, excerpts from 'Den Grondt der Edel vry Schilder-const' have been quoted by actors who deepened their knowledge of expression, gestures, and emotions through its pages. Therefore, it may very well be that Van Germez also learned how to express emotions from Van Mander's *Het Schilder-boeck*.<sup>27</sup>

Alternatively, or perhaps additionally, Van Germez may have also consulted *Rhetorica, dye edele const van welsegghene* by the Fleming Jan van Mussem, a reprint of which was made in Gouda in 1607. Van Mussem had collected the teachings of Cicero and Quintilian and made them available in Dutch for aspiring speakers, but its audience undoubtedly also included rhetoricians and actors at the beginning of their careers.<sup>28</sup> Van Mussem wrote, for instance, that pronunciation originates 'in the stirring of the

<sup>27</sup> Albach 1977, 38–39.

<sup>28</sup> Albach 1977, 38–39.

body, which is nothing else than a movement of the limbs and the countenance which gives a good semblance of the truth to all the things you say.<sup>29</sup> We can see, then, how Van Germez could have honed his art by taking notice of how to demonstrate emotions, through both word and action, according to Van Mander, Van Mussem, or both.

But no other work was known as well to rhetoricians than Matthijs de Castelein's *De const van rhetoriken* (1555, 'The Art of Rhetoric'). This booklet was part of the collections (or archives) of many rhetoricians' chambers well into the seventeenth century, as *De const* was the rhetoricians' handbook on poetry writing, and how to properly use rhetoric in both text and speech.<sup>30</sup> In it, De Castelein tells the aspiring rhetorician that his body should be able to demonstrate emotions convincingly: 'The body must be especially good / With tears, with moans, with voice, with eyes. / Therefore, every actor has his own style.'<sup>31</sup>

The rhetorical style of acting described in Van Mussem's *Rhetorica* and De Castelein's *De const* remained the gold standard throughout the seventeenth century. This has consequences for our perception of *comedia nueva* on the Dutch stage; we must consider that the Dutch acting style differed from the style that Lope had intended for *comedia nueva*. In his *Arte nuevo*, Lope wrote that when delivering a soliloquy the actor should himself be moved in order to move spectators, as I discussed earlier.<sup>32</sup> Thacker argued on the basis of this advice that 'the transformation of the lover through the poetry that he or she speaks seems to suggest that—at least on some occasions—Lope favoured a naturalistic style of performance in which the empathic response of the public was the goal.'<sup>33</sup> This naturalistic style of acting would only become common in the Dutch Republic in the eighteenth century with actors such as Marten Corver and his students. Corver broke with the Dutch acting tradition of his own teacher, actor Jan Punt, by pursuing a more natural, more realistic style under the influence of new French acting and theatre theories.<sup>34</sup> In the seventeenth century,

29 Van Mussem 1607, 23: 'int roeren des lichaems, twelcke anders niet en is, dan een bestier der ledenen ende des Aenschijns bijden welcken dat een goet schijn der waerheyt geeff, al tgene datmen seggende is.'

30 Van Dixhoorn 2009, 189–190.

31 De Castelein 1986, strophe 175: 'Veel behendicheits, moet den lichame dooghen / Met tranen, met suchten, met vooyse, met ooghen, / Diueersche personagen maken diueersche actie.' My translation is largely based on that of Bussels 2010, 242.

32 Lope de Vega [1609] 2003, vv. 274–279.

33 Thacker 2008, 116.

34 Albach 1946, 115–128.

the gestures of actors were, however, still the highly stylised movements outlined by rhetorical models, according to Albach.<sup>35</sup> This is also attested in an account by De Brune de Jonge, who writes that *decorum* makes acted emotions more pleasurable to watch:

While someone who truly cries, or who is truly angry, is seen during common incidents and expositions; in the imitation, however, some dexterity and swiftness is applied, because it comes about more appropriately: we take no pleasure in the first, at the same time that the second strangely entertains us.<sup>36</sup>

These rhetorical models certainly also gave Van Germez a point of reference when he had to act out the emotional conflict at the monologue's start, which might have otherwise been hard to convincingly express.

Thus, the delivery of Orantee's monologue by Van Germez could be analysed in the light of these treatises, which instructed the actor on the appropriate gestures and facial expressions to convey the love, sorrow, and honour that are uttered in the monologue. When Orantee expresses how his heart is weighed down by both love and sorrow, Van Germez may have embodied Orantee's emotions of love with a kind, smiling appearance as was described by Van Mander:

The depiction of the affect of love is built  
With a kind, smiling countenance,  
With embraces, and arms encompassed,  
And by making the heads hang bending  
Towards each other, like they are poured full of love,  
With the right hands folded in each other.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Albach 1946, 57; 1977, 40–41.

<sup>36</sup> De Brune de Jonge 1644, 344: 'Dewijl dan yemand die waarlix weent, of gram is, in gemeene voorval-  
len, en vertoogen gezien wort; in de nabootzing daarentegen, zoo zy gevoeghlijker wijze geschiet,  
eenige behendigheid en gaaueheid te pas komt: scheppen wy geen vermaak in't eerste, daar ons het  
tweede zonderling verlustigt.'

<sup>37</sup> Van Mander [1604] 1969, fol. 23<sup>v</sup>: 'T'affect der Liefden uytbeeldinghe bouwen, / Met een vriendelijck  
toelachend' aenschouwen, / Met omhelsinghen, en aermen omvanghen, / En de hoofden  
toeneyghende doen hanghen / nae malcander, als vol Liefden doorgoten, / Met de rechte handen  
in een ghesloten.'

However, Prince Orantee mentions at the same time that he is afflicted by his honour and feels despair, sorrow, and also compassion. How Van Germez could have expressed honour is a matter for conjecture, because Van Mander and Van Mussem do not discuss it as such. The combination of love and sorrow that Orantee wants to simultaneously communicate shows that his emotions are not simple or singular, but rather complex and contradictory. The prince's inner emotional conflict limits the actor in exactly how kind the expression on his face can be to communicate his love under such conditions. Then, it also becomes clear that an actor can never fully learn acting from a book or other regulations, as Albach rightly observed.<sup>38</sup> This demonstrates why *comedia nueva* needed an actor like Van Germez, who had enough experience to take on such a role. Roles like Prince Orantee required the actor to effectively transcend Van Mander's descriptions on conveying basic emotions.

Van Germez perhaps combined Van Mander's instructions to depict love alongside fear, sorrow, and compassion. Van Mander ascribes comparable expressions and gestures to all three passions. The master painter describes that sorrow, fear, and compassion are best illustrated as follows:

Now, to make a sad countenance, full of pity,  
 And inward passion, without the running  
 Of tears, as happens sometimes,  
 One should raise the left eyebrow  
 With the left eye half closed,  
 And let the nasolabial fold  
 Be pulled up and shortened in the same way:  
 This way, one shall depict a fearful being.  
 The head shall also hang down to one side,  
 The cheek raised towards the previously mentioned eye  
 Shall pull the mouth open on that side.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Albach 1977, 38–39.

