



Review¹

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Joost van den Vondel (1587-1679). Dutch Playwright in the Golden Age, ed. by J. Bloemendal and F.-W. Korsten (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

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Befitting its rank, the new series 'Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe' enters the academic stage with a volume that is dedicated to the Dutch national poet and playwright Joost van den Vondel and his works. Editors are neo-Latinist Jan Bloemendal, who also acts as editor for the whole series, and philologist Frans-Willem Korsten. By relating Vondel to Shakespeare and Rembrandt from the outset in their introduction, they immediately signal to those readers not familiar with Vondel, that as a poet he belongs to the cultural premier league. Traditionally, Dutch literature of the Golden Age takes second place to the world famous Dutch paintings of that period. Riet Schenkeveld-van der Dussen's 1991 overview on 'Dutch Literature in the Age of Rembrandt' had already attempted to draw the international readers' attention to Dutch seventeenth century literature by recalling the famous painter. The editors of this new volume are well aware that there is still an important task at hand, and with this collection of essays they plan 'to increase the knowledge of Vondel's work internationally'.² The essays seek to enable scholars, students and the public at large alike to benefit from studying Vondel's plays individually. The volume is not only meant to present the results of current research and to function as a body of reference, it also aims at giving new impulses to literary analysis of Vondel's plays in national and international settings.

The volume begins with three general introductory essays and is then split into two parts. The first part presents 'a survey of Vondel's life and works, of his literary, historical and social contexts, and of the reception of his plays in other countries of Europe'.³ The second part gathers analyses of sixteen of Vondel's thirty-four plays, each with a different set of questions based on different methodological and disciplinary approaches. A bibliography of Vondel's life and play as [93] well as an extensive list of literature can serve as foundation for further research. Various *indices* guarantee convenient access to the texts in this volume.

The first two essays are of a stocktaking nature. Riet Schenkeveld-van der Dussen and Eddy Grootes, both renowned scholars of the older generation specialized in Dutch renaissance literature, present a chronological overview on the production of Vondel's plays in biographical and historical context. Their contribution also contains condensed information on subject matter, on stage and publication history of the plays and their periodization as well as on their

poetological and political context. In the second essay, Riet Schenkeveld-van der Dussen deals with the reception of and research on Vondel's plays from the seventeenth century to the present. Other than Shakespeare, who still enjoys much attention in theatre and research, she argues, Vondel has more or less faded into insignificance. Probably this owes to the fact that Vondel's plays completely lack the vibrancy of his English contemporary. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen calls to mind the heyday of Vondel-worship in the second half of the nineteenth century in the context of cultural nationalism (Jacob van Lennep) and catholic emancipation (J.A. Alberdingk Thijm) before she turns to new forms of interpretation. For a long time there was no way around the three volume-monument of Vondel-research, i.e. *Van Pascha tot Noah* (1956-62) by W.A.P. Smit, a comprehensive interpretation of Vondel's plays to the rules of a historicizing 'close reading'. The new volume at hand can almost be understood as a collective counter-design to Smit's authoritative voluminous monograph – in today's form of methodological polyphony and dialogue between alternative content. Of course there have been contributions that have emancipated themselves from Smit's canonical exegeses before, for example feminist readings, amongst others Schenkeveld-van der Dussen's *Vondel en't vrouwelijke dier* (2002) stands out. Four years ago Frans-Willem Korsten, co-editor of the volume discussed here, started a controversy with his study *Sovereignty as Inviolability: Vondel's Theatrical Explorations in the Dutch Republic* (2009). His post-structuralist reading of a series of Vondel's plays – a secular approach centred on contemporary questions – stood against Smit's interpretations. Among experts, Korsten's work was received controversially. From her perspective as a 'philologist of the old school'⁴ Schenkeveld-van der Dussen criticizes it 'as an incorrect way of dealing with the past'.⁵ This critical reception of Korsten's analyses and interpretations points to a *leitmotiv* of this volume, mostly working as a red thread, but sometimes as a disruptive force. Korsten almost takes the position taken by W.A.P. Smit within the Vondel-research in the second half of the twentieth century: almost none of the essays collected here can help positioning themselves to Korsten and his theses. There is one difference, though, in that Korsten is not ascribed the canonical authority that Smit once possessed.

