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“I am not Shakespeare’s Shylock”: *The Merchant of Venice* on the Dutch stage

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Introduction

I am not Shakespeare’s Shylock, [. . .] I show you mercy now” (Oel, *De Arabier* 62). These lines were spoken near the end of a 2007 production of *The Merchant of Venice* on the Dutch stage.¹ They concluded a moment in the production where the characters unanimously condemned Shakespeare for creating a Shylock, who supposedly was such a convenient vehicle for anti-Semitism. This 2007 production is almost indicative of the stage history of *The Merchant of Venice* in the Netherlands after World War Two, which tends to take a cautious approach to the play, which tries to avoid any anti-Semitic elements in the play, and present a generally dignified and noble Shylock. Strangely, no research to date has been done on the production and reception of *The Merchant of Venice* on the Dutch stage after World War Two. This essay fills that gap in scholarship.

The stage history of *Merchant* after World War Two has been most thoroughly investigated in Germany, where it reflected Germany’s guilt and shame. Many researchers demonstrated how *Merchant* played a role in, illustrated, or commented on the way Germany has faced its past and how these productions initiated debates on fascism, anti-Semitism, the Shoah, and Germany’s complicity.² Initially, productions of *Merchant* were dominated by noble, dignified Shylocks, the victims of a callous and hostile environment. The famous *Merchants* with the actor Ernst Deutsch playing Shylock in 1957 and 1963 showed Shylock to be the play’s only honorable character.³ Any hints of anti-Semitism were unacceptable and, in a period of trying to set things right—the *Wiedergutmachungspolitik*

of the Adenauer era (1949–63)—these productions were possibly more concerned with “playing away” the Shoah than with “working through the past” (Ackermann 367–69; Hortmann, *Shakespeare* 421–23; Schülting “Remember” 293).

After this period of transition, the Jewishness in the play gradually became the central core to which directors reacted and which they used to help make sense of—and atone for—the German past and the horrors of the Shoah in a mixture of guilt and shame (Hortmann, *Shakespeare* 254–56, 262, 421–23; Leiter 436–37; Schülting, “Remember” 294–96). They were directors with Jewish roots who broke the taboo on the “expiation” Shylocks and set out to deconstruct the taboos on Germany’s past. Otto Schenk’s 1968 *Merchant* movie turned Venice into an allegory of Nazi Germany, and Shylock was used in a confrontation of the audience with their own recent anti-Semitic history (Schülting, “I Am” 67–69). A few years later, Jewish director Peter Zadek’s *Shylock* (1972) was treacherous, malignant and embodied the worst stereotypes about Jews, causing a huge controversy, with Zadek arguing that he wanted to break down the horrors of the past (Hortman 257–59). This kind of soul-searching has become less pronounced since the 1980s, although productions invariably took a stand on what was considered the central question of the play (see Hortmann, *Shakespeare* 254–62, 421–23; Schülting, “I Am” 68–71; Schülting, “Remember” 294–300). Prominent examples were the 1985 East German production by Thomas Langhoff and the 1995 production by director Hanan Snir. Langhoff set his production in the festive, but decadent, capitalist atmosphere of Venice. His Shylock was played by Fred Düren, a Jewish Holocaust survivor himself, who appeared as a strong-willed, self-disciplined, and noble figure in a hostile environment reminiscent of the 1930s Germany. In the trial scene, Düren, dressed as a concentration camp inmate, was confronted with the very fascist mentality that originated from the capitalist society which bore the potential of the Shoah (Drakakis 135–37; Hortmann 421–23). In 1995, director Snir set the entire production in a concentration camp in which the Jewish prisoners were first made to perform the play to entertain their German guards, and were then slaughtered on stage. The use of *Merchant* as a “moral cudgel” (Walter 298–9) remained strong and in 2003 Hortmann expressed his yearning for the “good, old times when *Merchant* could be staged by a Jewish director as a wonderful fairy-tale” without the ever-present obligation to remember the Shoah (“Wo” 217). Since 2000, Germany has seen an increasing number of *Merchants* which did expand the terrain and move the focus away from German anti-Semitism

and Shylock's Jewishness in favor of more general, contemporary debates such as migration, terrorism, multi-ethnic society, or globalized banking (Schülting, "Remember"). However, productions of *Merchant* in Germany remain dominated by the legacy of the Shoah: a 2009 *Merchant* by director Armin Petras in Berlin, which played down the anti-Semitic themes in the play, was criticized for its failure to engage with German history and the Shoah (Sokolowski; Wildermann). Although German productions of *Merchant* have come a long way over the past sixty years, their production and reception is invariably overshadowed by the country's history.

Unlike Germany—where Schülting heads a research project at the University of Berlin entitled "Shylock in Germany: The Reception of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* after 1945"—there has been no comprehensive study of *Merchant* and Shylock in the United Kingdom in relation to the cultural and historical context after the Shoah. However, a cursory review of the numerous studies and introductions written on *Merchant* make it apparent that UK productions show a great versatility in their *Merchants*. Oddly enough, productions at first hardly reacted to the Shoah. John O'Connor uses an interesting metaphor: "[...] the British theatre's response to Hitler's persecution of the Jews is like that of Conan Doyle's dog that did not bark in the night. . . . [For] mainstream theatre it was as though nothing had happened" (398). The 1948 opening production of the Stratford-upon-Avon season featured the Australian dancer-actor Robert Helpmann as a Shylock whose mannerisms and intonation reflected the anti-Semitic stereotypes in the 1948 movie *Oliver Twist* by director David Lean (Edelman 55). Productions in 1953, with Michael Redgrave playing Shylock, and 1956, with Emlyn Williams, continued this tradition of a seedy, leering and repulsive Shylock (Gilbert 27–28). From the 1960s, productions in the UK took a variety of approaches to *Merchant*. In his review of British post-Holocaust *Merchants*, Gross pointed out that while the play could never be the same again after the Shoah, British productions tended to pay less direct attention to the Shoah itself than German productions (324–52). Instead, there was a tendency to focus more on underscoring the prejudices of the Christian Venetians in making the play more acceptable to postwar sensibilities. Although memories of the Shoah are present in productions, British theater has produced many different Shylocks, with a multiplicity of interpretative possibilities. Shylock has been portrayed both as a sympathetic character, understandably driven by a hostile environment to demand revenge, but has also been staged as a manipulative—or even as

a villainous—vicious character. He has been staged as utterly, stereotypically Jewish, but also as a modern banker or a prototype of “the Other” with hardly any reference to his Jewishness.⁴ The 2011 RSC *Merchant*, starring—for the fifth time in his career—Patrick Stewart as Shylock, perhaps best illustrated this diversity: reviews of the production used around fifty different—and often contrasting—adjectives to describe his Shylock. Stewart himself told me in an interview that he wanted to “move away from previous interpretations and present a more complex and diverse character this time.”⁵

An analysis of productions of *Merchant* in Israel shows how strongly present social and political conditions inform production and reception of the play. Avraham Oz argues that while at first it would be unthinkable to deprive Shylock of any measure of his pathos, as the state of Israel matured and stabilized, the full weight of Jewish history no longer needed to be borne by Shylock. This allowed not only for greater diversity in the portrayal of Shylock, but even for some daring, topical interpretations, such as that of a Shylock succumbing to terrorism (63–64, 68–70). Likewise, in France, productions of *Merchant* and Shylock gradually showed an increasing diversity, after a period of reflection on France’s dubious role in the Shoah. There was a movement towards a more general interest in the humanity of the play rather than in the specific Jewish topic, in line with a tendency among French theater directors to depict Shakespeare in essentialist terms, referring to the “real meaning” and universal character of his plays (Bradby 424–58; Fayard, “France’s” 406–407; Fayard, *The Performance* 322–30). Director Stéphane Braunschweig, in his 1999 Paris production of *Merchant*, ignored the anti-Semitic themes in the play, focusing instead on its economic conflicts. While a majority of reviewers criticized his dismissal of the play’s anti-Semitic elements, others applauded him for moving the play beyond history (Fayard, “Recycling” 27). Two years later, at another Paris premiere of *Merchant*, director Andrei Serban argued that in his 2001 *Merchant* Shakespeare’s aim was “to improve his knowledge of Man. Not man as opposed to woman or the Jew as opposed to the non-Jew. But Man. But Man” (qtd. in Fayard, “France’s” 407).