<sup>39</sup> Van Mander [1604] 1969, fol. 26<sup>v</sup>: 'Om nu een droef ghelaet, vol medelijden, / En inwendighe passy, sonder storten / Der tranen, te maken, alst beurt somtijden, / Salmen de wijnbrauwen ter slincker sijden / Met d'ooghe half toe wat om hoogh' opschorten, / En laten derwaert trecken en vercorten / T'vouken, dat van de neuse loopt in wanghe, / Soo salmen uytbeelden een wesen banghe. / T'hoofft sal oock hanghen eensijich ghestopen / De wanghe nae t'voornoemt ooghe verheven / Sal op die sijde den mondt trecken open.'

At the same time, emotional torment is shown through the actor's placement of their hands on their torso:

The one hand will touch the bosom on the heart,  
And the other will be attached to its same shoulder:  
Thus, with the inward turned outwards, positioned  
Such as to clutch or to protect something,  
To fully wear out an oppressed mind.<sup>40</sup>

Alternatively, to express abject despair:

The hands on the heart, lying crossway,  
The head pushing a shoulder, yes like also  
The body's securities are used to do,  
As the red clouds make wet the pale cheeks  
With tepid rain.  
The hands together with fingers intertwined,  
Contrary to each other, like West and East,  
The face shall look dejectedly upwards to the beyond.<sup>41</sup>

When actors wanted to indicate tears, they should do as follows:

To force or grapple the tearing eye,  
Sometimes a hand or a handkerchief comes forward,  
And the head, with sad wetness burdened,  
Will be firmly supported by the hand,  
And this is held up with the elbow;  
Yes, all limbs should nearly  
Lie limp or hang,

40 Van Mander [1604] 1969, fol. 26<sup>v</sup>: 'D'een handt op t'herthe den boesem sal nopen, / En d'ander haer eyghen schouder aenclieven, / Soo met t'binnenste uytwaert ghewent, even / Ghestelt, als om yet te vatten oft schutten, / Om een gheperst ghemoedt wel uyt te putten.'

41 Van Mander [1604] 1969, fol. 26<sup>v</sup>: 'De handen op't herte, cruyswijs gheleghen, / T'hoofd druckend' een schouder, jae vry soo mochten / Oock al s'Lichaems borghers wel mede pleghen, / Als die roode wolcken met laeuwen reghen / De bleycke wange-velden nat bevochten, / De handen t'samen met vinghers doorylochten, / Contrary van een, als Westich en Oostich, / Sal t'Aenschijn elderswaert op sien mistroostich.'

As if dead or riddled with disease.<sup>42</sup>

Van Germez certainly had to make use of his full body. Yet, alongside all these physical movements, the emotions must be enforced by proper use of the voice, at which Van Germez was especially skilled, according to the abovementioned testimonies. Van Mussem says 'that one cannot find a better pronunciation nor describe one, than to pronounce and relate something in a way which does not resemble artifice, but comes directly from the mind and heart.'<sup>43</sup>

While preparing the text from which Van Germez would develop *Vervolgde Laura*, translator Jan Hendrik Glazemaker already found the emotions of love, sorrow, and honour in the French *Laure persecutée* (1639) by Jean Rotrou.<sup>44</sup> Rotrou had translated Orantee's lamentation in Lope's *Laura perseguida* quite freely and with more focus on the Prince's internal emotional conflict.<sup>45</sup> However, Van Germez adapted the monologue even more by including shame: right before the prince decides to knock on Laura's door again, he deliberates whether he should expose his true feelings to Laura. If he confesses his love to her, it could result in him losing face. Thus, he feels ashamed, as his emotional exposure also involves a potential loss of honour.

The emotion of shame is more elaborately constructed in the Dutch text than by the reflection 'C'est trop delibrer' ('It's too much to consider') found in Rotrou's adaptation. Van Germez differs here from the French and adds the embodied expression of 'ontblooten' to the Dutch text. The Dutch verb 'ontblooten' indicates that Orantee is about to lay his soul and inner thoughts bare for Laura to take full control over. Therefore, it is only natural that shame could follow this vulnerability, particularly

42 Van Mander [1604] 1969, fol. 26<sup>v</sup>: 'Om de tranend' ooghe drucken oft dwaden, / Sal somtijts handt oft doeck daer comen vooren, / En t'hoofd, met droeve vochticheyt beladen, / Sal de handt behulpelijck staen in staden, / En dat met den elleboogh onderschooren, / Iae alle leden soudens schier behooren / Daer slappelijck te ligghen oft te hanghen, / Als doot, oft gheheel met siekten bevanghen.'

43 Van Mussem 1607, 25: 'datmen gheen beter uyt-Sprake vinden noch beschrijven mach, dan een sake uyt-trespreken ende te vertellen sulcker Wijse dat niet een versierde sake en gelijckt, maer geheelijc uyten sin ende uyter herten te comene.'

44 Cf. Rotrou 1639, 97–98: 'En fin, me voicy seul, et je puis librement / escouter mon amour, et mon ressentiment; / Mon coeur, entre les deux, également balance, / Honneur, pour m'arrester, use de violence: / Car si j'ose la voir, quel que soit mon courreux, / Tu me verras muet tomber à ses genoux; / Un seul de ses regards m'arracheroit les armes, / Et si je me plaingnois, ce seroit par des larmes: / Si j'ose l'aborder, son pardon est certain; / L'ennemy qui visite a la grace à la main: / Queresoudrais-je donc au malqui me transporte? / Attens-je que le jour me treuve à cette porte? / C'est trop delibrer, levons-nous, parlons-luy, / Mais d'une fausse voix, et sous le nom d'autrui.'

45 Cf. Rotrou 1639, 97–98; Lope de Vega 1614, fol. 19<sup>r</sup>.

if he is rejected as he fears he will be. From his experience as an actor, Van Germez may have felt it necessary that Orantee expressed his shame more explicitly. This way, the embodiment of shame during his performance would probably have elicited more compassion from the audience. In this regard, Van Germez' adaptation can be considered a stronger text in the way that it theatrically employs emotions than either Rotrou's adaptation or even Lope's original.<sup>46</sup>

Van Mussem writes in his *Rhetorica* about eliciting compassion that 'this one should best learn from women, such as striking with the hands, nodding with the head, sometimes keeping everything still. And always with a mournful and miserable countenance.'<sup>47</sup> When Van Mussem writes, furthermore, that a sorrowful way of speaking is especially something that should be learned from women, it begs the question of how Dutch actresses embodied emotions in the productions of *comedia nueva* on the Dutch stage.

#### Embodied Emotions as Comic Relief

Sporadically, Van Germez also played a supporting role, especially in the newer adaptations dating from the mid-1650s as he grew older. Thus, the *Parsonaadjeboek* of 1658/9 records that Van Germez played the court master Alberto in Rodenburgh's *Celia en Prospero* (1617), one of the two citizens in *Sigismundus* (1654), the emperor's friend Narces in De Grieck's *Den grooten Bellizarius* (1658), or one of the three Hebrews in Serwouters' *Hester* (1659). Another minor role that Van Germez interpreted was that of the messenger in *Gysbreght van Aemstel*, which he apparently did convincingly and with much pathos.<sup>48</sup> Van Germez was apparently an earnest actor whose stage presence bore considerable *gravitas*.

