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

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STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Part One

Jelgerhuis, the interdisciplinary artist

The first part of this thesis, consisting of Chapter 1, focuses on Jelgerhuis and his oeuvre and serves as a preparation for Part Two, Chapters 2–4 on stagecraft. To lay the foundation needed to explore the first research question (investigating how Jelgerhuis's lesser-known works can add to a better understanding of his treatise and acting style, and how this can contribute to HIPPP), I discuss Jelgerhuis's professions and his ambitions regarding painting, acting, costume design, research, and teaching against the background of early nineteenth-century theatre and the shifts in stage practices during that time. I present a selection of Jelgerhuis's lesser-known works, and address the reliability of Jelgerhuis's costume designs and his research on costume in preparation for the second case study. Time and again, I provide fragments from Jelgerhuis's document of 1808 'Antwoord op de vraag' (published posthumously in 1877) to shed light on Jelgerhuis's perspective on the theatre's past and present, and his vision for the future.⁴⁵ In doing so, I discuss both his ideals regarding theatre performance and the limitations he encountered in achieving these ideals. The ensuing observations of various interconnecting disciplines in Jelgerhuis's career as presented in the first chapter provide insight into the breadth of Jelgerhuis's craftsmanship and the density and complexity of information in his work. As connection points between the different layers in Jelgerhuis's oeuvre (including the principles of acting described in the *Theoretische lessen*), I introduce eight basic terms, frequently used by Jelgerhuis and his contemporaries — *schilderachtigheid*, *contrast*, *attitudes*, *welstand*, *waarheid*, *natuurlijkheid*, *gemak*, and *gratie* — accompanied by a discussion of their translations. Subsequently, I reflect on Jelgerhuis's ideas about teaching to better understand his treatise and teaching methods in preparation of Chapter 2.

Part Two

Stagecraft based on and inspired by information in Jelgerhuis's sources

In the artistic part of this research, described in Chapters 2–4, I carry out experiments to address questions that cannot be answered by reading and writing alone. The body, and the connection between doing and thinking, can provide different answers or lead to additional questions. The emphasis in this practical application is on the performer's work from outside in (physical training to build informed intuition and tacit knowledge in the desired acting style) as well as from the inside out (using the imagination, image-recall techniques, and emotions). The reason for working from both angles is ultimately to balance both of these approaches so as to establish a core status in which gestures and stage movements are a unity within the performer. There is not enough information in the sources to base each acting detail in the case studies on historical documentation, but the challenge and process of filling in existing gaps in the information available today and the search for solutions often results in new discoveries. My research in this chapter

⁴⁵ Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag'.

therefore combines the physical acting tools and rules on style proposed in the *Theoretische lessen* with mental acting tools drawn from Jelgerhuis's character studies and other lesser-known writings.

Chapter 2. In this chapter I adapt elements of acting as described and illustrated in the *Theoretische lessen* to create basic exercises for myself and others, that can be used as acting tools for training and teaching purposes. Part of this process involves the integration and application of the terms and concepts proposed and contextualized in Chapter 1 to physical practice. Guided by research question 3 – ‘Which acting tools can I develop from such training, and how can I make them available and useful to other performers?’ – I document the shift from information on the page to physical examples of acting tools in written form, in pictures, and through video recordings. I then expand these exercises with information from historical treatises by other authors to broaden the performer's vocabulary of expressive options. Finally, I compare the illustration that led to the first basic exercise to illustrations of costume designs and paintings by artists in and outside of the Netherlands, in order to view Jelgerhuis's material in a broader European context.