In this paper I describe and analyze the production and reception of *Merchant*—and in particular the representation of Shylock—in the Netherlands after World War Two, a topic which criticism yet has to explore. I analyze the impact World War Two might have had on *Merchant*, and also how production and reception of *Merchant* in the Netherlands seem to differ from those of surrounding countries, responding to the specific

circumstances in Dutch society in coming to terms with the trauma of the Shoah and the unexpectedly high percentage—seventy-five—of deported Dutch Jews. First, I discuss the history of anti-Semitism in the Netherlands, the impact of World War Two, the way Dutch society has wrestled with its role in the Shoah, and how recent research on this role has demonstrated a truth far more complex than suggested earlier. Next, I present an overview of Dutch *Merchants*, with special attention to Shylock, and in highlighting some of the more remarkable productions I will demonstrate how the Dutch *Merchant* is illustrative of a much wider sentiment in Dutch society concerning its perceived history and identity.

History and Identity

Dutch society is traditionally known for its tolerance of outsiders. The formal agreement the Dutch provinces reached in 1579—the Union of Utrecht, which laid the foundation of the Netherlands—in its war against Spain stipulated that nobody could ever be persecuted on religious grounds. The Inquisition was abolished, freedom of worship was introduced, and much restrictive religious legislation was rescinded. This amount of religious freedom was unique in Europe at the time and led to many religious refugees seeking the shelter of the Dutch state.⁶ Amongst these were many persecuted Jews, most notably Sephardic Jews from Portugal and Spain and Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe. The virulent anti-Semitism that dominated Europe from the second half of the Middle Ages onwards never gained a foothold in the Netherlands, which had no ghettos, no pogroms, no job prohibitions, and no mass expulsions, unlike Great Britain, France, Spain, Germany, Poland, and Russia.⁷ The Jews who fled to the Netherlands settled mainly in Amsterdam, and eventually comprised about three percent of the population. The city became known as the “new Jerusalem,” with neither the growing density nor the growing prosperity of these newcomers giving rise to explicit persecution or recrimination in the prosperous Republic of the Seven United Netherlands in the seventeenth century (Poliakov 3–5, 38). The new constitution of the Batavian Republic at the end of the eighteenth century enshrined legal equality for Jews—in line with the French attempts all over Napoleonic Europe. Unlike other European countries, however, the Emancipatory decree remained fully intact in the Netherlands until shortly before World War Two. While the decree was revoked in the other European countries, no political party in the Netherlands ever included anti-Jewish measures in its program and no criticism of disproportionate

Jewish influence or mass-incited violence took place in the Netherlands (Gans 9–25; Leyesdorff, “Wij Hebben” 77–80; Michman, Beem, and Michman 23–30, 49–53). Likewise, members of the Catholic Church in the Netherlands seemed less burdened with a history of anti-Semitic behavior than were their coreligionists in other Catholic countries, and the theological discussion on Jewry and religion attracted far less attention in the Netherlands (Poorthuis and Salemink 163–64, 272–73, 813–15).

Set against this background of tolerance, it was entirely unexpected that in the Netherlands seventy-five percent of the 140,000 Jews were being sent to their deaths. Neither Queen Wilhelmina, nor the Dutch government in exile paid much attention to the fate of the Jews in the Netherlands during the war, even though they were aware of the full-scale deportations (N. Zee 181–204). In no other country in Western Europe were so many Jews deported and killed as in the Netherlands.⁸ And in the financial rehabilitation and welcome of the Jews who returned from the camps immediately after World War Two, the Netherlands were steadfastly described as cold, unforthcoming and uncooperative.⁹ The extent of this—unexpected—high percentage, and the seeming implication of some form of Dutch complicity, was a shock for Dutch society, and at the first meeting of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948 it was said: “We cannot forget that we meet in a land [the Netherlands] from which 110,000 Jews were taken to be murdered” (qtd. in Brockway 5). Many reasons have been advanced to explain this seeming Dutch complicity in the Shoah: one of these reasons would be the meticulous administrative documentation of the Dutch population and the ruthless efficiency of the Dutch bureaucracy in carrying out orders. It resulted in an awkward compliment to Dutch collaboration by Adolf Eichmann, who stated during his trial that “the transports [in the Netherlands] ran so smoothly that one might say that it was a pleasure to see” (qtd. in Presser, vol. 2 371). Another reason would be that the Netherlands was a relatively flat country, with few places for Jewish people to hide, unlike Belgium and France. An obvious discrepancy in this argument might be that many (non-Jewish) Dutch workers who were called up for labor service in Germany were very well able to hide. Moreover, it was argued, with the departure of the Dutch government, that the German administration in the Netherlands could more easily subvert the system and rely more on high-placed German civil servants than in other occupied countries. With German instead of Dutch leaders in, for example, the police force, the Dutch would have been less vigilant than the Belgian and French authorities in protecting “their” Jews.¹⁰

Initially, Dutch studies on the possible compliance with the Shoah tended to gloss over Dutch participation in the Shoah and contended that the majority of the Dutch population would have been unaware of the reality and scale of what was happening to the Jews. Three famous Jewish Dutch historians—with first-hand experience of the war and having suffered personal losses themselves—wrote extensive studies on the World War and on the Jewish deportations. While they never glossed over the extent of the deportations, they did argue that the Dutch could not have been aware of the fate of deported Dutch Jews: at best only fragmented knowledge was available and the truth would have been too horrible to imagine.¹¹ Later studies—from the 1970s onwards—moved away from the idea that the Dutch would not have known about the fate of the deported Jews, or introduced other reasons in a general tendency to break down the supposed myth of Dutch tolerance or ignorance and to demonstrate some form of Dutch complicity.¹² Looking back—with hindsight—many claimed that the supposed lack of anti-Semitism in Dutch history had never been based on tolerance, but rather on indifference, mere commercial gain, a Dutch tendency to go for practical solutions rather than sharply defining ideological positions, and a relatively strong assimilation of Jews in the Netherlands. At the same time they argued that, while anti-Semitic behavior might never have been regulated in law or expressed through physical attacks, the sentiment was never absent from Dutch society. Although, for example, legislature stipulated equality in the nineteenth century, Jews continued to be denied positions of representation in Dutch society (Michman, Beem, and Michman 108). The Netherlands were perhaps less a model of tolerance than previously thought.¹³ After the initial period of denial of awareness of the Shoah in the first decades after the war, a sense of self-recrimination slowly arose in Dutch society: authors moved towards a perception of illusory Dutch tolerance, which had seemingly been shattered by new revelations of the magnitude of the Dutch participation in the Shoah. More recent research, however, has revealed the situation to be far less clear-cut and an analysis of 164 diaries revealed that ordinary Dutchmen generally were shocked by the deportations, but were also unaware of the fate that awaited their Dutch Jewish compatriots (Boom). A detailed, and well-documented comparison of the persecution of Jews in the Netherlands, France, and Belgium argued that the high percentage of deported Jews in the Netherlands was mainly caused by differences in organizational structure of deportations (in the Netherlands, the German agencies had almost total freedom of action in the process), by the later rise of organized resistance

and hiding opportunities in the Netherlands, and by the deeper integration of Jews into Dutch society, which made them cling longer to legal options in avoiding deportation, rather than go massively into hiding, as in France and Belgium (Griffioen & Zeller; also Romijn et al. 55–78).

