

THE CREATIVE RECEPTION OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

IN THE NETHERLANDS:

THE CASE OF ARTHUR VAN SCHENDEL

by

YVONNE STEINMETZ-ARDASEER

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Arts
of The University of Birmingham
for the degree of
MASTER OF LITERATURE

Department of English
Faculty of Arts
The University of Birmingham
September 1998

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

19370229

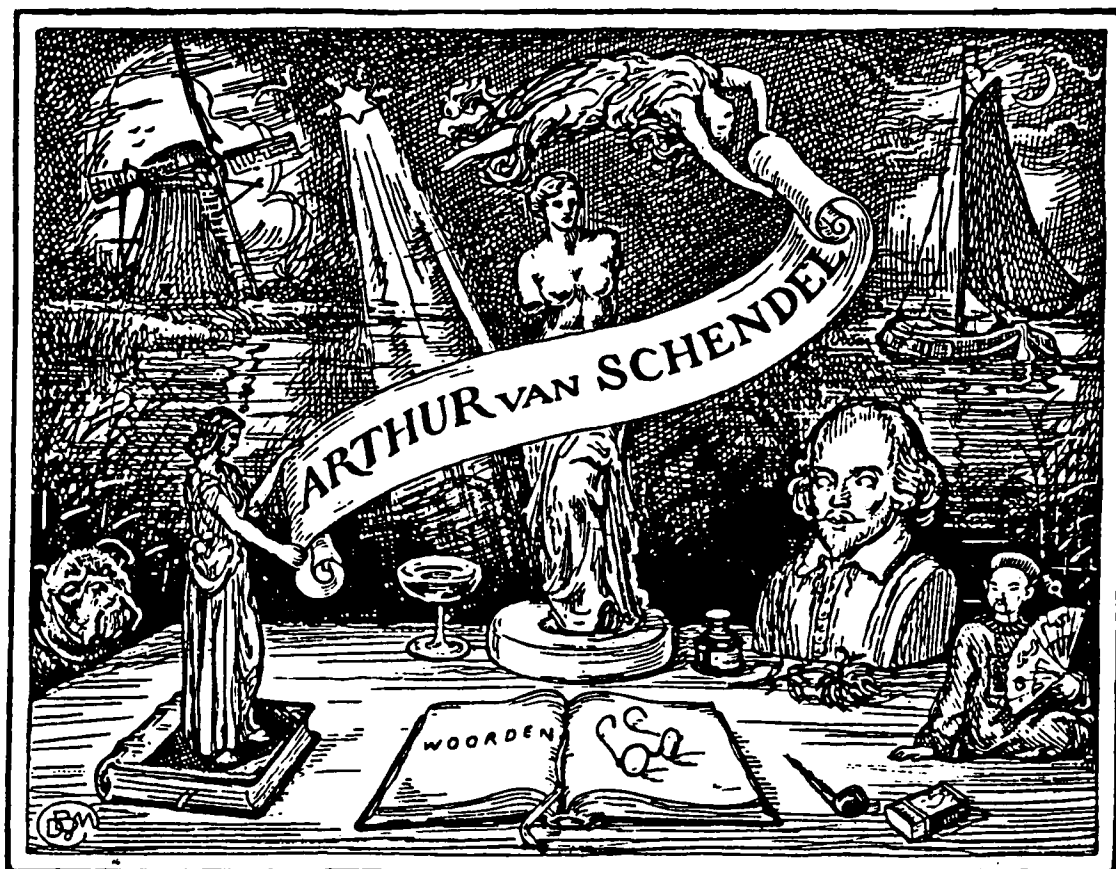
14080841934

ARTHUR VAN SCHENDEL'S *EX LIBRIS*

DESIGNED BY

DAVID BUENO DE MESQUITA

SESTRI LEVANTE, SEPTEMBER 1934



Courtesy of *Nederlands Letterkundig Museum
en Documentatiecentrum
's-Gravenhage*

SYNOPSIS

THE CREATIVE RECEPTION OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE IN THE NETHERLANDS: THE CASE OF ARTHUR VAN SCHENDEL

As a young man, the Dutch novelist, short story writer and poet, Arthur van Schendel (1874-1946) developed a passion for Shakespeare. The plays came as a revelation to him, kindling his creativity to such an extent that he imaginatively adopted and adapted many of the playwright's characters and ideas. The principal results were a life of the poet, *Shakespeare* (1910), a play *Pandorra* (1919), the novel *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* (1940), and a poem "Stratford-upon-Avon" (1944).

In this thesis I will explore the intertextuality between the works of Shakespeare and those of Van Schendel. To this end I will study the latter's complete works, all the associated material, including correspondence and manuscripts, kept in the *Literary Museum and Documentation Centre* in The Hague; and also biographies, books and articles concerned with Van Schendel that have appeared since the publication of his first novel *Drogon* (1896).

This dissertation will comprise:

- a discussion of Van Schendel's life and works
- a reading of *Shakespeare*
- comments on five of Shakespeare's plays, included in the second enlarged edition of *Shakespeare*, and on *Pandorra*
- and last but not least an evaluation of *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw*.

approximately 64,000 words

TO THE LOVING MEMORY OF

MY HUSBAND CARL STEINMETZ

AND

MY GRANDSON CARO STEINMETZ

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Professor Ton Hoenselaars who drew my attention to Arthur van Schendel's *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw*. This proved to be an eye-opener, for I discovered that Van Schendel had not only written a biography of Shakespeare, but some of his works show intertextuality with Shakespeare's plays.

I am much obliged to the librarians, archivists and staff, who assisted me in tracing letters, manuscripts, books, and articles, in particular those of:

- *Het Letterkundig Museum en Documentatiecentrum (LM)*, Den Haag
- *Koninklijke Bibliotheek (KB)*, Den Haag
- *Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit Leiden*, Leiden
- *Archief Theater Instituut Nederland*, Amsterdam
- *Van Looy Archief, Frans Hals Museum*, Haarlem
- *Johnson Library*, Stratford-upon-Avon
- *Records Office, The Shakespeare Centre*, Stratford-upon-Avon.

My thesis has greatly benefited from the guidance, suggestions and advice of Professor Stanley W. Wells, for which I offer him my warmest thanks. I am also grateful to Dr Charles Vergeer who drew my attention to letters to and from Arthur van Schendel unknown to me and provided me with copies of relevant material.

My children and friends supported me with good faith and I owe especially Drs E.G. van Weezendonk, who read my thesis with great care, sincere gratitude. It stands to reason that errors that might be traced are my own responsibility.

Delft, September 1998.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page
<u>Introduction</u>	i-xvi
<u>Chapter 1</u>	
The Life and Work of Arthur van Schendel, His Place in Dutch Literature	1
1.1. Arthur van Schendel's Life	1
1.2. The Poet/Novelist Arthur van Schendel	43
1.3. Arthur van Schendel's Place in the Dutch Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries	44
<u>Chapter 2</u>	
A Discussion of <i>Shakespeare</i>	55
2.1. Introduction	55
2.2. Shakespeare Man and Playwright	57
<u>Chapter 3</u>	
Arthur van Schendel's Views on Five of Shakespeare's Plays, Shakespeare performed in The Netherlands, Arthur van Schendel's Involvement, and a Discussion of his only Play <i>Pandorra</i>	128
3.1. Introduction	128
3.2. Arthur van Schendel's Views on Five of Shakespeare's Plays	129
3.3. Arthur van Schendel's Involvement	158
3.4. A Discussion of <i>Pandorra</i>	167
3.4.a. Date and History	167
3.4.b. The Title	169
3.4.c. Intertextuality and Intertraffic the Mind	170
3.4.d. The Play	174
<u>Chapter 4</u>	
<i>Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw</i>	178
4.1. Introduction and a Discussion of Some of Van Schendel's Short Stories	178
4.2. Reviews which Appeared on the Publication of <i>Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw</i>	185
4.3. An Evaluation of <i>Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw</i>	194
4.3.a. The Style	196
4.3.b. The Title	197
4.3.c. The Story: Analogies between A <i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i> and <i>Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw</i>	198
4.4. Concluding Remarks	227
<u>Conclusion</u>	229
<u>Bibliography</u>	234
	248

INTRODUCTION

Since 1600 Dutch translations and discussions of, and references to, English literary and other works, such as books, plays, and to a lesser extent poems, have appeared regularly. English authors, playwrights, poets and their works have been the subject of monographs, articles and dissertations. A great number of these translations or sometimes adaptations (in the case of performances of plays), treatises, and articles cover a wide field - see for instance *Sir Thomas Browne M.D. and the Anatomy of Man* (1982) by Cornelis W. Schoneveld et al.¹, and *Intertraffic of the Mind* (1983) by Cornelis W. Schoneveld² - and quite a few of them are devoted to Shakespeare. In the 1890s L.A.J. Burgersdijk translated all Shakespeare's plays in twelve volumes³; Renetta Pennink wrote a dissertation called, *Nederland en Shakespeare: Achttiende Eeuw en Vroege Romantiek* (The Netherlands and Shakespeare: the Eighteenth Century and Early Romanticism, 1936)⁴; Robert H. Leek composed a book entitled, *Shakespeare in Nederland: Kroniek van Vier Eeuwen Shakespeare in Nederlandse Vertalingen op het Nederlandse Toneel* (1988)⁵, which is a survey, covering four

¹ (Leiden: Brill, 1982).

² Dissertation Leiden University (Leiden: Brill/Universitaire Pers, 1983).

³ 1884-1888. (3rd rev. ed. Leiden: A.W.Sijthoff, 1983).

⁴ Dissertation University Utrecht ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff).

⁵ (Zutphen: De Walburg Pers). This book appeared as an unpublished dissertation at the University of Auckland, New Zealand (n.d. [= 1972]) in two volumes and is entitled, "Shakespeare in the Netherlands: a Study of Dutch Translations and Dutch Performances of William Shakespeare's Plays."

centuries, of Shakespeare's plays translated into Dutch and performed on the stage in The Netherlands; Bart Westerweel and Theo D'haen edited *Something Understood: Studies in Anglo-Dutch Translation* (1990)⁶; and A.J. Hoenselaars included some considerations of Shakespeare in The Netherlands in his edited collection, *Reclamations of Shakespeare* (1994).⁷ These examples comprise only a small number of all the works written by Dutch scholars and translators both in Dutch and English; they show a continual interest in the literary output of Great Britain in general and to a great extent in William Shakespeare's life and works in particular.

Arthur van Schendel (1874-1946) takes up a modest place among those mentioned above. My thesis offers a study of his literary interaction with Shakespeare. In this introduction, I briefly survey those of his writings, both novels, short stories and a play, that are most relevant to my theme, mention the works that are to be dealt with thoroughly in the following chapters, and say something about the English reception of his work. Van Schendel was sixteen when he first saw a play by Shakespeare. That was *Hamlet*, performed by a German theatre company, and when he was seventeen, he enrolled at the Academy of Drama in Amsterdam. He then began to read all Shakespeare's plays, in the translation by L.A.J. Burgersdijk, which he borrowed from the library of the Academy of

⁶ (Amsterdam - Atlanta, GA: Rodopi).

⁷ (Amsterdam - Atlanta, GA: Rodopi).

Drama.⁸ When he became proficient in the English language, first through self-study and later through his studies at a college of education (in order to become a teacher of English), he read Shakespeare's plays in the original language. This gave him so much pleasure that his interest in Shakespeare and his works increased, which resulted in a biography of the playwright and a thorough knowledge of the characters and plots of his plays.

Van Schendel was a poet, but foremost a novelist and short story writer, who composed only one play. *Shakespeare* (1910), one of his two biographies, the play *Pandorra* (1919), the novel *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* (1940), the poem "Stratford-on-Avon" (1944)⁹, the various allusions to characters in Shakespeare's works scattered through his writings, and also his *ex libris*¹⁰ bear witness to his lifelong admiration for the great playwright. His *Shakespeare* may be regarded as a romanticized biography. The second edition, published in 1922, was enlarged with discussions of five of Shakespeare's plays. According to one of Van Schendel's biographers, G.H. van 's-Gravesande, the author hoped that his *Life of Shakespeare* would prove an eye-opener for his friends and entice them to

⁸ In *Arthur van Schendel* ('s-Gravenhage: BZZTôH, 1983) Charles Vergeer remarked that as a student of the Academy of Drama Arthur van Schendel was in charge of its library and read Shakespeare's plays in the Burgersdijk translation (168).

⁹ In *Herdenkingen* (Reminiscences), *Verzameld werk* (VW) vol. 8: 380-381.

¹⁰ In September 1934 the *ex libris* was designed by David Abraham Bueno de Mesquita (1889-1962), a Dutch artist designer, illustrator and painter of Portuguese extraction, who, like Van Schendel, went to live and work in Italy.

read (or re-read) Shakespeare.¹¹ This biography will be discussed in Chapter Two.

The play *Pandorra* is set in Renaissance Italy. It is the story of a young woman, a courtesan, who attracts men and in most cases causes their misfortunes, or even their deaths. Her way of life changes drastically when she falls in love, but this love is doomed to perish. Echoes of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* may be traced in this play. In Chapter Three *Pandorra* will be examined, together with the five plays by Shakespeare which Van Schendel discussed in the enlarged edition of his *Shakespeare*. His interpretation of them and his keen sensitivity will be shown.

Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw is a novel portraying two personages cum spirits, Oberon and Titania, who play their parts in a Dutch bourgeois environment. The names of these characters point to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Whether the intertextuality between Shakespeare's play and Van Schendel's novel reaches beyond these names will be discussed in Chapter Four. The poem "Stratford-on-Avon" will be given in translation in Chapter One.

It seems that Van Schendel was fascinated by the story of *Romeo and Juliet*, for in his early novels and essays he more than once portrayed a tragic love similar to that of *Romeo and Juliet*. He was also greatly interested in the character of *Hamlet*.

¹¹ In *Arthur van Schendel: zijn Leven en Werk* (1981) G. H. 's-Gravesande mentioned a letter from Van Schendel to his friend Aart van der Leeuw (1876-1931), a man of letters, in which he put forward the idea referred to in the text (39).

In his first novel *Drogon* (1896), which he wrote when he was nineteen¹², the eponymous personage Drogon was already imbued with Hamlet's melancholy and his preoccupation with questions of life and death. Drogon was also inclined to contemplations about sin. In the introductory lines he is described as one who was born under a curse with his right cheek covered with red hair, and a subterranean rumble and the howling of dogs were heard when his mother was delivered of him. This reminds me of Richard III, who in the opening lines of *The Tragedy of King Richard III* soliloquizes as follows,

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass,
I that am rudely stamped and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph,
I that am curtailed of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
Into this breathing world scarce half made up-
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them-
(*The Tragedy of King Richard III*, 1.1.14-23).

Both Drogon and Richard III are not loved by the people. They meet with their deaths towards the end of the story and play respectively. As we know, Richard III was killed fighting Richmond on the battlefield and Drogon, too, lost his life by the sword. This does not happen in a battle or duel, however, which is quite unusual.

The novel is set in the Middle Ages, the time of crusades, knights and serfs. Amalric, Margrave of Sinte-Bertijn, Drogon's elder brother, had been invited by the French King

¹² Written in 1893 and published in 1896.

to join his army and wage a crusade against the Saracens. When he departed, accompanied by noblemen and soldiers, he left Drogon, who did not wish to join them, in charge of his wife, the castle, and the county. When, because of his misbehaviour - encouraged by his sister-in-law, he had begun an affair with her which resulted in her pregnancy - Drogon was threatened by the serfs, who, at the instigation of the clergy, stormed the castle to punish him, he had to defend himself. In order to achieve this he needed to get hold of the family sword. It hung, however, out of reach on a cord in the great hall. When Drogon tried to detach it, standing on a stool which his sister Ursulla had placed beneath it, he sprained his foot and in his fall was struck and killed by the swinging sword.

Another reference to Hamlet appears in a short story "De Engelsen in Soeratte" (1936) (The English in Soeratt).¹³ In 1607, three English ships under the command of William Hawkins set sail to Soeratt in India, near the Portuguese colony of Goa. During the voyage, two of the ships the "Hector" and the "Dragon" were becalmed; the third, however, fortunately caught a gust of wind and sailed out of sight. In the logbook of the "Hector" the following curious entry could be read,

Today I [William Hawkins] invited Captain Keeling, commander of the "Dragon", to a fish meal and afterwards the crew staged *Hamlet*, which I sometimes allow them to do for fear of laziness, gambling and sleep.

¹³ This story is part of a collection of essays, called *Avonturiers* (Adventurers), VW vol. 5: 96-106.

(my interpretation and translation, 97).¹⁴

The story continues with the information that three weeks later - it was still calm, for the weather had not changed - Captain Keeling invited commander William Hawkins (to a meal) on board the "Dragon" and this time the crew performed *Richard III*. But apparently *Hamlet* was more to their liking, so that the next day Captain Keeling had this play staged as well to the satisfaction of the people concerned. In my opinion Van Schendel must have read the story when he lived in England, but I could not find the particulars in *The Hawkins' Voyages During the Reigns of Henry VII, Queen Elizabeth and James I*, edited by C.B. Markham. This editor had stated earlier "that the manuscript of The Journal of Hawkins was lost". But further on he says, "It has since been found among the manuscripts in the British Museum (Egerton MS 2100); but much injured by damp"¹⁵. However, Stanley Wells drew my attention to a list of "Performances 1606-1608; *The High Seas*" which is given in E.K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, vol. 2 (1930). The relevant entries, taken from a journal kept by William Keeling, read,

1607, Sept. 5. I sent the interpreter, according to his desier, aboard the Hector wher he brooke fast, and after came aboard mee, wher we gaue the tragedie of Hamlett.

30. Captain Hawkins dined with me, wher my companions acted Kinge Richard the Second.

¹⁴ Since most of the books, articles and poems referred to are written in Dutch, the translation of titles, appropriate lines, and phrases into English are mine and my own responsibility. If it concerns a 'literal' translation of the Dutch text, I shall give the Dutch title and its translation, but if it concerns whole phrases, I shall refrain from giving the Dutch text.

¹⁵ (London: printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1878): xlv-xlv.

(1608, Mar. 31). I envited Captain Hawkins to a fissue dinner, and had Hamlet acted aboard me: which I permitt to keepe my people from idlenes and unlawful games, or sleepe.

(App. D: 334-335).

These entries show that Van Schendel must have read this journal, but changed the facts when he wrote the short story, *De Engelsen in Soeratte*. The staging of plays on board English ships in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries seems not to have been exceptional, for in this respect Arie J. Gelderblom mentioned a similar activity in a lecture given at the XII Renaissance Colloquium Utrecht, held at the University Utrecht, November 1997. He refers to the performance at the time, of whole plays ("gansche komediën") on board Dutch ships.¹⁶

Be that as it may, it must, however, have made high demands on the crew to recite the lines of plays which were only performed occasionally, and the more so when it concerned such a long play as *Hamlet*.

It has been mentioned above that Van Schendel had enlarged his biography of Shakespeare with discussions of five of his plays. One of these plays is *King Lear*. A possible allusion to Gloucester's resignation to his lot (see VW 1, 393),

As flies to wanton boys are we to th'gods;
They kill us for their sport.

(*The Tragedy of King Lear*, 4.1.38-39),

is to be found in *De Grauwe Vogels* (1937) (*Grey Birds* [1939]).

In short, the novel is the story of a Dutch couple, Heiltje

¹⁶ Arie Gelderblom mentioned an article by J. de Hullu, "Amusement", 126-133. *Op de Schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie: Vijf Artikelen van J. de Hullu*. Eds. J.R. Bruijn and J. Lucassen. (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff/Bouma's Boekhuis BV, 1980) 127.

and her husband Kasper, who live their simple lives as owners of a nursery. She is a member of the Protestant Church, he has no faith. They have received blow after blow and one day when they are talking, she utters these words,

I'm exhausted. How bright it was for us in the beginning with the children God gave us, and how black He has made it for us. We're not even allowed to know what sin we've committed. What sins did the children commit? Life was still a game for them when their troubles began. And we ourselves? We've worked from morning till night, honourably, without robbing others; we have kept our hands unstained; we have done our duty without self-seeking; we have helped the poor and the afflicted; we have borne our trials; we were clay in His hands. He has slowly tortured us, our merciless Guardian, all through our lives, and we haven't murmured until my strength was exhausted. He has been hard and cruel to us, liberal with His bitterness. He has never spared us and we have said: "Thy will be done". The hereafter couldn't be worse than what He has done to us in this life. He created us for a cruel game, and I have placed my trust in Him, that he shall not cast me out eternally; and I must still pray.

(*Grey Birds*, 237-238).

Van Schendel has turned the 'gods' of Gloucester into the God of the Christians. The indictment, however, is the same.

As for Van Schendel's *ex libris*, it contains one certain and one possible reference to Shakespeare. The possible one is the portrayal of an open book with "woorden" (words) written on blank page. 'Words', of course, could be simply a reference to the implements of the *métier* of a poet/playwright/novelist, and not to Shakespeare in particular. F.E. Sparshott puts it in a scholarly way as follows,

For literature operates with words, which are symbols that already have a set meaning, and thus involves the intellectual life and discursive reason in a way in which the other arts do not.¹⁷

¹⁷ In *The Structure of Aesthetics* (Toronto: U of Toronto Press; London: Routledge & Paul Kegan, 1963) 152.

As regards the language in Shakespeare's plays, Stanley Wells said,

More relevant to my purpose is an idea that has been propounded about all these plays [*As You Like It*, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*]: that to a rather exceptional degree, they betray a preoccupation on the part of the dramatist with his own art.

And he continued,

It is surely undeniable that in constructing this play [*Love's Labour's Lost*] Shakespeare was strongly motivated by his interest in the means of communication, in the fact that words can obscure meaning as well as reveal it.¹⁸

In *Hamlet* Polonius asks Hamlet: "what do you read my Lord?", and Hamlet answers: "Words, words, words" (*Hamlet* 2.2.194-195). This answer could be read in two ways. Firstly it is a straight reply to the query, and secondly it obscures the meaning that is: Hamlet tries to fool Polonius as he does on one or two occasions. Van Schendel mentions this 'woorden' several times in the poem "Taal" (Language, 1950)¹⁹, in *Shakespeare*²⁰, and also in an essay called, "De gave van het boek" (The gift of the book, 1942)²¹.

The certain reference, which is of weighty importance, is the picture of a bust of Shakespeare overlooking Van Schendel's desk, or could we say inspiring Van Schendel's work?²²

¹⁸ In "Shakespeare Without Sources". *Shakespearean Comedy. Stratford-upon-Avon Studies* 14 (1972): 58-74, 69.

¹⁹ In *Herdenkingen*, VW vol. 8, 358.

²⁰ In VW vol. 1, 310.

²¹ In *Stray Publications*, VW vol. 8: 461-469.

²² Incidentally the figure standing on a closed book and holding up a banner with Van Schendel's name - see copy of the *ex libris* on one of the first pages of this thesis - could be the representation of his muse. In Chapter One I will deal with her more elaborately.

Before Van Schendel moved to Italy in 1920 and during the short periods when he was back in The Netherlands, he was much interested in performances of Shakespeare's plays in Dutch theatres. See, for instance, the remark on the enlarged edition of *Shakespeare* above. In 1936 he wrote the programme for a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Amsterdam and his reviews of performances of plays appeared in newspapers.