The *comedia nueva* is, however, no tragedy. As discussed in Chapter 6, the genre staged the *gracioso* as its ubiquitous clownish figure. The *gracioso* offered comic relief to counterbalance the gravity of sorrowful and lovesick characters. When the *gracioso*

<sup>46</sup> This also contradicts the opinion that Van Germez' plays have little poetic value; see e.g. van der Aa 1878, 56. More recently, Porteman and Smits-Veldt asserted that *Vervolgde Laura* is more sober than the 'liberal' plays translated from Spanish, mistakenly believing that *Vervolgde Laura* was originally a French play (Porteman and Smits-Veldt 2008, 389).

<sup>47</sup> Van Mussem 1607, 25: 'dat salmen best aen de [van de] vrouwen leeren, als slaen metten handen, knicken metten hoofde, somtijts al stille houden. Ende altijts met rouwigen ende beroerden Aenschijnr [sic].'

<sup>48</sup> See the *Parsonaadjeboek* 1658–1659, inv.nr. 429 in the Stadsarchief Amsterdam; see also Blom 2021a, 92.

Guarin, his master Don Louis, and Don Garzeran must flee court fighting in Heynck's 1668 *Don Louis de Vargas*, the *gracioso* draws a laugh: Don Garzeran is wounded, but says he will survive. When Guarin also screams of pain, Don Louis, concerned, asks why he holds his stomach; it turns out that the *gracioso* is just hungry, although he acts as if it is a mortal wound:

My hollow stomach, my Lord, screams continuously murder and fire;  
I hardly dare speak as to not upset my intestines,  
My head starts spinning, then appears that phantom before me.  
There is another: the earth moves and tears apart,  
Oh Santiago, oh! Preserve me from the danger.<sup>49</sup>

He thus comically and disproportionally upends the gravity of Garzeran's wounds. Likewise, hunger is Clarín's main motivation to do everything in *Sigismundus*: when he and Rosaura almost reach the tower in which Sigismundus is imprisoned, Clarín is uplifted, thinking that he has seen the signboard of an inn. He creates a word play with 'bear,' which is traditionally used in Dutch for a place where they serve food and as an informal way of saying that you are hungry, such as in the expression 'hungry as a bear.' The joke unfolds thus:

ROSAURA.        We reach  
                         A house, I believe, unless it is the dark  
                         That has deceived my eyes.  
CLARÍN.            There is no objection:  
                         Because there, I am sure, I see the Bear hanging out,  
                         Unless my hunger [bear], which dances, makes me ravenous,  
                         And blurs my sight.<sup>50</sup>

49 Heynck 1668, 30: 'Mijn holle maeg, mijn Heer, die roept vast moordt en brandt; / Ik derf nauw spreken om mijn darmen niet te storen, / Mijn hooft wert yl, dan komt my dit dan dat te voren. / Daer weêr aen, d'aerdt beweegt en scheurt zig van elkaêr, / Och Sante Jago, och! Behoedt my voor 't gevaer.'

50 Vrye Lief-hebbers 1654, vv. 38b–43a: 'ROSAURA. Wy naken / Een huysingh, soo my dunckt, 't en zy de duysterheyt / Mijn oogh bedroghen heeft. CLARÍN. Daer is gheen swarigheyt: / Want ginder, 't is



When the *gracioso* later sees Sigismundus appear before his eyes in animal hides, he exclaims, 'Did I not say that the bear resides there?'<sup>51</sup> This provokes the audience's laughter as they recognise the humorous word play of the *gracioso*, as well as his cowardice throughout the scene.

Who played these comic roles? Being the melancholic actor that he was, Van Germez certainly never took on these light-hearted roles of the *gracioso*. We only have the division of roles for the theatre season 1658/9 and therefore do not know who played the role of Guarín in *Don Louis de Vargas*, but we do know this for Clarín in *Sigismundus*. In this theatre season, Clarín was brought to life by Jan Meerhuijsen. That season Meerhuijsen sometimes also played opposite Van Germez: in *Verwarde hof*, he was Barlovento, a *gracioso* and the servant of Van Germez' Carel.<sup>52</sup> Meerhuijsen was apparently able to bring the right levity to the role to balance Van Germez' gravity.

### Van den Bergh and Van Lee: The Beauty of the Female Body

That audiences saw female actors was not a given on the early modern Dutch stage. As described in Chapter 6, before 1655 women characters were played by men in the Amsterdam Public Theatre. This changed when Ariana van den Bergh was contracted. In need of new and skilled actors to modernise the productions in the city's theatre, Van den Bergh's husband Jillis Nozeman was approached by the theatre directors to hire his wife who had already gained lots of experience as a member of the travelling theatre company of the 'Nederduytsche Comedianten,' to which group both Nozeman and Van den Bergh belonged.<sup>53</sup> She was soon joined by Susanna van Lee.<sup>54</sup> It is generally argued that they 'primarily performed in the so-called tender or soft roles of young women whether in love or not.'<sup>55</sup> With the arrival of female actresses

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gewis, sien ick den Beir uyt-hangen, / 't En zy dat mijnen beir, die danst, my doet verlangen, / En schemeren 't ghesicht.'

51 Vrye Lief-hebbers 1654, v. 64a: 'Seyd'ick niet dat den Beir daer uyt-hongh?' See also the analysis of Clarín in Blom and Van Marion 2021, 24, 41–43.

52 See the *Parsonaadjeboek* 1658–1659, inv.nr. 429 in the Stadsarchief Amsterdam.

53 Blom 2021a, 278–279.

54 Ariana van den Bergh is better known by her married name, Ariana Nozeman (Juffr. Noseman). However, I choose to call her by her maiden name. The same applies to Susanna van Lee, who returns in the theatre accounts as Juffr. Eeckhout.