It is not surprising that Korsten takes the space of the third essay titled 'Vondel's Dramas: Ways of Relating Present and Past'⁶ to directly address the criticism [94] voiced by Schenkeveld-van der Dussen. He explains his theoretical maxims, takes issue with historical-critical hermeneutics as well as New Historicism (which in this volume is represented with an essay by Jürgen Pieters, its protagonist in the Low Countries, see below) and calls uncompromisingly 'to consider the historical work as an actual thing of the present'.⁷ His deduction is drawn from historical-philosophical reasoning, circling the assumption that history can only be experienced here and now, i.e. as representation in the present: 'The past as such is not what is present, but its *active* representation is. Likewise, memory is not a natural given, but an act.'⁸ The article contrasts starkly with the rather traditional opening of the volume as work of reference. While Korsten refers to basic problems of historical philosophy and general literature studies, Vondel's plays become exchangeable illustrations. Without doubt Korsten's essay contains a plethora of relevant findings and inspiring thoughts, but these go beyond the scope of this collection.

The essays in Part I: 'Vondel's Life, Works and Times' then return to Vondel-research proper. First, there is an abbreviated translation of the Vondel biography that Mieke B. Smits-Veldt and Marijke Spies – both old-school philologists like Schenkeveld-van der Dussen – wrote to introduce their 1986 edition of Vondel's works. Unfortunately, this fact is not

mentioned. The article is more of a historical contextualization of Vondel's plays in chronological order rather than a biography, resulting in various overlappings with the first essay of this volume. Smits-Veldt and Spies draw exclusively on Vondel's texts and the biography written by the poet's contemporary Geeraerd Brandt, so the reprint makes an urgent case for new approaches to Vondel's biography, certainly a task that goes beyond the scope of this volume.

The next chapter is dedicated to a topic that has been covered extensively: 'Vondel's Religion'. Vondel's life is characterized by multiple changes in confession, and this has more than once been used for confessional polemics. Historian Judith Pollman aims at a different new approach 'to suggest ways of rethinking Vondel's religious development by re-examining and recontextualizing some of the core evidence of his religious views, without reading between the lines in this dramatic work'.⁹ Her contribution contains valuable information about Dutch religious life and multi-confessional society in the seventeenth century for readers with a non-Dutch background, but she cannot entirely honour her introductory claim. Concerning the motives for Vondel's conversion to the catholic faith, Pollmann presents previous findings again. Amongst other details, she points out how Vondel's first biographer Geeraerd Brandt reasoned that Vondel wanted to marry a rich catholic widow, an argument J.A. Alberdingk Thijm and P. Leendertz jr. already disputed more than a hundred years ago.¹⁰

The following chapter on 'Vondel and Amsterdam' also belongs to classical subject-matter of literature on Vondel. Eddy Grootes recollects findings of older [95] research, which again leads to multiple overlappings with previous texts in this volume.

Among the essays gathered in Part I that are mostly dedicated to overviews based on established research, the article by Bettina Noak titled 'Vondel as Dramatist: The Representation of Language and Body' stands out. Again there is an overview on the production of Vondel's plays, but this time with a focus on current issues such as concepts of performativity and theatricality as well as theoretical questions regarding the relation of knowledge and power – questions that current research is only beginning to address. Noak's explanations on body, power and gender that are based on the many female figures in Vondel's plays who suffer physical violence or sacrifice themselves in a physical way, encourage further research in this particular field.