However, these recent, more nuanced, studies have not yet found their way into the public debate, which is dominated by a tendency to accept the idea of the shattered illusion of the tolerant Dutch nation, and to accept that indifference and anti-Semitism on the part of the non-Jewish Dutch were a main cause of the high percentage of deportations. In the wake of the war and the realization of the extent of the Shoah, a strong postwar opposition to anti-Semitism set in and the Netherlands became a steadfast supporter of the new state of Israel.¹⁴ The wave of anti-Semitic incidents in Germany in 1959 and 1960, starting with the defacement of the synagogue in Cologne which had just been opened by the Chancellor Adenauer, and quickly spreading over Western Europe, never reached the Netherlands, where only a few minor incidents were reported (*Kroniek Antisemitisme*). The Six-Day War (1967)—when Israel was attacked by Egypt, Syria, and Jordan—resulted in an outpouring of pro-Israel sentiment, both in the government and in society. Successful national fundraisers for Israel were organized and stickers bearing the text “I support Israel” were posted on the rear windows of thousands of cars (Blom 395–97; Houten and Kopuit 10–13; *Kroniek Antisemitisme*). The Yom Kippur War of 1973 between Israel and Egypt and Syria also led to unconditional Dutch support and large pro-Israel manifestations in the Netherlands. In the 1970s the Netherlands frequently opposed France and other European countries that did criticize Israel (Houten and Kopuit 9–35; *Kroniek Antisemitisme*; Snel 46–51).

In the 1970s and 1980s, in line with earlier developments across Europe, the Netherlands began to express some criticism of Israel, particularly after Israel's 1982 invasion of Southern Lebanon; however, this did not translate into an increase in anti-Semitic behavior (*Kroniek Antisemitisme*; Snel 49–51). The new parties of the far right, electorally successful in the Netherlands from the 1980s, rarely engaged in anti-Semitic behavior; on the contrary, they rather turned into stalwart supporters of Israel.¹⁵ Strong Jewish organizations in the Netherlands became influential in public debate, with the Anne Frank Foundation seen as an unassailable institution. Just as all English children are introduced to Shakespeare in primary school, all Dutch primary school children visit the Anne Frank house, which tells the story of a young Jewish diarist, hiding from the Germans in Amsterdam until she and her family were betrayed, deported,

and sent to die in concentration camps. However, the canonization of Anne Frank is ambivalent and some researchers have asserted that the central place that this Jewish girl has taken in the Dutch conscience has done more than underscore the sense of remorse in Dutch society. It also helped to restore the myth of the moral courage of the Dutch, and of the heroic Dutch who tried, sometimes to no avail, to hide their Jewish compatriots during the war (Gerstenfeld, *Judging* 26–27; Lans and Vuijsjes 69–73; Young 131–37).

Around the turn of the millennium, the yearly Dutch monitoring of anti-Semitic behavior showed a sharp rise in the number of anti-Semitic incidents, which led to international institutions warning of an anti-Semitic environment in the Netherlands. The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia stated in its *Annual Report* that the Netherlands showed a striking rise in anti-Semitic violence (48). This was confirmed by CIDI, a Dutch organization documenting anti-Semitic incidents (2001 2–3; 2002 2–5; 2004 4–7; also *Monitor Racisme* 27, 42). This disturbing trend was related to demographic changes: following labor migration from Mediterranean countries such as Turkey and Morocco, a sizeable Muslim minority in the Netherlands had emerged (Heijes, *Met Andere* 21–31). The continuing tensions in the Middle East between Israel and the Palestinians led to an increase of anti-Semitic behavior, largely caused by a minority of young, second-generation Moroccan Dutch in the large cities (CIDI, 2001 43–47; CIDI, 2002 52–55; CIDI, 2004 2–6; *Kroniek Antisemitisme*; *Monitor Racisme* 27, 42). An increase in tension, as the outbreak of the second intifada, almost automatically led to an increase in anti-Semitic incidents. Unlike in Belgium or France, however, in the Netherlands there were no reported physical attacks on Jews or on their property in the forms of arson, vandalism, or destruction of synagogues or Jewish-owned businesses (CIDI, 2002 2). In addition, the CIDI maintained that nonetheless, the Netherlands were still "a positive exception" among European countries (CIDI, 2004 4). However, although Dutch sentiment still seems to be firmly opposed to expressions of anti-Semitism, some studies have warned not only of a potential further increase in anti-Semitism but also of a growing undercurrent of indifference. While not leading to waves of violent anti-Semitism, this indifference might take the form of tolerance of intolerance.¹⁶ In the next section I discuss how *Merchant* on the Dutch stage might have been influenced by World War Two and how Dutch productions and the Dutch reception of *Merchant*—and especially of Shylock—reflect Dutch self-perception and the Dutch manner of coming to terms with the nation's supposed complicity in the Shoah.

The Dutch *Merchant*

Although Dutch literature at the turn of the nineteenth century was generally less blatantly anti-Semitic than German, English, and French literature (Weijters 160–64), productions of *Merchant* did not shy away from more malignant Shylocks on stage, which were comparable to some of the productions in other European countries. The most renowned Dutch actor of the time was Louis Bouwmeester, and his defining role was Shylock.¹⁷ He first appeared as Shylock in 1871, signed a contract with *Het Nederlandsch Tooneel* (the most prestigious Dutch theater company), and subsequently appeared as Shylock in *Merchant* in more than two thousand stage productions over forty-four years. On the one hand, his Shylock possessed some of the dignity that, for example, Henry Irving tried to bring to the role, while on the other hand, Bouwmeester also emphasized his Jewishness and the cruelty of the character, showing a Shylock both dignified and consumed by hatred and greed (Dommelshuizen 59–73; Hoeven iv, 27–30; Koster 141–46). He was dressed as an orthodox Jew, wearing a dark brown kaftan, a traditional tallit and arba kanfoth, and a black yarmulke; his eyebrows and long beard bristled forward, he walked bent forward, leaning on a stick; some teeth were blackened to simulate missing teeth, and he rolled his “r” aggressively in words such as “Christian” and “revenge.”¹⁸ This Shylock fully fitted the Jewish stereotype, and production photographs show a wild, almost bestial Shylock in the trial scene, one hand with curved fingers on Antonio’s chest—as if ripping out his heart with his hand—the other hand holding the sharply honed knife.¹⁹

The *Merchant* in which Bouwmeester appeared was extremely popular and his Shylock dominated the Dutch stage even after he himself had stopped playing the role. Actors like Piet Janssens, Hubert Laroche, and Karel van Rijn—contemporaries who also performed Shylock—were believed to have been strongly influenced by Bouwmeester’s interpretation (Magnus 53–56). Bouwmeester was also quite popular abroad, and he toured many European countries, appearing in cities that included Stratford, London, Paris, and Berlin (Koster 190–210). *The Times* described his portrayal of Shylock in a 1920 performance as follows: “Bouwmeester came, saw, and conquered. The tragedian, speaking his native language, roused his English auditors to the highest pitch of excitement and enthusiasm. For a veteran of seventy-eight, the mere physical side of the enactment was astonishing. The embodiment of malignity and cruelty, he spluttered, hissed, and raged. . . . Undoubtedly, here was a Shylock

of renown" (qtd. in Koster 200; see also Amerongen 29–31). The last *Merchant* production on the Dutch stage before World War Two—by theater company *Residentietoonel* under Johan de Meester—premiered on April 27, 1940. With press night only two weeks before the invasion, the Shylock in this production—played by the well-known actor Philippe la Chapelle—deviated from the Bouwmeester tradition. Both Shylock's humanity and his anti-Semitic surroundings were emphasized, and some reviewers commented on the difficulty of staging Shylock at this point in time (Dijkhuizen). It would be an indication of the Shylock tradition to be picked up after the war.