In 1919, the actress Enny Vrede lost her life when the ship on which she and her husband were travelling from Norway to The Netherlands sank, possibly having struck a mine. At the request of Eduard Verkade, Enny Vrede's first husband, actor and director of a leading theatre company, Van Schendel contributed an article, called, "Sweets to the sweet, farewell" (*Hamlet* 5.1.239), to a slender memorial volume, *Enny Vrede: In Memoriam Maria Magdalena Müller*.²³ Although the late actress had acted various roles in all kinds of plays, in this memorial volume she is, curiously, only remembered in the role of Juliet, not as might be expected especially by Van Schendel, but also by other contributors, such as Jacques van Looy (2-4), who translated some of Shakespeare's plays into Dutch, and Frans Mijnsen (8).

So far I have described Van Schendel's outlook on English literature and particularly on Shakespeare's work, but the interest appears to have been reciprocal, for there had also been interest from the other side of the Channel both in Dutch

²³ (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, [1919]): 5-7.

theatre and in Van Schendel's work. Since this thesis is devoted to Van Schendel's preoccupation with Shakespeare, I shall only mention in passing one book, i.e. J.T. Grein's *The World of the Theatre: Impressions and Memoirs, March 1920-21* (1921), in which drama in 'the small countries across the Channel', such as Belgium and Holland, is appreciatively compared to drama in England. He said,

When we compare our drama with the small countries across the Channel, such as Belgium and Holland, we may feel abashed at their intellectual superiority, their width of horizon, their indescribable love of the theatre. In Amsterdam alone in one week you could see Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and "As You like It", to say nothing of Strindberg, Hauptmann, a few new dramas and native comedies, all of no meaner calibre than the best seen at the Criterion, or even the Haymarket.²⁴

According to E.F. Verkade-Cartier van Dissel, J.T. Grein, a Dutch merchant and theatre critic (Ambassador of the Theatre [1862-1935]), was a naturalized Englishman. Strangely enough, English interest in Van Schendel's works does not concern the works discussed above, except two, but lies in novels which have nothing to do with Shakespeare. For the greater part it concerns novels which were translated into English. (Incidentally novels by Van Schendel have been translated into twelve languages).

The first review to be mentioned is one by H.S.M. van Wickevoort-Crommelin which appeared in *THE ATHENEUM*, N° 3636, 3rd July 1897. Van Schendel is praised for his novel *Drogon*,

²⁴ (London: W. Heinemann, 1921) 1. I am indebted for this piece of information to E.F. Verkade-Cartier van Dissel in *Eduard Verkade en zijn Strijd voor een Nieuw Toneel* (Eduard Verkade [actor and director] and his Struggle for a New Theatre [along the lines of Gordon Craig]) (Zutphen: De Waldburg Pers, 1978) 372.

in particular because it does not belong to the romantic school and consequently does not seem to fit into the Dutch literary stream of those days. In Chapter One this phenomenon will be discussed in more detail. Further, the reviewer thought that the subject is highly dramatic - although it is inadequately worked out - and also that towards the end of the novel a fine piece of symbolism occurs (19) [The reviewer seemed to be referring to the incident with the family sword mentioned above]. There is, however, no mention of echoes of *Hamlet* and *Richard III* as I have indicated before. As a matter of fact this novel saw no translation into another language.

The second review, "New Novels", was written on the publication of a translation into English of Van Schendel's *Het Fregatschip Johanna Maria* (1930) by Brian W. Downs, entitled *The JM* (1935), with an introduction by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (5-11). This review appeared in the *TLS* of 9th May 1935. The translator is highly praised for having successfully reproduced the tone of the original (300)²⁵. In the introduction Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch expressed his appreciation for Van Schendel in the following lines,

All beauteous things by which we live
By laws of time and space decay
But O! the very reason why
I clasp them, is because they die (11).

The third review appeared in the *TLS* of 21st October 1939 on the occasion of a translation of Van Schendel's *De Grauwe Vogels* (1937) by M.S. Stephens. The reviewer was surprised by

²⁵ (London: Jonathan Cape; New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1935). File AVS/2.b.1(4), LM.

Van Schendel's exceptional talent, although he added that, since "Q" 's testimony in this matter which is surely as conclusive as anybody's" [meaning the introduction to *The JM* by Sir A. Quiller-Couch; see previous reference], "we already knew of it". He ended his article with the following words,

There is something akin to Hardy's Immanent Will in the metaphysic of this sombre and deeply moving story, and perhaps the terrible conclusion has also a tragic irony like his (611).

These lines reflect the reviewer's evaluation of kinship with certain traits detected in Hardy's novels, but no mention was made of intertextuality between Gloucester's lines in Shakespeare's *King Lear* and Heiltje's complaint discussed above.

And in an editorial in the *TLS* a week later, dated 28th October 1939, we again read the words "exceptional talent" in connection with Van Schendel's novel *Grey Birds*.

The fifth review, "Novels of the Week" in the *TLS* of 24th February 1940, commented on the publication of *The House in Haarlem* (1940), a translation of Van Schendel's *Een Hollands Drama* (1935) also by M.S. Stephens. The article had this to convey,

Now comes a second novel, *The House in Haarlem*, as relentless in its single-minded quest as the other [as *Grey Birds*] and as starkly illuminated. Faith is now encompassed not by the mystery of suffering, but by the mystery of sin and retribution. God's will is become [sic] man's hunger for righteousness. It is difficult to convey the quality of the book. Still and passionless on the surface, quiet in tone almost to the point of monotony, the story, though it is set in the eighties and nineties of the past century, has something of the spiritual atmosphere of England of the Commonwealth (97).

With these five reviews I have exhausted the English comments

on Van Schendel's work.

From 1900-1901 Arthur van Schendel had been a foreign master at the Grove House School in Stratford-upon-Avon. At the time John A. Priest, one-time mayor of that town, was the headmaster. In the files at the *Letterkundig Museum en Documentatiecentrum* (LM) in The Hague I found a manuscript of 50 pages written by H. Maud Kremer-Priest (ca. 1910 and later). Through her uncle, John A. Priest, and aunt Maud Priest came to know Van Schendel. Although they had not met when he lived in Stratford-upon-Avon, years later he invited her to visit his family in The Netherlands. On a second visit she stayed at their holiday home in Domburg, a sea-side town. This MS is called, "A Dutch Writer and an English Girl"²⁶ and I shall quote two relevant passages,

The girl, in her turn, waiting at the door of her compartment for the train to stop, had not the faintest idea what he would look like. Her uncle, to whom she owed this introduction, had said, he was a "famous Dutch author" and, he had added, "a great man". And her aunt, cosily knitting in the conservatory where they were sitting at Stratford-on-Avon, had quietly supplemented this description by "and such a strange man!" (1).

"Were your Aunt and Uncle quite well when you last saw them?" he asked. "Thank you, Uncle was very well, but Auntie is almost an invalid." "Yes, she was a great sufferer, at times, when I was staying there. She is a brave and most worthy lady, and your uncle a most honourable man." "And Brutus is an honourable man", flashed through her brain. "Why, the man talks like Shakespeare!" And suddenly she became aware of a resemblance in him to Shakespeare himself, what with the high domeshaped forehead, the hair starting there in a point and leaving, at the sides, the temples high and bare, the longish pointed nose and the slightly protruding eyes (5).

²⁶ File AVS/3.a.15, LM.

Maud Priest eventually married a Dutchman and remained in The Netherlands.

In this introduction I have mentioned briefly Van Schendel's preoccupation with Shakespeare and his works, but it is important to emphasize that, although the novelist appropriated material, such as plots or characters, from Shakespeare's plays, he adapted it to his own purposes. A clear example, for instance, is *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw*, which plot and environment are completely different from those of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The analogies between the play and the novel, however, seem unmistakable and indeed point to Van Schendel's creative use of intertextuality.

CHAPTER ONE

THE LIFE AND WORK OF ARTHUR VAN SCHENDEL, HIS PLACE IN DUTCH LITERATURE

1.1. ARTHUR VAN SCHENDEL'S LIFE

The Dutch poet, novelist, and short story writer, Arthur François Emile van Schendel, was born in Batavia, the capital of the former Dutch colony, The Dutch East Indies, on 5th March 1874, and died in Amsterdam on 11th September 1946.

Van Schendel belongs to those who remain silent about their own lives. He was not communicative at all; particularly his youth, which had not been a happy one, was not discussed, even with his family. At the request of his children the novelist wrote a slender book about his early years, called *Jeugdherinneringen: a Document* (Reminiscences of my youth: a Document) on condition that it was not to be published. But his heirs did publish it, be it long after his death.¹

Charles Vergeer, who administered Van Schendel's estate, was one of the editors of the eight volumes of Van Schendel's *Verzameld werk*² (Collected works), co-editor of his letters, and, apart from other books and articles, author of a monograph called *Arthur van Schendel*³. He devoted much research

¹ (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1989).

² Commissie tot Redactie van het Verzameld Werk van Arthur van Schendel (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff Nederland BV, 1976-1978).

³ ('s-Gravenhage: BZZTôH, 1983).

to unravelling what had taken place in the first twenty-five years of the novelist's life. According to Vergeer, Van Schendel refused ever to give an interview and no photographs of him were to appear on the cover of his books. Even in his letters to his best friends Van Schendel hardly ever mentioned particulars about his childhood.⁴ In his attempt to come to know what had happened to him in the suppressed years, Vergeer approached Van Schendel through his work, which was actually in compliance with the latter's own ideas. For, as regards William Shakespeare, Van Schendel argued somewhat jokingly,

It ought to be mentioned that many Shakespeareans, etc. do not believe that one may learn and know the Poet's personality, or as they call it his character, from his work. Shakespeare's character, they say, is not to be found in his work, for it is dramatic.

And further,

Those scholars are of course not learned enough, for they do not know that a book means a man, at least something of a man; that every persona, not only every character, but every sentence, every word, means something of a man. They are also childish, because they think that somebody can hide himself, someone who expresses himself moreover. Even if Shakespeare mentions mere facts, he does not hide himself.

(my interpretation and translation).⁵

Van Schendel was certainly not an exception as regards these views as will become evident in what follows. A.C. Bradley expressed the same points of view, for he stated in his *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*⁶, in the chapter "Shakespeare the Man", commenting in that respect on Sidney L. Lee, *A Life of*

⁴ Arthur van Schendel, 122.

⁵ Shakespeare in VW vol 1: 307-416, 307.

⁶ (London: MacMillan & Co, 1909; 2nd repr. ed. 1926).

*William Shakespeare*⁷ - in particular on the biographical inference the latter drew from Shakespeare's Sonnets -,

Even if Mr Lee's view of the Sonnets were indisputably correct, nay, if even, to go much further, the persons and the story of the Sonnets were as purely fictitious as those of *Twelfth Night* they might and would still tell us something of the personality of their author. For however free a poet may be from the emotion which he simulates, and however little involved in the condition which he imagines, he cannot (unless he is a mere copyist) write a hundred and fifty lyrics expressive of those simulated emotions without disclosing something of himself, something of the way in which he in particular *would* feel and behave under imagined conditions. And the same thing holds in principle of the dramas. Is it really conceivable that a man can write some five and thirty dramas, and portray in them an enormous amount and variety of human nature, without betraying anything whatever of his own disposition and preferences?

(313-314).

And in *Shakespeare: the Later Years*⁸ Russell Fraser stated his view as follows,

But the personal life, though he buries it deep, participates in his art, an energizing presence. Energizing doesn't always mean troubled.

(xi).

Therefore it is not exceptional that Vergeer approached Van Schendel in *Arthur van Schendel* through his works, particularly through *Drogon*⁹, *Fratilamur*¹⁰, *Een Hollands Drama*¹¹ (The House in Haarlem¹²), and *Herdenkingen*¹³ (Commemorations) in combination with G.H. 's-Gravesande's (pseudonym for G.H. Pan-

⁷ (London: John Murray, 1898; 4th ed. 1925).

⁸ (New York: Columbia UP, 1991).

⁹ 1896; VW vol. 1: 7-62.

¹⁰ Autobiographical essay, 1928; VW vol. 3: 329-354.

¹¹ 1935; VW vol. 4: 622-720.

¹² Trans. M.S. Stephens (London: G. Routledge & Sons Ltd., 1940).

¹³ 1950; VW vol. 8: 341-381.

nekoek Jr) biography, *Arthur van Schendel: zijn Leven en zijn Werk*¹⁴ (Arthur van Schendel: his Life and his Work), F.W. van Heerikhuisen's biography (Dissertation), *Het Werk van Arthur van Schendel: Achtergronden, Karakter, Ontwikkeling*¹⁵ (Arthur van Schendel's Work: Background, Character, Development), and *Schrijvers prentenboek*¹⁶ (Authors' picturebook).

In 1983, when the monograph *Arthur van Schendel* was published and Van Schendel's letters were about to appear¹⁷, *Jeugdherinneringen: a Document*, was, as stated above, not in print. Incidentally, whenever Vergeer quoted from *Jeugdherinneringen*, he did so by heart, because even he, as co-editor of the *Verzameld werk* and Van Schendel's letters, was not allowed to read it. He remembered lines that were read out to him by the heirs; some of them were etched in his memory.

Besides, Vergeer had talked to persons who had known Van Schendel and he himself had had conversations with Van Schendel's son Sjeu (Arthur) and daughters Bartje (Hubertina) and Kennie (Corinna¹⁸); Sjeu and Kennie had studied at the Sorbonne in Paris.

It must be stated, however, that as regards the ease of detecting autobiographical information in Van Schendel's

¹⁴ ('s-Gravenhage: BZZTÔH, 1949; repr. 1982).

¹⁵ (Amsterdam: J.M. Meulenhoff, 1961; repr. 1982).

¹⁶ Corinna van Schendel & Gerrit Borgers. Eds. *Schrijvers prentenboek; dl. 19 "Arthur van Schendel"* (Amsterdam: Bezige Bij, 1976).

¹⁷ This announcement proved not to have materialized - the publisher went bankrupt - although much work and research had been invested in this project by the respective editors. However, whenever there was an opportunity, in the course of time a number of letters were incorporated in articles and books.

¹⁸ The girl in *De Berg van Dromen* is called after Van Schendel's daughter Corinna.

works, his work can be divided into two periods. In the first period, which starts with *Drogon*, these details are referred to in parallels, indirect references, similar problems. Only in the second period, when Van Schendel was over fifty, do autobiographical references appear plainly in his work. This period from 1927 till 1945 began with *Fratilamur* in 1928 and ended with *Herdenkingen* in 1945.¹⁹

Arthur van Schendel was the fifth child of his parents, a late arrival. His father was an officer in the KNIL (The Army of the Royal Dutch East Indies), on duty in the former Dutch colony, where he had to move from one island to the other, from one garrison to the other. In 1875 the family went on leave to Holland. Two years later they came back and when, in 1879, they finally returned home, the father was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel and retired. They went to live in Haarlem, but Arthur's father could not long enjoy his retirement, for he died in December 1880, when the boy was only six. In April the following year the mother and four of her children - one of Arthur's brothers had joined the army in 1880 - left for The Hague, only to return to Haarlem and to leave again in 1883, this time for Amsterdam. The mother and children were continually on the move and this went on when the three eldest children left the parental home and Mrs Van Schendel had only to take care of Arthur. According to Vergeer, Arthur's mother was restless and carefree, and having

¹⁹ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 123.

been left with a small pension, was not capable of coping with the difficulties she had to face. Arthur himself said in *Fratilamur*,

I was eleven years old, a child that got little, either for his mouth or for his heart. My destiny was not to be feared, however, for I did not know most acute hardships; a piece of bread was sufficient, and I was not in need for warmth. I did not go to school, I had no friends and I did not play.

(my interpretation and translation).²⁰

He roamed through the fields and the woods when they lived in Haarlem and when they moved to Amsterdam, went for endless walks outside the town, past the quays, where huge ships lay moored, noticed everything, but at the same time was absorbed in his own thoughts.

Meanwhile his mother had acquired a new attachment. The relationship between this person, whom Arthur always referred to as 'that man', and the boy remained a strained one. Things got worse and Arthur left his mother's house. A half-sister and later a half-brother were born; the former was sickly. Once when his baby sister Lucie was ill, Arthur had to sit up at night and look after her to allow his mother to have some rest. Somebody had given him an illustrated book to read, called *De Aarde en haar Volken* (The Earth and its Peoples). In it he read the fascinating story of Stanley and Livingstone.

Van Schendel admitted in *Fratilamur*,

the first time I read this book the fire of passion inflamed. Although this passion - without which no beauty

²⁰ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 13; *Fratilamur*, WV vol. 3, 337.

will become visible - did not come out of the book to me, there must surely have been a breeze entering me which ignited a sparkle.

(my interpretation and translation).²¹

One wintry night little Lucie died and the family soon thereafter moved. In *Jeugdherinneringen: a Document* (14) Van Schendel commented on this episode in his life as follows,

A rift has developed between the reality and my world of imagination, already since my eleventh year.

(my interpretation and translation).

From that time he began to read eagerly and to write. Mrs Van Schendel's small pension and the fact that they were constantly moving gave little opportunity for the boy to receive proper schooling. When his father died he attended a primary school. Later in Amsterdam he also went to a primary school, but that only lasted for a couple of weeks because his mother could not pay the fees and Arthur's clothes were so shabby that he was sent away. After some years he eventually went to the *Jongeheerenschool* in Amsterdam and this time he was able to stay a whole year; he happened to have been admitted to the last year of primary education. How happy the boy was! The following year he went to the first form of the H.B.S. (former Dutch High School), but he failed to reach the second form, not because of any inability to study, but because of his defective primary schooling. Arthur left school and went to work in a bookshop, *Kirberger en Kesper*, specializing in English books. However, the job only lasted for one month. It was at this point that he decided to study English himself - which

²¹ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 14 and 141; VW vol. 3, 337.

led him eventually to Shakespeare -, the first step on the path to acquire knowledge through self-study, which proved to have been so efficient and thorough that critics who read his novels never suspected that they had been written by an autodidact.

In retrospect on 21st December 1923, he wrote a note to his young friend the poet/novelist Jan Greshoff (1888-1971): "I wrote many poems and tragedies from my thirteenth to my eighteenth year."²² Hardly any of the poems, let alone the tragedies, have survived, for the young poet/playwright was inclined to destroy his work. This happened because, in that period, no editor wanted to publish Van Schendel's work in his literary journal.

Van Schendel acknowledged in *Fratilamur*,

I read as one obsessed; there was no book but I found the appeal of new thoughts. It is tiring to believe everything one reads and this is perhaps the reason that for convenience's sake one considers everything printed as mere fantasy. Few believe, as I do, that Hamlet and Don Quichotte ever existed.

(my interpretation and translation).²³

Vergeer remarked,

Neither schooling nor education established the development of the young Van Schendel, but his imagination, which was stimulated during the long walks, and the reading material greedily devoured, did.

(my interpretation and translation).²⁴

He had various jobs after his job in the bookshop, but none

²² Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 16, 135, and 44, which appears to be a copy of this note reproduced in *Schrijvers Prentenboek*. Also in Charles Vergeer, *Gewezen en Gemaskerd: over de Jonge Arthur van Schendel*, 45.

²³ *VW* vol. 3: 340-341.

²⁴ *Arthur van Schendel en zijn Vrienden* (On the Exhibition in the Amsterdam Historic Museum) (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1938) 4.

lasted long. He was poor, often hungry, and did not always have a roof over his head, for the quarrels with his mother's friend caused him to stay away and spend the night elsewhere.

In August 1890 he lived on his own in Haarlem. At the request of his mother, who was then living in Amsterdam, he went to The Hague to ask for an advance on her pension. He was given only twenty-five guilders, of which his mother gave him ten to be used for food and lodging for the next three months. So in September of that year, at the age of sixteen, Arthur again went to live - on his own - in Amsterdam.²⁵

The money burnt a hole in his pocket and he went to the *Grand Théâtre* and bought a ticket for *Hamlet*, performed by a German theatre company. This made an enormous impact on him.²⁶ In a long poem, called *Amsterdam*, written on 18th August 1944, he devoted a few lines to commemorate his having watched several plays, of which *Hamlet* was one. He even mentioned the name of the actor who played Hamlet on that occasion. It was the Viennese, Kaiserlich Königlich Hofschauspieler Friedrich Mittenwurzer.²⁷ The poem *Amsterdam* contains two notable lines,

And the most beautiful of all that could be heard,
The voice of Shakespeare in the 'Amstelstraat'.
(my interpretation and translation).²⁸

Young Arthur often went to the theatre and he applied for a

²⁵ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 132; *Jeugdherinneringen*, 76.

²⁶ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 132.

²⁷ Charles Vergeer, *Gewezen en Gemaskerd: over de Jonge Arthur van Schendel* (Leiden: Dimezie, 1988) 19.

²⁸ *Herdenkingen*, VW vol. 8: 359-368, 366.

job with the theatre company, but to no avail. His frequent visits to the theatre, however, were noticed by the theatre critic and novelist M.G.L. van Loghem who saw to it that Arthur was given the opportunity to become a student at the Academy of Drama.²⁹ In January 1891 he sat for an entrance examination and passed. From June 1889, after his failure to be promoted to the second form of the H.B.S., until January 1891, when he was admitted to the Academy of Drama, his 'authorship' gradually developed and became established. He tried to get his poems published, first in the literary journal *Nederland* (M.G.L. van Loghem), later on in *De Nieuwe Gids*, but the editors were, as it turned out, not inclined to do so. They did not even write a letter of acknowledgement, or encouragement, or rejection. For that matter they might have thrown Arthur's poems into the waste-paper basket. During this period Arthur had to face hardships - as before - but to what extent is not known, for no written documentation exists, neither in veiled nor in plain language.

The headmaster of the Academy of Drama knew that Arthur's mother could not pay the fees, which is why he had to draw money from other sources to provide for it. It was a happy time for the young man for he was able to quench his thirst for knowledge, although after one month it became clear to him that the profession of actor was not his objective any more. He borrowed many books from the library (he read, as said be-

²⁹ In *Schrijvers Prentenboek* Vol. 19: "Arthur van Schendel" it reads M.G.L. van Lochum [M.G.L. van Loghem is meant, YS], 7. Charles Vergeer, *Gewezen en Gemaskerd: over de Jonge Arthur van Schendel*, gives a different information, 19.

fore, the Burgersdijk's translation of the *Complete Works* of Shakespeare and also Eduard Hartmann's *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, to mention a few), studied to his heart's content, went to the theatre, wrote poetry, and after a year was admitted to the second year, after having passed his examinations. On this occasion he recited a self-composed long poem, "Laat de kinderen tot mij komen" (Let the children come to me).³⁰

It was about this time that he was hospitably received in the house of the family Coorengel. The father, who had been a senior civil servant in the former Dutch colony, had died. There were nine children. Arthur got on well with the youngest child Jacques, who was two years his senior and was a fellow-student at the Academy of Drama; he also knew him from the *Jongeheerenschool*. Arthur often had long talks with the eldest brother, the thirty-four-year old Ernst, about art, literature, and music. His friendship with Truus, a pianist and five years his senior, was a happy one.