Since today Vondel's plays are predominantly received as texts read in silence, researchers might lose track of the fact that the action on stage was often accompanied by vocal and instrumental music. Musicologist and musician Louis Peter Grijp and Jan Bloemendal have analysed thirty-two plays regarding passages that might have been sung. They found evidence for texts that have been performed to widely familiar melodies, so-called *contrafacta*, only in about twelve plays. Continuously, these are passages reserved for choirs. This informative article on one of the lesser known aspects of Vondel's production of plays and the practices on stage is completed by an appendix that documents the songs that have resurfaced.

This perspective on the history of theatre also characterizes the next article by Mieke B. Smits-Veldt on the performance history of Vondel's plays from the seventeenth century to the present. Additionally, Jan Bloemendal includes detailed lists of performances in his 'Bibliography of Vondel's Drama'.¹¹

The volume's first part concludes with a contribution by Guillaume van Gemert, a specialist in German literature, on Vondel and his *œuvre* in the context of its reception in England, France and the German lands. For quite a while it has been known that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Vondel's plays were only translated or adapted in German territories.

Until well into the nineteenth century there was no interest in these texts in other countries than the Netherlands. Van Gemert's informative and well-documented essay ends with the same conclusion as Schenkeveld-van der Dussen in the beginning: Vondel 'is revered in awe, but hardly ever read by the mainstream public'.¹²

The authors in the second part of this volume have put their effort into reading Vondel, each of them concentrating on one play or, in some cases, a series of interrelated plays. While the first part, which focuses on past Vondel-research to make up the balance of its findings, belongs more to the previous generation of old school philologists, in the second part members of the younger generation of Dutch and Flemish researchers in literature and cultural studies present a spectrum of methodological approaches and theoretical access to Vondel's plays. If [96] these contributions are to show future perspectives for Vondel-research and ignite debate among their readers, then readers first of all need to have access to the literary texts in question. All the non-Dutch readers, which this volume primarily addresses, must deal with the problem that according to the bibliography¹³ only six of Vondel's thirty-four plays have been translated into English. From the outset, this fact limits the range and possibilities of international reception as well as the impact of the fifteen individual analyses of sixteen plays.

In the first contribution of Part II, structured according to the chronology of publication of the plays discussed, Jürgen Pieters identifies the prospects that an analysis of *Hierusalem verwoest* (1620) along the methodological and theoretical premises of New Historicism offers. Pieters starts by qualifying his approach by pointing out that a full-fledged New Historicist analysis of *Hierusalem verwoest* would have called for more space and archive studies than would have been feasible in the framework of this volume. Contrary to the traditional characterization of *Hierusalem verwoest* as a purely religious play that is limited to biblical-Christian symbolism, Pieters seeks to direct attention to its political implications. Therefore he chooses one example from the dialogical framework that is written into *Hierusalem verwoest*, namely Hugo Grotius's *Remonstrance Concerning the Order that Needs to Be Imposed on the Jews in the States of Holland and Westvrieslandt* (*Remonstrantie nopen de ordre dije in de landen van Hollandt ende Westvrieslandt dijen gestelt op de Joden*, 1615). While Grotius responded to policy questions that were virulent in Dutch towns at the time regarding Jewish inhabitants, Vondel raises the problem's theological basis, namely the opposition of Jewish law and Christian faith in the idea of a New Jerusalem. Pieters counters the obvious invective that the analysis of an 'old historicist' would have come to similar conclusions with reference to the conceptual presuppositions of New Historicism, namely that it 'continues to seek the fundamental heterogeneity of every historical context'.¹⁴

For her contribution on the function of allegory in *Palamedes* (1625), Nina Geerdink chose the approach of New Formalism, which presents itself as Historical Formalism by assuming 'form' in close connection to history, culture and politics. The literary technique of allegory is considered in relation to its aesthetic and also its political implications. From the outset, *Palamedes* has been understood as an allegory of the decapitation of Land's Advocate Johan van Oldenbarnevelt in 1619 and therefore as Vondel's protest against the course of action taken by Stadholder Maurice of Nassau, Prince of Orange. At the same time it was argued that Vondel had chosen the allegorical form to palliate his criticism and escape censorship – both of which were only partly successful. Now Geerdink convincingly turns this argument upside down by providing evidence for an abundance of signals within the text that do not leave a readers a choice but to decode the allegorical conflation of Palamedes and Oldenbarnevelt and to

confront the political statement contained in the play. So the allegory serves to veil and unveil the topical meaning at the same time. [97]