Although under the occupation—apart from the 1940 production—no *Merchants* were produced for the Dutch stage, World War Two did not result in the disappearance of *Merchant* productions on the Dutch stage after 1945. *Merchant* was indeed one of the more popular plays, enjoying a total of nine different productions in the 1950s and 1960s and four in the first decade of the twenty-first century.²⁰ Of all of Shakespeare's plays, only eight plays were performed more frequently in the Netherlands: the "major" tragedies and comedies such as *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Twelfth Night*.²¹ This frequency not only contradicts expectations that World War Two and the trauma of the Jewish deportations would result in avoidance of the potentially anti-Semitic play; it also contradicts the mistaken belief among reviewers that *Merchant* has been shunned by most Dutch theater companies and directors because of its implied anti-Semitism.²²

The productions of *Merchant* after World War Two can be divided into three phases—although the second phase consists of only one production: (1) the productions in the 1950s till the 1970s, (2) the 1982 landmark production, and (3) the productions of the 1990s up to and including the first decade of the twenty-first century. The first group of productions tended to stress the comic and fairytale elements of the play and depicted Shylock as a rather timid, shy, and gentle man, devoid of any threat or viciousness—as borne out by reviews and production photographs.²³ This approach is similar to the early postwar *Merchants* in Germany, although these productions had become more soul-searching and controversial by the end of the 1960s. We are a far step away in this first phase from Bouwmeester's Shylock and illustrative of this cautious approach was a production by the theater company Arena, which was to be performed for many secondary schools. Although the production was predominantly staged in a light-hearted manner, the target audience of teenagers caused opinion makers to warn the company that even the merest hint

of anti-Semitism should be avoided—particularly for such a “vulnerable group.” The idea that *Merchant* might be used educationally as a kind of terrifying example of anti-Semitism was derided by some as “nonsense” and “fully unjustifiable” (Koolhaas; Lokhorst; Ros). The artistic director eventually wrote an open letter in which he stated that although “the play might be misinterpreted,” he wanted to make absolutely clear that the “Christians were so hypocritical, so arrogant and so inhuman towards Shylock,” whom he saw as “a tragic and solitary figure, humiliated and tortured by his environment” (Vos 1). By way of illustration the director drew in his letter upon the reaction of a girl who repeatedly said during the trial scene: “The poor man is wronged” (qtd. in Vos 2).

One of the most notable Shylocks of these decades was played by Paul Steenbergen—one of the most famous actors (and later directors) in Dutch theater history. However, although Steenbergen was renowned for his versatility on stage as well as for his experimental approach to theater, it is indicative of the careful approach towards Shylock that even his Shylock—in the 1959 production—was first and foremost a generous and dignified man. If one Dutch actor could have portrayed a less one-dimensional Shylock, it would have been Steenbergen, known for the ambivalence that permeated many of his characters (Dubois 117–20). However, his Shylock did not demonstrate his usual ambivalence and was described in reviews as “an innocent lamb” (Koning). Neither did Steenbergen—unlike Bouwmeester—stress the Jewishness of the character, either through his language, his clothes, or his gestures.²⁴ The first production that deviated from this first postwar phase was the 1982 production by the RO Theatre Company, directed by Franz Marijnen. The public outcry which this production created, as well as its consequences shows how specific political and cultural conditions influenced productions of *Merchant* in the Netherlands. I will continue by analyzing this production and its reception, and then turn my attention to the third phase of subsequent productions of *Merchant*.

The 1982 *Merchant* was the first after World War Two not to be staged as comedy or fairytale. Marijnen staged a *Merchant* that followed the tradition of the Olivier production: Shylock as a dignified and assimilated banker in a hostile environment that was never going to accept him.²⁵ The popular Dutch actor Peter Tuinman did not revert to his Jewish role until the trial scene, when he donned traditional Jewish clothes; through this device Marijnen sought to demonstrate how anti-Semitism worked, as stereotypes about Jews would come into being precisely because of the prejudices of Christians (Jans 28–29). Whereas in the first

acts Shylock resembled his Christian counterparts, in the trial scene in act four, not only his dress (he first donned the kaftan and yarmulke), but also his movements and speech changed. From a modern businessman, he changed into the almost archetypal caricature of the spiteful Jew: he began to spit and hiss, his tongue rolled over his lips, his body posture became bent, he put on a phony, crooked nose, and his movements were almost ritualistic—all with the intent to demonstrate to his opponents how ridiculous their stereotypes really were.²⁶

Although his Shylock was no longer the gentle and dignified man of earlier productions, he did demonstrate an almost desperate bloodthirstiness similar to that of his Christian enemies. He was ultimately set down as a lonely and isolated outsider, the victim of a hostile world, rather than a perpetrator of evil. This was a production about spiteful people, and any potential for comedy in the last scene of the play was removed by scrapping most of the lines and replacing them with a silent scene in which Bassanio exchanged his homosexual partner for a rich and cruel woman, painfully illustrated by Portia forcing Antonio to put the ring back on Bassanio’s finger after having offered her body—in vain—to Bassanio and an uninterested Antonio. The somberness of the production, paralleled by the bare, grey set, fitted the director’s general main vision; indeed, the director’s other productions were known for their somber outlook on the world and mankind. However, where his other productions met with general approval, this production did not, and Marijnen himself was ironically accused of anti-Semitism. The production fitted his oeuvre. Shylock was just one of many vindictive people—and more a victim than a perpetrator at that—and Marijnen claimed that his focus on the greedy world of high finance was meant to draw attention away from any inherent anti-Semitism and that his productions fought the sort of stereotyping that produced anti-Semitism. However, the production led to vehement reactions. Many times, enraged audience members and demonstrators actually waited for the actors when they left the theatre in order to express their anger with the “pure anti-Semitism” and the “hatred of Jews” in this production (Knol; Puite). The production resulted in an unusual number of angry letters to newspapers, particularly to reviewers who had praised the production. In an ultimate blow to the production, the Anne Frank Foundation placed the *Merchant* of Marijnen on its annual list of anti-Semitic incidents.²⁷