55 Nozeman 2014a. See, furthermore, the *Parsonaadjeboek* 1658–1659, inv.nr. 429 in the Stadsarchief Amsterdam.

onstage, *comedia nueva* now enjoyed even more popularity in the Amsterdam Public Theatre than before, as Blom and Van Marion have demonstrated.<sup>56</sup>

The popularity of *comedia nueva* had always been dependent on female roles. When from 1587 onwards women were allowed on Spanish stages, '[t]he conflation of female role and female player endowed the characters on stage with an illusion of reality which the participation of boy actors could never have achieved,' as Tigner asserts.<sup>57</sup> The choice to bring women onstage brought, furthermore, a specific aesthetic with it, because Italian and Spanish plays often featured cross-dressing women, an element of *comedias* I explored in depth in my previous chapter.<sup>58</sup> While '[w]omen's normal dress would have covered the body nearly entirely, encasing it in a kind of cage' (in part because of the structured fashions of this time), cross-dressing ensured that the natural female body was now revealed by fitted trousers, leather waistcoats, and long—and sexy—riding boots, while the soft skin was also shown more.<sup>59</sup> The eroticisation of the female body would have undoubtedly aroused the male senses and captured the gaze of a large portion of male spectators. For female audience members it could have had a vicarious emancipatory effect, as they watched actresses move more freely, in public no less, appropriating the behaviour of their male counterparts.<sup>60</sup>

With this in mind, it is not without reason that Lope wrote that women disguising as men is often very pleasing.<sup>61</sup> The potential of women's freedom in *comedia nueva* is almost unlimited, which begs the question of what kind of roles Dutch actresses interpreted. Van den Bergh performed some parts in the theatre season of 1658/9, including the 'Spanish' roles of Chimène in Van Heemskerck's *De verduytste Cid*, Rosaura in Vos' *De beklaglycke dwangh*, Rosaura in the Amsterdam production of Schouwvenbergh's *Sigismundus* (1654), Constantia in Den *geheymen minnaar* by female playwright Catharina Questiers,<sup>62</sup> Clorinde in Questiers' *Casimier*, and Aurelia in Serwouters' *Den grooten Tamerlan*. The city magistrate showed special interest in the performance of both female artists by attending the première of Questiers' *Casimier*

56 Blom and Van Marion 2021, 27–28; Blom 2021a, 299–301, 337–339; Van Marion 2021.

57 Tigner 2012, 172.

58 Tigner 2012, 172.

59 Tigner 2012, 175. This attire was, for instance, worn by actress Julia Akkermans in her role of Rosaura in the 2016/2017 production of Calderón's *La vida es sueño* / *Het leven is droom* by the Haarlem based theatre company Toneelschuur Producties. The Dutch translation was provided by Eric Coenen and the play was directed by Olivier Diepenhorst.

60 Tigner 2012, 169, 172, 175–176. See also McKendrick 2004, 16–19.

61 Lope de Vega [1609] 2003, vv. 28–283.

62 Transl. of Lope de Vega, *Si no vieran las mujeres*.

on 25 October 1656.<sup>63</sup> These roles are, for the better part, also the female leads, the lovers of the male protagonists, which only shows how essential Van den Bergh was as a skilled actress in the first years that women were contracted by the Schouwburg.

Simultaneously, Van Lee interpreted at least as many roles as her colleague, performing in roles such as Laura in Rodenburgh's *Celia en Prospero* (1617),<sup>64</sup> Donna Urraca in *De verduypte Cid*, Dionisia in *De beklaaglycke dwangh*, and as the heroine Hester in the blockbuster *Hester oft verlossing der jooden* (Amsterdam 1659, 'Esther, or Liberation of the Jews') by Serwouters.<sup>65</sup> Like those played by Van den Bergh, most of these roles were young women who fall in love with the male protagonist. This resulted in the frequent occurrence of an onstage triangle between the 'main' female lover often played by Van den Bergh, the male lover many times interpreted by Van Germez, and Van Lee's character.<sup>66</sup>

It is also said that Van Lee was very beautiful, which explains why she played characters who fall in love with the male protagonist and are able to successfully seduce him, at least until he returns to his "true" love.<sup>67</sup> This dynamic is apparent for Van Lee's performance as Queen Esther, who was chosen by Ahasuerus for her fabled beauty. However, this view of Van Lee is too myopic, as Van Marion has recently pointed out. She was indeed a master at portraying sensual roles, but the actress was also an entertaining comedienne, deftly playing the roles of spinster, neighbour, or some niece.<sup>68</sup> Van Lee also interpreted the role of the noblewoman Maächa in *Den grooten Tamerlan*, who disguises at one point as a *graciosa* to move freely among the court of the tyrant Tamerlan.<sup>69</sup>

### *The Composition of Emotions in 'De beklaaglycke dwangh'*

An example of the onstage love triangle between Van den Bergh, Van Germez, and Van Lee can be found in Vos' *De beklaaglycke dwangh*, an adaptation of Lope's *La fuerza lastimosa*. The play opens with an encounter between the two lovers (played by Van Germez and Van Lee) in a forest. The scene is a display of pronounced feelings of love between Dionisia and Henryck: 'Like magnets they are drawn to each other,

63 Transl. of Antonio Enríquez Gómez, *Engañar para reinar*.

64 Transl. of Lope de Vega, *El molino*.

65 Transl. of Lope de Vega, *La hermosa Ester*.

66 See also Albach 1977, 74–75.

67 Blom and Van Marion 2021, 27–28; Blom 2021a, 299–301, 337–339; Van Marion 2021.

68 Van Marion 2021, 28.

69 See the *Parsonaadjeboek* 1658–1659, inv.nr. 429 in the Stadsarchief Amsterdam.



- DIONISIA. Control  
Yourself: What I say I swear to you, and shall also keep.  
Am I not yours?
- HENRYCK. Happiness has conquered  
My heart. Oh Madame! My soul is completely moved  
By joy because of your favour; yes, it is so passionate  
That she cannot give my tongue permission, according to *decorum*,  
To thank you for your good deed, to which I am obliged:  
Yet, what my tongue withholds is communicated by my face.<sup>71</sup>

Presumably, Van Germez as Henryck, and Van Lee as Dionisia, embodied this display of love with the proper embraces. Meanwhile, they would have both appeared with kind, smiling faces, which is also stressed by Henryck in the final verse cited above. Their heads also lean toward each other, their right hands folded together as was required by Van Mander.<sup>72</sup> Before they leave each other's presence, Dionisia invites her lover to visit her during the night.

Before Henryck can make his move, however, he is imprisoned through the interference of his jealous adversary Oktavio (played by actor Cornelis Krook), who wants Dionisia for himself; not because he loves her, but because in his hubris he fancies himself a king beside her. With Henryck imprisoned, Oktavio will visit Dionisia's chambers and spend the night with her. As discussed in Chapter 2, the scene was acted out by means of a *tableau vivant*. The next day, Oktavio leaves court and sends a message to the king, played by fellow *comedia*-author and actor Adriaen Bastiaensz de Leeuw, who was himself 'a very good and prudent actor without misplaced wisdom.'<sup>73</sup> It reports that Henryck can be released from prison. Again a free man, everyone congratulates him on his night with Dionisia, which oppositely shames him; knowing it is untrue, he thinks it a cruel joke. In this mood he returns to Bristol. There, he rekindles his relationship with Rosaura—played by Van den Bergh—with whom he had two children eight years earlier, although he had never married her, because he

71 Vos 1648, fol. A5<sup>r</sup>: 'DIONISIA. Betoomt / Uw: wat ick segh dat sweer ick u, en sal 't ook houwe. / Ben ik uw aygen niet? HENRYCK. De blijtschap heeft my hart / Verwonnen. Och Me-vrouw! mijn ziel door vreugde wart / Heel op getrocken door uw gunst; jaa soo gedreeven / Dat sy mijn tongh, naer eysch, geen Oorelof kan geven / Om u te dancken, voor uw weldaan, als verplicht: / Doch 't geen mijn tongh verswijght dat melt u mijn gesicht.'