Madeleine Kasten approaches Vondel's *Sophompaneas* (1635) from the perspective of translation studies. *Sophompaneas* is Vondel's translation of a Latin play by his contemporary Hugo Grotius that recounts the story of Joseph from the Book of Genesis. Against the backdrop of seventeenth-century theories of translation, Kasten shows that Vondel adopted appropriation as a strategy that makes cultural differences invisible instead of highlighting them – a process that was demanded in later theories, for example Schleiermacher's postulation of alienating translation.

This volume pays its respects to the special role of Vondel's *Gysbreght van Aemstel* (1637) as the best known and most frequently performed tragedy by dedicating two contributions to this play. In the first one, Marco Prandoni focuses on the role and function of intertextuality and offers exemplary abstracts from his PhD-thesis *Een mozaïek van stemmen: Verbeeldend lezen in Vondels Gysbreght van Aemstel* (2007). As in his thesis, Prandoni adheres to linking intertextuality with the aesthetics of reception and reconstructs intertextual expectations of seventeenth-century readers, even though he concedes in his introduction that these will remain abstractions. The results of his analyses of Vergil's *Aeneis* and neo-Latin historical tragedies as intertexts that cross each other in *Gysbreght* within the figure of Badeloch and her actions, are convincing and enlightening, even without the auxiliary construction of an horizon of expectations.

Coming from theatre studies, Peter G.F. Eversmann draws attention to the practices of staging *Gysbreght* and the dramaturgical problems and possibilities of the text. He intends to read the play with the eyes of a director to dispute the solidified prejudice that this play is unstageable. Although he discusses today's possibilities of directing and not the reconstruction of its first production,¹⁵ he often comes back to the question of the original production and the fragmented evidence for its reconstruction, making his contribution unequal in places. While the play opens up a rich variety of possible interpretations because of its sparse stage directions, Eversmann ascribes the problems of staging the play to the structural characteristics of its content. It is not a new finding that *Gysbreght* mostly consists of narrative passages, so much so that 'telling' outshadows 'showing'. Eversmann's contribution is one of many in this volume that draws on the concept of 'theatricality'. In his context of theatre studies he understands the term in its concrete sense regarding the possibilities of direction and production. Nina Geerdink draws on a very different conceptualisation from literary criticism by relating theatricality to the topos of *theatrum mundi*¹⁶ that questions the epistemological boundary between theatre stage and reality. In contrast, Bettina Noak grasps the concept in terms of literary theory as 'representation and observation of physicality'¹⁷ in the context of transfer of knowledge and demonstration of power. Within the individual contributions, theatricality – after all one of the key concepts of this volume – is defined adequately; additional cross-references [98] between the contributions and their differing use of the term would nevertheless have been helpful.

The concept of theatricality is then subtly differentiated in the next contribution in which Mieke Bal, Maaike Bleeker, Bennett Carpenter and Frans-Willem Korsten apply cultural analysis to the Joseph-plays. Cultural analysis is interested in the specific historical and cultural construction or the staging of human subjectivity. In this context, theatricality is related to visibility. On stage, 'visibility happens'¹⁸ because word and image are simultaneously and materially realized. The authors differentiate between 'theatrical' as a characteristic of that