It is still unknown why Arthur discontinued his studies at the Academy of Drama in January 1893, although he had been admitted to the last year and was only half a year away from the final examination.³¹ In the pupils' records in the archives of the *Dutch Theatre Institute* in Amsterdam, Vergeer discovered an entry devoted to Arthur van Schendel which states that his physical incompetence had been the cause of

³⁰ "Jeugdpoëzie" (Youth poetry) in *Ongepubliceerde Geschriften* (Unpublished Writings); VW vol. 8: 491-494. Written on 9th May 1891 and dedicated to Frederik van Eeden, a well-known poet and novelist.

³¹ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 171.

his departure from the Academy. It is possible that this refers to his health, which may well have been rather delicate in those years, or to his height, for he was indeed a tall person. These reasons, however, do not seem to convince Vergeer. Van Schendel's second wife, Annie van Schendel-de Boer, said in retrospect in an interview with G.H. 's-Gravesande, that it could well have been a pretence. This pronouncement comes nearer to the truth in Vergeer's view.³²

The girl Truus Coorengel made a lasting impression on Van Schendel. At the time they met he was only sixteen years old. He was a child, and she was a woman who seemed to be in love with him. He said of her, "She held my hand to prevent me from straying away, I hers because I could trust her".³³ When he suddenly noticed her love, he did not know how to react and shied away. When she left, he was lost. What happened in the period between spring 1890 and spring 1891, when Arthur was seventeen, cannot be traced. It remains a mystery, for even the inferences in *Fratilamur* shed no light on this matter. Arthur went through a crisis in both his health (his brother Johan had died of tuberculosis in 1890, and one of his sisters had also died when she was young) and his mental condition. He fled Amsterdam and went to stay with his sister Virginie and her husband in Apeldoorn. However, he was always away, for he had resumed his long walks with his dog and so overcame the turbulence in his mind, which had been caused, so it is

³² Charles Vergeer, "Portfolio: Arthur van Schendel" in *Maatstaf* 24 (Nov. 1976): 24-33, 24.

³³ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 158; *Fratilamur*, in *VW* vol. 3, 342.

assumed, by disappointment and adversity. As stated above, the descriptions of this period and the years thereafter, beginning in December 1892 until November 1896, when he had his first permanent job as foreign master in the Grammar School at Tuxford in Nottinghamshire, are rather vague.

But before this phase in his life is discussed it is necessary to go back a few years to the crisis towards the end of 1892. All literary sources on Arthur van Schendel at my disposal reveal that, while he was growing into manhood, he met with much adversity, but managed to overcome it. We see these strong personalities, especially in his tragic novels, revived. The personages receive blow after blow and without saying much try to overcome them. If this proves not to be possible they perish with dignity (see for instance Maarten Rossaart, the main character in *De Waterman*).

Before he went through the crisis in 1892 Arthur was a cheerful youth, but afterwards he had become a melancholic man. He abandoned his youth poetry, destroyed most of it and began to write prose. Both in *Jeugdherinneringen* and in *Fratilamur* he marked this process clearly; in the latter it reads,

I did not want to write poems any more after having abandoned the last ones.³⁴

Later, however, Van Schendel resumed writing poetry. A couple of poems, and also two pieces of prose, composed in English, were written in Haarlem in 1901³⁵. Other poems appeared in

³⁴ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 16; *Fratilamur*, VW vol. 3, 345.

³⁵ These unpublished poems, and the pieces of prose, are in MSS and kept in the LM. Although Charles Vergeer has included the sonnet *Silence* (21 Sep. 1901) in *Gewezen en Gemaskerd: over de Jonge Arthur van Schendel*, 68.

Herdenkingen, published in 1944. This collection also contains such poems as "Tuxford", "London", "Stratford-on-Avon", and "Amsterdam". They will be referred to in the appropriate places in this thesis. Van Schendel wrote one or two letters to the headmaster of the Academy of Drama while he was convalescing in Apeldoorn. The first letter was written in February 1893, the second in March 1893. He told the headmaster, Mr S.J. Bouberg Wilson, that he had been very ill and was recovering through much exercise and surely, I think, also due to the regular meals he received at his sister's house. During his walks his mind worked feverishly; he saw in his imagination all kinds of scenes, he travelled to foreign countries, and had talks with people from other cultures. It is interesting that in *Fratilamur* Van Schendel told more than once about a meeting with foreigners who had talked to him in French and English. One of Van Schendel's biographers, F.W. van Heerikhuizen, called these meetings pseudo-hallucinatory fiction. In this respect he asserted,

Thus *Fratilamur* gives us pieces of evidence that Van Schendel's imaginative life - at least in the years of his childhood and adolescence - partly possessed such a force and clarity, that we can speak of pseudo-hallucination. These contain partially a continuation of meetings really experienced, but one can also notice - with the utmost certainty - that the flashing up of this kind of 'visions' only occurs in the imagination, etc.

(my interpretation and translation).³⁶

This 'with the utmost certainty' as regards real and fictional meetings is doubtful. It is Vergeer in particular who fulmi-

³⁶ *Het Werk van Arthur van Schendel: Achtergronden, Karakter, Ontwikkeling*, 419.

nated against Van Heerikhuizen's view of pseudo-hallucinations in connection with Van Schendel's meetings described in *Fratilamur*. As editor of Van Schendel's letters he referred to a letter written to Jan Greshoff on 25th June 1933, in which Van Schendel told about one of his encounters with the Spanish organ-grinder, mentioning the exact time and place of their meeting in Haarlem.³⁷ As a consequence we may expect such an imagination to produce a great variety of stories. This happened indeed, for the short stories and novels give evidence of diverse settings - the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries - and such a variety of plots, that it amazes the reader.

Through the respective letters sent to the headmaster of the Academy of Drama, and what Van Schendel told in *Fratilamur*, Vergeer was able to piece roughly together what had happened in Van Schendel's life from spring 1893 until August 1894. Whereas at first Van Schendel had no eye for what happened around him - so engrossed was he in his thoughts - he eventually began to notice nature around him and the human world also began to appeal to him. He even went to Amsterdam to enrol as a sailor on one of the ships, but he was not accepted. Back in Apeldoorn he began to put in writing the pictures and scenes that had haunted him for such a long time. So from October 1893 until January 1894, at the age of nineteen, he wrote his first novel, called *Drogon*, the MS of which

³⁷ Arthur van Schendel, 127.

was lost for two years. When it reappeared in 1896, it was sent to a publisher and was printed two months later, which was exceptional indeed. Marius Bauer, an impressionistic-romantic artist and engraver, designed the cover, the title-page, and four illustrations for *Drogon*. This is the same person who was on a familiar footing with Edward Gordon Craig, the well-known innovator of the theatre and author of *On the Art of the Theatre*. Their friendship became known through a letter from Craig to Bauer, dated 15th February 1906, with the greeting, "Dear and lovely old friend".³⁸ Incidentally Van Schendel tore the four illustrations by Bauer out of his own copy.³⁹

Since there is no evidence, one wonders about the exact relationship between Arthur Van Schendel and Gordon Craig. So far I have found out that Van Schendel stayed in Rapallo, on the Italian Riviera in 1923⁴⁰, and that Craig had his school there from 1917 until 1928, and later in 1933 returned to stay until 1935. The school was located in *Villa Raggio* next to Max Beerbohm's *Villino Chiari*. These two villas were referred to in *Gordon Craig: The Story of his Life* as follows,

Ours [meaning the two villas] were no longer a couple of lonely villas on the Riviera. They became more like a couple of well-known cafés on the Paris boulevards where artists and intellectuals dropped in (307).

Rapallo was perhaps not such a big town, so it is most likely

³⁸ Edward Craig, *Gordon Craig: The Story of his Life* (London: Victor Gollancz LTD, 1968) 227.

³⁹ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 85.

⁴⁰ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 99; Jan van Nijlen, "Herinneringen aan Arthur van Schendel" in *Beschouwingen over Arthur van Schendel* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff Nederland BV, 1976) 51.

that people would know each other; and especially Craig's school would have drawn attention from a person like Van Schendel. Besides, in the *LM* I read a letter from Arthur van Schendel to Jan Greshoff sent from Rapallo on 1 June 1923. In it he wrote that Gordon Craig lived there in the neighbourhood.⁴¹ Craig sent an undated picture postcard, featuring *le Masque*, to Arthur van Schendel with this mysterious message,

I did expect that my hope would have been realized - that is why I made my hope express itself - etc.⁴²

After this digression I would like to continue with my discussion of *Drogon*. It set the trend for Van Schendel's whole oeuvre, that is: "Precisely, not to mention things; this is highly significant".⁴³ Since the novel is suggestive, symbolic, one has to read behind the lines for clues, for only then is it possible to unravel certain aspects of the story. In this respect one of Van Schendel's biographers remarked,

How did it come about that this poet - for Van Schendel has remained a poet all his life - should write a story that deviated so much from the contemporary prose?
(my interpretation and translation).⁴⁴

It will be discussed further on whether or not the novelist fitted in the world of the 'Tachtigers', the name for the school of Dutch writers towards the turn of the century. *Drogon* was well received in many of the leading Dutch literary journals and Van Schendel was given praise in reviews by esta-

⁴¹ File S00312 B.1 *LM*.

⁴² File AVS/2.a.2(C) *LM*.

⁴³ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 54.

⁴⁴ G.H. 's-Gravesande, *Arthur van Schendel: zijn Leven en zijn Werk*, 9.

blished poets and prose writers. Not everyone was positive about the novel, which is not to be wondered at. One of the critics, Alphons Diepenbrock, a man of letters and composer, wrote a remarkable letter to Van Schendel in which he stated,

So I meant with that sentence that your work expressed the truth, that the presence of an idea, in other words of an intellectual or moral tendency, places a literary work instead of on a lower, as one thought in the past and still thinks at present, on a higher level; that in this way such a work in which besides the impression (the sensitive) the element of ideas (thoughts) occupies a place, is of a higher quality than one in which the former is exclusively present.

(my interpretation and translation).⁴⁵

An English reviewer, H.S.M. van Wickevoort-Crommelin (see Introduction), also noticed the publication of *Drogon* and his remarks are exactly in compliance with Diepenbrock's. One of the critics, Lodewijk van Deyssel, pointed out that the dialogue in *Drogon* was rather bad and Van Schendel agreed. In Vergeer's view Van Schendel never mastered dialogue, and he maintained,

Nowhere in Van Schendel's work does a conversation appear, dialogue is out of the question, and the only play he wrote must be regarded - especially on this account - not to be successful.

(my interpretation and translation).⁴⁶

And also further on in the text, "I do not think we should regret it" (my interpretation and translation), by which he meant that the play had not been staged. I disagree with this opinion, because I think that the tragedy *Pandorra* is a good play, which is also confirmed by other critics. That it had

⁴⁵ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 27.

⁴⁶ *Arthur van Schendel*, 54. See another view in the Conclusion.

never been staged is due to the fact that the theatre company went bankrupt. Incidentally, the playbill had already been designed by a friend of Van Schendel's, Jan Toorop, a well-known painter.⁴⁷

Towards the end of November 1896 Van Schendel left for England to become, as has already been mentioned, a schoolmaster in Tuxford. Van Schendel wrote his experiences down in the poem "Tuxford"⁴⁸ and an essay *The Grammar School*⁴⁹. Besides, he wrote to prominent men of letters, viz. Willem Kloos, Lodewijk van Duyssel and Frederik van Eeden, requesting them to publish his work in the literary journal *De Nieuwe Gids*. His experiences in Tuxford boil down to what follows. Van Schendel was employed as foreign master at the *Grammar School*, a boarding school where he had to teach not only French, as it turned out immediately after arrival, but also Latin, mathematics, and knowledge of the Bible. The headmaster Mr D., as he is referred to by Van Schendel in his essay, always in gown and cap, was never seen in the school which consisted of one classroom only. There were approximately twenty-five pupils, of which the youngest was six and the eldest fourteen years old. Van Schendel and Mr Frank, the son of the headmaster, were the only teachers. Among the boarders was a French boy, called Edouard. When, on his arrival, Van Schendel addressed the boy in French, the latter flushed with happiness and the

⁴⁷ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel en zijn Vrienden*, 21.

⁴⁸ *Herdenkingen*, VW vol. 8: 375-376.

⁴⁹ *Verspreide Publikaties* (Scattered Publications), VW vol. 8: 446-450.

other boys looked amazed and gained a high opinion of their foreign master.⁵⁰

The Arabist Rens Zomerdijk, a Dutchman and friend of Charles Vergeers's, wrote a letter to me in which he mentioned his visit to Tuxford.⁵¹ In 1981 he and his English wife Elizabeth Harding paid a visit to the school to look for traces of Van Schendel's stay there. The outside of the building had not changed much, but it had since become a public library. After some enquiries they were directed to an old lady who lived in the house of the former headmaster. She did not remember Van Schendel - he had been there for barely a year - but she told her visitors that, for quite some time, the family had been in touch with a certain Edouard, a Frenchman. This proved to be the same French boy *Edouard* who features in the essay, *The Grammar School*, for in the *LM* I read two letters - in French - from Edouard Louvel to Van Schendel, one dated 17th June 1897 and the other 25th June 1897, in which he discussed the new foreign master, who had replaced Van Schendel.⁵² Further examination in the regional archives in Nottingham by Rens Zomerdijk and Elizabeth Harding did not yield the information they hoped for, i.e. a record that Van Schendel had indeed been foreign master of the *Grammar School* in Tuxford. In his essay, *The Grammar School* Van Schendel said,

⁵⁰ *Verspreide Publicaties*: 446-450. French was taught in the highest forms of the primary school (*Jongeheerenschool*) and also at the Academy of Drama.

⁵¹ This Letter, dated 8th May 1996, was sent from Warmenhuizen, The Netherlands.

⁵² File AVS/2.b.7 (L) *LM*.

"I still have pictures from that time".⁵³ Unfortunately I have not found them in the files in the *LM*.

In this essay Van Schendel told how difficult it was to teach other subjects than he had visualized. He had been engaged to teach French only, but Latin, and especially mathematics with the unfamiliar metric system, demanded self-study until late at night under a faint light and with an empty stove. However, he surmounted the difficulties, because he had learned to acquire knowledge through self-study and was able to pass this knowledge on to his pupils. He wondered towards the end of his essay how many farmers there would be in the shire who had learnt their three r's and additional knowledge at the Grammar School in Tuxford.

The poem in commemoration of the time Van Schendel spent in Tuxford as a foreign master runs as follows,

"Tuxford"

I arrived there on a dark autumn evening,
Just as one reads in a book by Dickens,
At an old-fashioned inn near the harbour
With seamen quietly behind their scotch or ale
In the gaslight of the bar, the smell of roasting,
Of coal in the hearth and of tobacco,
An old drudge who showed me the room.
I had a bag and heavy luggage,
A big sailor's chest of camphor-wood
With all my books filled chockablock,
And further, not to be hampered by possessions
I had put on a new suit and new boots;
One ounce of 'kanaster'⁵⁴ and a stone pipe.
More did I not need, for there I would get board and lodging.

The train ran in the morning through a country
Still wet from rain, sunlit,

⁵³ *Verspreide Publicaties*, 450.

⁵⁴ A kind of tobacco.

Windblown trees in the middle of the fields,
The yellow leaves glistening along the roads,
Villages with grey towers, empty and quiet,
A station between bare blackthorn hedges,
This was the place where I came as a master.
The school showed on its stone a date
Which inspired awe because of its age,
Diagonally across I saw a church with truncated tower.
A church, a school, that was the whole village,
An inn at the crossing of two roads,
And also a shop, and scattered here and there
The low little houses where nobody was seen.

The headmaster in his black gown
Learned college cap and grey beard,
Walking like a stately ghost through the corridors,
Inspired the boys with silent awe.
With finger on the lips and only whispers
The eyes glancing panicky to the ceiling,
As if a ghost hid itself there near the dark beams.
The wretched children were sitting lean with hunger,
Patiently waiting for their piece of bread
And mostly silent behind their empty dishes,
Which remained empty, for a miracle in the form
Of another piece of bread would never occur.
But in the evenings they knew how to react to cold;
It was a smart pupil who stole away with coal,
Whereas I was sitting near a gas flame and empty stove.

On Tuesdays the lady from the shop would come
And in the dining-room play the piano for the dance,
The weekly merriment of the villagers,
Washed with soap, the hair neatly combed,
Only just from work, mud still clinging to their boots.
I learnt from a little child who took me by the hand
To tread the Scottish dance at a trotting pace.

And Christmas came with ringing bells
And snow on the plains of the land,
On the white morning and again at quiet sunset
The tower bells made a cheerful feast
Of tones high and low,
A rosy light shone through the coloured window
Of the church where voices were singing hymns.
I saw in winter light the leafless oak stems
Stately covered in white,
The children dragging green mistletoe
While shouting in the snow with great expectation,
The woods resounding with their young voices.
I saw here once again the spirit of Dickens's time
Revived in the real holidays.
And the field in the first days of April
Stuck clearly in my mind.
Joy played there in spring hue
On the new grass with primula,
The boys and girls coming forth

With hands full of violets and that laugh
Of lovely simplicity I never forgot.

14 September 1944
(my interpretation and translation).⁵⁵

Not only a poem and an essay devoted to Tuxford have survived, but also the three letters, mentioned before, and letters to the editors of *De Nieuwe Gids*. Moreover, Van Schendel's conversation about the *Grammar School* in Tuxford with his friend Jan van Nijlen is recorded in "Herinneringen over Arthur van Schendel"⁵⁶ These constitute sufficient proof that the foreign master Arthur van Schendel had indeed spent a year in Tuxford.

In *Arthur van Schendel* Vergeer reproduced a picture of Van Schendel and two girls, Truus Coorengel and her sister Dien, taken in Amsterdam in about 1896. Since the trees are still covered with leaves, it must have been taken in late summer or early autumn 1896, before Van Schendel left for Tuxford. This proves that Van Schendel had renewed his friendship with Truus. Vergeer discovered particulars in the correspondence of Willem Kloos, who often visited the Coorengels, and later married Dien. It appears that in 1899 Van Schendel and Truus Coorengel were engaged. She was in England with Van Schendel in October 1901.⁵⁷ The engagement apparently lasted a couple of years and was broken off in March/April 1902. In this connection Vergeer remarked: "Thus the name Truus Coor-

⁵⁵ VW vol. 8: 375-376.

⁵⁶ In *Beschouwingen over Arthur van Schendel* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff Nederland, 1976): 52-53.

⁵⁷ Charles Vergeer heard from her family that she had sent a greetings telegram from England in October 1901.

engel is connected to a suppressed catastrophe."⁵⁸ Why the engagement was broken off is not known. It has been mentioned that in 1901 Van Schendel had written one poem and two essays in English, which remained unpublished; they seem to refer to Truus Coorengel. The poem is called "Silence" and the essays are entitled, "To the Glory of Two Beautifull [sic] Eyes"⁵⁹, and "Land Ahead!". Van Schendel added to the latter in later years these lines,

Written on a May morning long ago, after I had been
dreaming and found that the shadows of long despair had
passed away.⁶⁰

After a year in Tuxford the foreign teacher went to teach in Clapham from 1897-1898, which he commemorated in the poem "London" written in September 1944. The lines bearing on this time run as follows,

The task I had been charged with in Clapham
Was severe and hard in the old-fashioned way.
From early morning, gas-flame lit, till the dark night
With bundles of exercise books by the poor light.
We masters had but a narrow room
A small table and an empty stove,
We then whistled a tune, cold, half frozen.

September 1944
(my interpretation and translation).⁶¹

There exists a picture of Van Schendel as a schoolmaster in Clapham, London, taken in 1898 (File AVS LM).

The next year Van Schendel went to another London suburb, namely Wimbledon, which is referred to in the same poem,

⁵⁸ *Arthur van Schendel*: 159-160.

⁵⁹ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 161; files AVS/1.b.9 and AVS/1.b.7 LM.

⁶⁰ File AVS/1.b.14 LM; G.H. 's-Gravesande, 22.

⁶¹ VW vol. 8, 378.

In Wimbledon I performed that task
From day to day with boys small and innocent,
In the evenings I sat between cold walls
Alone with books at a schoolboy's desk.

September 1944

(my interpretation and translation).⁶²

This post too was not prolonged, for after one year Van Schendel moved to Stratford-upon-Avon, where he studied English. In 1900 he passed his English examination in The Netherlands, which qualified him to teach English. Then he became schoolmaster at the former *Grove House School*, Green Hill Street in Stratford-upon-Avon, from 1900 until 1901. Pictures of this period still exist (File AVS LM): there is one of Van Schendel in an English chequered cap taken in Clapham in 1899, and two taken round that same year showing Bernard Sleigh, who was to design the illustrations for Van Schendel's novel, *Een Zwerver Verliefd*, his then wife Stella B. Sleigh, and Van Schendel at the horse-races.⁶³ During this time, from September until December 1900, after having given lessons the whole day, he began to translate *Minnebrieven van een Portugese Non, naar Mariana Alcoforado*⁶⁴ (Love-letters from a Portuguese Nun, by Mariana Alcoforado) from the Portuguese into Dutch. In the collection *Herdenkingen Stratford-on-Avon* is memorialized in the following poem.

"Stratford-on-Avon"

When I hear Stratford I think of apples

⁶² VW vol. 8, 379.

⁶³ Both the picture taken in Clapham and those in Stratford-upon-Avon are mentioned in Charles Vergeer, *Gewezen en Gemaskerd: Over de Jonge Arthur van Schendel*, 81.

⁶⁴ 1904. VW vol. 1: 81-110.

Hanging there on the bank of the river
 And in October, ripe and red, fallen down
 Floating along in the shadow of the curve,
 A profusion of fruit, in short summer
 Of mildness born and soon wasted.
 Of foliage on the road along cool slopes
 Where bees, heavy in black and yellow velvet,
 Would drink blissfully from the wild thyme.
 Of fields silvery under hawthorn trees
 Where silhouettes of leaves hid in the dew,
 A pastoral scene by moonshine.

The little town lived modestly through the seasons
 In quiet days with common tasks,
 Regulated on from the day of pious rest.
 The clouds paraded gracefully where the Avon lay,
 Mirroring church and tower, slowly moving
 Along elms clad in their decoratively curling green.
 In the lane, close to a little house with a thatched
 roof,
 I heard in the gloaming a thrush,
 Perched there, with new song.
 In the summer dusk, in the rain, I heard
 The curfew with the old tone
 Already heard for ages in these houses.
 The candlelight in the church shone through the windows,
 The last psalm drifted away on the tones of the organ
 And on a tombstone fell a last gleam.
 At the autumn fair, lit by torches, the country people
 Stood around an ox cooked on the spit,
 Surprised, laughing, the fathers and the sons.
 But in April joy was heard high and new,
 Glowing faces, flags in the wind,
 Ode and prayer of thanksgiving in honour of the Poet.

I, a son born in a far country,
 Have just like anyone else done my daily work here,
 I have loved this country and I have sung
 And - filled with grace - gazed at a wonder.

September 1944

(my interpretation and translation).⁶⁵

In *Shakespeare's Lives* Samuel Schoenbaum stated in relation to Thomas Carlyle,

Thus did the bardolatry first naively celebrated at the Shakespeare Jubilee of 1769 achieve its imaginative apotheosis in the rhapsody of a Victorian romantic.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ VW vol. 8: 380-381.