72 Van Mander [1604] 1969, fol. 23<sup>r</sup>.

73 As per Pels 1689, fol. \*3<sup>r</sup>: 'een zeer goed verstandig Speeler zonder waanwysheid.'

had to serve his king in London. They marry, and it is visualised by means of a *tableau vivant*, also discussed in Chapter 2.

These and other *tableaux vivants* were highly stylised, thus illustrating the action by focusing attention on a specific event or moment in the play. Albach writes how the actors had to adopt graceful positions, for which reason Albach says that the Spanish *comedia* required a mannered form of acting, stylised through and through: ‘the acting remains despite the fierce emotions “schilderachtig” [i.e. picturesque].’<sup>74</sup> Van Germez and his colleagues Van den Bergh and Van Lee showcased big passions: love, hate, sorrow, and vindictiveness. This picturesque style of acting originates from both classical rhetoric and the visual arts. After all, the actors had to continuously interrupt their acting to perform in one of the many *tableaux vivants* in Dutch theatre, as Albach explains.<sup>75</sup>

These *tableaux vivants* were then not only spectacular elements in the adaptations of *comedias*, as discussed in Chapter 2, but the actors could also use them to focus attention on the play’s central theme through their postures and expressive poses. Albach writes:

the showcasing of oneself in a role as part of a group that poses as if they have to be painted, requires a special ability to consciously adopt postures and well-considered gesticulation, such as we still know today from the art of the ballet.<sup>76</sup>

As such, actors needed knowledge about how to use their bodies in an expressive way—and moreover, one they could hold in absolute stillness for the *tableau*’s duration—by turning and twisting it in counterpoised positions. This so-called *contrapposto* is the basis of Van Mander’s theory about posture and gesticulation in his *Het Schilder-boeck*, and it applies both to the visual arts and the stage.<sup>77</sup>

The importance of the marriage *tableau vivant* becomes clear when Dionisia is faced with Henryck upon his return to court with his reunited family. She is outraged that Henryck first presumably spent the night with her and has now left her for another woman. Dionisia cannot bear the sight of that traitor: ‘The Furies appear all three before my eyes. A drop of this cursed venom was enough. Oh cruel Father, did it

<sup>74</sup> Albach 1977, 41. He gives no further proof of this claim.

<sup>75</sup> Albach 1977, 38.

<sup>76</sup> Albach 1977, 38.

<sup>77</sup> Albach 1977, 38–39.

have to be a cup completely filled?’<sup>78</sup> While saying this, Van Lee must have acted out the anger that Dionisia is feeling in this moment by putting the main focus on her eyes. Particularly relevant here, Van Mander wrote:

Anger: in the head, two burning coals  
Hide beneath two dark eyebrows,  
That raise over, bulging [and] sparking high.<sup>79</sup>

One might ask, though, how clearly this could be seen from the auditorium. The instructions given by De Castelein in *De const* were much clearer. He says that anger is displayed by the movement of the arms and stamping of the feet:

Then there is the raising of the arm and,  
Certainly when expressing indignation about someone,  
The stamping of the feet, such as Tullius [Cicero] clearly wrote.  
And in everything the eyes need to indicate this.<sup>80</sup>

Compare this to Van Mussem, who says that the orator should display ire or vindictiveness ‘with a somewhat slower movement of the arms and countenance.’<sup>81</sup> So, we see how anger required seventeenth-century Dutch actors to have perfect mastery of both facial expression and bodily gestures. We may assume that Van Lee possessed both. Dionisia’s angry outburst surely had effect. Not knowing what troubles his daughter, the king asks her for an explanation, but the words are stuck in Dionisia’s mouth for the shame that has befallen her. With tears in her eyes, she instead writes down how Henryck has stolen her honour in that night. Silently, she gives her father the letter containing the ominous revelation.

Now it is the king’s turn to burn with anger. Wanting revenge, he thinks of a ruse: he asks Henryck for advice on how to deal with the offence, reading aloud the words that his daughter wrote while feigning that this happened at the court of the

78 Vos 1648, fol. C1<sup>v</sup>: ‘De furien alle drie verschijnen voor mijn oogen. / Een droppel waar genoegh van dit vervloecht fenijn. / O wrede Vaader, most het juyst een beecker zijn / Ten boordevol?’

79 Van Mander [1604] 1969, fol. 27<sup>v</sup>: ‘Den grammen in’t hooft twee brandende colen / Doen onder twee doncker wijnbrauwen schuylen, / Die over dweers vonckende hoogh uyt puylen.’

80 De Castelein 1986, strophe 177. The translation is largely based on Bussels 2010, 241: ‘Dan comtere des arems ophef en risijnghe, / Principalick op eenighs persoons verpisijnghe: / Stampijnghe van voeten, zoo Tullius blye screef / En van als moet de ooghe doen de wisijnghe.’

81 Van Mussem 1607, 24: ‘met wat tragher roeringe des Arms ende Aenschijns.’

Danish king, rather than at his own. Henryck thinks it an outrage and rules that the offender should kill his own wife and marry the woman whose honour was stolen in order to restore it again. Pleased with the solution, the king reveals now that the people involved are actually Dionisia and Henryck himself. The king orders Henryck to follow his own advice to kill his wife and marry Dionisia. In that moment, the 'fuerza lastimosa' or 'lamentable obligation'—to which the play's title refers—is born, driving forth the rest of the plot's events.

Henryck is heart-stricken by the command and sinks deeply into an inner struggle, which is only resolved by Rosaura when she accepts her fate. In a heart-breaking scene, Rosaura says goodbye to her children, Mauritius and Lisaura, while Henryck laments what he is about to do. In the Spanish original, the mother says to her children:

Children, today I call you here  
 as witnesses of my intention,  
 which I want to make into a will:  
 you are well next to me.  
 [...]
   
 Pray to God that he hears  
 my request, so that after  
 they killed me here,  
 souls would come out of me,  
 like sparks of fire!  
 Children, today I die, today my life ends,  
 [...]
   