which is seen, and ‘theatricality’ as an effect of communication in the correlation of text, staging and readers and spectators.¹⁹ They advocate a form of visual analysis beyond iconography and relate *Joseph in Egypten* (1640) to two paintings by Rembrandt that both depict the accusations against Joseph by Potiphar’s wife Jempsar. While the Washington painting seems to present Joseph as a dream image of Jempsar, visualizing her ‘inner theatre’, the one in Berlin presents ‘outer theatre’ by showing what would happen if Joseph participated in the process against himself, if he reacted to the false accusations and confronted Potiphar directly. Both illustrations, the representation of the ‘inner theatre’ of a dramatic figure by way of verbalization, as well as the representation of the ‘outer theatre’, were at the disposal of the dramatist as well. By illustrating the divide between inner and outer theatre, between subjectivity and objectivity, the authors pose the question in how far visual representation concurs with reality. The demonstration of the fascinating perspectives opened up by cultural analysis compensates for the fact that this contribution deals with Vondel’s *Joseph* merely in a cursory fashion.

In another contribution that draws on the concept of theatricality, Frans-Willem Korsten analyses the David-plays. He regards ‘close reading’ as an approach that answers to the crisis of representation because it problematizes the rhetorical character and theatricality of representation. Korsten investigates those characteristics in Vondel’s *Koning David in ballingschap* (*King David Exiled*, 1660) and its sequel *Koning David herstelt* (*King David Restored*, 1660). In those plays, he finds the rhetorical aspect and theatricality mainly in three forms: (1) Figures purposely mask themselves by manipulating voice and actions, (2) they stage themselves and transform the viewers into their audience; (3) subjectivity is only produced by a specific form of mise-en-scène.²⁰ With these strategies of uncertainty the plays challenge the theatre audience to rethink their own habits of viewing and reading.

Against the backdrop of humanist school plays about the same matter, James A. Parente, Jr. and Jan Bloemendal interpret Vondel’s *Maria Stuart* (1646) in the tradition of hermeneutics and poetology. While the neo-Latin texts refer to Seneca’s plays, Vondel bestows Aristotelian characteristics upon his protagonist. While the school plays present her reflectively, Vondel’s Mary Stuart is in action and re-stages the passion of Christ. Parente and Bloemendal interpret this *imitation* [99] *Christi* not only as a religious, but also as a political statement which, in their view, transforms *Maria Stuart* into a dangerous play by a subversive poet.

In his contribution on variants in *Adam in ballingschap* (1664) Jan Bloemendal continues with a philologist approach. He points to new perspectives for the edition of Vondel’s texts which open up in the course of New Philology. This recent school of thought strives for the presentation of a text in its different variants from different manuscripts rather than focusing on the constitution of one ideal text. As a member of staff of the Huygens Institute for the History of the Netherlands of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences in The Hague, Bloemendal is involved with edition projects and is thus able to put an editorial concept into practice that accounts for the ‘fluidity of texts’ and shows readers ‘their manifold material forms’.²¹

The theoretical watershed that divides not only the last four contributions described here, but also the whole volume, characterizes the situation of the study of early modern Dutch renaissance literature in the Netherlands as whole. It is explicitly put into words by Stefan van der Lecq at the beginning of his contribution:

From an international perspective, early modern Dutch studies inevitably appears to be a fairly traditional and, one might argue, even staunchly conservative discipline. Whereas the

likes of Shakespeare and Milton have been extensively studied from a wide range of modern theoretical perspectives, the literary figureheads of the Dutch Golden Age are still firmly ensconced in the paradigmatic frameworks of classical philology and positivist historicism. As Jürgen Pieters has recently argued, Dutch literary historians have a propensity to meet ‘poststructuralist’ theory either with indifference or with marked hostility. Their most fervent objection to incorporating the thinking of theorists such as Foucault, Althusser, Derrida, or Deleuze into the study of historical literature is that this would yield ahistorical analyses.²²