⁶⁶ (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford UP, 1970, 2nd ed. 1991). Note on Carlyle: Thomas Carlyle, "The Hero as Poet", *On Heroes, Hero-worship and the Heroic in History* (1841; London: Chapman and Hall, 1901) 178.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Van Schendel felt completely at home in the 'bardolatry' celebrated at the annual Stratford Jubilee. I do not think that Van Schendel was a (late) Victorian romantic (see the discussion in 1.3 about the supposition that he belonged to the neo-romantics). But in my view he fitted, to a certain extent, in the literary climate of the Victorians, which may be derived from a review in the *TLS* of 21st October 1939 in which he is compared to Hardy and also in a review in the *TLS* of 24th February 1940 (p. xiv).

After this digression I resume the topic of the Stratford Jubilee, nowadays called The Shakespeare Birthday Celebration, which has been organized by the *Shakespeare Club* since 1824.

The Royal Shakespeare Club, as it was initially called, was officially founded in 1824, although there is evidence of informal activities prior to this date. Later on, from 1874 onwards, this society became known as *The Shakespeare Club*.⁶⁷

In 1908, *The Shakespeare Club* sent a circular letter to all the ambassadors and representatives of foreign countries in London requesting them to send a flag of their countries to the annual celebrations of Shakespeare's birthday. Thus they could show how highly their countries regarded Shakespeare, the poet and dramatist. This letter was signed by Mr R. Latimer Greene. Many countries responded, but, to Van Schendel's great regret, The Netherlands failed to do so. He

⁶⁷ See records at the Records Office of The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

happened to be in Stratford-upon-Avon for a thorough study of Shakespeare's life and works at that time. In a conversation with the mayor, John A. Priest, he apologized for the fact that his country had not sent a flag, and suggested that something might have happened to the circular letter.⁶⁸ Be that as it may, this induced Van Schendel, when he was back home in Ede, to write a letter to the Dutch Minister of Education, Art, Learning and Sciences, dated 27th December 1909. In this letter he mentioned the circular letter sent by *The Shakespeare Club*, the conversation he had had with the mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon when he realized that his country had not granted the request, and urged the Minister to see to it that the Dutch tricolour would represent The Netherlands on the first occasion in April 1910. In this request Van Schendel referred to himself as an admirer of Shakespeare and a true Dutchman.⁶⁹ In the 1910 files of the *Shakespeare Club* at the Records Office in Stratford-upon-Avon I found an entry stating, "The Netherlands: flag received March 1910." The secretary Mr R. Latimer Greene wrote two letters to Arthur van Schendel; in the first letter dated 18th February 1910 he told him that they had not received the flag as yet and in the second of 27th March he acknowledged the arrival of the flag.⁷⁰

Van Schendel had been a member of *The Shakespeare Club*,

⁶⁸ Van Schendel and John Priest had known each other since 1900 when the latter was Headmaster of *The Grove House School* and Van Schendel foreign teacher. See letters in the *LM*.

⁶⁹ A copy of this letter was sent to me by Charles Vergeer.

⁷⁰ File AVS/2.a.2(G)(2) *LM*.

but I found no evidence of it in the relevant archives at the Records Office. However, Rens Zomerdijs sent me a letter which had belonged to Van Schendel. It is an invitation from *The Shakespeare Club*, dated 11th October 1915, for the next monthly meeting and as a reminder that the Subscription, 5/- for 1915, was due and should be paid to etc. The letter had been addressed to: "Mr Van Schendel, Ede, Holland", and had been opened by Censor 237 (war-time). On the back of the envelope is a postmark, Ede, 18.x15.3-4N. This is the evidence that Van Schendel had indeed been a member of *The Shakespeare Club*.

Since there are no records of *The Shakespeare Club* for the year 1915, Dr Robert Bearman, Archivist of The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, was much surprised to see this envelope and the invitation and copies of them have been entered into the empty file.

After this intermezzo of inferences of 'bardolatory' the story will be resumed. Van Schendel moved from Stratford-upon-Avon to Haarlem to become a teacher of English at the private *Instituut Prins*; this lasted from 1901 till 1902. Having followed the story of Van Schendel's life so far, it is evident that he was indeed a chip off the old block, as far as restlessness is concerned. As stated above his father as a KNIL officer had to move from place to place, and the story of the frequent removals of his mother - if one could apply this expression to a mother as well - is sufficiently known.

It has already been mentioned that the engagement to Truus Coorengel was broken off in February/March 1902. In Au-

gust of that same year Van Schendel again went to England, this time to marry Bertha Zimmerman and to legitimize her daughter Hubertina. She was an unwed mother, who had fled to England to evade the disgrace at home. Even Van Schendel's most intimate friends were overwhelmed with amazement on hearing about this marriage. Relatives of the family Coorengel told Vergeer that the father of the child was a married man.⁷¹

Bertha Zimmerman lived with her daughter in Haarlem when Van Schendel was a teacher at the *Instituut Prins*, but when and where they met remains undisclosed. In the piece of English prose, "To the Glory of Two Beautifull [sic.] Eyes", there are some enigmatic lines which read as follows,

For the first time we are aware of the transitoriness of our affections. And we laugh ourselves, and at ourselves - which is a sad thing indeed!⁷²

One wonders, had his affections changed when he met Bertha Zimmerman? Anyway, it was a happy marriage and since his wife was well-to-do, Van Schendel could devote himself for the first time in his life to writing. In 1902 they went to live in Pwllheli in Wales. In *Fratilamur* Van Schendel referred to this time with these lines,

Years passed, until in a summer I was blessed with love. Not until I was led into this new world the mists fell apart between me calling him and he who was looking for me.

(VW vol. 3, 353; my interpretation and translation).

⁷¹ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 89; Charles Vergeer, *Gewezen en Gemaskerd: Over de Jonge Arthur van Schendel*, 13 & 17.

⁷² AVS/1.b.7 LM.

In my view this 'he' to which Van Schendel referred is his muse. To prove this I have to include more lines of this remarkable event.⁷³

I lived near the sea opposite a sturdy rock right in front of me on the coast. To the west there was an island. When the sky was red I heard him across the quiet sea behind that island. He sang as someone having been deserted or a shipwrecked person who believed that no mortal ear could hear him and that he was never to be silent any more. He knew that there was one who listened. I heard him call fine names and at every name I saw whom he called. They were people who in their faces had something of heaven, of the sea, and of the earth, creatures who did not exist as yet [*Italics are mine*].

Although the play with literature did not fascinate me, I went to sit behind a sheet of paper one evening when I had listened. I did not know what I would write, for except my blessing, of which I do not need to speak, I had nothing to say. I went to sit down and chose a pen because I obeyed.

Then I recognized that voice, close by now, the same voice I had heard in my childhood, and saw his eyes I had met so often right before me. His voice and his eyes were his whole presence. Every word I wrote down had his voice, his look, the cry of a bird, the breaking of a wave, the call of a lonesome person, the tone of a harp. It was the voice of a sailor who reacts to the song of the fairy Morgane, yes especially this, the deep, clear and tender voice of a seaman who peers with steadfast eyes at sunrise.

When I reread the words I discovered that they did not make any sense and I tore up the paper. He who had spoken then remained.

I constantly heard him and listened to him; he spoke through every word I wrote. When I realized this, I did not tear up.

Other people do know him as well, for I often hear him in a book or a letter. With some he speaks clearly or loudly, with others softly and from far away, but nobody says something I can understand or it is with his rhythm and his voice.

(VW vol. 3: 353-354; my interpretation and translation).

It is, in my view, the growing awareness of someone who feels that he has to write the lines, ideas, stories, dictated by

⁷³ In *Gewezen en Gemaskerd: over de Jonge Arthur van Schendel* Vergeer mentioned a voice which urged Van Schendel to write *Ben Zwerver Verliefd* (A Wanderer in Love) 81.

the muse. Compare this for instance with Sir Philip Sidney's poem "Loving in Truth", where his muse says, "Fool, look in thy heart and write".⁷⁴ In the case of Van Schendel it is partly his muse and partly his imagination. The strange thing is, that, although it has been taken for granted that the muse of an artist is female, Van Schendel's muse appears to be male. How to fit then, in this connection, the female figure holding up a banner with Van Schendel's name in the *ex libris*? Be that as it may, I cannot avoid the impression that it is a matter of analogy, notably 'the muse urging to write'. Van Schendel knew about Sidney's poem, for in a discussion about the wave of composing sonnets in England in the sixteenth century, he remarked in his biography, *Shakespeare*, "Sidney's 'Stella' appeared"⁷⁵. Van Schendel's muse urged him to write his next novel. In a letter to G.H. 's-Gravesande, dated 21st April 1942, Van Schendel wrote about 'that voice' which he called "a kind of double ego from another world".⁷⁶ He wrote *Een Zwerver Verliefd* (A Wanderer in Love) in London in 1903; it was published in 1904 and was reprinted time and again. It is interesting to hear what Elizabeth Harding had to say about the muse in Van Schendel's life in her undated letter to Charles Vergeer,

Eventually he finds his voice (as a writer) and the fact that he describes him as a creature who is separated from

⁷⁴ In *Silver Poets of the Sixteenth Century*. Ed. Gerald Bullett. Sir Philip Sidney, *Astrophel and Stella*, Sonnet I (London, etc.: Everyman's Library repr. 1982) 173.

⁷⁵ VW vol. 1, 337.

⁷⁶ File S00312 B.1 LM.

his own consciousness is not uncommon. See for instance Coleridge, or Yeats. The 'breath of God' (inspiration) idea was quite 'normal' among romantic poets.
(my interpretation and translation).⁷⁷

In the summer of 1903 a daughter, called Suzanna, was born to Van Schendel and Bertha. Van Schendel's happiness was not to last long, however, for in the following summer (1904) it appeared that Bertha had contracted tuberculosis. They went to Dangaard in Denmark to see doctor Kjer Petersen, who treated Bertha in his hospital. Towards the end of that year little Suzanna died and in spring Bertha had improved somewhat, so that they could return to Ede in Holland, where she died on 15th May 1905. In barely three years this happy marriage had come to an end. A few lines in the poem "London" commemorate this short period.

After years of seeking I found here
The home of eventual happiness
Granted only for years of remembrance
Like the dream dissolved by the day.
September 1944
(my interpretation and translation).⁷⁸

Again as happened previously when sorrow and unhappiness enter Van Schendel's life, he remained silent. Writing, which was an innate part of his being, was the medium par excellence to recollect his shattered life and to go through the period of mourning. Such a time appears to be different for each person. One rereads the letters of the beloved, another tries to make a painting of the deceased or to resume his or her normal

⁷⁷ File AVS/2.b.3(5) LM. I wonder, does Elizabeth Harding think that Van Schendel belongs to the romantic poets with these lines? Or do they only convey his recognizably romantic ideas?

⁷⁸ VW vol. 8, 379. Charles Vergeer directed my attention to these lines in *Arthur van Schendel*, 90.

way of life, be it with difficulty. And this was what Van Schendel did, which apparently left him a man resigned to his loss. He then lived in Doorn and the novel he wrote was a sequel to *Een Zwerver Verliefd*. It took him one year and a half to finish *Een Zwerver Verdwaald* (A Wanderer Lost). But before he started to write in November 1905, he went to Italy in October. Like its counterpart this novel was much in demand and saw consequently several reprints. Still in his last unfinished novel one comes across the following lines,

I have, my boy, at a very young age lost my beloved wife and our only new-born baby. The sorrow that loss caused, God knows, I thought I would never overcome it and, I can acknowledge it to you, even now, at my advanced years, I sometimes feel the pangs of sorrow here, like an old disease which never completely heals.

(my interpretation and translation).⁷⁹

After having finished his novel in March 1907, he first travelled to London, together with his daughter Bartje (Hubertina), then he again went to Italy and stayed there for a month on his own. From Italy he sent picture postcards to Bartje.

It was in Amsterdam at the house of Jopie Breemer, whose door was always open to his friends, architects, journalists, actors, writers and their wives and girl friends, that Van Schendel met Annie de Boers. They got married in 1908 and went to live in Ede where two children were soon born, a daughter Corinna (Kennie) in 1909 and a son Arthur (Sjeu) in 1910. Shortly after the publication of *De Schoone Jacht, Stories*⁸⁰ he left for Stratford-upon-Avon to immerse himself completely

⁷⁹ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 215.

⁸⁰ 1908. In *VW* vol. 1: 279-307.

in the spirit of Shakespeare. Details about the exact dates are lacking, at least it is unknown to me; it is even uncertain whether his wife Annie accompanied her husband. When he returned home, Van Schendel wrote his biography of Shakespeare in six weeks, which was quite uncommon. It was published in 1910 and years later, to be precise in 1922, he revised this biography - which some call *vie romancée* - in so far that he added a discussion of five of Shakespeare's plays. Immediately after *Shakespeare* he began to write *Een Berg van Dromen*⁸¹ (A Mountain of Dreams), the story of a boy Reinbern, a girl Corinna and a man Peter, who set out on a journey. L. Turksma commented on this novel as follows,

The *Mountain of Dreams*, in which every personage is at the same time a picture of something abstract, and the quest itself constitute the allegorical search for happiness, but also the silence about the essential events - as it has been exercised since *Drogon* - whereby only symbolic 'Begleitungsumstände' refer to the facts, is prominent present.

(my interpretation and translation).⁸²

To phrase it differently: the whole quest is a symbolic journey for happiness and consequently the personages have a symbolic meaning as well.

Van Schendel began to translate this novel into English, but the publisher did not approve of it and therefore the translation of *De Berg van Dromen* into English did not materialize. A German translation, however, did appear in 1927, but Van Schendel was not the translator. Anyway, he translated

⁸¹ 1913. In *VW* vol. 1: 417-578.

⁸² *Het Goede Leven: Het Werk van Arthur van Schendel* (The Good Life: The Work of Arthur van Schendel) (Amersfoort, Leuven: Acco, 1987) 88.

the short story *Angiolini en de Lente* (Angiolini and Spring) into English.⁸³

With his friend Aart van der Leeuw he went on a walking tour to the Schwarzwald in 1909 and he travelled to Spain with among others Kees Wiessing in 1913. For study purposes in connection with his his forthcoming book *De Mens van Nazareth*⁸⁴ Van Schendel visited Palestine in 1914. From then on almost every other year saw the publication of a novel, a collection of short stories or fiction. Scarcely had he finished one novel, than the next one introduced itself, almost in full shape. His mind brimmed over with tales from his imagination. Vergeer elaborated on these particulars as follows,

Van Schendel could write everywhere if he had his little pencil, a notebook and a pipe on him; he carried these three items always with him. He produced entities and what remained a fragment was thrown away. And what he wrote was without interruption and without many corrections, written down in one stretch. When he looked up it was not to see around him or to observe something more carefully, but it was to look in himself. He did not look, he gazed.

(my interpretation and translation).⁸⁵

One of these lines reminds me of Jonson, who wrote in his *Discoveries. De Shakespeare Nostrati Augustus in Haterium* what the players had said about Shakespeare, "In his writing (whatsoever he penned), he never blotted out a line."⁸⁶

Van Schendel's only play, *Pandorra*, published, as said

⁸³ 1923. In *VW* vol. 2: 531-545.

⁸⁴ 1916. In *VW* vol. 1: 489-774.

⁸⁵ *Arthur van Schendel*, 78.

⁸⁶ *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* 1941 (London, New York, etc: Oxford UP, 2nd ed. repr. 1962) 280.1.

before, in 1919 was set in the Renaissance. It betrayed a good knowledge of the Italian Renaissance and Van Schendel became so much interested in Italian literature that, in a letter to his friend Aart van der Leeuw in 1922, he told him how busy he was reading Italian literature of the last twenty years, and he mentioned how many interesting books he had discovered.⁸⁷ It must be emphasized that for his pleasure Van Schendel read books on English history (T.B. Macaulay) and the history of the Renaissance to mention some, apart from the travel books that had always fascinated him. And besides, he easily mastered foreign languages. One example, which has already been mentioned, is the fact that, when he arrived to take up the post as a foreign master in Tuxford, he addressed Edouard Louvel in French. He mastered Latin, spoke German and Italian, and was also proficient in Portuguese, for, as has been previously mentioned, he translated *Minnebrieven van een Portugese Non*.

Before he began to write he thoroughly studied his subject (see for instance his studies on Shakespeare, his visits to Stratford-upon-Avon, and his visit to Palestine to immerse himself in the Jewish atmosphere before he wrote *De Mens van Nazareth* [1916]). Afterwards the sentences tumbled out of his brain.

Apart from a biography of Shakespeare, Van Schendel wrote a biography of Verlaine (1927), the French symbolist poet whom

⁸⁷ File S00312 B.1 LM.

he admired, and who was also fascinated by Shakespeare's plays, and had also been a foreign master in England, in a village in Lancashire. In his younger years Verlaine was very popular in The Netherlands, so much so that many young men knew his poems by heart. In 1892 he was invited by Dutch literati to give a series of lectures in The Hague and Amsterdam. This fifteen-day visit to The Netherlands was always remembered by Verlaine with much pleasure. Incidentally Van Schendel had no money for a train ticket at that time, so he could not attend the lectures.⁸⁸

However imaginative Van Schendel was, some of his real experiences in life and the towns where he had lived crop up in his novels, for instance in *Een Hollands Drama*. In my view it is significant that the English translation of this novel bears the name, *The House in Haarlem*. Amsterdam also features in his novels, for example in *De Rijke Man*⁸⁹ (The Rich Man), *Voorbijgaande Schaduwen*⁹⁰ (Passing Shadows), and *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw*⁹¹ (Mr and Mrs Oberon).

Vergeer observed that there is a distinct difference between the description of Italy in *Een Zwerver Verliefd* in 1904 and its sequel *Een Zwerver Verdwaald* in 1907. The former relates the story of Tamalone, the wanderer, in a shadowy Italy, whereas in the latter a clear description is given of Tama-

⁸⁸ Charles Vergeer in "Portfolio "Arthur van Schende"". *Maatstaf* 24 (Nov. 1976): 24-33.

⁸⁹ 1936. In *VW* vol. 5: 163-312.

⁹⁰ 1948. In *VW* vol. 8: 7-164.

⁹¹ 1940. In *VW* vol. 6: 283-436.

lone's walk through Venice. Earlier in this thesis it was stated that Van Schendel visited Italy in October 1905 for the first time. This visit apparently caused the differences pointed out by Vergeer.

Despite the fact that almost every other year Van Schendel published a novel or a collection of short stories, it remained difficult for him to support a family. At first he could live on Bertha's inheritance, but although the novels were later on in great demand - as can be judged from the number of reprints and translations⁹² - the family's way of life had been a modest one. They moved to Italy because of Annie's asthma. From 1923 till 1939 Van Schendel never travelled from Italy or Paris to Amsterdam without staying in Brussels for a couple of days to meet in particular his friend, the poet Jan van Nijlen.⁹³ From 1936 the Van Schendels lived in Sestri Levante, a fishing village in Italy.

Although the impression has been aroused - on account of the particulars of Van Schendel's life and works - that he was not interested in what happened around him in the social and political fields, the opposite is certainly true. As a young man he was interested in the socialist movement, but he never engaged himself to become a member of any party. When they lived in Florence and witnessed the Fascist rebellion preceding Mus-

⁹² *Het Fregatschip Johanna Maria* 1930 (The Frigate Johanna Maria, *The JM* as it was called [1935]) had been translated into seven different languages.

⁹³ Jan van Nijlen, "Herinneringen aan Arthur van Schendel" in *Beschouwingen over Arthur van Schendel* (Meulenhoff Nederland, 1976): 51-61.

solini's coup, Van Schendel clearly understood what Fascism meant. He was even more critical of Nazism, saw distinctly that the treaty of Munich in 1938 was a lie, a betrayal, and he knew that a war was imminent.⁹⁴ It is remarkable that a poet and novelist, who had written, among other things, such poetic novels as *Een Zwerver Verliefd* en *Een Zwerver Verdwaald*, should penetrate and detect with such sharpness the Nazi 'ideology'. According to Vergeer he had discontinued the publication of his work in Germany since 1933, and did not wish to travel through that country any more. It stands to reason that, during the German occupation of The Netherlands he refused to become a member of the *Kultuurkamer* (the Chamber of Culture), because it was supervised by the Germans.

Jan Greshoff reviewed *De Grauwe Vogels*⁹⁵ (*Grey Birds*)⁹⁶ in the literary section of the newspaper, the *NRC* of 10th December 1937, and he characterized Van Schendel in the following way,

As far as I know one has never as yet directed the attention to the insurgency which lies deeply hidden in Van Schendel's work. One lets oneself be carried away too easily by his lyrical chronicle tone, one is captivated too much by the dramatic tensions which come to an outburst in his personal sphere, how he hates, more than any of his contemporaries the lie of the doctrine, the traditional ways of life, and the selfish interest of the powerful.

(my interpretation and translation).⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 114.

⁹⁵ 1937. In *VW* Vol. 5: 313-440.

⁹⁶ Translated by M.S. Stephens (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd, 1939).

⁹⁷ Charles Vergeer, "Van Schendel's Noodlot" in *Maatstaf* 24 (Nov. 1976) 37.

To return to 'the lie of the doctrine', Annie van Schendel's family was of Jewish origin, so the Van Schendels were very much alert, more than the man in the street, to the 'dogmas' propagated by the German regime. A year after Munich war broke out (with England; Holland was neutral) and on 1st September 1939 Van Schendel, his wife, and their daughter were on their way to Holland. It took them six weeks to travel via England and Flushing to Amsterdam. Here Van Schendel wrote *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw*. Since the situation in the political field remained uncertain at that time, and also for finance's sake, Van Schendel and his wife returned to Italy early in 1940. But on their way to Sestri Levante they heard, in Paris, that the Germans had invaded Denmark and Norway, so they wanted to go back to The Netherlands. This, however, was forbidden by the French authorities; they had to continue their journey. That is why they stayed in Italy against their will during the five years of the war.

On account of his novel *Een Spel der Natuur*⁹⁸ (A Play of Nature) it was forbidden to print and publish Van Schendel's work in occupied Holland during The Second World War. G.H. 's-Gravesande remarked,

This book made the National Socialists furious, as a consequence of which it was forbidden to print or reprint the works of Arthur van Schendel, even to mention his name! This poetic novel with the lightness of a butterfly, read by many with a happy smile, especially in those dark days, was condemned as extreme nihilism of the mind.

⁹⁸ 1942. In *VW* vol. 7: 147-288.

(93; my interpretation and translation).⁹⁹

As regards the ban on the printing and publication of Van Schendel's work, the publisher Mr Meulenhoff, having foreseen this long before, had kept apart and stored large quantities of books. So during the whole occupation he was in a position to spread the older work of the novelist, surreptitiously, of course.¹⁰⁰ The novel *Een Spel der Natuur* was published in New York, South Africa, and the Dutch East Indies before the Japanese occupation through the efforts of Jan Greshoff.