This was not a production that strongly denounced Shylock. In the UK and Germany, productions similar to this one—or ones that went much further—were performed without the public outcry that this produc-

tion incited in the Netherlands. Prominent examples are the 1978 John Barton and the 1987 Bill Alexander productions. In Barton's production, Shylock was played by Patrick Stewart as a cold-blooded, unpleasant, and sinister outsider, who did not shrink back from slapping his daughter across the face. His actions not only explained Jessica's elopement, but even explained and almost seemed to justify the hatred of his Christian adversaries in Venice. In Alexander's *Merchant*, the production moved beyond anti-Semitism to a wider discourse on racism. However, the hostility between both sides was such that neither side evoked much sympathy. Shylock, played by Anthony Sher, was on the one hand a focus of sympathy in an environment that was more blatantly cruel than shown in any previous Stratford production, but on the other hand equally repulsive and villainous himself.²⁸ In Germany, productions from the 1960s onwards formed part of a postwar soul-searching and also included Jewish actors such as Düren, or Jewish directors, such as Zadek, who did not shy away from controversy. However, although the Dutch 1982 production was relatively mild compared with many other productions in the UK or Germany, it did—however lightly—depart from the standard cautious approach to the play. It is noticeable that this production was staged at a time when public sympathy towards Israel in the Netherlands was relatively low. Israel had invaded Lebanon and the Palestine refugee camps of Shaba and Shatila. Under the “watchful” eyes of the Israeli army—at the time at war with the PLO in South Lebanon—a Lebanese Christian militia was supposed to have massacred between one thousand and 3,500 Palestinian refugees in these camps. Anti-Israel sentiments were frequently expressed in Dutch newspapers, and the first Dutch production was put on stage which deviated—albeit slightly—from the cautious approach to Shylock and tentatively criticized both Shylock and the Christians. The program notes to the production mention the “bloodthirsty force” that supposedly drove the Israeli Defence Minister Ariel Sharon, in an obvious link to the Shylock about whom Marijnen argued that his demands for the pound of flesh were inhuman (“Program Notes”). Newspaper reviewers also picked up on the relation between the play and the political situation in Lebanon, arguing that the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the resulting growth in anti-Semitism gave the production a very contemporary context. The specific political conditions of 1982 were such that the director of a Dutch *Merchant* was able to stage a Shylock who was not merely sympathetic. However, even in this year, the reactions to such a Shylock were vehement, as previously noted, and to this day the production continues to be an exception.

It would be ten years before another *Merchant* would be staged in the Netherlands and this production would be the start of the third phase of Dutch *Merchants*. The third phase was characterized on the one hand by a more comic approach than the 1982 production, partly returning to the first phase, while on the other hand the theme of intolerance would be explored in a more serious manner. However, the third phase is characterized by a more cautious approach than the 1982 production. Any hints of anti-Semitism or ambivalence in a *Merchant* would not be tolerated from 1982 onwards; Shylock would be portrayed as a dignified victim rather than a perpetrator; repeatedly directors in the Netherlands would point out the supposed inherent anti-Semitic elements of *Merchant*; reviewers kept repeating the dangers of staging a *Merchant*; and any Jewish caricature would be avoided. The aftereffects of the criticism of the Marijnen production were clear in the choice of the director for the 1992 production. Where Marijnen was known to be controversial, the director chosen for this *Merchant*, Ger Thijs, had a reputation as a traditional, trustworthy craftsman who was averse to controversy. Although reviewers applauded theater company Het Nationaal Toneel—the most prestigious in the country—for daring to stage another *Merchant* in the Netherlands, this production and the “safe” director choice resulted in a *Merchant* generally characterized as a hilarious comedy.²⁹ This *Merchant* was thus in line with productions of the 1950s and 1960s. Shylock was dressed in a modern suit, like the other characters, but did not revert to Jewish costume as in the Marijnen production. This Shylock never caricatured his Jewish background in gestures or facial expression, as did Tuinman in 1982. Although Shylock was an outsider, the excessive hilarity of the production neutralized any ambivalence; even the trial scene evoked laughter from the audience. Although the director asserted that the lack of tolerance between Christians and Jews was the crux of the play, his production concentrated on the intolerance that the Christians, portrayed as a bunch of revolting good-for-nothings, showed towards Shylock, rather than paying attention to the cruelty of Shylock himself. For example, he cut act three, scene three, in which a vengeful Shylock has Antonio incarcerated and in which Antonio begs Shylock, in vain, for mercy. In spite of some reviews, which took issue with the excessive hilarity and easy laughter of the production, this *Merchant* drew no fewer than 25,000 theatergoers, making it one of Het Nationale Toneel's most popular productions that year (Blik, “Toneelleider”; “Afgelasting”).

After this production, *Merchant* once again appeared on the Dutch stage with a more regular frequency. Six productions were staged in the

1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century (see appendix two). The traumatic experience of the 1982 production had been mitigated by the 1992 *Merchant*, which showed that it was possible to stage the play in the Netherlands, while taking into account the specific conditions of Dutch society and the trauma of World War Two. Although the typical comedy style of the 1950s and 1960s became less dominant, with directors beginning to explore the play's theme of intolerance, Shylock remained an "unassailable" character in the sense that Dutch directors would refrain from any overt criticism of him. One example of this tendency was offered by the three productions of *Merchant* by Shakespeare Theatre Diever, a theater company that has, since 1946, produced one open-air Shakespeare play each summer in the small provincial town of Diever. The productions have become an important Shakespearean tradition in the Netherlands, attracting an average yearly audience of 18,000 as well as five Royal visits to date. Diever is one of only three places in the world allowed to raise a Shakespeare flag, along with Alabama and Stratford-upon-Avon. After two productions in 1960 and 1972, that followed the comic trend of those days, the 1995 production was somewhat more serious. As is almost traditional with every new *Merchant* on the Dutch stage, particularly after the controversial 1982 production, reviewers once more pointed out the dangers of staging *Merchant*, identifying it as "risky enterprise," and a "very sensitive choice," and considering it "courageous [. . .] to stage *Merchant* under the idyllic trees of the Diever forest, amidst the darting night moths and the bats" (Buijs; Geerlings; Freriks "Tragisch").

On the one hand, the production maintained a light, romantic tone, and the director, Wil ter Horst—known for her brisk and lively comedies—was fully aware of the importance of the entertainment factor in Diever (Nijhof 276; Verpalen). She added two professional singers to the production—Floor Pots and Joske van der Hoeven—whose songs accompanied the departure of the rejected suitors; she included a dreamy masque, and added a vivacious group of flirtatious court ladies surrounding Portia. All of Portia's scenes were thus accompanied by soft giggles and the rustle of gowns, under which the court ladies wore a kind of super-sized push-up bra, which induced reviewers to observe that it seemed as if one found oneself "in a lingerie store for well-proportioned women" (Verpalen). In conjunction with the dreamy, outdoor forest setting of Diever and the joy in the love scenes, it led reviewers to stress that this *Merchant* was undoubtedly a comedy—"just as Shakespeare probably wanted it to be," and indeed very similar to plays such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Buijs; Freriks "Tragisch"; Geerlings).

However, although this *Merchant* was reviewed as romantic and funny, the director did not present a light and entertaining trial scene, but dramatized the humiliation and betrayal by the vicious Christian businessmen that Shylock—his head meekly bowed—underwent, in line with the increasingly serious approach to *Merchant* on the Dutch stage. Shylock was not so much presented as a Jew—in clothing or gestures, as in the pre-war productions or as in the final scenes of the Marijnen production—but was symbolic of the outsider in general and his refusal to break his oath was to him a point of honor, which his Christian adversaries could not or would not understand. Horst stated that the preparations for the production were "difficult and full of doubts, particularly because of the discriminatory way in which Shakespeare portrayed Shylock in his play [. . .] This is no longer possible today" (qtd. in Verpalen). In the production, her approach was evident as a mild Shylock in a cruel world was set down on stage, a Shylock for whom the audience could feel only pity. Reviewers noted the long way this production had come from the "satanic and vindictive" Bouwmeester or from the "comical" productions of the 1950s and 1960s, but also from the "very dangerous" Shylock by Tuinman in the controversial 1982 production.³⁰ Shylock was a thoroughly sympathetic character, more stubborn than cruel, and at the end of the play, as the festivities went on in Belmont, he was seen crossing the stage, broken, isolated, and humiliated, glancing at his daughter who had betrayed him, and being jeered at by the Venetians. The last scene elicited strong sympathy and pity for a victimized Shylock and had none of the tentative ambivalence of the 1982 Marijnen production.