In this dispute between representatives of the old school on the one hand and Pieters and Korsten *cum suis* on the other hand, Van der Lecq does not want to take sides but rather a meta-point of view in ‘an attempt to blur the apparently impermeable boundary between “historicist philology” on the one hand and “poststructuralist theory” on the other’.²³ He refers to Barbara Johnson who traces effects of difference that manifest themselves in the illusion of binary oppositions in *The Critical Difference*.²⁴ In her view ‘difference *between* entities’ often turn out to be ‘an outward projection of difference *within* entities’.²⁵ This figure of thought can be applied to the situation within Dutch studies as sketched above. The accusation of pursuing an a-historical approach is not only raised by representatives of the old school against representatives of poststructuralist [100] thinking, but, within the second fraction, Jürgen Pieters as a representative of New Historicism raises this objection against Frans-Willem Korsten as well.²⁶

Van der Lecq applies Johnson’s thesis regarding the illusion of binary thinking to a deconstructive reading of Vondel’s pastoral *Leeuwendalers* (1647). Vondel wrote the play *apropos* the festivities of the Peace of Westphalia (finalized in 1648). The central topic is peace itself, a term that is defined by its opposition to its counterpart war, and that by itself postulates the absence of friction and conflict, that is harmony. With his reading, Van der Lecq breaks the ‘homogeneous, stable and whole’²⁷ surface of the term and of Vondel’s text at the same time. He convincingly shows how Vondel’s play lays open the internal ambivalence of peace that appears where the antagonisms nature and culture, womanhood and manhood, pagan polytheism and Christian monotheism interfere with each other. *Leeuwendalers* exposes harmony as violently enforced ideology suppressing otherness. Van der Lecq’s interpretation encourages to re-read the text because it shows how this play addresses problems that have not lost their (destructive) power to this date. Van der Lecq criticizes Korsten’s analysis as one-sided because Korsten eliminates the orthodox Christian Vondel from the text by replacing him by a ‘suspiciously modern’ Vondel. Next to him, Van der Lecq reinstalls the ‘ultimately submissive believer’.²⁸

Such a ‘religious turn’ away from the secular, modern theorist of sovereignty that Korsten allegedly sees in Vondel, and back to the deeply religious poet whose plays negotiate fundamental questions of belief and the relation between god and man, is put into effect as well by Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen and Helmer Helmers in their contribution on Vondel’s *Lucifer* (1654) and Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1674). In contrast to Korsten, who reads *Lucifer* as a political allegory on sovereignty that has been transferred into a religious context, Van Dijkhuizen and Helmers argue that this play proves ‘the essential analogy and continuity between religion and politics – between sacred eternity and secular history, as well as divine and human authority’.²⁹ They convincingly demonstrate their argument by the comparison with *Paradise Lost*. The protestant Republican Milton presents a view of sovereignty that is diametrically opposed to that in Vondel’s play because he categorically discriminates between divine and secular power and therefore deduces a political legitimization of tyrannicide.

Kristine Steenbergh's analysis of gender and emotions in *Jeptha* (1659) also owes its originality and persuasiveness to a 'religious turn'. In her view the confrontation of feminine expression of emotionality in Filopae and her daughter Ifis and masculine suppression of emotions in Jephtha refers to the contrast of Senecan and Aristotelian poetics, which in turn contrasts the catholic with the protestant worldview. Filopae and Ifis act according to the Aristotelian view that aims at producing strong emotions in a theatrical context. These emotions are supposed to have a therapeutic effect, similar to the catholic understanding of remorse, absolution, repentance and salvation. On the other hand, Jephtha at first [101] acts, by suppressing his feelings, in the framework of Senecan poetics that are directed at moderating affects. Steenbergh understands his development in the course of the play as metamorphosis from principled and loyal Calvinist to catholic sinner who is reliant on divine grace and forgiveness.

The last chapters of this volume are dedicated to interdisciplinary contributions that shed light on Vondel's plays with the help of psychoanalysis, law and philosophy. In his analysis of 'Law, Theatre and Violence in *Samson*' (1660), Yasco Horsman simulates the psychological process that determines Samson's violent act of destroying the temple. Like Stefan van der Lecq, Horsman traces the inner ambivalence of a term or concept by taking the dark side of the law that is characterized by violence into account, and interprets the theatre stage as the place of presenting 'what is repressed' (448f.). Samson's destruction of the temple, the stage for the Philistines' rituals of sacrifice, lays the foundation for the establishment of Jewish law. The play shows how a new order is born by an act of violence.