When eventually Sestri Levante came under constant bombshelling, the Van Schendels had to evacuate - their daughter had managed to come to Italy in 1943 - to a hamlet up in the mountains which could only be reached on foot or on the back of a mule. Towards the end of April 1945, when they heard that Sestri Levante had been liberated, Van Schendel went on foot along the mountain paths. He could not wait for a mule. Exhaustion and emotions caused a brain haemorrhage which left him partly paralysed. It took a long time for him to convalesce and not until November 1945 was he allowed to travel to Amsterdam. The journey, by military car, ambulance and train lasted for twenty days. Although he was constantly ill, he worked hard on his last novel. While he was recovering, he made a bad fall and broke his leg. Two days later he contracted pneumonia. That was towards the end of May 1946 and on 11th

⁹⁹ *Liederen van een Zwerver* (MS) Den Haag (September 1948, 124 pp). File G.747 H.1 LM.

¹⁰⁰ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 114.

September of that year Van Schendel died.

1.2. THE POET/NOVELIST ARTHUR VAN SCHENDEL

Van Schendel's popularity before the War was great, thereafter it was on the wane and nowadays it is on the increase. See, for instance, the introduction by Rens Zomerdijs to Elizabeth Harding's translation of a short story by Van Schendel, called "The Moth" ("De Nachtuil" [1937]).¹⁰¹ In it he said,

He is regarded by many as one of the greatest Dutch writers of this century and has been compared in style to England's Thomas Hardy. Both show strong themes of fatalism in their work. It has only been during the last ten years that interest in Van Schendel's work has been rekindled (8).

As has been stated earlier, quite a few of his novels have been translated into various languages and one novel *De Waterman*¹⁰² (*The Waterman*)¹⁰³ was adapted for the screen by Philo Bregstein, but, although everything had been arranged, such as the location and a number of extras, the project fell through. For his novel *Het Oude Huis* (*The Old House*), which was written in 1942/1943 and published in 1945¹⁰⁴, he was awarded the *P.C. Hooft Prijs* posthumously in 1948. This award is a prestigious one in the Dutch literary world which is sometimes awarded for one outstanding piece of work and sometimes for the whole oeuvre.

¹⁰¹ In *the Paper*, Holland's independent newspaper, January 1983, No 7, 8. See also the review in the *TLS* of 21st October 1939 referred to on p. xiii of this thesis.

¹⁰² 1933. In *VW* vol. 4: 178-314.

¹⁰³ Trans. by Neline C. Clegg (Leyden: Sijthoff; London: Heineman, 1963).

¹⁰⁴ *VW* vol. 7: 473-607.

Van Schendel never cared for the honorary memberships and awards bestowed on him. He was not a vain man, far from it; he remained a good-natured, unpretentious person all his life.

Apart from the portraits, drawings and pictures by his friends and acquaintances, there is also a bust by J.G. Wertheim. It stands on a pedestal in the *Leidsebosje* in Amsterdam.¹⁰⁵ Those who walk from the *Leidse Plein* to the *Rijksmuseum*, the *Stedelijk Museum*, where Van Schendel's son had been the curator during his life, or the *Concertgebouw* will certainly not miss it.

1.3. ARTHUR VAN SCHENDEL'S PLACE IN THE DUTCH LITERATURE OF THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, prose in The Netherlands was much influenced by realism and naturalism, the latter introduced from France, and also later by impressionism. This school of writers was called the *Tachtigers*. Before the turn of the century, however, romantic characteristics again came to the fore in the works of some prose writers. To differentiate this romantic tendency from the earlier one - that is to say lyrical romanticism, e.g. Keats and Shelley - it was referred to as neo-romantic. It should be emphasized that at the turn of the century when Van Schendel made his debut with *Drogon*, three streams of style existed alongside

¹⁰⁵ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 97.

each other, viz. realism, naturalism and neo-romanticism.¹⁰⁶

Whereas in the preceding paragraph the different streams constituting the school of the *Tachtigers* have been mentioned, it is necessary to be more specific. This school was, as always in such cases, a movement of renewal; it manifested itself on cultural and political levels¹⁰⁷; and it was in fact an emancipation of the senses. Most representatives of this school had turned their back on Christianity, on account of the fact that much 'unwholesome' poetry was written by clergymen.¹⁰⁸ When *Drogon* was published in 1896, it did not have, as mentioned before, the characteristics of the *Tachtigers*. Van Schendel's debut was labelled neo-romantic by some, symbolic by others, but Van Schendel certainly did not fit in the contemporaneous school of prose writers. In fact he did not belong to any school whatever, he wrote prose in his own way, causing a breaking-point in the tradition. Charles Vergeer had this to say,

Also the debut of Van Schendel, *Drogon*, which he wrote as a nineteen-year old young man, is far from the prose of the *Tachtigers*. It stands especially under the influence of the French symbolists and notably of the work of Villiers de l'isle Adam. At the time critics already pointed to - and I think it is justifiable - the analogy between the character of *Drogon* and Hamlet.

(my interpretation and translation).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ I am indebted for this outline of the streams in Dutch literature towards the turn of the century to Henk Buurman, *Over Een Hollands Drama van Arthur van Schendel* (Amsterdam: Wetenschappelijke Uitgeverij BV, 1979) 113.

¹⁰⁷ Ton Anbeek, *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Literatuur tussen 1885-1985* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij De Arbeiderspers, 1990) 35; E.H. Kossmann, *De Lage Landen 1780-1940* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1982): 241-251.

¹⁰⁸ Ton Anbeek, 60.

¹⁰⁹ *Gewezen en Gemaskerd: over de Jonge Arthur van Schendel*, 46.

Drogon the eponymous character does not acquiesce in his sorrow, but tries silently to overcome it. This feature is according to Vergeer, not neo-romantic, but classical. He underlined his statement by quoting Jan Greshoff who in his monograph on Van Schendel maintained,

Van Schendel is an outspoken anti-impressionistic stylist. He succeeds in convincing his reading public of his will to put his language in the service of his imagination, not in the service of his eyes. One can not emphasize often enough the originality of *Drogon*.

(my interpretation and translation).¹¹⁰

This caused a reaction from Van Schendel, who hardly ever reacted to criticism. In a letter, dated 1st January 1934, he wrote: "Bravo for the lecture, you are the first who has stated that all that talk about romanticism is pure nonsense."¹¹¹

The next work *Een Zwerver Verliefd* was labelled by Anbeek as neo-romantic. The neo-romantic stream may be characterized as follows,

The use of all the texts in which the priority of the dream is defended, mainly in a setting in which space of time is kept vague, because in it one and the same spiritual leaning could be detected.

(my interpretation and translation).¹¹²

It is true that in the first period of his authorship Van Schendel's novels and stories are peopled by ageless individuals with an indistinct past, who are moving in an unspeci-

¹¹⁰ Jan Greshoff expressed his view about Van Schendel's work in *Arthur van Schendel: Aanteekeningen over "Jan Compagnie" en "De Waterman"*: 9-11.

¹¹¹ Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 42; Jan Greshoff, *Arthur van Schendel: Aanteekeningen over Jan Compagnie en De Waterman* (Rotterdam: Nijgh & Van Ditmar, 1943).

¹¹² Ton Anbeek, *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Literatuur tussen 1885-1985*, 103.

fied space (the south) and time (the Middle Ages). And therefore the label of neo-romantic attached to *Een Zwerver Verliefd* is justified, but only to a certain extent, because another feature of Van Schendel's work notably his suggestive way of writing is also part and parcel even of his early novels, together with that specific attitude of his characters 'not giving in, rather enduring it silently'. These features have not much to do with neo-romanticism.

The suggestive style or symbolism could be described as follows: the most important emotions, those on time, accident and death are not put into words, but they are implicitly present. In this respect Turksma's view has been mentioned earlier. This may be called an expansion of the foregoing. The novel *Voorbijgaande Schaduwen* displays still another feature, because there exists a clear distinction between the main personages and those who constitute their environment. The former go their way in silence, the latter are those who comment on the incidents, they constitute a so-called chorus, just as in Greek tragedy and Shakespeare's *Henry V*, where at the opening of the play the chorus enters as Prologue.¹¹³ Van Schendel's application of this so-called chorus, however, has an additional quality. His is set in opposition to the silent main characters. A few examples will serve to clarify this procedure. In *Drogon*, where the title character cannot express himself and does not know what his longings are, we already

¹¹³ Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, gen. eds. *William Shakespeare The Complete Works* (1991; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). 569.

encounter in opposition the nobles, the servants in the castle, the serfs in the little village, the nuns in the convent and the friars in the monastery, who speak freely about the events, and in particular about their apprehensions and suspicions. In *De Grauwe Vogels*, the friends constitute the chorus; they frequently call on Kaspar Valk, one of the main characters, to tell him that the adversities he and his wife Heiltje meet with are due to his unbelief, for he does not believe in God. In *Een Hollands Drama* - classified by Anbeek as classical tragedy, set in a typically Dutch nineteenth-century Calvinistic bourgeois milieu - the chorus is also represented by the neighbours with their comments on everything that goes on in the house where the Werendonks have lived for generations (55). I would digress too much if I should further explore the occurrence of these 'environmental voices'. So it suffices to state that Van Schendel made full use of them.

The *Tachtigers* were also known for their portrayal of nature. This was not the case with Van Schendel, however, for although he describes nature, for instance, in *Voorbijgaande Schaduwen* and in *De Zeven Tuinen*¹¹⁴ (The Seven Gardens), his description of colourful nature is not a description for description's sake only, which is one of the characteristics of the *Tachtigers*. His portrayal of nature is sometimes symbolic for what goes on in the minds or hearts of his characters. A striking example of this parallelism with nature can be read

¹¹⁴ 1939. VW vol. 6: 7-137.

in *Een Hollands Drama* when Floris, one of the main characters, meets Wijntje, a servant-girl, for the first time.

He stood still, he looked at the leaves that stuck out of the shining bracts, she had her mouth open in a laugh. When she asked whether he was waiting for an answer, he saw that there were already flower stems on the chestnut trees.

(VW vol. 4, 697; my interpretation and translation).

So it is not the girl who is described, but the nature around her. Through this parallelism the inner feelings, thoughts, etc. are pictured in nature.¹¹⁵ To phrase it differently: Van Schendel was a symbolist rather than a naturalist.

Another feature which was exploited by Van Schendel is collectivity. The novel *Voorbijgaande Schaduwen* is an excellent example of a panoramic work, like the collectivity of persons prominent in the works of Tolstoy, Thackeray and Galsworthy.¹¹⁶ But in *De Wereld een Dansfeest*¹¹⁷ (The World a Dancing-feast) and in some other novels this collectivity is already one of their characteristics. In this respect the story of Daniel and Marion in *De Wereld een Dansfeest* is told by nineteen different persons. Be that as it may, in addition to its collectivity *Voorbijgaande Schaduwen* also displays similar characteristics as its predecessors, viz. the suppression of important events - an alert reader will surely unearth them, though sometimes with difficulty - and the theme of fate. This will be discussed in what follows.

¹¹⁵ For this point of view I am indebted to Charles Vergeer, *Arthur van Schendel*, 87-88.

¹¹⁶ L. Turksma, *Het Goede Leven: Het Werk van Arthur van Schendel*, 100.

¹¹⁷ 1938, VW vol. 5: 623-782.

Although fate is the last item of the themes - incorporated in Van Schendel's work - to be discussed, it is certainly just as important as the other ones. It is an all-pervading theme which is inextricably related to the person Van Schendel, his background, his youth. Pulinckx's view in this respect is not only illuminating, it is actually quite simple. He maintained,

In Arthur van Schendel's work we have always seen one great ground idea: romantic longings, which flee everyday life to dwell in the land of dream and fantasy, where imagination does not know its boundaries - with at the same time as a dark undertone the grief because of the disillusionment once out of the dream, on account of which one's whole life is almost needlessly wasted.

Longings and fate are the magnetic poles, to which life is drawn, now the one, now the other domineering, but as contradictory as the north- and southpoles of the magnet, they are neither to be imagined without one another.

(my interpretation and translation).¹¹⁸

Fate which is related so inextricably to longings is actually a classical phenomenon. But before this theme is to be discussed more fully, it is necessary to first dwell on the distinct meanings of fate.

1. In Van Schendel's work the characters do not rebel against fate, they try to accept it with resignation. So here we speak of subjective suffering rather than the objective existence.
2. Fate may be seen as something that was decided ages ago, referred to by some as ineluctability, i.e. curse or doom, seen as the tools of God or fate.

¹¹⁸ Arthur van Schendel: *Zijn Werk en Beteekenis* (Diest: Pro Arte, 1944) 174.

3. Fate could also be described as caused by man's own culpability. One carries one's secrets from youth all through one's life.

Strictly speaking, however, only the second description of fate is used here; it can be subdivided as follows:

- a. the antique fate which cannot be evaded, for the Fates have spun their skeins of thread long ago (Moirai);
- b. the predestination doctrine in Christianity, notably in Calvinism, where indeed all has been ordained in advance. But because of the concealment of this decision and of grace, man is not exempt from his own responsibility.¹¹⁹

Although some of Van Schendel's novels, in particular *Een Hollands Drama* and *De Grauwe Vogels*, are strongly influenced by Calvinistic views, there are more novels in which man's destiny is fixed, but they are written without any reference to Christendom. Charles Vergeer's ideas about this aspect in Van Schendel's novels were expressed as follows,

That what is important from the past, is not something vague, but the sharp doom which has cast a spell over future life. With romanticism the past is still full of vague promises, from which everything may come forth. With Van Schendel it is almost Freudian, the unrelenting determinant of future life. It does not cost any difficulty - for this theme is too characteristic - to detect it in all his great novels, where it serves almost as a refrain. [I would rather call it a bourdon, YS].
(my interpretation and translation).¹²⁰

Now that the different streams and themes have been analyzed, one important item has to be discussed, and that is the use

¹¹⁹ For this outline I am indebted to Turksma, 112.

¹²⁰ Arthur van Schendel, 204.



of the Dutch language in Van Schendel's novels and poetry. Since the novelist stayed so long in England, it is not surprising that he should have adopted and introduced unconsciously English sentence constructions in his Dutch outpourings. Van Schendel's language in his work was the subject of a dissertation by Henricus Petrus Antonius van Eijk. His research brought to light that Van Schendel's Dutch was up to standard, apart from the Anglo-Dutch phrases here and there. This dissertation is called, *Mededelingsvormen bij Arthur van Schendel* (Forms of Communication in Arthur van Schendel's Work).¹²¹

Although it makes no sense for an English dissertation, this feature is important enough to dwell - be it briefly - upon it.

1. In English the dominant thought or idea is placed in relief, cf. "There were written words, the sadness of which struck me." This sentence construction would be unusual in Dutch, but Van Schendel had no qualms about using it. Dutch people would rather say, "The sadness of the written words struck me", switching the weightiness of 'words' to 'sadness'.¹²²
2. The novelist often applied a kind of *ablativus absolutus*, which looks somewhat old-fashioned in Dutch, although this is not the real word to describe 'its strangeness'. This *ablativus absolutus* shows some relationship with the Eng-

¹²¹ (Assen: Van Gorcum and Comp. NV, Dr. H.J. Prakke & H.M.G. Prakke, 1965).

¹²² R. Pulinckx, 193-194.

lish participial construction, 'being', cf. "Dinner being over, we left the table".¹²³

The unconscious introduction of sentence constructions derived from English has not affected Van Schendel's prose at all. Van Eijk came to the conclusion that the novelist could certainly write well, that he could adapt himself infallibly to a situation by making use of different forms of communication and thus created for each work its own character, and its own personality.¹²⁴ Now that I write these lines, I am surprised that Van Eijk - in his evaluation of the means of communication in Van Schendel's work - should not have mentioned the 'bad' dialogue (Lodewijk van Deyssel, Charles Vergeer) produced by Van Schendel in *Drogon* and his play *Pandorra*. Van Schendel's language is sober and succinct and he depicted in a few sentences an event or accident. It is to be compared to painters; some paint meticulously every feature in a face, every flower, or tree in the background (cf. the Pre-Raphaelites), others are able to bring before one's eyes a whole scene with a few strokes (the school called *Cobra* for instance). Because of his succinctness Van Schendel's novels are shorter than one would expect. In the foregoing attention has been paid to this phenomenon.

Real tragedies are *Een Hollands Drama* and *De Grauwe Vogels*. In these two novels, but also in one or two others, Van

¹²³ COD (1911. Oxford & New York: Oxford Clarendon Press, 8th ed.). Ed. R.E. Allen. (5).

¹²⁴ Van Eijk, 3.

Schendel's work shows an almost cyclical structure.¹²⁵

In this respect Charles Vergeer observed,

Van Schendel's work displays in many respects a cyclical structure, in the end he returns to the beginning. But once returned to that same spot - in space or in time - everything is different. Between the first and the last page, between origin and future the whole story is imbedded, the whole life of a person; his maturing and the blow that breaks him. The rest is nothing. Is this Hamlet's wisdom, "Ripeness is all/the rest is silence"?

Arthur van Schendel, 220.

(my interpretation and translation).

Apart from the tragic novels, there are light-hearted novels and stories. Especially in the latter category the variety is immense, viz. allegorical stories, dream fantasies, absurd or sweet stories, and captivating ones.

In light of the subject of this thesis it suffices to state that Arthur van Schendel, the poet/novelist, has been introduced and in a bird's eye view his place in Dutch literature and his works have been explained. Some of his poems, essays and novels will receive more detailed attention in the following chapters.

¹²⁵ The term cyclic(al) in literature (and also in music) has, as is well-known this application: the novel ends where it begins (in music the initial theme appears in the finale), be it in different circumstances, as in *Tom Jones* by Henry Fielding and *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë. In this view *Een Hollands Drama* and *De Grauwe Vogels* could also be called cyclical, because they begin and end in the same place. Incidentally, also Vergeer and Turksma drew attention to this phenomenon in *Arthur van Schendel*, 121 (mirror effect) and 220 (cyclic) and Turksma in *Het Goede Leven: Het Werk van Arthur van Schendel*, 113, respectively.

CHAPTER TWO

A DISCUSSION OF *SHAKESPEARE*

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In his authoritative book, *Shakespeare's Lives*¹, Samuel Schoenbaum drew attention to the inclination of each generation to portray Shakespeare according to its own views and insights. He meticulously pointed out and criticized the various works, novels and articles that had been devoted to the life and works of the great playwright through the centuries, also taking into account foreign biographers and scholars. In this respect he did not value their works highly to say the least, for he stated, "Writings in other than the mother tongue presented a problem" (xii). Does Schoenbaum mean that the language proved to have been a problem, a barrier, to get a good knowledge and understanding of the contents of these writings? Be that as it may, therefore I am not surprised to encounter the following remark in *Shakespeare's Lives*,

Recent support for the hypothesis [Derbyites, YS] has come from Amsterdam, in the form of *Wie was Shakespeare?* (1964?) (Who was Shakespeare?) by F. Louise W.M. Buisman-de Savornin Lohman; the most remarkable feature of this effort, if one may judge from the English summary graciously appended, is the name of the authoress (616).

This effort, as Schoenbaum called it, is in my view a well-argued and well-documented book of a scholarly nature.² The fact that the authoress conveyed her story in Dutch and placed

¹ (1970. Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford UP, repr. 1991).

² (Amsterdam: H.J. Paris, 1963).

herself in the camp of the Derbyites does not affect the academic value of *Wie was Shakespeare?*.

Another effort which did not come to Schoenbaum's notice, however, is the work of a representative of those who 'do not write in the mother tongue', from the viewpoint of Schoenbaum, namely that of Arthur van Schendel, whose life of Shakespeare was published in the first quarter of this century.³

Contrary to Buisman-de Savornin Lohman's work, Shakespeare's Life by the author under discussion is different; it is definitely not of a scholarly nature, because the point of departure is the biographer's adoration for "sweet master Shakespeare". For, inherent in such an attitude is a subjective approach, which stands in the way of a scholarly, objective one. As a matter of fact this biography had been translated into English by May Hollander, but remained unpublished.⁴ *Shakespeare*, which appeared for the first time in instalments in *De Gids*⁵, saw three editions: in 1910 the first edition was published, in 1922 the second one, enlarged with a discussion of five plays by Shakespeare, and in 1953 the (posthumous) second-third edition - as it was called - appeared. It was entitled *Shakespeare: Verlaine*, one volume containing the biographies of Shakespeare and the French poet

³ In a letter of 3rd July 1911 addressed to Arthur van Schendel the Librarian of Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Mr W.S. Brassington acknowledged the receipt of a complimentary copy of *Shakespeare* (file AVS/3.a.13 LM). This copy is kept at the Library of the Shakespeare Centre.

⁴ (AVS/1.a.27 [6-7] LM).

⁵ A literary journal, vol. 74 (1910), part I: 259-277; 474-494; part II: 1-19; and 98-113.

Verlaine. In this chapter the second enlarged edition will be dealt with, the one that had been included in the *Verzameld werk*⁶; it will only cover the Life, and the following chapter, which will be devoted to *Pandorra*, will include a discussion of the five plays: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest*.

2.2. SHAKESPEARE MAN AND PLAYWRIGHT

In Chapter One attention has been paid to the fact that as a sixteen-year-old boy Van Schendel saw his first *Hamlet* performed by a German theatre company. In this respect it is important to mention that as early as 1777, *Hamlet* had been performed, in Dutch, in Rotterdam and The Hague; it happened to have been a translation from the French (Jean François Ducis)⁷. In the introductory two and a half pages of *Shakespeare*, Van Schendel referred to his having seen the play in 1890, adding that since his proficiency in English was inadequate at that time, he began to read the Dutch translation of Shakespeare's plays by L.A.J. Burgersdijk.⁸ He was captivated by the verse, forgot the players, did not quite understand the meaning of the words, and his imagination was set

⁶ Vol. 1: 307-416.

⁷ It was translated by M.G. de Cambon-Van der Werken. See "Shakespeare op het Nederlandse Toneel" (Shakespeare on the Dutch stage) by H.H.J. de Leeuwe. *De Gids* 1964 I: 324-339, 327.

⁸ Mention is made in An Ordinary Meeting of the Governors of Shakespeare Members on April 28, 1886 that "The Foreign Department of the Library has been enriched with 5 volumes of a Dutch Translation of Shakespeare now in the course of publication from the translation of Dr L.A.J. Burgersdijk, of Deventer." (GM 146 Minute Book 1, Archives of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust). Mary Allan from Stratford-upon-Avon drew my attention to this piece of information.

aglow like a mighty land under a red sky. Already then Van Schendel knew *Him* as he indeed was, so that this first acquaintance with Shakespeare became an everlasting affinity. To describe his feelings for Shakespeare, he appropriated Christopher Marlowe's famous lines from *Hero and Leander* (I.176), also quoted by Shakespeare in *As You Like It*,

Who ever loved that loved not at first sight! (3.5.82),
changing the quotation mark into an exclamation mark⁹ (309; my interpretation and translation).

The plays intrigued him, for in his mind's eye, he saw the actions of British kings and Romans, heard the warbling of lovers at night, and the lamentations of that much abused old king in the storm. Van Schendel became interested in the playwright, which is why he began to read various works devoted to Shakespeare to satisfy his curiosity. To his disappointment authoritative biographical facts were limited, whereas speculation and hypotheses abounded. It appeared to him that, apart from biographical evidence - which in later years proved to have been more substantial than was thought in the first decade of the twentieth century¹⁰ - only the works remained as true reflections of Shakespeare's views, preferences, and criticism. That is why Van Schendel began to read them in this light. Some Dutch scholars and biographers

⁹ Whether Van Schendel did this on purpose is the question. It could also have been a happy coincidence, for in *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works* by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, gen. eds., notably in the paragraph, "the punctuation of the early texts", one may read: "the questionmark could signal an exclamation", xxxix.