 I have no goods to bequeath;  
 only you, nothing more;  
 and although I ready myself to let you go,  
 I will never release you  
 From the place where I have placed you,  
 because I carry you in my soul,  
 where my love for you resides.<sup>82</sup>

82 Lope de Vega 1611a, fols. C1<sup>v</sup>–C2<sup>r</sup>: 'hijos oy os llamo aqui / por testigos de mi intento, / que quiero hazer testamento, / bien estays juntos a mi. [...] Pluguiera a Dios que mi ruego / oyera para que luego / que me mataran aqui, / salieran almas de mi, como centellas del fuego. / Hijos, si oy muero, oy acaba mi vida, [...] Bienes que mandar no tengo, / soys lo vosotros no mas, / y aunque a daros me



The emotionality of the Spanish scene is quite literally transposed to the Dutch adaptation, where Rosaura even invokes the genre of funerary poetry by availing herself of language also found in Vondel's famous and heartrending poem 'Kinderlyck,' which he wrote for his dead son Constantijn in 1632, only a decade before this play's first performance.<sup>83</sup> Vondel writes: 'Little Constantine, the blissful child, the little Cherub, ridicules from up there the vanities down here with a friendly eye.'<sup>84</sup> In a similar fashion, Rosaura expresses the hope that when she dies, she is guided by the happy shrieks of her children who are here addressed as little angels who will also fly to heaven. Rosaura finishes her motherly words of wisdom by giving her children some consolation, which Sonja Witstein identified as one of the five returning elements in funerary poetry.<sup>85</sup> Thus, Rosaura will always comfort her children with her presence until the day that Mauritius and Lisaura will die themselves:

Oh, come here my dear children,  
 So that you may ease your mother's pain a little.  
 Come, join me by my side, witnesses, that I silently  
 Can explain to you my very last will.  
 I wish you here now [by my womb], where you lay secure before  
 Beneath the heart, so that when I am pierced through,  
 And my soul leaves me, both your souls too,  
 Would fly as fiery sparks upward, with happy shrieks  
 To Heaven; Oh! I end now my life.  
 [...]  
 You are my legacy, which I will leave behind:  
 Innocent angels, how can my sorrows help you,  
 Now that my premature death gives you to a stepmother?  
 And although I die, I will be steadily by your side,

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prevengo, / no os apartare jamas / de donde a poner os vengo. / Porque es el alma adonde / os llevo, y amor esconde.' With thanks to Alexander Samson for helping me translate the more peculiar bits of this fragment.

83 Van Marion 2018, 31–41; Pollmann 1930, 68–77; Witstein 1969, 111, 302, 305.

84 Vondel [1632] 1929, 388: 'Constantijntje, 't zaligh kijntje, / Cherubijntje, van om hoogh, / D'ydelheden, hier beneden, / Vitlacht met een lodderoogh.'

85 Witstein 1969, 106–112. The five elements are *laus* (laudation), *iacturae demonstratio* (demonstration of loss), *luctus* (lamentation), *consolatio* (consolation), and *exhortatio* (exhortation to demonstrate the same bravery and mentality as the deceased). Rosaura's monologue meets all five requirements of funerary poetry.

As long as you are alive; my spirit will roam beside you,  
And will watch over you, until you too will die.<sup>86</sup>

When Rosaura has shared her last words with her children, her son Mauritius does not understand why his father must kill her. His mother can only reply that she was born for misfortune; the king's decree is, after all, a lamentable obligation:

- ROSAURA. I go and die alone because of a lamentable obligation,  
MAURITIUS. Where are you going, dear mother, why do you scare us?  
HENRYCK. She goes through her death up high with the chosen?  
MAURITIUS. Ah, why do you kill her?  
ROSAURA. Because I was born  
For misfortune.  
HENRYCK. Fabio, take them away from my sight  
Because not only my arm, but also my heart succumbs to them.  
ROSAURA. A last kiss: farewell, my innocent lambs,  
How they do tear you from me! *Fabio exits with the children.*<sup>87</sup>

This scene was so impressively emotional that it was also visualised in the frontispiece of the 1662 reprint of the play (Fig. 7.2). The scene is a display of motherly love. Van Mander explains how to portray a mother's affection for her children through the example of a Greek vase depicting a nymph nursing a baby satyr. While describing the scene on the vase, the painter says that the love between a mother and child can

86 Vos 1648, fols. C6<sup>v</sup>–C7<sup>r</sup>: 'Ach, komt hier mijn lieve kind'ren, / Op dat g'uw Moeders druck een weynig moogt vermind'ren. / Komt, voegt uw aan my zy, getuygen, dat ick stil / Aan uw verklaaren magh, mijn alderlaatste wil. / Ick wens uw nu ter plaats, daar ghy wel eer beslooten / Laaght onder 't hart, op dat wanneer ik werd doorstooten, / En my de ziel verlaat, oock uwe zielen bey, / Als vuur'ge voncken, na om hoog, met bly geschrey / Ten Hemel vloogen; ach! ick endigh nu mijn leeven. [...] Gy sijt het Errifdeel, dat ick sal afterlaaten: / Onnoosel Eng'len, wat kan uw mijn sorgen baaten, / Nu mijn onrijpe doot, uw aan een Stief-moer geeft? / En of ik sterf, ick sal soo langh als ghy hier leeft, / Gestadigh by uw sijn, mijn geest sal om uw swerven, / En neemen uw in agh, tot dat ghy ook sult sterven.'

87 Vos 1648, fol. C7<sup>r</sup>: 'ROSAURA. Ik gaa en sterf alleen door een vervloecte dwangh, / MAURITIUS. Waar gaat ghy Moeder lief waarom maackt ghy ons bang? / HENRYCK. Sy gaat door haare doot om hoogh by d'uytverkooren? / MAURITIUS. Agh waarom doot ghy haar? ROSAURA. Om dat ick ben geboren / Tot onluk. HENRYCK. Fabio, brengt hun uyt mijn gesicht / Daar niet alleen mijn arm, maar ook mijn hart voor swight. / ROSAURA. Nogh eens gekust voor't laatst: vaar wel onnoosle Lamm'ren, / Hoe rucktmen uw van my! / Fabio met de Kinderen Binnen.'



FIG. 7.2 Rosaura bids her children farewell. Henryck, his rapier bared to kill his wife, is torn with sorrow. Oktavio, in the background, oversees the scene. Frontispiece to *De beklaaglycke dwangh*  
AMSTERDAM: BROER JANSZ BOUMAN, 1662

be recognised if the mother looks at her offspring ‘so tender and softly with her / Eyes.’ Her appearance should be as though she ‘would entirely destroy herself’ as a result of the sweet pain of love she feels, which is revealed by her gestures. With one breast she nurses the child, while the child lays its tender hand on the other breast of its mother, ‘looking at the mother with all its strength, / Fearing that she might be taken from him.’<sup>88</sup> While the child in Van Mander’s story did not truly have to fear its mother’s departure, Mauritius and Lisaura will actually soon be robbed of their mother.