Legal scholar Jeanne Gaakeer links her discussion of *Batavische Gebroeders* (1663) to a detailed presentation of the Law and Literature movement, a movement she helped to establish and is still active in. Just as jurisprudence needs to come to terms with the relation of experience, narrativity and normativity after the narrative turn, literary criticism needs to broaden its perspectives. Gaakeer argues that the consideration of legal history and theory is indispensable for Vondel-research. In relation to *Batavische gebroeders* she points out that the play that propagates the idea of liberty with the Batavian myth was traditionally read with Hugo Grotius' *Liber de antiquitate reipublicae Batavae* (*Book on the Antiquity of the Batavian [= Dutch] Republic*, 1610) in mind that derived the Republican form of government from Batavian roots. In Gaakeer's opinion, the influence of Grotius' *De iure belli ac pacis* on Vondel has not been sufficiently researched, and *Batavische gebroeders* should be regarded in relation to this work rather than to the backdrop of the *Liber*.

Time and again, Vondel was concerned with the issue of human autonomy and free will as well as the origin of evil, at first in *Lucifer* (1654), later in *Adam in ballingschap* (1664) and finally in his last play *Noah* (1667) that he himself described as the third part of his trilogy on the birth of sin. Wiep van Bunge explains the philosophical-theological discourses that included the tragedy of the Noachian deluge. On the one hand, catholic teaching allows for human freedom to sin, but also for the acceptance of saving grace. On the other hand, the narrative of god's destruction of his own creation and Noah's rescue illustrates the scholastic antagonism between divine *potestas* and *potentia* of nature.

This contribution together with the previous ones succeeds in encouraging reading Vondel's plays and further researching them. Even though the non-Dutch readership can access only a small part of Vondel's dramatic *œuvre* in (English) translation, this volume manages to present it in all its breadth for an international [102] audience. It is a work of reference on the one hand and a research laboratory and forum for debate on the other. To its credit, this volume features

the whole spectrum of past and present research on Vondel's plays and integrates representatives of different methodological and theoretical provenance.

Notes

1. Translation: Esther Helena Arens M.A.
2. Joost van den Vondel (1587-1679). Dutch Playwright in the Golden Age, ed. by J. Bloemendal and F.-W. Korsten (Leiden: Brill, 2011), p. ix.
3. Idem, p. x.
4. Idem, p. 22.
5. Idem.
6. Idem, pp. 23-47.
7. Idem, p. 25.
8. Idem, p. 28.
9. Idem, p. 86.
10. See M.-Th. Leuker, *Künstler als Helden und Heilige. Nationale und konfessionelle Mythologie im Werk J.A. Alberdingk Thijms (1820-1889) und seiner Zeitgenossen* (Münster: Waxmann Verlag, 2001), p. 309ff.
11. Joost van den Vondel, pp. 529-78.
12. Idem, p. 198.
13. Idem, pp. 528-78.
14. Idem, p. 223.
15. Idem, p. 289.
16. Idem, p. 244ff.
17. Idem, p. 115, no. 3.
18. Idem, p. 322.
19. Idem, p. 323.
20. Idem, p. 436.
21. Idem, p. 505.
22. Idem, p. 359.
23. Idem, pp. 360-1.
24. B. Johnson, *The Critical Difference: Essays in the Contemporary Rhetoric of Reading* (Baltimore / London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).
25. Idem, p. 362.
26. J. Pieters, *Historische letterkunde vandaag en morgen* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), pp. 74-79, regarding the mentioned methodological conflict in general, see pp. 19-89.

27. Idem, p. 362.

28. Idem, p. 376.

29. Idem, p. 379.