¹⁰ Although, Dennis Kay stated, "To start with a good deal is known about his life". See *William Shakespeare: his Life and Times* (New York: Twayne's Publishers; Toronto: Maxwell MacMillan Canada, 1995), viii.

of Van Schendel referred to his *Life of Shakespeare* as a *vie romancée*¹¹, because in it narrative and reflective parts alternate with one another, in other words, each authoritative biographical event of Shakespeare's life gives rise to a dreamlike reflection taking shape in Van Schendel's mind. In his *life of Arthur van Schendel* F.W. van Heerikhuizen, referring to Van Schendel's biography of Shakespeare, asserted,

His love for Shakespeare was based on a deep congeniality: the old master had also sharply known the fundamental insecurity of human feelings which had grown autonomous; he had lived in a world of joyful Renaissance beauty, but, incomprehensible to him, the blackest abysses of the human soul became visible. Therefore in between an impersonal tale of facts Van Schendel continually interweaves passages which betray a strong reverberation of his inner feelings.

(my interpretation and translation).¹²

Also L. Turksma commented on this *vie romancée*, for he stated,

the biographer was obviously more interested in Shakespeare's inner development than in facts. His great admiration for the Poet is always present. Van Schendel was eventually more concerned about Shakespeare's conclusions as regards man.

(my interpretation and translation).¹³

In a lecture delivered in Dutch at the University of Kaapstad (Capetown, South Africa), on 6 August 1941, Jan Greshoff maintained that,

with his *Shakespeare*, Van Schendel introduced an unprecedented approach to Dutch historiography. It took scholars some time to realize its value. After having studied Shakespeare's oeuvre and the most important contributions to the Shakespeare literature, he left the texts as they

¹¹ See Robert H. Leek, *Shakespeare in Nederland: Kroniek van Vier Eeuwen Shakespeare in Nederlandse Vertalingen op het Nederlandse Toneel*, 367; R. Pulinckx, *Arthur van Schendel: zijn Werk en zijn Beteekenis*, 61.

¹² See *Het Werk van Arthur van Schendel: Achtergronden, Karakter, Ontwikkeling*, 138.

¹³ See *Het Goede Leven: Het Werk van Arthur van Schendel*, 77.

were and in his imagination he saw a man, and man is an eternal actuality.

(my interpretation and translation).¹⁴

And last but not least, Jos Panhuijsen had another idea of Van Schendel's authorship as regards his biographies. He expressed his views in an article in a Dutch newspaper, called "De Schrijver van het Noodlot" (The Writer of Fate), in the following lines,

Arthur van Schendel never writes psychological novels in the strictest sense of the word, With the 'Lives', *Shakespeare*, *Verlaine*, and *De Mens van Nazareth* he follows a similar procedure. They tell more about Van Schendel than about the eponymous personages.

(my interpretation and translation).¹⁵

These various points of view shed, of course, light on the different approaches towards the evaluation of Van Schendel's *vie romancée* of Shakespeare. However, it is high time to give the biographer himself the floor.

According to Van Schendel, a playwright who could create such a variety of characters, alive, not only in his mind's eyes, but also on the stage, and reveal so much beauty in mankind with words, must have indeed had a rich mind. In *Shakespeare and Others* Samuel Schoenbaum evaluated this rich mind by referring to Nicholas Rowe (1674-1718), playwright and editor of Shakespeare's plays, who early in the eighteenth century remarked, that the poet's father "had bred him, 'tis true",

¹⁴ A more elaborate article, "Jan Greshoff over Arthur van Schendel" appeared in *De Stoep* 6, July 1941: 7-32, 20.

¹⁵ *Het Binnenhof* dated 2 March 1974. Personally I would not attach the label 'Life' to *De Mens van Nazareth*.

for some time at a Free-school"¹⁶, which induced Schoenbaum to say,

Many have marvelled that a writer who demonstrates in his work such wide and varied learning with respect to literature, rhetoric, music and the law, as well as British and Roman history - quite apart from his profound comprehension of the human heart - should have succeeded so astonishingly without the advantages of a university education.¹⁷

Through these characters and the stories of bygone days in which they feature, Van Schendel's insight into human nature increased - he became wiser, so he said of himself - and so did his love and veneration for Shakespeare. These interesting personages who play their parts in Shakespeare's plays elicited from Van Schendel the exclamation,

O brave new world that has such people in 't!.
(*The Tempest*, 5.1.186-7).

It is a well-known phrase, often quoted, for it is Miranda's exclamation, when she and Ferdinand are discovered playing at chess by the King of Naples and his attendants (310).

The life contains four chapters, "Stratford-upon-Avon", "London", "London", and "Stratford-upon-Avon". In the first, Van Schendel related the familiar story of the Shakespeares and the Ardens, the parental and maternal forefathers of William Shakespeare. These two families lived in the heart of England, Warwickshire. The former family name denotes warrior and the latter, a much older one of Welsh origin, which might

¹⁶ Also E.K. Chambers referred to Rowe's line in *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* vol 1 (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1930) 16.

¹⁷ (1927; Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library; London: Scolar Press, Associated University Presses, Inc., 1985) 22.

be traced back to the princes of Wales, stands for poet. However, be that as it may, Van Schendel detected the main characteristics of the Germanic and Celtic races in Shakespeare, that is the deed or action and the imagination. According to him these two now seek one another, now fight one another (312-313).

When on the 23rd April 1564 William Shakespeare saw the light of day for the first time, his father John had been living in Stratford-upon-Avon for a number of years and had secured a firm position as alderman on the town council. The year 1564 lingered on in the thoughts of the citizens of this town, because the plague raged then, one of the worst scourges of that period. Van Schendel thought that as a little boy William must have heard the stories connected with the black death told by neighbours, especially the one about the young daughter of the Master of Clopton which took place at the time that he was still wearing his 'chrisom-cloth'.¹⁸ The father who thought that his daughter was dead had her buried hastily, anxious for fear of contagion. But when a second daughter died a few days later, the vault had to be re-opened and they found the first child standing dead against the wall with the winding sheets unswathed. So the girl had possibly been unconscious when they buried her, but, after having regained con-

¹⁸ Referred to in *Henry V*, 2.3.11., "an it had been any christom child", meaning, according to Van Schendel, "the baby wore this 'chrisom-cloth' until its mother went to church for the first time", 315, endnote on 409. In the Arden Shakespeare, ed. J.H. Walter (1954, London and New York: Routledge, repr. 1991), the relevant note refers to "a child in its first month after baptism, during which time it wore a white robe called a chrisom-cloth", note 12, 46. The COD again gives a slightly different explanation, 199.

sciousness, she eventually died.¹⁹ In his imagination the little boy heard her cries - according to Van Schendel at least - not to be heard by human ears though, "Shrieks like mandrakes' torn out of the earth" (315). This is clearly a quotation from *Romeo and Juliet*,

And shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth,
That living mortals, hearing them, run mad-
(4.3.46-7).

The relationship between shrieks and mandrakes is explained in *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, for 'mandrake' is glossed as, "poisonous plant believed to shriek when pulled up" (1263). Initially the relationship between the tale of the girl buried alive and the 'shrieking' plant seemed to me a figment of the biographer's imagination, but I had to reconsider this supposition, for also John Webster in *The White Devil* (1612) devoted a line or two to mandrake. He may have borrowed the quotation from *Romeo and Juliet*, the earlier play, and expanded it into,

Millions are now in graves, which at last day
Like mandrakes shall rise shrieking.
(V.vi.66-7).²⁰

And this is exactly what Van Schendel seemed to tell in his supposition referred to above, in other words, that young William, when he grew older, heard in his imagination the shrieks of the girl - reminiscent of the mandrake - buried

¹⁹ Van Schendel had read this legend ("legendary but unprovable story") in *Shakespeare's Warwickshire Contemporaries* (Stratford-upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, rev. and enlarged 1907) by Charlotte Carmichael Stopes, 217, for he mentioned this book in his bibliography of *Shakespeare*.

²⁰ Russell Brown. Ed. (London: Methuen & Co, Ltd, 1965). From letters to his friends, and the books in his own library, it is known that Van Schendel was familiar with quite a number of playwrights of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

alive. In Chapter One I told that, in his early childhood Van Schendel had a lively imagination and this story possibly serves to show that, in his view, as a small boy Shakespeare's imaginative faculty was highly developed. The year 1564 was a terrible year indeed; the stories about the friends who died were told many times and, as Van Schendel thought, young William listened to them and carried them with him all his life. Van Schendel then went on in a personal vein,

Who does not know from one's own life the far away, yet distinct figures born and shaped in the imagination of one's own childhood - even before the beginning of one's schooldays.

Focusing these reflections on Shakespeare he continued,

reminiscences of things heard, seen in the short, sharp sunlight of his early life are time and again apparent in the plays, just like dried flowers of which one recognizes the smell, without knowing which lovely reality they once represented.

(315; my interpretation and translation).

In the first chapter of this thesis it became apparent that in his poems, novels and short stories, Van Schendel himself drew on his own experiences. That is why he devoted part of the first chapter of his *Shakespeare* to Shakespeare's boyhood in order to draw attention to the fact that children retain events and those who happen to write poems, plays or novels later on tend to use these creatively in their works, although mostly unconsciously.

Another example is Jaques's reflection in *As You Like It* beginning with, "All the world's a stage" (2.7.139 ff.), which induced Van Schendel to make the following link. In those days well-to-do citizens decorated the walls of their living-rooms

with painted cloth, instead of tapestry, as was the custom in the more affluent society. These pieces of cloth displayed paintings of allegories, as for example the allegory of the Prodigal Son, provided with proverbs coming in bubbles out of the mouths of the personages, was a favourite scene.²¹ Van Schendel supposed that in John Shakespeare's home a painting representing the seven ages of man's life hung on the wall in the livingroom which the young Shakespeares and their neighbours the young Badgers often looked at. These reminiscences were, according to the biographer, expressed later on in his life, and Jaques was his mouthpiece, notably in the reflection,

And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages.

(2.7.143-4).
(315-316).

Also Falstaff refers to these paintings of allegories when he says to the hostess Mrs Quickly in *King Henry IV Part 2*,

Glasses, glasses is the only drinking; and for thy walls,
a pretty slight drollery, or the story of the Prodigal,
or the German hunting in waterwork, is worth etc.

(2.1.145-7).²²

The Arden Shakespeare gives an explanation for the prove-

²¹ Arthur van Schendel told in *Shakespeare* that there were two painted cloths in the estate of Mary Arden's father (note on 410) and so did A.G. Kranendonk in *Shakespeare en zijn Tijd* (Shakespeare and his Time) (Amsterdam: NV E.M. Querido's Uitgevers' Mij, 1938), 215. Edgar I. Fripp, however, gave an inventory of Robert Arden's goods, among which there were 11 painted cloths. See *Shakespeare Man and Artist* (Oxford: Oxford UP; London: Humphrey Milford, 1938), vol. 1, 32.

It had been the custom for a long time already to hang tapestry with biblical and mythological scenes on the walls [of the rooms]; these were the so-called "arras", which were employed in Shakespeare's plays. Falstaff, as is well-known, hides himself behind the arras and falls asleep (*King Henry IV Part 1* [2.5.506]), Polonius, hiding behind the arras to overhear the conversation between Hamlet and the Queen, is run through by Hamlet's dagger (*Hamlet* [3.4.75-80]) who heard something stirring, and Iachimo notices the arras in Imogen's room (*Cymbeline* [2.2.26]).

²² I am indebted for this example of Shakespeare's falling back on things heard or seen in his youth to Edgar I. Fripp in *Shakespeare Man and Artist*, vol. 2, 488, which is also Van Schendel's point of view, discussed above.

nance of the 'seven ages of man' elaborated upon in *As You Like It*. In a footnote mention is made of the fact that the idea originally comes from *De Proprietatibus Rerum* by Bartholomaeus Anglicus.²³

Van Schendel remarked that at the age of five, shortly after his sister Joan was born, the greatest event of Shakespeare's youth took place, that is to say, the occasion on which he saw a play for the first time in his life. Incidentally the use of the superlative 'greatest' is, in my view, an indication of a subjective comment. For that matter, Van Schendel was sixteen, when he saw his first (Shakespeare) play. Such a comparison between the feelings and reminiscences of a sixteen-year-old youth and a young child is not altogether true. Anyway, Van Schendel suggested that one morning William had seen a troupe of men arriving on horseback. They also had a cart with them and one of the men carried a big drum. They happened to be players who had got permission from the bailiff to perform in the council-chamber. John Shakespeare took his two sons William and Gilbert with him, but they only understood the meaning of the play after their father had explained to them that the king in the play represented sinful man, the three women vices, and the old men the end of the world and the Last Judgement (316-317). This mora-

²³ *As You Like It*. Ed. Agnes Latham (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 56, note 143. In *Shakespeare Man and Artist* Edgar I. Fripp reproduced an illustration of *The Seven Ages of Man*, mosaic pavement in the Cathedral of Sienna, which dates back to 1476 (in between 532 and 533 of vol. 2).

lity, according to Van Schendel *The Cradle of Security*²⁴, was acted by the Earl of Worcester's Men. The Bailiff at that time was John Shakespeare whose bailiwick lasted for one year (end-note on 410).²⁵ Afterwards the little children, led by William, had their own play in the garden with the king (played by William), the three women, and the old men. They never tired of it, at least in Van Schendel's imagination!

When he was seven, William went to the King's Grammar School, actually the King's New School, a grammar school, with satchel and shining morning face

Van Schendel remarked (317). This phrase is a well-known one as well, for it is taken out of Jaques's reflections on the seven ages of man.

William seemed to have been a boy who soon knew his morphology, which, as Van Schendel explained, may be reflected in the scene in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in which Sir Hugh Evans, the Welsh curate, asks little William Page such questions as,

William, how many nomberrs is in nouns?, and, to reassure Mrs Page that her son indeed profits from the lessons at school, he concludes his interrogation with,

²⁴ 1565-1575 according to *Annals of English Drama*.

²⁵ In *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1882) by J.O. Halliwell-Phillips it is stated that, "on 4th September 1568 John Shakespeare was chosen High Bailiff (= Mayor) which ended in September 1569.", 25. Also S. Schoenbaum in *Shakespeare's Lives* used High Bailiff (21) and E.A.J. Honigmann stated that "John Shakespeare..., who in 1568 served as high bailiff (equivalent to the modern mayor)" in *Shakespeare: the 'Lost Years'* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1985), 5. However, other biographers, E.K. Chambers among them, referred to John Shakespeare's post in 1568 as Bailiff, see *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* vol. 1, 13. And also Peter Alexander used 'bailiff' in *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* (1951) (London and Glasgow: Collins, repr. 1990) xi.

He is a good sprag memory.
(4.1.19 and 4.1.76).

Van Schendel suspected that young Shakespeare was often wrapped up in his thoughts and if the master asked him, for instance, to recite a line from *the Mantuan*, he would give an example of antithesis and then would have to come in front of the class for a beating. In this way the biographer seemed to account for the following reflection,

William saw the discrepancy between a boy's fanciful thoughts and things that happen in daily life,

and continued with a general observation,

man's wisdom is unconsciously based on youthful experience.

Growing older William clearly understood what he already knew as a boy, namely, that

it was better to watch and act than to dream and wait, which might be detected in Hamlet's remark to Horatio,

the readiness is all.
(*Hamlet*, 5.2.168).

(318-319).

According to Van Heerikhuizen this is one of the pronouncements discussed above which shows that Van Schendel identifies himself with Shakespeare.

The biographer approached the playwright through his work, but he did not seem to feel the need to establish for instance the identity of the Dark Lady in the *Sonnets*, or to scrutinize Shakespeare's relationship with the Earl of Southampton. He was well aware that as a servant Shakespeare could not be on an equal footing with his patron. However, he might

easily have commented on the lines scattered through the playwright's work and persistent 'legends', as many did before and after him. However, he did mention in an endnote the existing opinions on these topics (407-408). Van Schendel only wished to depict the feelings of Shakespeare as child and man in connection with the ordinary things in life, which were reflected in his works. That William sometimes played truant in order to gather blackberries along the banks of the river Avon is a nice example, for in Van Schendel's view it could be derived from the scene in *King Henry IV Part 1* in which Falstaff, playing the role of the King, admonishes Hal,

Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a micher,
and eat blackberries?

(2.5.411-12).
(318 and note on 410).

Van Schendel's John Shakespeare had always wished to give his sons a better education than he himself had had, but business was declining, wool did not fetch such high prices as in former days, and he had to encumber his estates in Snitterfield and Wilmcote.²⁶ That is why William had to leave school at the age of fourteen and help his father. There are, however, authorities who deny the fact that William had to leave

²⁶ Some scholars argue that these financial difficulties were a pretence for his being a recusant. But since both being in financial difficulties and a recusant could give rise to his nonattendance at church on Sundays - as regards the former possibility for fear of legal action for debt and as the latter one is concerned his not wishing to attend church - it is not certain whether the assumption of these scholars is a correct one. See among others E.A.J. Honigmann's *Shakespeare: The 'Lost Years'*, 116, and also Dennis Kay's *William Shakespeare: His Life and Times* (New York: Twayne Publishers; Toronto: Maxwell MacMillan Canada, 1995) 9.

school prematurely, arguing that the grammar school was free.²⁷ Van Schendel imagined that William did all kinds of jobs, lent a hand in slaughtering a calf, conveyed cartloads of bark for the tannery, wrote official letters and lodged appeals on behalf of his father who was illiterate. He also assisted Master Jenkins in teaching little boys gender, number and case for which he earned a few coins, and now and then the notary sent for him to do some paperwork, but on the whole, the years went by with only temporary jobs (321-322). It has to be admitted, however, that he gained knowledge of various matters and procedures, of falconry, hunting, agriculture and gardening to mention a few. His walks in the neighbourhood took him to Barton-on-the-Heath where an uncle lived, to Wincot, where Sly the tinker praised Marian Hacket's excellent beer and had the drinks he owed her scratched on a tally (322). Surprisingly enough, having mentioned the name of Sly the tinker, the biographer did not elaborate on this drunken personage who features prominently in the Induction of *The Taming of the Shrew*.²⁸ Or did he take it for granted that

²⁷ See A.G. van Kranendonk. "Although this is true, the fact that John Shakespeare needed the assistance of his son in his business, as is asserted by many sources, is of a different nature", 40. E.K. Chambers, for instance, stated: "We are told by Rowe, presumably on the authority of inquiries made by Thomas Betterton at Stratford, that his father bred him at a free school, but withdrew him owing to the 'narrowness of his circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home'". In *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, vol. 1: 16-17. John Aubrey's acknowledgement, "Though as Ben Jonson says of him..., for he had been in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country" (c. 1681), which is an important point of departure for many scholars (Aubrey's 'Brief Lives', set down by John Aubrey, between the years 1669 & 1696. Ed. Andrew Clark. 2 vols. Vol. 2 (I-Y) (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1898) is not mentioned by Van Schendel.

²⁸ According to Van Schendel Dowdon and Furnivall provided a list of Shakespeare's plays in order of appearance; so Van Schendel gives the date 1597 for *The Taming of a Shrew* (416). It is generally assumed nowadays that it was performed for the first time in 1589. See *Annals of English Drama 975-1700* by Alfred Harbage and Samuel Schoenbaum (London: Methuen, 1st ed. 1964).

it was well-known that Christopher Sly was one of the characters in Shakespeare's plays, and was it his purpose to indicate that he had really existed?

When William grew older, Van Schendel suspected, he was often seen in Shuttery, because he was attracted to Anne Hathaway. It was on Midsummer's Day that William and Anne had first watched the revelry around the bonfires, and afterwards went for a walk along the fields as so many other couples did. It is said that on a midsummer night the late walker can get carried away by ghosts into a blissful summernight's folly. "Puck is a rogue", said Van Schendel, "and the lovers lost their way" (323; my interpretation and translation). His reference to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is obvious and this then might be his interpretation of William and Anne's views on the marriage proper²⁹, for William was eighteen when he told his father that he had proposed to Anne. Van Schendel elaborated on this statement by saying that John Shakespeare was not amused, for his eldest son had not learnt a proper trade and Anne Hathaway brought no dowry to her husband.³⁰ Friends of

²⁹ The pronouncement, "Hard to recognize in this portrait of a saintly semi-invalid the passionate (or calculating) village lass who took to her bosom and her bed, without benefit of clergy, a youth eight years her junior - and who outlived him by another seven", which appears in *Shakespeare's Lives* is, in my view, typical of Samuel Schoenbaum, who commented on Edgar I. Fripp's, somewhat, it must be admitted, exaggerated, 'description' of Anne Hathaway's merits in *Shakespeare Man and Artist* vol. 1: 186-187 (694).

³⁰ In *Shakespeare en zijn Tijd*, A.G. van Kranendonk stated that Anne Hathaway's father was a well-to-do farmer, 41; E.K. Chambers asserted that a Richard Hathaway from Shuttery left an unmarried daughter Agnes, or Anne [interchangeable names in the registers], money on his decease in 1591 (*William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*) vol. 1, 18; G.B. Harrison in *Introducing Shakespeare* remarked, "His wife [William Shakespeare's] was the daughter of one Hathaway, said to have been a substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood of Stratford." (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, Ltd, 1974) 39; Dennis Kay mentioned the sum of 10 marks which Anne's father left her in his will to be paid to her on the day of her marriage. This will bears the date: 1 September 1581. See *William Shakespeare: His Life and Times*, 16; and Edgar I Fripp spoke of "the sum of £6.13s.4d to be paid on the day of her marriage" (Vol. 1, 184).

the Hathaways had obtained a special licence from the bishop [the diocesan court of Worcester, YS], and it is assumed that the couple married in the church of Aston Cantlow in November 1582. However, John Shakespeare was not present at the ceremony. It was then, according to Van Schendel, that Shakespeare began to worry about earning a living, and after his disillusionment at the first serious misunderstanding with his father, realizing for what little pleasure, for what social duty, he a young, ardent, and eager man had forgotten to think about his future, he and his father became reconciled.

In May 1583 their daughter Susanna was born (it is interesting that Van Schendel called his first daughter, who died in infancy, Suzanna). His mother went to see her first grandchild, but his father could only come after dark, because he hardly dared leave his house for fear of being arrested and committed to prison. The reason was that John Shakespeare had many debts at this time. From these lines one might conclude that William and Anne were not living with his parents, but other sources relate that after their marriage the young couple went to live in Henley Street with his parents (323-324).³¹

Also Shakespeare's friends came to see the new arrival, and among them was a certain Richard Field who four years earlier had left for London to learn the trade of printing. He

³¹ A.G. van Kranendonk stated, "It is certain, that on the 28th November 1582 Shakespeare married at the age of eighteen and that he went to live with Anne in the house of his father in Henley Street" (*Shakespeare en zijn Tijd*, 42). Also Edgar I. Fripp acknowledged, "To his father's house in Henley Street, according to the custom in Stratford and elsewhere, Shakespeare would bring his wife". In *Shakespeare Man and Artist*, vol. 1, 192.

told them about the city, and about the lively district where the printing business was situated. The new father was quieter than usual; he listened with eagerness to Field's tales. There he was, living in the country, with wife and child, relying on favours and irregular work, waiting for opportunity to knock at the door. However, one evening when he was standing on the Clopton heights and looked down on the lights of Stratford, his thoughts cleared up. It was indeed a distressing time, for his wife was again pregnant, his father's debts had increased as a consequence of which John Shakespeare had been stripped of his dignities³², and last but not least he himself was prosecuted by Sir Thomas Lucy.³³ According to Van Schendel Shakespeare kept waiting, doubtfully, with these thoughts in mind,

he who does not notice the moment, has to make a decision, venture, win or lose. Must he go out into the world, flee on account of a trifle? But what are the omens?