The early twenty-first century productions followed in the tradition of those of 1992 and 1995. A 2004 production directed by Iris Jansen with the DTG theater company presented a playful, fairytale-like production in which Shylock was a thoroughly sympathetic character haunted by uncertainty and powerlessness (Kleef). The most recent production of *Merchant* (2008) was directed by Theu Boermans with the Theatercompagnie; it presented Shylock, played by the famous Dutch actor Pierre Bokma, as a sympathetic victim cast out by a hostile environment.³¹ But the 2002 and 2007 productions warrant further discussion as they illustrate some specific changes made in the process of adapting *Merchant* for the Dutch stage.

The 2002 *Merchant* by the Amsterdam theater company, under the direction of Ola Mafaalani, was eagerly anticipated because the director had a reputation for controversial, compelling productions (Bots). However, her *Merchant* shied away from any possibility of anti-Semitic accusa-

tions. For example, she cut Shylock's enforced conversion to Christianity as being too humiliating and focused instead on victims of capitalism. Not only was Shylock portrayed as a comical miser, without any hint of vengefulness or cruelty, Mafaalani removed any reference to Shylock's being Jewish. Her production, described by reviewers as light and lively, removed all references to Jewishness (Franssen 53–56; Liefhebber; Takken). For example, in Shylock's famous monologue, the line "Hath not a Jew eyes?" (3.1.40) was changed to "Hath not Shylock eyes?" whereas in other places "a Jew" was changed to "outsider" or to "stranger." Not only was the word "Jew" removed from the text, but the director herself also argued that maintaining the word "Jew" in the text would weaken Shakespeare's text and would reduce the play these days to an "us and them, Christians and Jews caricature" (Mafaalani, "Koopman"). Instead, she argued that "Shylock is not first and foremost a Jew, but an outsider who was humiliated by the Venetians" (Mafaalani, "Shakespeares"). Shylock's position as victim was reinforced by his body movement, which included a wistful staring into the distance—indicative of the forlorn migrant he was—and a raising of his fingers in the air while pushing his elbows against the sides of his body, as if protecting himself from a hostile world. Although the trial scene in act four was played with a bare-chested Antonio and a Shylock with a sharp potato-knife hovering over his chest, the potential for viciousness was reduced by having Shylock winking at the audience as if to say that he was only playing a game of cat and mouse, while in the background an upbeat, comic melody was played. Shylock's winks formed part of a pattern of asides between Shylock and the audience, creating an alienation effect in which he told the audience: "I may have to play the role of someone who screams 'an eye for an eye' in this play, but I do not want to enter into any racist controversy." It worked on the Dutch stage, and reviewers lavished praise on the production, declaring that the "problem" of *Merchant's* "rabid anti-Semitism" had been "finally solved" (Schaap). The play could be enjoyed once more as a regular comedy.³²

The 2007 production by director Justus van Oel and theater company De Nieuwe Amsterdam went even further than Mafaalani, having Shylock played as an Arab Jew and renaming the play *The Arab of Amsterdam*. Shylock, now renamed Rafi, was played by the Egyptian-Dutch actor Sabri Saad El Hamus; the character ran a large chain of falafel snack bars in Amsterdam. Meanwhile, Antonio was a drug trafficker who had three ships—engaging in marijuana smuggling—that were headed to Amsterdam. Instead of being a purely Jewish Shylock, Rafi played both on his Arab and his Jewish roots and delivered the monologue "Hath

not a Jew eyes?" (3.1.40) twice: first as a Jew, then as an Arab, symbolic for the Muslim migrant, an outsider in Dutch society. Antonio and his xenophobic companions did not distinguish Jews from Arabs. When Antonio cited the German playwright Fassbinder's controversial play about anti-Semitism, *The Garbage, the City, and Death*, he was no longer talking about Jews, but had changed the dark monologue from Fassbinder into a discriminating attack on Arabs. In the course of the play, Rafi held many heated discussions with Shakespeare, a double role played by Portia, in which Shakespeare was called to account because of the perceived anti-Semitic character of *Merchant*, and particularly of Shylock. Dutch reviewers were enthusiastic about the way Van Oel managed to drain the play of its anti-Semitic content and transform it into a general attack on the rise of intolerance in the multicultural society of the Netherlands.³³ The culmination of the play came in the final trial scene: the director cut the reconciliation scene at the end in which the lost rings were found. In the revised trial scene, this Shylock would not be caught as easily. Rafi, the Arab Jew, had studied Shakespeare's *Merchant* in Baghdad and had found a solution for the drop of blood and the exact weight dilemmas. Based on an episode in Karen Blixen's *Out of Africa*, Rafi countered Portia's first claim by arguing that not one drop of blood could be spilled, if he but used a hot knife: "A red-hot knife gives us clean wounds / And will sear up the veins while cutting / No drop of blood will flow" (Oel, *De Arabier* 54). Having to cut the exact amount of flesh was just as easily countered by Rafi, arguing that a voluntary reduction of debt was a normal and acceptable course of mercy: "I will reduce my debts by two or three ounces" (Oel, *De Arabier* 55). Rafi wondered why Shakespeare himself never thought of that and argued that, no matter what, the Jew Shylock had to be humiliated.

Before the production premiered, Van Oel had stated in an interview that *Merchant* was indeed an anti-Semitic play: "Shakespeare chose blatantly for the Venetians. This is unjust. . . . He had many opportunities to choose for Shylock, but he didn't. . . . Well, my Shylock will win. It's his right" (Oel, "Toneel"). In a unanimous moment of direct criticism at the end of the play, the characters—including Rafi/Shylock, Jessica, Antonio, and Bassanio—sat facing the audience, while launching an attack on Shakespeare, whose portrayal of Shylock would have made the Jew (and other outsiders) into an easy target of anti-Semitic interpretation. As Shylock moved towards Antonio's chest with his knife, no one was able to stop him; yet, in the end, he refrained from cutting out his pound of flesh—not because Portia stopped him, but because he chose to. His final

words to Antonio demonstrated not only his mercy, but also the difficulty of bridging gaps: “You abhor me / But have to be grateful. Rafi is now your friend, you have to / Show him gratitude. I am not Shakespeare’s Shylock, / Rafi’s the name. I show you mercy now / And you will hate me for it, friend” (Oel, *De Arabier* 62). The production ended on a very quiet, almost meditative tone, with Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 1”, spoken by Rafi and Jessica, in a moment not only of fear and (self-) criticism, but also offering a view on the potential for hope. Although the production also contained many funny moments, it was considered a masterly interpretation and adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Merchant* and can be seen as illustrative of the delicate problems this play poses—to this day—within Dutch society and the way Dutch productions of the play were adopted, following the uproar of the 1982 production.³⁴

Conclusion, limitations, and future research

The historical, political, and cultural context of Dutch society influenced the productions of *Merchant* on the Dutch stage. The caution with which *Merchant* is approached, the way that anti-Semitic references are removed, the portrayal of Shylock, the way reviewers refer repeatedly to the history of World War Two, the vehement way a mild deviation from the play with a slightly more ambivalent Shylock—the 1982 RO production—is received, all seem related to the impact of the Shoah on Dutch society. However, they move beyond a mere memory of World War Two, but also seem linked with the debate on the role of the Netherlands in the deportation of Dutch Jews and the resulting guilt and the shattered self-perception of the Dutch as a tolerant people. Although recent research paints a far more nuanced picture of the supposed Dutch complicity in the deportations, and also argues that the Dutch were mostly unaware of the fate that awaited the Dutch Jews (Boom 367–86; Griffioen and Zeller 999–1011; Romijn et al. 7–9), the discrepancy between the historical perception of a tolerant nation and a haven for Jewish refugees, and the supposed participation in the Shoah had to be resolved after World War Two.