<sup>88</sup> Van Mander [1604] 1969, fol. 24<sup>v</sup>: ‘soo teerder en sachtelijck met haren / Ooghen’; ‘gants soude

While Van Mander discussed the picturesque love as depicted on the vase as a rhetorical expression of emotion, in *De beklaaglycke dwangh* Van den Bergh acted opposite her own daughter Maria Nozeman who played Rosaura's daughter Lisaura: for an audience this was, of course, even more spectacular than what any rhetorical instruction could hope to achieve.<sup>89</sup>

Fig 7.2 also shows Henryck, his sword bared, overwhelmed by sorrow. Henryck's sorrow is indeed in line with Van Mander's description of this emotion: to display tears, the actor could simply place his hand or a handkerchief before his eyes, which I also discussed in the context of Van Germez' performance of Orantee in *Vervolgde Laura*.<sup>90</sup> Apart from tears, Van Mander also advises that sorrow is implied when the hand supports the wet face and the limbs are weak or hanging, as described in the passage above.<sup>91</sup> The weakness that Van Mander ascribes to the sorrowful body is also verbalised by Henryck to make clear the toll it takes on him:

I hardly know what I am doing  
 When my hand arms itself to close the eyes  
 Of my beloved, my heart starts to scare:  
 And again when my heart takes courage stoutly and quickly;  
 Thus, my arm startles and shakes and its strength faints;  
 Thus, everything I do is for nought and lost.  
 Oh, if only I would die in this place, or if only I were never born:  
 Alas!<sup>92</sup>

The emotional scene overtakes the immediacy of the king's command: Henryck's 'anxious spirit suffocates' ('benoude gheest verstickt') him and prevents him from killing his wife. Therefore, Henryck's servant Fabio proposes that he instead sends Rosaura away in a boat, which was visualised in a *tableau vivant* (see Chapter 2). As in so many other comedias, Rosaura survives her dangerous exile and eventually comes to

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brenghen te nieten [haer selven]'; '[d]e Mamme aensiend' uyt al zijn vermoghen, / Vreesend' ofse hem mocht worden ontoghen.'

89 Albach argues the same for Vondel's *Jeptha* (1659), in which Gillis Nozeman likely played the role of Jephthah, while his wife Van den Bergh played Jephthah's wife Filopae. Their daughter Maria Nozeman possibly portrayed their daughter Ifis (1977, 76).

90 Van Mander [1604] 1969, fol. 26<sup>v</sup>.

91 Van Mander [1604] 1969, fol. 26<sup>v</sup>.

92 Vos 1648, fol. C7<sup>v</sup>: Ick weet nauw wat ik doe / Wanneer dat mijne handt zigh waapendt om de blicken / Te sluyten van mijn lief, begint mijn hart te schrieken: / En weder als mijn hart sigh moedight kloect en gaau, / Soo schrickt en beeft mijn arm en sijne kragt word flaauw, / Dies alles

the rescue of her husband, after which father, mother, son, and daughter are reunited. And they lived happily ever after.

### The Embodiment of Emotions on the Flemish Stage

Another, more controversial mother was found in the Habsburg Netherlands. For the most part, it is still unclear which actors performed in *comedias* staged in Antwerp and Brussels. Yet, one of the paratexts added to the frontmatter of Antonio Wouthers' *De verliefde stiefmoeder* contains one of the few accounts that we have of the brilliance that actors brought to the stage of Antwerp. According to this same laudatory poem, the actors portraying the star-crossed lovers Cassandra and Frederico met similar applause as their peers in Amsterdam, despite the fact that Cassandra is Frederico's stepmother, a relationship that was actually considered incestuous according to the laws of that time.<sup>93</sup>

It is unclear if Cassandra was portrayed by an actress or a boy, although one may presume that innovations developed along a similar trajectory as in Amsterdam, considering the increasing acceptability of women onstage in other European centres, as discussed in Chapter 6. Nevertheless, the performance was apparently convincing; its reception by Antwerpian spectators having witnessed the elaborate, pitiful love affair is presented as exceptionally positive in one particular laudation. It was, apparently, a hit:

Your piece (Sir) for its illustrious Verses  
Is requested by all of Antwerp,  
For you have charmed them by this brilliant work,  
And you make unsuccessful  
Hatred & Rage:  
Ever since Cassandra entered the Theatre  
Everyone is keen on having a Stepmother.<sup>94</sup>

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wat ick doe om niet is een [sic] verlooren, / Och, sturf ik op dees plaats, of waar ik noyt ghebooren:  
/ Helaas!

93 As recorded in *Groot placaet-Boeck* 1658, fol. X4<sup>r</sup>.

94 Wouthers 1665b, fol. π3<sup>v</sup>: 'Vostre piece (Monsieur) pour ses illustres Vers / Est demandè par tout Anvers, / Car vous l'avez charmé par ce brillant ouvrage, / Et faites aller de travers / La Haine & la Rage: / Depuis que Cassandre a partut sur le Theatre / Chacun est amoureux d'avoir une Marastre.' This quote was also discussed in Chapter 4.

Whomever performed the role of Cassandra must have been a commanding and elegant presence, according to this testimony. In the same introduction as the above verses, it is, furthermore, recorded that ‘as Frederico and Cassandra make the Theatre echo with applause and cries, the audience celebrates to the heights of Wouther’s star’s rise.’<sup>95</sup>

How, then, did the actors represent the incestuous love between stepmother Cassandra and her stepson Frederico? The characters’ love affair is the subject of one conversation between the two lovers, which begins when Frederico says that ‘the catastrophe and the misfortune, which rages in my bosom, / Is endless, Madame.’<sup>96</sup> While Frederico is ashamed to say what ails him, Cassandra already knows that it is love that troubles her stepson, specifically the love that he carries for her. Frederico confirms that this is the case: ‘the cruelty shown to me / Was the cause for my melancholy.’<sup>97</sup> Cassandra thinks, however, ‘That love builds on courage, but not on a sorrowful affliction.’<sup>98</sup> Therefore, she tells him the story of Stratonice and her stepson Antiochus. From Cassandra’s description of Antiochus’ lovesickness, we can learn how Frederico’s body was apparently similarly affected. As so often happened to lovers on the early modern stage, Antiochus, and thus also Frederico, is portrayed as a besotted patient suffering from lovesickness or love melancholy.<sup>99</sup>

- CASSANDRA.      Antiochus, a prince born from an illustrious stem,  
                          Was seduced by his stepmother’s beauty to be in love [with her],  
                          And this one melancholy made him very ill.
- FREDERICO.      If he died, he did the right thing:  
                          Because I must be miserable because of my love.<sup>100</sup>

Cassandra continues her story, making clear that Antiochus’ symptoms betrayed the prince and that the court physician Erasistratus could quickly deduce that Stratonice was the cause of Antiochus’ deteriorating health. The symptoms are clear, as per

95 ‘Door Got, natuur en reen’ 1665, fol. π3<sup>v</sup>: ‘want als sy [Frederico and Cassandra] ’t Schouburg daveren, / En treuren doen, om ’t seerst uijtrompen sy u [Wouthers] klaveren.’ This quote was also discussed in Chapter 4.