Then he knew that

there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow
(*Hamlet* 5.2.165-6).
(325; my interpretation and translation).

In this way Van Schendel sketched the contradictory thoughts

³² Edgar I. Fripp stated in a note, "Lee's statement that he [John Shakespeare, YS] was 'deprived' of his alderman's gown (*Life of Shakespeare*, 14 ff.) is entirely misleading. Nothing could be less like 'expulsion'" (Vol. 1, 202). As an afterthought it is interesting that Van Schendel had read Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakespeare* (bibliography on 200 of the 1922 edition of *Shakespeare*).

³³ Having said this, Van Schendel, contradictorily, stated in a note, "The story of deer poaching in Charlecote is founded completely on tradition" (412). According to Peter Alexander, "The group of traditions that gathers round Rowe's account of Shakespeare's deer-stealing and of his prosecution by Sir Thomas Lucy has not only no pedigree but is contradicted by the fact that there was no deer-park at Charlecote at the time, the Lucy family establishing one there only in the next generation" (xii). In this respect the only conclusion for Van Schendel's use of this tale of deer poaching would be that he thought it too nice to dispense with it.

which, according to him, moved Shakespeare. In other words, on the one hand he had the easy-going thoughts of Falstaff and on the other the more serious ones of Hamlet. He eventually discovered and adopted the middle course and, after having said goodbye to Anne and their child, set off on a journey, went to London that is. From this instance one could deduce that Shakespeare had left Stratford-upon-Avon before the birth of the twins, which indeed Van Schendel suggested further on,

shortly after his departure the twins Judith and Hamnet were born,

(325; my interpretation and translation),

but some biographers are of the opinion that Shakespeare left some time in 1585 after the twins were born, others admit that it is not known when he left, and also where he went, whether to London or possibly to a post as a teacher in the country. From 1584 till 1592 no factual data about Shakespeare have been unearthed, so the stories devoted to the 'early years' are conjectures, to which, in the first decade of this century, Van Schendel added his. In this connection research has tried to improve on 'conjectures' by using documents hitherto unknown or at first not acknowledged as having anything to do with Shakespeare in the first place.³⁴

³⁴ One of these works is for instance, *The Real Shakespeare: Retrieving the Early Years 1564-1594* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1995) by Eric Sams. I refrain from giving an estimation of its value, but leave it to scholars to give their opinions about this reconstruction of Shakespeare's early years in London. I only want to comment on the following lines in this book, "Of course that sadly short-lived lad (1585-96) was called Hamlet" (xvi). It was taken for granted that the twins were named after their godfather and mother, Hamnet and Judith Sadler and in this respect A.G. Kranendonk remarked, "Of this marriage in May 1583 a daughter, Susanna was born, and in 1585 the twins: Hamnet and Judith. Hamnet was a variant spelling of the name Hamlet, and in a later document the Stratfordian baker was referred to as Hamlet Sadler (42). See also *Shakespeare: the 'Lost Years'* in which Honigsmann asserted, "Names simply were not thought of as fixed and unalterable in the sixteenth century..." (18).

In the second chapter of his *Life*, "London", Van Schendel depicted briefly the history and background of the city to which Shakespeare went and tried his luck. He related how London replaced Antwerp as the market of the West during Queen Elizabeth's reign, how English seafarers discovered new routes and brought home treasures and gold, and how they defeated the Armada. The city of London, expanding beyond the city walls, was a hive of activity and trade. Business flourished, and so did art. After the Italian example the nobles, scholars and civilized people took pleasure in tender poetry, madrigals and rondeaux. The imagination of the common people who hitherto had been living on wonder after wonder, did not find satisfaction in ballads any more. The people wished to see before them acted, true to life, happenings at home and in foreign countries, so that they could understand what went on in the real world.³⁵ Shakespeare, using Hamlet as his mouthpiece, emphasized that plays were in the interest of the general public,

Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed?
Do you hear? - let them well be used, for they are the
abstracts and brief chronicles of the time.

(*Hamlet*, 2.2.526-528, remark YS).

The playwrights and actors originating from the lower-educated people were able to create the new art, since the forms and the principles were already prepared by the university wits. Drama, the glory of that time, radiant under the name of Shakespeare, was created by the labour of those who

³⁵ See Thomas Heywood in *An Apologie for Actors* Book 3 (In *The School of Abuse* by Stephen Gosson, 1579. Repr. for the Shakespeare Society 1841). "Thirdly, playes have made the ignorant more apprehensive, taught the unlearned the knowledge of famous histories, instructed such as cannot reade in the discovery of all our English Chronicles, etc." (52 ff.).

were referred to by their contemporaries as vagabonds and rogues. Thus the increase of wealth stimulated the need for the pleasure of plays, and subsequently for a playhouse. The London authorities banished the vagabonds from the city and it so happened that James Burbage, a former carpenter and joiner, built the first playhouse for his company, Leicester's Men, in the 'liberty' of Holywell, independent of the Corporation. It was called the Theatre. Soon a second playhouse, the Curtain, was built close by in Moorfields, also outside the city. The yard of a tavern, where they used to perform, was taken as an example for the design of these playhouses (328-30).

In the Theatre Tarlton, Richard Burbage and Will Kemp rose to their fame. In addition to an old play or morality now and then, plays by Lyly, Greene, Kyd, Peele, Lodge, Nashe and Marlowe were being performed at the time that Shakespeare arrived in London. Actors united in groups under the patronage of a nobleman commissioned poets or playwrights to write new plays for them. Marlowe was the youngest and the most brilliant of these playwrights; he was at the same time the most exuberant in taverns and sooner than the others discovered his equal in the quiet young countryman. Having said this, Van Schendel did not hesitate to acknowledge in an endnote,

There is no proof for the friendship between Marlowe and Shakespeare (412; my interpretation and translation).

Nevertheless he continued to weave a tale around this 'friendship' as follows: Marlowe took 'gentle Will' to Burbage,

showed him how he rewrote old plays by using heavy iambic pentameters and told him, in glowing speeches, of grand subjects on which a young poet would be able to build superb tragedies. Shakespeare left his lodgings and went to live in the neighbourhood of Holywell. Van Schendel took it for granted that Shakespeare played a role as messenger, page or attendant of Zenocrate's in *Tamburlaine the Great* and stated that Shakespeare seemed to have learnt most from this play, from its art as regards blank verse, and also from the principles of tragedy. The biographer made his readers believe that Shakespeare spent his formative years in close fellowship with Kit Marlowe (331-332). Shakespeare was, judging from the list of his daily activities, which are elaborated upon by Van Schendel, 'a jack of all trades' or 'an absolute *Iohannes fac totum*', the well-known phrase used by Robert Greene in *Groatsworth of Wit*. Reference is made to the fellow-actors, Richard and Cuthbert Burbage³⁶, sons of the owner of the Theatre, Jack Hemynge, Henry Condell and Augustine Phillips, and to his friends Tom Pope and George Bryan who had served with princes in Germany and Denmark and told their friends about Elsinore. Also topics of discourse are mentioned, such as the attacks of Puritans on playhouses, the quarrels with the 'criminal' publishers, the stories of Gower and Chaucer, and a book with spicy amorous adventures read by one of them in Italian. Besides, they talked in jest about rhetoric, earrings, the latest fashion

³⁶ Edgar I. Fripp maintained that Cuthbert was not a player. See *Shakespeare Man and Artist* vol. 1, 234.

at court, and many more subjects passed in review, when they were having a drink at their favourite tavern.

There were occasions when Marlowe who had been commissioned to write a play was not in the right frame of mind to set himself to it, due to his turbulent life at that time, or because of the mysteries which induced Faustus to sign a pact with Satan kept him busy. Then he provided his 'pupil' (Van Schendel's term) with a 'case' and left him alone with quill, ink and paper. When Shakespeare did not know how to proceed with one of the personages, Tom Kyd and Robert Greene came to his rescue³⁷ -

let him die, of course let him be murdered: people want to see blood, for where blood is shed, there is at least action,

they said. According to the biographer, *Titus Andronicus* was conceived in this way; fourteen persons were killed, only four survived (335; my interpretation and translation). Be that as it may, Van Schendel's musings on Shakespeare's formative years fit the categorization of *vie romancée* given to Van Schendel's Life of Shakespeare (see above).

Then Shakespeare could send home some money, said the biographer. He looked with more interest at the clothes of the noblemen when they took their seats at the Theatre or when his company, after Leicester's death serving as the Lord Strange's Men, had to perform at their patron's near Baynard's castle

³⁷ The suggestion that Greene lent Shakespeare a hand is in my view highly improbable.

situated in Paul's Wharf.³⁸ This was an enlightening experience for the young man from the country, who hitherto had only mixed with actors, poets, dancers and bear-wards, to see noblewomen in their refined environment (as it is well-known, it was not the custom for noblewomen to accompany their husbands to a playhouse). It was a fine world of splendour, virtue and love! Shakespeare's first play in which, according to Van Schendel, he laid down his own ideas, expressed not only his pleasure in youth and wealth, but at the same time also his apprehension of the superficial civilization represented by this world.³⁹

As regards *Love's Labour's Lost*, which was the play referred to above, the playwright obviously adopted Lyly's elegant, florid style. This was quite appropriate, for it was indeed the tone at court. It lent itself, as a matter of course, to the case: a king and three noblemen, a princess with three ladies; a neat contrast which unfolds in a simple plot: the men with their pretentiousness and unnaturalness as opposed to the women with their airiness and pure feelings. The biographer continued by mentioning a second contrast, that between Holofernes, Sir Nathaniel and Don Armado on the one hand and the jesters Dull, Costard and Moth on the other. The young man bred in the country, who had not been to the univer-

³⁸ Dennis Kay stated, "Baynard's castle next to Puddle Wharf" in *William Shakespeare: His Life and Times* (63).

³⁹ It must be stated that the list of dates on which Shakespeare's plays were performed for the first time or entered on the Stationers' Register used by Van Schendel differs from the one(s) used nowadays, such as *Annals of English Drama 975-1700* by Alfred Harbage and Samuel Schoenbaum for instance. That might be the reason that the chronological sequence in which Van Schendel discussed the plays strikes us as 'muddled'.

sity to study rhetoric, but had mastered it by imitating Lyly, could not refrain from praising the excellence of natural wit to learning: Costard and Moth, illiterate fools, are more sensible than the bombastic schoolmaster *cum suis*;

had he himself not always answered adequately the learned attacks of the friends?

asked the biographer (336; my interpretation and translation). The play presents a display of high-flown figures of speech, pleasure in words and simple wit, and it ends with the lively rustic song of "*Hiems and Ver*". Van Schendel continued his account of this play by stating that the real Shakespeare comes to the fore in the person of Berowne, the first of a generation of sensible young noblemen, courageous and witty, who take worldly pleasures as they present themselves, without consideration, and who would be prepared to lose their lives in the same way. The play was met with approval, for the courtiers saw themselves depicted in the personages. Current events were treated in it, such as the Muscovite envoys who were in search of a spouse for the Tsar, and especially the events which were taking place in France drew their attention.

The Spanish threat was still present. Once again an army set out to beat the enemy in France, this time under Essex. The war, however, was not as serious as the one of three years ago and, although the country was not under threat of an immediate attack, Burleigh and his advisers knew that the Catholic kings were preparing themselves for a fiercer attack.

The attention for France roused the courtiers' pleasure

in love poems, delightful gems created by a sensitive light hand, sonnets about the love and pain of poets as they had been read and listened to in prominent houses there in France for a long time already. Then Sidney's "Stella" appeared and writing sonnets became the vogue with poets in England.⁴⁰ Earlier Spenser and Watson had written sonnets, but then followers, one after another, offered their noble patrons "a bouquet, sometimes of fresh flowers, but often of flowers of a surprisingly imitative nature" (337; my interpretation and translation).

The playwrights, except Lodge, kept themselves busy with their own work. Shakespeare wrote a succession of plays in one of which, according to the biographer, a couple of remarkable lines may be noticed. With these lines,

Wailful sonnets, whose composed rhymes
Should be full fraught with serviceable vows-,
(*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 3.2.69-70),

Shakespeare seemed to comment on the folly of sonneteering, at least in Van Schendel's view. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* was, on the authority of Dowden and Furnivall, written in 1590 (198 of the 1922 edition).⁴¹ It is assumed that in the second year of the plague, in 1593, Shakespeare went back to Stratford. By then he is said to have composed a small number of his sonnet cycle (26 of 154). Some of these Sonnets, which first circulated in MS among his private friends, contain

⁴⁰ Van Schendel, of course, meant *Astrophil and Stella* which was published posthumously.

⁴¹ In *Annals of English Drama 975-1700* this date is given as 1593.

'serviceable vows'. Is it possible that as early as 1590, Shakespeare would have poked fun at the nature of sonnets in general, and possibly at some of his own in particular, which in fact still had to be written? I think that this question could be answered in the affirmative, for the creator of *Be-rowne* would have been realistic enough to mention, with a smile, his indulgence in 'serviceable vows' and at the same time have availed himself of them when he thought fit.

According to Van Schendel, Shakespeare must have smiled to himself as he wrote about Launce and his improper dog in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. The audience roared with laughter when they saw Launce and his dog, Crab. Who had ever heard of someone who - with pleasure even - receives a beating for the pranks of his dog! But there is also a sweet young girl in this play, the first of the sisters who calmly and unpretentiously do the only good thing prescribed by their hearts and who manage to endure and to trust. When one night Julia, disguised as a lad - a practice invented by Lyly and often resorted to by Shakespeare - witnesses her lover's betrayal under Silvia's window her only remark heard is, that it has been the longest night she has kept watch ever, but she does not hesitate to follow the man she loves (338; my interpretation and translation).

The following play Van Schendel commented upon is *The Comedy of Errors* of which he stated, with a reference to Dowden and Furnivall, that it came immediately after *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. It is Pinch the schoolmaster to whom

attention is drawn,

They brought one Pinch, a hungry lean-faced villain,
etc. (5.1.238-242),

one reads, to which the biographer added, "A teacher, a nightmare!". Elaborating on Shakespeare's lines, Van Schendel, to all probability, expressed his own dislike of the jobs he obtained as a foreign master. As can be read in his autobiographical poems and essays, the job of schoolmaster in England was very demanding and besides, both pupils and masters were poorly fed. From 1899 onwards, however, when he occupied the post of master at a school in Wimbledon, they were all provided with sufficient food.⁴² In a letter to Mr S.J. Boubier Wilson, who was the principal of the School of Drama in Amsterdam at the time that he was a student there, Van Schendel gave his personal view of the post of schoolmaster, and I translate,

You may have heard rumours that I have stayed in England for a long time. This is true, I have been there for nearly nine years, except a short period when I was a schoolmaster in Haarlem. I had been too much Anglicized to appreciate the post of teacher in Holland.⁴³

He supposed that for Shakespeare, the days of innocent joking, of untroubled happiness belonged to the past. The latter had to prove whether he was to be a Poet or had to join the crowd of poets who had fallen into obscurity and conse-

⁴² See his letter from Wimbledon, London, to his friend Willem Witsen, painter and graphic artist, dated 20th October 1899 (file G.474 H.1 LM).

⁴³ The letter was written from the Fakkegrav Hotel, Dangaard, Jutland, Denmark, and was dated September, 17. 1904. Charles Vergeer drew my attention to this letter, and I got a copy of it by courtesy of the Archivist of the Library of the Theater Instituut Nederland (Theatre Institute The Netherlands), Mrs Tuja van den Berg (File Doos 8A: 'Diverse Stukken. 1904').

quently had to live an insignificant life. Van Schendel said,

the road of the brilliant appearances of poetry had come to an end. Who decided the how and why were the first mysteries Shakespeare encountered when entering the gate of the dark world of the soul, a world full of misery and tearful joy, where an awesome presence carried him like an infant child.

(338-339; my interpretation and translation).

What did Van Schendel mean by these words, one wonders? Do 'the brilliant appearances of poetry' refer to the happy subjects of love, joy and trust cloaked in fixed forms, rhyme schemes and stereotyped language, as they were referred to as sugared sonnets? What mattered from then on is, in my opinion, the treatment at the same time of such subjects as grief, disappointment and betrayal, which also find their origin in the soul. But further on - long after *The Comedy of Errors* had been written - Van Schendel related in this biography that Shakespeare wrote his sonnet cycle and two narrative poems. Especially the Sonnets conveyed serious opinions and advice which came straight from the Poet's heart/soul, but they were cloaked in fixed forms, in other words he had indeed done with 'the brilliant appearances' - at least to a certain extent, I think. In this connection it is necessary to remark that also in his plays Shakespeare often used blank verse, so that the phrase 'he remained a poet all his life' is justifiable. Anyway, the biographer appears, however mysterious his argumentation may be, to indicate that by appropriating more serious subjects as well Shakespeare rose to his eventual fame.

This is the right place to remark that the biographer's

Dutch texts are sometimes difficult to grasp, even for a Dutch reader, which is possibly due to the terseness of his style - almost like poetry⁴⁴ -, and to a rather unusual or obsolete meaning of certain words too, for every language undergoes changes in the course of eighty years.

Be that as it may, Van Schendel supposed that Shakespeare regretfully mused about his 'low' birth and also that his means of earning a living was looked down upon by many; these were perhaps reasons for his halting career. That is why his ambition became keener, for he wanted to be a gentleman, rich, independent, one who could dictate plain circumstances which caused some to be pleased with the smiles and nods of noble women, others to find a closed door and loneliness in a cold street.⁴⁵ This ambition diverted his thoughts from musings, cares and trivialities, and he began to write about the love that awakened at night and came to full bloom at dawn, love as great as the light of the sun which lightens the whole world, love which is eternal (339).

Van Schendel saw parallels between this play, *Romeo and Juliet* - the story of all-consuming love - and the story of Hamlet. Both heroes muse and roam through the space of their youthful ecstasy. Juliet was possessed by mere chaste passion.

⁴⁴ This could be the reason why some state that Van Schendel had always remained a poet. See Chapter One, the translated quotation of G.H. 's-Gravesande's biography of Arthur van Schendel (15). As has been mentioned earlier, remarkably enough none of Van Schendel's novels earns the epithet 'a thick volume', which is certainly due to the terse style of his prose. In Chapter One attention has been drawn to the novelist's practice of refraining from giving elaborate information necessary to understand the course of his story.

⁴⁵ Although Van Schendel was a prolific writer himself, he never became rich. On the contrary there were even times when he and his family were supported financially by his friends. The family lived quite a modest life.

She begged eagerly with her feminine heart and whispered so urgently that the young man let himself be carried away by passion which was of such a vehement nature that it eventually destroyed both. The biographer ended this short résumé with a remark about Shakespeare, again in a personal vein,

the vague sadness of love was never to leave him, nor the questioning voice from the abyss.

He further remarked that, after Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and *The Jew of Malta*, *Romeo and Juliet* was the first play watched breathlessly by the audience. The other playwrights noticed with admiration its flawlessness, the effortless ascent of two light spirits, although at the same time envy writhed underneath (339-340; my interpretation and translation).

In the beginning of the next year, Van Schendel continued. This line struck me, for I could not make out when 'the next year' was, and glancing again through *Shakespeare*, it occurred to me that Van Schendel hardly ever mentioned a date. He did mention, however, when William Shakespeare was born, which is, in retrospect, exceptional indeed. Only in endnotes to this biography did he provide dates. It seems to have been one of his characteristics, for Charles Vergeer, referring to Van Schendel's autobiographical work, also drew attention to this phenomenon (see Chapter One). The reader himself has to find out what date to attach to 'the

following summer' or 'the next spring'.⁴⁶ In any case, since in an endnote the biographer supposed - in accordance with the findings of Dowden and Furnivall - that *Romeo and Juliet* was composed in 1591, 'the following year' should refer to 1592. This phrase introduces Van Schendel's point of view with regard to the dates of the founding of the respective playhouses on both sides of the Thames, the companies that 'owned' them and played there. Further on in this thesis more attention will be paid to this subject.

To continue, Van Schendel commented upon the changing of the people's attitude in general. After prosperity had brought satiation in the country, the tide of sensual pleasure abated, and with the craving for liberation from the supremacy of the court, the desire for knowledge as regards the inner self arose. Those who preached near the cross of St Paul's saw themselves surrounded by bigger and more attentive crowds than usual and in the stalls in St Paul's Churchyard the pamphlets on religious matters were in great demand. The ignoramuses desired to know more about sin and grace, about church and state; people's faithful nature sought satisfaction in religion. Owing to the suppression of the fiercest Puritans - some were exiled or put to death - the real Reformation, that is to say the Puritan faith with its heat and deep glow, inflamed. This was reflected in many hearts. On account of the

⁴⁶ In at least one sonnet, namely No. 104, also Shakespeare used such vague indications as,
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters' cold
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride.
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turned, etc.

above-mentioned questioning and musings, Van Schendel supposed that the composers of drama found themselves beset by worries. Ahead of them stood Marlowe, who haughtily called himself a heathen, an atheist, rather than an ignoramus or a doubter. But the power of former days when he composed *Doctor Faustus* began to slip away; in the milder words of *Edward II*, one hears a suppressed stammering, and the fiery playwright, who once had put on stage the formidable Tamburlaine, grew calm and quiet and melodious. He began to sing about Hero and Leander. But the night came too early (340-341).⁴⁷

The despondency among playwrights was to be heard clearest of all in Greene's later gloomy writings, remorseful and bitter. His fellow playwrights did not see a solution, they lived more recklessly than before, in enmity with the younger generation who was still at work. They lived in poverty, for the theatres were frequently closed on account of the pestilence. They were forced to flee the city.

The biographer also visualized Shakespeare fleeing the city together with his theatre company to perform in the country, for example in Coventry. It is a short distance from there to Henley Street in Stratford, where he was received with much warmth by his family and friends. The children looked shyly at the fine gentleman and after amazement, admiration and friendly words, they exchanged thoughts, while Anne served cake and cider. Then questions were asked, questions

⁴⁷ Who else but a poet would have referred to Marlowe's violent death in this way?

such as, whether he ever went to church in London, and whether actors were indeed as sinful as people assumed them to be, and who looked after his clothes. His father, however, thought these interrogations silly and invited his son for a stroll. They discussed all kinds of matters, such as the application for a coat of arms by father John, and when it came to finances, the old gentleman was quite amazed to learn about the sums of money his son earned and his intention to buy a dwelling place and land in Stratford in due course. The reader of this paragraph will immediately realize that here Van Schendel had given his imagination free rein! This is surely a true example of Jos Panhuijsen's pronouncement in "De schrijver van het noodlot", in particular the lines,

but he does penetrate into the lives of his main characters, for, although they could seem quite different, he draws them to himself.