While other occupied countries in Western Europe also deported Jews, none of them did so to the degree that the Netherlands did, and likewise no country in Europe had the historical reputation for tolerance and as a safe haven for refugees that the Netherlands had. Although Germany was the instigator of the Shoah, German productions did not avoid controversy, but used the Jewish element of *Merchant* to debate the horrors of

the Shoah and Germany's participation in it. In Germany, any process of denial and ignorance regarding the Shoah was virtually impossible, leading to what Leon Festinger would call "identical dissonance" (237): the same dissonance is created in a large number of people when something occurs which is so compelling and evident that it would, for example, unequivocally invalidate any widely held belief. For Germany, the path to denial and ignorance regarding the Shoah would be closed after the first decades, and *Merchant* was used to initiate a discussion of its past, but also of Jewishness in a variety of productions. Likewise, productions of *Merchant* in France and the UK demonstrate a far greater versatility than have productions in the Netherlands. Although both countries have—more so than the Netherlands—a history of anti-Semitism, in the UK, any dissonance between positive self-perception and behavior during World War Two is less of an issue. Although the UK was only—at best—mildly interested in the fate of the Jews, before the war, for example, any dissonance between its citizens' behavior and self-perception is easily mitigated by the fact that Britain was never occupied, and had no Shoah. As the strength of the pressure to reduce the dissonance is a function of its magnitude, the smaller dissonance of the UK, compared to that of the Netherlands, would create a smaller need to reduce it (Festinger 17). France, unlike the UK, was occupied and did participate in the Shoah. However, any dissonance between anti-Semitic behavior during World War Two and self-perception is less large than in the Netherlands. This is not simply because France has a stronger history of anti-Semitic incidents than the Netherlands. France deported, relatively speaking, far fewer of its Jews than the Netherlands did—twenty-five percent in France versus seventy-five percent in the Netherlands—and France participated less actively through its officials, considering the Jews to be "our Jews." Also, in France the issue of World War Two has more to do with the Vichy regime. These arguments would reflect a smaller amount of dissonance than in the Netherlands, and therefore less need for dissonance in this area to be reduced.

The Netherlands seems to have taken a different path in its productions of *Merchant* than surrounding countries. First of all, the first phase in the Netherlands, of denying any knowledge of the Shoah, lasted longer, for example, than in Germany, and was perpetuated also by the impact of major Jewish historians and their argument that the Dutch people did not take part in it and never knew what really had happened. In the second phase, this argument changed, which not only impacted on the perception of the Dutch role in the Shoah, but also on the perception of

the Dutch history of tolerance: “we did know, we were at best indifferent, or even participated actively, and we have never really been a tolerant people” became the new perception. It resulted in an almost apologetic approach, with a strong support for Israel, strong Jewish institutions anchored in Dutch society, and a strong aversion towards any form of anti-Semitism. This same apologetic approach seemed to have found its way into Dutch *Merchants*. Shylock would systematically be presented as a sympathetic or dignified character, worthy of our sympathy or respect, any hints of anti-Semitism of Jewish caricatures would, where possible, be removed or mitigated, reviewers would consistently indicate the dangers of staging *Merchant* and would point out that the “problem” of *Merchant* had been solved after another cautious *Merchant*, and a mild deviation from this approach—the 1982 production—would meet with much criticism. Although the director had intended to deflect attention from any inherent anti-Semitism in the production, he found himself accused of anti-Semitism. Although the director had stated that his production revealed the stereotyping that produced anti-Semitism, reception of the production focused on its supposedly anti-Semitic portrayal of Shylock.

In this essay I have undertaken to fill a lacuna in research on post-war *Merchants* in the Netherlands and have tried to show how specific national conditions have influenced the Dutch *Merchant* and reflected the way the Netherlands have handled the trauma of World War Two and the Shoah. The development of the Dutch *Merchant* after World War Two is in part unique, but in this paper I have of necessity only been able to indicate some broad strokes. Rather than pretending this to be a definitive paper on Dutch *Merchants*, I would rather see it as the beginning of a discussion on a topic which would warrant far more research. One always has to be wary of trying to fit the stage history of a play into a necessarily simplified succession of phases. This danger is even more real when one relates this to historical and political developments, where one has to avoid the trap of fitting a stage development into a perception of history which in itself might be too rigorous or simplified. Reality is always far more complex, as recent research on the role of the Dutch in World War Two has revealed. Basing my arguments largely on reviews of theatre productions, information from directors and actors, public responses to productions, production notes, academic research, and archival production material such as photographs and interview transcripts of the Dutch Theatre Institute in Amsterdam, I have aimed in this paper at providing a first step in a debate on the Dutch *Merchant*. It is a debate

to which I am truly looking forward, and which offers so many more options for further research.

First, although all professional *Merchant* productions have been included in the appendix, many productions warrant a more detailed analysis; also, amateur productions have not been discussed, which in themselves might also provide valuable information. Further, it would be an interesting avenue of research—unfortunately all too rarely explored—to include more qualitative empirical research and interview directors, actors, and audience members on Dutch *Merchants*. It would also be interesting to see the effects of changing conditions in the Netherlands on future *Merchants*. As we have seen, recent research has begun to demonstrate (1) that the Dutch were far less aware of the horrors of the Shoah than previously thought, and (2) that the high percentage of Jewish deportations was not so much caused by any latent anti-Semitism in Dutch society, but rather by other factors. Although these studies did not aim at explaining away the horrors of the Shoah, they do illustrate that reality is far more complex than suggested in earlier research. It would be interesting to see how this would impact on future productions of *Merchant*. On the other hand, the rise of anti-Semitism in the Netherlands—albeit on a lesser scale than in surrounding countries—would also be a challenge for future productions of *Merchant*—of which we already saw some indication in the 2007 production. Possibly these challenges, and the opening up of the debate, might lead to a wider variety of Dutch *Merchants* than we have seen so far. *Merchant* remains a research area which merits more attention and which carries an important societal relevance, and while in Germany extensive research projects have been conducted to investigate these processes, many other countries still have many research opportunities on the relation between *Merchant* and the effects of World War Two and anti-Semitism. With this paper I hope to have widened the possibility for further research within this area of Shakespeare studies.

Appendix 1: Professional Shakespeare productions in the Netherlands from 1945 to 2011.³⁵

<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	2
<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	5
<i>As You Like It</i>	14
<i>Cardenio</i>	1
<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	9
<i>Coriolanus</i>	10
<i>Cymbeline</i>	4
<i>Hamlet</i>	59
<i>Henry IV</i>	7
<i>Henry V</i>	4
<i>Henry VI</i>	3
<i>Henry VIII</i>	0
<i>King John</i>	3
<i>Julius Caesar</i>	12
<i>King Lear</i>	33
<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>	2
<i>Macbeth</i>	27
<i>Measure for Measure</i>	17
<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	18
<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	9
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	34
<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	12
<i>Othello</i>	23
<i>Pericles</i>	3
<i>The Rape of Lucrece</i>	1
<i>Richard II</i>	6
<i>Richard III</i>	16
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	15
<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	37
<i>The Tempest</i>	25
<i>Timon of Athens</i>	4
<i>Titus Andronicus</i>	13
<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>	8
<i>Twelfth Night</i>	31
<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>	4
<i>The Two Noble Kinsmen</i>	1
<i>Venus and Adonis</i>	1
<i>The Winter's Tale</i>	13
TOTAL	486