96 Wouthers 1665b, 27: ‘Den ramp en’t ongeluck dat in mijn boesem woet / Is eyndeloos Mevrow.’

97 Wouthers 1665b, 27: ‘de wreetheyt my bewesen / Was oorsaek van mijn druck.’

98 Wouthers 1665b, 27: ‘Dat liefde bowt, op moet, maer niet op droeve quael.’

99 Van Marion 2016, esp. 47–51.

100 Wouthers 1665b, 27: CASSANDRA. Antiochus een prins uyt hoogen stam geboren, / Wirt door sijn Stiefmoers schoont tot hare min bekoren, / En d’enklen druck deed’ hem een groote siekt’ uytstaen. /

Cassandra's words: flickering eyes and a fiery visage. Having diagnosed these two illuminating symptoms, Cassandra says that she recognises them in her stepson as well:

- CASSANDRA. Fearful, the father looked for a way to cure his son  
Through the power of herbs, but the illness maintained itself.  
His love remained hidden; nonetheless, the sparkling fire  
In the eyes was soon discovered by Erasistratus:  
On his order, the ladies of the court were sent to  
The Prince's quarters, but when the stepmother entered  
Antiochus countenance ignited with a new flame.  
Thus, his love became known.
- FREDERICO. This solution was highly praised.
- CASSANDRA. Frederico, do not deny that I also saw such in your countenance.<sup>101</sup>

Flickering eyes and a fiery visage are also something that the Flemish master painter Van Mander had identified as the embodied symptoms of love melancholy: 'but slight contrition / Transformed the countenance with a rose-coloured redness, / Because of a painful shame and a bareness of the heart.'<sup>102</sup> Furthermore, the painter notes when discussing the same Antiochus that the prince 'lay ill in bed, and wanted to die by depriving / Himself of physical food.'<sup>103</sup> This is something that was considered to be a general characteristic of lovesickness in the early modern period, as Van Marion explored in light of plays that echo the contemporary ideas of physician Johan van Beverwijck in his *Schat der gesontheit* and *Schat der ongesontheit* (and which I discuss in Chapter 4).<sup>104</sup>

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FREDERICO. Soo hy gestorven is, hy heeft seer wel gedaen: / Want ick rampsaliger door mijne min moet wesen.'

101 Wouthers 1665b, 27: 'CASSANDRA. Den Vader socht beanxt zijn Sone te genesen / Door kracht van kruyden maer de sieckte hiel haer stant, / Zijn liefde bleef bedekt: nochtans wirt strax den brant / In d'oogen flikkerend' van Erostrat bevonden: / Door zijn gebot zijn in des Princen sael gesonden / De Juffers van het hof, maer toen de Stiefmoer quam / Antiochus gelaet ontstak door nieuwe vlam. / Dus wirt zijn min bekend. FREDERICO. die vont was waert gepresen. / CASSANDRA. Fredrico loochent niet dat'k sulks sag in u wesen.'

102 Van Mander [1604] 1969, fol. 23<sup>r</sup>: 'maer lichte wroeghen, / Door pijnlijcke schaemt, en s'herthen blootheyt, / Verwende t'Aenschijn met een Roose rootheyt.'

103 Van Mander [1604] 1969, fol. 23<sup>v</sup>: 'Lach cranck te bedd,' en wilde, met te derven / Lichamelijck voedsel, hem laten sterven.'

104 Van Marion 2016, 47–48.

We can imagine that an actor can hardly produce those symptoms. However, Van Mander identifies other symptoms that prince Antiochus displayed when his stepmother entered the same room:

Then, his pulse beat as a sickened artery,  
 The voice faltered with stammering,  
 The countenance fiery red, sweating more heavily:  
 In sum, no sign was missing in him  
 Of all the things that Sappho relates in writing.<sup>105</sup>

When consulting Van Mander's *Het Schilder-boeck*, the actor would realise that the inner characteristics of love melancholy were nearly impossible to act outwardly, but the broken voice and stammering were symptoms that the actor playing Frederico could easily imitate. The raised heartbeat might have been illustrated by its necessary consequence: heavy breathing and a heaving chest. This gives an indication as to how such an important emotion in this *comedia nueva* might have been enlivened on the Dutch stage.<sup>106</sup>

We can, therefore, see how many of the emotions displayed in the *comedias* examined here were probably conveyed onstage. Portraying Orantee in *Vervolgde Laura*, Van Germez expressed emotions in a similar fashion to Van den Bergh and Van Lee in *De beklaglycke dwangh*, or the anonymous actors in *De verliefde stiefmoeder*. The performers used similar acting styles to represent emotions in at least three different Spanish *comedias*, although at the same time individual actors relied on their varying rhetorical skills to display emotions. Analysis of the performance practices of these three *comedias* shows that a number of movements, poses, facial expressions and vocal effects were employed, and were recognisable to the audience through a shared literary and artistic culture. This familiar visual and vocal language was used to express emotions—and, based on the praise of actors and playwrights alike, it was done with great success—on the stages of the Low Countries, and thus also in performances of Dutch adaptations of *comedias*.

105 Van Mander [1604] 1969, fol. 23<sup>v</sup>: 'Doen sloech zijnen Puls als beroerde ader, / Den voys werdt ghebroken met een ghestamer, / T'Aenschijn vierich root, sweetende bequamer: / Summa, gheen teycken aen hem daer en faelde, Van al wat Sappho schrijvende verhaelde.'

106 For the role of love melancholy in the Spanish originals, see Scott Soufas 2014, esp. 302–304.



## Conclusion

Let us return to the character with whom this chapter began: Queen Joanna. Her emotions were enveloped in song, which conveyed to the audience members that Joanna was heart-stricken by love. But how did the emotions of love and sorrow that Queen Joanna displayed in her heartrending song compare to the emotional expression in all of the Spanish plays? How unique was Joanna's conflict between her love and her duty? Moreover, how did the Dutch actress playing Joanna embody the queen's emotions on stage? And how did the actress give rise to the conflict between the Queen's Two Bodies: the body natural and the body politic? In this chapter, I argue that the actors played a pivotal role in the transmission of emotions to the audience, in moving spectators.

As far as Joanna's emotions are concerned, both her love and her sorrow were felt deeply in her soul. In this, her emotions were not only a product of her mind, they were also embodied. This chapter has made clear that *comedia nueva* is not only a highly embodied genre in itself, but that theatre in general relies heavily on the use of a performing body. By focusing on the expression and embodiment of love, honour, fear, and other emotions by actors onstage, it is clear that bodily rhetoric was essential. As such, it became clear that an actor like Van Germez could rely on Van Mander's *Het Schilder-boeck* and Van Mussem's *Rhetorica, dye edele const van welseghene* for instructions on how to perform the often contradictory emotions expressed by characters, and thus experienced by actors and their captive audience. I examined the construction of emotions by actors in performances of Van Germez' *Vervolgde Laura*, Vos' *De beklagelycke dwangh*, and Wouters' *De verliefde stiefmoeder*. These three plays show that actors needed a high degree of control over their movement, speech, and emotions to properly interpret the inner conflicts so important in *comedias*, although Van den Bergh was given space to also produce onstage genuine emotions when acting opposite her own young daughter in *De beklagelycke dwangh*.

When applying these insights to Queen Joanna's emotions in her song, we see that Van Mander gives instruction on expressing both love and sorrow, while Van Mussem explains how to elicit compassion and empathy from the audience. The Dutch actor portraying Joanna probably expressed the queen's love with a kind, smiling face, while her sorrow was conveyed by holding a hand or a handkerchief before her eyes to simulate tears. Meanwhile, her body feigned weakness, her limbs loosely draped as though deathly ill, the result of a true lovesickness. In this way, the embodied emotions of Joanna were communicated to, and if convincing enough, mirrored back by spectators through an embodied transmission of emotions, a contagious exchange of physical feeling in the Amsterdam Public Theatre.