Chapter 3. In this **first case study**, the first part of Research Question 1 ‘How can a study of Johannes Jelgerhuis's lesser-known works add to a more complete understanding of Jelgerhuis's treatise *Theoretische lessen* and of his acting style?’ governs my investigation, but for a more integrative approach to this query, I carry out a combination of research and practice. In doing so, the first case study aims to contribute knowledge, gleaned not only through analysis and comparison of the sources but also through artistic outcomes, to Dutch theatre history and historically informed theatre practices. The main source of focus is Jelgerhuis's manuscript *Toneel Studien*, and in particular Jelgerhuis's detailed description of preparing and performing the role of Siméon in the play *Omasis, of Jozef in Egypte*.⁴⁶ In search of a deeper understanding of Jelgerhuis's acting style, I first analyse Jelgerhuis's acting as described in his study of Siméon and compare this information to the content in the *Theoretische lessen*. This analysis lays the foundation for this case study's working project, which features my collaboration with three actors to stage three scenes from *Omasis, of Jozeph in Egypte*. The approach to this case study consists in zooming in as much as possible on Jelgerhuis's creative processes by meticulously following his study of Siméon. I therefore keep the focus on spoken theatre, a genre known to and practiced by Jelgerhuis, and use mainly Dutch sources when contextualization is required. In describing my research and the creative processes in this project, I address the problems created by the gaps in Jelgerhuis's *Theoretische lessen* (regarding declamation, for instance) and demonstrate how Jelgerhuis's manuscript *Toneel Studien* and the *Theoretische lessen* can complement each other in theory and in practice, leading to a more holistic understanding and interpretation of Jelgerhuis's sources (and consequently of his stagecraft).

Chapter 4. To observe and test the techniques (and research) described in the previous chapters in a wider context, **the second case study** delineates my preparation of a historically

⁴⁶ Pierre-Marie-François Baour-Lormian, *Omasis, ou Joseph en Egypte, Tragédie en cinq actes en vers* [...] (Paris: Didot l'aîné, 1807), transl. into Dutch by Maarten Westerman as *Omasis, of Jozef in Egypte; Treurspel* [...] (Amsterdam: Abraham Mars, 1810).

inspired performance of the melodrama *Proserpina* of 1815 by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) and the composer Franz Carl Eberwein (1786–1868). This time operating in a more extended field of research-performance, I combine Dutch and international sources to inform my preparations of this melodrama and to create a stage character using acting techniques based not only on the works of Jelgerhuis but also inspired by other performers. In preparing the role of Proserpina, I build on the exercises proposed in Chapter 3, and compare physical stage attitudes described by Jelgerhuis to another style of attitudes performed by three women: Lady Emma Hamilton (1765–1815), Henriette Hendel-Schütz (1772–1849), and Ida Brun (1792–1857). Where all the characters in the first case study were male, this project is concerned with the stage movements and performance by women. My study of their craft includes experimentation with the costume’s influence on my movements on-stage. Combined with Jelgerhuis’s costume designs, the relationship between costume and movement informs my design and choice of dress for Proserpina and advances the costume as an important element in the conception of this role. Although the staging concept and preparations are my own, a close collaboration with the musicians of ensemble Postscript allowed me to align the expressive options between the text and the music in this melodrama.⁴⁷

KEY

Regarding my transcription of Jelgerhuis’s handwriting: I have kept his original punctuation (including combinations such as ‘. -’ and ‘. - .’) and capitals as they appear in the manuscripts. This includes the titles in the footnotes and bibliography. For clarity, I have replaced the occasionally accentuated letter ‘ú’, with the unaccentuated ‘u’, except in the titles of Jelgerhuis’s two versions of the manuscript *Toneel Studien* and *Tonneel Stúdien*, where I retained the accent to differentiate between them. All translations are my own unless specified otherwise.

After the first reference to a source in the footnotes, subsequent references take the author’s surname and a shortened title. Figures and footnotes are numbered by chapter, and Oxford spelling is used throughout the dissertation.

I have written this dissertation with the intention of doing justice to and with paying respect for the work of others (in footnotes or in the body text), as I have for all citations and illustrations.⁴⁸ If any of the ideas or results presented in this dissertation strike the reader as having originated elsewhere previous to my writing while missing the due reference, or for other seeming incongruencies or questions, please contact me.

⁴⁷ Postscript specializes in the historically inspired performance of music from Baroque to the Romantic era. For more on this ensemble, see Postscript, ‘Our Story’ <https://www.postscriptensemble.com/about> (accessed 2 January 2025).

⁴⁸ I have not been able to retrieve the full names of all authors, e.g. A. G. Schulte, E. Tas (possibly Eva Tas), and F. de Kaarsgieter.