Appendix 2: Productions in the Netherlands of *The Merchant of Venice* from 1945–2011.³⁶

Year	Company	Director	Translation
1949	De Schouwspelers	Gelijm Molier	L.A.J. Burgersdijk
1952	De Nederlandse Comedie	Cees Laseur	L.A.J. Burgersdijk
1955	Reizend Volkstheater	Rik Jacobs	L.A.J. Burgersdijk
1958	Toneelgroep Arena	Erik Vos	L.A.J. Burgersdijk
1959	De Haagsche Comedie	Johan de Meester jr.	Bert Voeten
1959	Koninklijke Nederlandse Schouwburg	Fred Engelen	Bert Voeten
1960	Toneelgroep Diever	L.D. Broekema	L.A.J. Burgersdijk
1961	Koninklijke Vlaamse Schouwburg	Kris Betz	Willy Courteaux
1966	Ensemble	Karl Guttman	Bert Voeten
1972	Toneelgroep Diever	L.D. Broekema	L.A.J. Burgersdijk
1982	RO Theater	Franz Marijnen	Gerrit Komrij
1992	Het Nationale Toneel	Ger Thijs	Bert Voeten
1995	Toneelgroep Diever	Wil ter Horst-Rep	Emmy Wijnholds
1998	Stichting Wereld Premieres/ Flex Theater ism. Stichting Grand Theatre	Harrie Hageman	Harrie Hageman
2002	Toneelgroep Amsterdam	Ola Mafaalani	Gerrit Komrij
2004	DTG	Iris Jansen	Iris Jansen
2007	De Nieuwe Amsterdam	Justus van Oel	Justus van Oel
2008	De Theatercompagnie	Theu Boermans	Tom Kleijn

Notes

¹All translations from Dutch and German into English are made by the author of this paper. These include personal interviews and citations from written Dutch and German sources, such as books, journals, published interviews, and newspapers.

²See, for instance, Ackermann; Hortmann, *Shakespeare* 254–55, 421–23; Leiter 436–37; Moninger; Schülting, “I Am”; Schülting “Remember”; Sokolowski; Wildermann.

³Ackermann 368; Hortmann *Shakespeare* 254–55, 421–23; Leiter 436–37; Schülting, “Remember” 293.

⁴See, for example, Bulman 75–142; Drakakis 112–59; Edelman 58–86; Gilbert 25–43, 106–16; Gross 324–52.

⁵See also Heijes, “Theatre” 654–58.

⁶See Blom 82–92; Moore 20–23; Griffioen and Zeller 165–66; Poliakov 38, Vital 61, 145.

⁷Andel 45–68; Arkel 47–51; Blom 166–72; Michman, Beem, and Michman 7–64.

⁸See Gerstenfeld, *Judging* 21–27; Griffioen and Zeller 17; Moore 91–106; Wasserstein vii–viii.

⁹Aalders 256–57; *Kroniek Antisemitisme*; Lipschits 9–16, 190–94; Moore 228–52.

¹⁰Gerstenfeld, *Judging* 25–6; Moore 199–206; N. Zee 7.

¹¹Herzberg; L. Jong; Presser; also Boom 91–94; Moore 4–7; Vuijsje 16–49.

¹²Boom 94–97; Gerstenfeld, *Judging* 21–28; Moore 1–14; Poorthuis and Salemink 570–73; Vuijsje 125–28, 207–11; N. Zee 257–63; S. Zee 56–60.

¹³See Bornewasser 76–77; Gans 5–10; Griffioen and Zeller 165–68; Huizinga 74–75; Leyesdorff, “Wij Hebben” 271–74; Schöffers 79–84; Weijtens 160–64; N. Zee 23–29; Zwager 183.

¹⁴Houten and Kopuit 10–22; L. Jong; *Kroniek Antisemitisme*; Poorthuis and Salemink 641–46; Presser.

¹⁵While Dutch right-wing parties such as—most recently—the PVV are generally critical of immigration, calling, for example, for a stop to immigration from Muslim countries, they are sympathetic towards Jewish migrants and the state of Israel. A report on polarization in the Netherlands noted that while containing radical right and xenophobic views, the PVV party also followed in the tradition of a pro-Israel stance (Moors et al. 15–16).

¹⁶Gerstenfeld, *Antisemitism* 1–6; *Kroniek Antisemitisme*; *Monitor Racisme*; Poorthuis and Salemink 766; Leyesdorff, “Alledaags” 933–36; Vuijsje; N. Zee 257–63.

¹⁷Dommelshuizen 9–10; Gelder 9; Hoeven 27–30; Koster 389–92.

¹⁸Amerongen 29–31; Carelsen 24; Dommelshuizen 63–72; Koster 142–45; Hoeven iv; Leeuwe 9–14; Raalte 18–22; Tooneel 2, 43.

¹⁹Photographs are held at the Nederlands Theater Instituut (Dutch Theatre Institute) in Amsterdam.

²⁰See appendix 2 for an overview of all professional *Merchant* productions in the Netherlands after World War Two. The overview also includes the names of the translators: all productions in the Netherlands were performed in a Dutch translation. At first these were generally based on Burgersdijk’s translation dating from the end of the nineteenth century. From the 1960s onwards, theater companies tended to use translations which were specifically written for the production. Nowadays, most productions of Shakespeare in the Netherlands are based on recent translations of Shakespeare.

²¹See appendix 1 for an overview of all professional Shakespeare productions in the Netherlands after World War Two.

²²Bots; Breejen; Harst; Takken.

²³See Gomperts; Haagse; Loggem; Magnus; “Nieuwjaar”; Spierdijk.

²⁴See Doolaard; Grolle; Koning; Spierdijk.

²⁵See Bobkova, "Associaties"; Bulman 75–100; Edelman 64–65; Gilbert 30; Gross 327–28; Houtman; Ruivenkamp.

²⁶See Bobkova, "Associaties"; Gortzak; Justesen; Leeuwen; Liefhebber, "Shakespeare's"; Olde Monnikhof; Thielemans, "RO" 5–7.

²⁷Buijs; De Vos 272–4; Freriks; Jans 28–30.

²⁸See Bulman (117–42); Drakakis (137–41); Edelman; Gilbert; Gross (331–32); Stewart, "Shylock" (11–28).

²⁹Blik, "Shakespeare"; Bobkova, "*Koopman*"; Harst; Kottman.

³⁰Buijs; Freriks, "Tragisch"; Geerlings; Terpstra; Verpalen.

³¹Berg, "*De Koopman*"; Keller; Velden; Veraart; Zijlmans; Zonneveld, "*De Joodse*".

³²Bobkova, "*De Koopman*"; Breejen; Dieben-Frerichs; Evenhuis; Franssen; Janssen; Liefhebber; Takken; Zonneveld, "Alles".

³³Berg, "*De Arabier*"; Embrachts; Heuven; Jagt; S. Jong; Ruiter; Zonneveld, "*De Arabier*".

³⁴Berg, "*De Arabier*"; Embrachts; Heuven; Zonneveld, "*De Arabier*".

³⁵This overview, largely based on the extensive database and archives of theatre productions in the Netherlands of the Dutch Theatre Institute in Amsterdam includes professional productions in Dutch, Flemish, Frisian, and Dutch dialects, as well as productions by the semi-professional company Shakespeare Theatre Diever

³⁶This overview includes professional productions and adaptations of *The Merchant of Venice* in the Netherlands in Dutch, Flemish, Frisian, and Dutch dialects, as well as productions by the semi-professional company Shakespeare Theatre Diever.

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