(5; my interpretation and translation).

After his stay at Stratford-upon-Avon he rode back to London. Incidentally, because of Van Schendel's different chronological sequence of the publication of Shakespeare's poetry and the first performances of his plays, it is indeed difficult to keep track of Shakespeare's life in this period. From other sources we know that the plague raged in London in the years 1592, 1593 and 1594. That is why it is taken for granted that Shakespeare must have stayed some time in the country. According to Van Schendel, one night as the playwright was riding back to London, with his thoughts on the future, on London, work, earning money, he seemed to hear whis-

pers there where he saw a faint blue light in the foliage. He smiled and said to his horse,

Lord, what fools these mortals be!
(Robin in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* [3.2. 115]).

The treetops swayed to and fro, there were fairies in the shadow who liked to play with human beings - superstitious people say that one has to look straight ahead when passing them, in order to escape from their spell. I think that Van Schendel tried to persuade his readers - as in examples given earlier - that then and there Shakespeare conceived *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Anyway Shakespeare returned to London, Van Schendel continued, resolved to remain an actor and playwright for the sake of money, although at the same time hoping to gain esteem as a poet, and consequently in this profession should be considered more respectable than before. He discussed with Richard Field the printing of a narrative poem. This poem, *Venus and Adonis*, was dedicated to his patron The Earl of Southampton; the dedication was composed of courtly deferential phrases. It was sold at the sign of the White Greyhound in St Paul's Churchyard and was much read, on account of which Shakespeare became better known in upper-class circles. In Van Schendel's imagination, Shakespeare was received graciously by many noblemen, and their wives talked smilingly to him (343). Shakespeare's visits to his native town may have been more frequent in these years than Van Schendel referred to. According to the antiquary John Aubrey, Shakespeare

was wont to go to his native country once a year.
(see his '*Brief Lives*'; 226).⁴⁸

New shapes appeared in the Poet's mind, shapes that began to depict men's lives, their thoughts and actions. Shakespeare embroidered upon those visions which, in Van Schendel's view, had flitted through his mind when one night as he rode back from Stratford to London. He called the play that took shape in his mind's eye *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The biographer remarked,

Yes, Oberon, Titania and Robin Goodfellow had dealt rather with their friends only; but human beings mean well, although they are silly; they while away the hours with joking, but it makes them forget the dark things in life, of which they frequently think.

And further on,

Those who do not understand the play think that they have had a dream; Robin will mend his ways and behave more sensibly soon.

(343; my interpretation and translation).

The lines,

A certain aim he took
At a fair vestal thronèd in the west.
(*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2.1.157-8),

induced Van Schendel to relate another story, which runs as follows. In the autumn of that year - that is the year that Richard Field printed *Venus and Adonis*, in 1593 - Shakespeare wrote *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is chronologically not quite correct, according to the current assumptions at least. Anyway Shakespeare, Kemp and Burbage, and other members of the company, were invited to perform before the Queen in Green-

⁴⁸ Referred to by Samuel Schoenbaum in *Shakespeare and Others*, 50.

wich. Because of the scant information, it is not clear which play Van Schendel was referring to, although, as the tale unfolds, it becomes evident, that he meant the *Dream*.⁴⁹ When he knelt before her, it pleased the Queen to tap Shakespeare on the cheek to thank him for his charming thought of "the thronèd virgin in the west", or perhaps it was a sign that she had read with pleasure the story of the fair Venus.

Also the brilliant Southhampton is referred to in this tale. He, described as sporting bracelets and earrings, and adored by the young ladies present, showed his friendship towards Shakespeare. But the ladies not only drew the attention of the young earl, they also nodded and cooed to the player, cast down their eyes and hoped to read of a chaste courtship! (343). With this vivid romantic description Van Schendel created a fantastic setting for an ordinary performance of a troupe of players at court, the kind of speculation that one can expect from him.

The following year another erotic poem, *The Rape of Lucrece*, was entered on the Stationers' Register and it was also printed by Richard Field shortly after. It was again dedicated to Southampton and since it was well received, Shakespeare was often seen at his patron's residence near Lincoln's Inn. It was an exciting experience, but after all he felt himself more at ease among his equals, with his friend Jack Hemyng in Al-

⁴⁹ In the Arden Shakespeare *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Harold F. Brooks (London and New York: Routledge, 1990) one may read in the Introduction, "It seems likely that Queen Elizabeth was present when the *Dream* was first acted." (iv). But Stanley Wells said in the Introduction to the New Penguin Shakespeare of this play, "To me, then, it seems credible that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was always intended for the public theatres." (14).

dermanbury, when he was invited to a meal there and was seated among Jack's children. In this respect the biographer could not refrain from making the following moralizing remark,

what happiness could there be for a countryman in the company of kings and knights? The earl, his patron, had his place in society and Shakespeare had his own.

(344; my interpretation and translation).

As his fellow-actors are concerned, the sensible Phillips already owned an estate in Mortlake, and also some pieces of land, and was trying to obtain a coat of arms.

Shakespeare was not to write narrative poems any more, because it gave him more pleasure to write plays than the pure forms of which his poems consisted, Van Schendel remarked. These plays were penned in quick succession, *Richard II*, *King John* and *The Merchant of Venice*, the story of a Jew that made a great impact on the audience. It had predecessors, such as *The Jew of Malta* by Christopher Marlowe. In Shakespeare's play we meet someone who, with his body, wants to pay for the happiness of his friend⁵⁰, and another person who, for his friend, breaks his promise to a woman; there are reflections about justice and mercy and a dark foreboding in the lines,

In sooth, I know not why I am so sad.
It wearies me, you say it wearies you,
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn;

(1.1.1-5).

The biographer called these lines an utterance of loneliness, a gentle sadness and in one and the same breath added,

⁵⁰ This is a typically Schendeleian way of presenting a plot briefly. If one would not know the play, one would not guess that these lines are about two friends.

It was also in this period that Shakespeare wrote his first sonnets (345; my interpretation and translation).

Did he link the sadness detected in the lines to which he referred to the atmosphere of the Sonnets, some of which indeed reflect sad thoughts, such as "And barren rage of death's eternal cold?" [Sonnet XIII], "And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud." [Sonnet XXXV], or "Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay," [Sonnet XV] to mention some? But to say that the Sonnets as a whole convey sad reflections is, I think, not true. Besides, the certainty with which Van Schendel declared that Shakespeare wrote his Sonnets at that period is not shared by others.⁵¹

Because of the favourable reception of the two narrative poems and the plays that appeared soon afterwards (and his share in the syndicate of members of The Globe [YS]), Shakespeare had earned enough money to start the procedures for the application for a coat of arms and the acquisition of a suitable dwelling-place in Stratford-upon-Avon. But all these fair prospects paled before the sad tidings that his son Hamnet had died at the age of eleven. Van Schendel put himself as it were in the position of the bereaved father and described delicately what this loss would have meant to him. The biographer was able to do so, because he himself had lost a daughter in infancy, the grief of which lasted until old age (mentioned in Chapter One). Life went on and, according to Van Schendel,

⁵¹ See *William Shakespeare The Complete Works*, gen. eds. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, "Whether Shakespeare began to write the Sonnets at this time (1593-1594) is a vexed question," (xx).

Shakespeare tried to find his mental equilibrium in his work by creating new plays (345). This example once again shows the characteristics of a *vie romancée*, an embroidering of personal reflections around authoritative biographical data. In this connection it is known that Van Schendel buried himself in his writings after the death of his little daughter, and of his first wife.

Shortly before Shakespeare was once again to visit Stratford, the first production of a play, featuring Henry of Monmouth and Falstaff, was staged. This play was much liked, and in particular Sir John Falstaff, the grey-haired youth, as the biographer called him, won the people's affection. He was a talented hedonist who took the long view, in such a way that, when, in the end, his royal friend, the newly acclaimed King Henry V, renounced him, he was not disappointed, but kept on trusting with a childlike *naïveté*. The biographer stated that the King meant the well-being of the people, no roguery, and Falstaff meant loyalty, friendship, love, and all the good in the heart of one man towards another.

Visiting Stratford once again, he was welcomed by his family. His daughters had grown up, the elder one was not a child anymore. He talked with his wife about the past, about a peaceful future and bought the second largest house in Stratford-upon-Avon, the free-hold house of New Place opposite the grammar school to which he went as a boy. No mention is made of a date, but Van Schendel added,

He was still young, thirty-three years old, although

he was much quieter now
(345; my interpretation and translation).

The reader, however, realizes that he is referring to the year 1597.

The next chapter "London" opens with the following sentence of which the literal translation runs as follows,

When the task of two dynasties was nearing its end, England, convinced of its firmly established independence, was eligible to compete (346).

In worldly matters? Referring in all probability to the Houses of Plantagenet and Tudor, Van Schendel proceeded with a description of the position of England and its people as a seafaring nation; its urge for expansion, however, was slumbering as yet. Nevertheless, favoured by the business acumen of the administrators, the country had gained in wealth, trade and industry, as has been stated earlier. But simultaneously at this time much poverty became visible, disgraceful deprivation, which prevented the country from directing its attention to the outside world. The Government had first to reform circumstances and conditions, especially with a view to the situation of the poor.

As has already been mentioned, people had become more interested in religion, as a consequence of which preachers were better listened to. The people perceived that the Established Church had gained the supremacy that the Roman Catholic Church previously had, and right-minded people demanded religious freedom. These demands, with the necessity for the reform of the poor social conditions, induced gentlemen, merchants and

heads of families to claim power in the Commons; they struck an alliance. Van Schendel must have had Queen Elizabeth's reply to these religious and social matters in mind, for in 1597 she

invited the Commons to debate certain specific points of "Ecclesiastical Reformation". And she only staved off a crisis on financial questions by methods which made the problem worse for her successor.

(*History of England*, 102)⁵².

(Remark YS).

Van Schendel also mentioned, that, years later, James I, knowing the strength of the alliance, commented "No Bishop, no King", but he gave no further explanation.⁵³ The biographer continued his views on the last years of Queen Elizabeth's reign by stating that those in power regarded the country as an Eden where only those plants were allowed to grow for which they had given permission, and where the supremacy of the will of the people was compared to a weed that had to be destroyed. It was towards the end of the old era that the struggle, which was to last for half a century, began between the nobility under the banners of Divine Right and the Established Church and hundreds of thousands who had become aware of their duty towards God and their rights among people (346). Van Schendel considered this to be the forerunner of the Civil War which took place half way through the seventeenth century. He further mentioned, that with the death of Philip II the Spanish

⁵² (1960, Aylesbury: The English Universities Press Ltd, 1973) by William McElwee.

⁵³ King James was bent on preserving his Divine Right and the bishops claimed for apostolic authority. The King knew that these two had to stand or otherwise fall together. That is why his famous words, "No Bishop, no King" came into being.

ghost fell into the abyss once and for all and the death of Burghley at the same time marked the break-down of the tyranny. The Queen was old; she was still loved and the country could wait for her to die. But at the same time, while they were looking forward impatiently for the arrival of a new ruler, who, it was thought, would improve the bad conditions of the lower classes, people began to quarrel amongst themselves; Puritans quarrelled with the wicked. In this way Van Schendel sketched Shakespeare's England around the turn of the century, and the rise of Puritanism not only as a religious faction, but as a 'political' instrument as well. He related how young people had two examples before them, that of the fine gentleman and the simple citizen, the epicurean and the labourer. The biographer then gave a scrupulously detailed description both of a gentleman and a citizen. These descriptions also indicate that Van Schendel had read quite a number of books on social history, in particular those on Elizabethan and Jacobean England. See, for instance, in Chapter One the reference to his preference for history books. He ended this digression by stating that young people who earned their living by working, and objected to an unprincipled and iniquitous lifestyle, could not act otherwise but to take sides with the Puritans (347-348).

Also the company of playwrights at the Mermaid had undergone important changes during these years, both as regards its members and their social and political aspirations. Of the old representatives only Lodge, Nashe, Shakespeare and Chettle

were left. The places that had been vacated were occupied by Ben Jonson, Thomas Dekker, John Marston, Thomas Heywood and John Fletcher. The old company of actors and playwrights, who, as has been mentioned earlier, were referred to as 'vagabonds' and were combined in their strife to find a living, was replaced by a couple of newcomers who strove to win fame and jobs that would make them rich. The atmosphere had changed for the worse though. Where formerly good-natured fun was foremost to be heard, now strange hatred, jealousy and disparagement filled the room of the public house. The biographer described meticulously the persons of Ben Jonson and Thomas Dekker and the discrepancies in their lifestyle and opinions, because they represented, as he saw it, the court on the one hand and the rights of the people on the other. He needed to elaborate on the newly-arrived playwrights to make clear that Shakespeare held himself far from the bickering of the others; he did not write pamphlets, since he was not vindictive by nature in the first place ('gentle Will' he was called), and he earned enough money in the second place. Van Schendel's reflections as regards Shakespeare's views of contemporaneous matters once again originated from his lively imagination, for he suspected that Shakespeare still regarded the nobility, who represented the heroes of the bygone chivalrous epics, with the old affection of his dreams as a boy. He might have poked fun, the biographer maintained, at the graceless middle-class morality, the narrow-minded aversion of entertainment, and the humdrum Sunday observance, to be detected in,

Dost thou think because thou art virtuous
there shall be no more cakes and ale?
(*Twelfth Night*, 2.3,101).

He might also have loathed the tyranny of the new dogmas, but he himself was of low descent and knew the injustice of the oppressor. It was only once in a while that Shakespeare expressed his opinions, for instance on the misleading of the choirboys of Blackfriars, the so-called 'eyases', in *Hamlet*. But then he spoke as a father does, who, not being offended, gives sound advice. Jonson passed judgement on Shakespeare, on his knowledge and talents, whereas the latter never uttered a word about the former. Van Schendel ended this reflection by adding that Shakespeare never detected petty characteristics in others (349).

At that time the poet wrote comedies, such as the crazy marriage of Petruchio and Katherine, and the playful, sparkling courtship between Benedick and Beatrice. They seem to reflect witticisms and adventures, reminiscences from his early period in London. He also introduced such figures as Slender, Evans, Caius, Dogberry and Verges. Hero had appeared, affectionate, as a vague dream in silence.

Hero's loveliness in *Much Ado About Nothing* evoked reminiscences of desire still slumbering in his lover's heart. Youth itself was blooming again, but it was of no avail, it was only a dream,

Van Schendel imagined and continued,

The woman with the red lips, whom he tried to find in daytime, for whom he wrote verses of reproach and humility,

In faith, I do not love thee with mine eyes-
(Sonnet 141, "Love in Unloveliness"),

was she the same whom he desired last year? Who was she, what was she called in the loneliness of the night?

What did the biographer mean? I stated earlier that he did not seem to have felt the compulsion to weave a tale around the Dark Lady in the Sonnets, but I read in the afore-mentioned lines that Van Schendel nevertheless wanted to make clear that, in his view, part of the Sonnets are based on Shakespeare's own experiences in sexual matters (350; my interpretation and translation).

However, Van Schendel thought that Shakespeare put these oppressive thoughts out of his mind and in his imagination fresh maidens came to life, Celia, Rosalind, Viola. One day in spring, while he was writing *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*, his youngest brother Edmund arrived in London to try his luck as an actor. It was also in that period that Richard and Cuthbert Burbage told him that they had to vacate the Theatre because the owner of the plot on which it was built had asked an excessively high sum for the renewal of their lease. To counteract this, they had conceived of a plan to tear down the building secretly and erect it on the other side of the Thames between the Swan and Ned Alleyn's playhouse, the Rose. Van Schendel imagined that, when the ferrymen saw the Globe arising above the reeds and the low trees on the other side of the Thames, they rubbed their hands in expectation of the ensuing business. It was this wooden O that was to become the world of the greatest tragedies and it elicited from Dennis Kay, among others, a pronouncement worthwhile quoting, because

his description of playhouses (on the South Bank) is in tune with the one made about those in Holywell commented upon by Van Schendel earlier in this chapter. Kay's lines run as follows,

For when theaters came to be built on the South Bank, their size, design, and organization were strikingly similar to those of the bear gardens, so similar that at least one contemporary illustration mistakenly labeled the Globe as "The Bear Garden".⁵⁴

Besides, there was also the Paris Garden, a beargarden, in this area. From then on the Clink was the most important entertainment district, although on the other side of the river the old playhouses were still in use, such as Blackfriars and the Fortune. The Curtain, however, had become a fencing hall.

One of the first plays to be staged in the Globe was *As You Like It*, the story of the exiled Duke who chooses to live with his friends in the Forest of Arden. As in the golden world of the past they while away their time in a carefree manner, delighting in nature,

And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

(2.1.15-17).

Also the two friends Celia and Rosalind, accompanied by Touchstone, the fool, flee to this forest. According to Van Schendel, the faithful Touchstone explains with a knowing look the differences between life at court and life in the country using the distinct language of a philosopher,

Truly, shepherd, in respect of itself, it is a good life;

⁵⁴ William Shakespeare: *His Life and Times*, 73.

but in respect that it is a shepherd's life, it is
naught. Etc.
Hast any philosophy in thee, shepherd?

(3.2.13-22).

And of course a young nobleman appears on the scene, one worthy of marriage to a lovely girl. Under the trees the respective couples engage in a short-lived play of sighs, amorous looks and kisses, which serve for the lonely spectator, Jacques, as a means for passing the time. He is a poet, who neither writes poetry nor delights in anything except a good song and his own inexpressible innate melancholy. Van Schendel quoted his reflections to underline this mentality,

I have neither the scholar's melancholy, which is
emulation, etc.
and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels,
on which my often rumination wraps me in a most
humorous sadness.

(4.1.10-18).

While Shakespeare composed the comedies, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, he noticed more clearly than before that the narrowness and shadow in his soul hung, like a dark cloud, over the airy, delightful scenes which he depicted (350-253; my interpretation and translation). In Van Schendel's view this was in addition induced by the unrest in society. The Queen, who felt neglected by the small circle of her most trusted advisors, had refused, for quite some time already, to summon Parliament. She had become suspicious, and like Caesar, superstitious in Van Schendel's opinion. Dee, the astrologer, sailed almost daily from Mortlake to the palace in the royal sloop. The queen had heard rumours of a secret correspondence with James of Scotland, and she called Essex,

her favourite, back from Ireland. Envious tales made her renounce him. This was the point where a group of discontented noblemen met at the Earl of Sussex' in the Strand. They decided to bribe the players of The Globe to stage *Richard II* with a view to win - as Van Schendel has it - the mob for the idea of dethroning the old Queen. As is well-known, it all came to nothing for the insurrection was crushed and the rebels were captured (353-355). It is, however, necessary to state that Van Schendel's description of authoritative data in this respect, is, according to reliable sources, incorrect. Essex came back from Ireland without the Queen's consent, and after almost a year of house arrest - she was jealous of his increasing popularity with the people among other things - made an abortive attempt at rebellion in the city of London in February 1601.⁵⁵ The biographer continued to state that the ensuing lawsuit kept the whole of London in suspense, not in the least Shakespeare, for also the Earl of Southampton had to stand trial. The Queen appointed Francis Bacon, who was Essex' friend and greatly indebted to him, Queen's Counsel, so that it was unanimously understood that she did not wish to have the worst punishment inflicted upon her one-time favourite. But Coke, the judge, who was also in favour of Essex, was Bacon's enemy. Despite the judge's attempt to 'save' the accused and Bacon's eloquence, the conflicting feelings effected a counterproductive outcome: Essex was condemned to the block.

⁵⁵ See for instance *The Encyclopedia Britannica* vol. IX, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1910-1926), 11th ed.: 782-783.

Fortunately, owing to his youth, Southampton escaped the death sentence and was put in the Tower instead. Van Schendel drew a comparison between Queen Elizabeth's intentions to save the life of Essex and Brutus's intentions to liberate the city, in *Julius Caesar*, in the following lines,

Also Brutus failed when he wished to liberate the city from Caesar's oppression, because he, sincere himself, put too much faith in others.

(353-354; my interpretation and translation).

Van Schendel visualized Shakespeare as much taken aback on hearing the verdict on his patron. He called it the glaring reality which the playwright had to face when, looking up from his reflections, he saw around him deception, treason and disloyalty. He felt himself powerless in the turmoil of the big struggle, disappointed even. Especially this last feeling aroused in him the pain of a friendship long forgotten and no longer wished for. Was the biographer subtly referring to a couple of the Sonnets which were written to/about, the friend?

That summer of 1601, Van Schendel proceeded, spectators could watch the noble tragedy of *Julius Caesar* in the Globe. The plays, *Poetaster*, by Jonson, and *Satiromastix*, by Dekker, were disposed of by Van Schendel as bickering. It has been hinted above that envy, slander and hatred were rampant among playwrights and actors as a consequence of which the Roman plays, which had become fashionable, were disguised squabbles, understood by everybody. In that same year Shakespeare's father died.

The biographer wondered whether it was providence that

at that time, while talking about the old days, one of Kyd's tragedies was mentioned, namely *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, the story of Hamlet who was called upon by the ghost of his father to revenge evil deeds, even at the peril of his own life. The reference to this tragedy drew Shakespeare's attention and without wasting time, he began to write a new tragedy based on this play. Van Schendel remarked that Shakespeare saw Hamlet in his mind's eye and began to write, forgetting all around him, working with a fever which verged on insanity. And the biographer remarked,

Shakespeare wrote the tragedy of a prince who, apart from having to take revenge, was a poet, noble and gentle as poets are, honest and melancholic by nature, suffering from the unutterable pain of the state of uncertainty. But he was also a poet who had borne the lashes of time, the contempt of haughty people, etc.

Van Schendel almost stumbled over his words to describe in flowery language the characteristics of a poet, and of Hamlet in particular. He continued with, I would say, the promise that Hamlet would be loved, because of the grandeur of his chaste love [indeed!], the honesty of his struggle, and his courage to die, as long as there are people who realize that also a poet, although not given to exploits, is a hero. It is only all too evident that the poet Van Schendel interwove his own feelings with those of Shakespeare's, projected on a personage in one of the latter's plays. Van Schendel wondered,

does not it sound beautifully, these lines, uttered by someone not knowing any fear,

"The dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country, from whose bourn,
No traveller returns-",

(*Hamlet*, 3.1.80-82)

who had wandered through the impenetrable mysteries of anxiety and faith, crying as a child and an old man, when they are alone,

"But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart, but it is no matter-"

(*Hamlet*, 158-159).

The biographer also commented on the last words uttered by Hamlet,

"The rest is silence",
(5.2.310),

as follows,

has the mystery of the soul ever been referred to in a sadder and more beautiful way?

(355; my interpretation and translation).

The following year, in March 1603, the Queen died on the occasion of which many poets wrote elegies, but Shakespeare was not among them, neither among those who composed odes of welcome for the Scottish King James VI as the successor of the late Queen. In the summer London was again visited by the plague and people, in their thousands, fled the city. Shakespeare's company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, who had become The King's Men after the accession of King James I (Royal licence dated 19th May 1603), also left the city and went on tour in the country. Since the plague was rather persistent for some time, the playhouses were only opened in winter (356-357).

When Shakespeare visited Stratford-upon-Avon, accompanied by Edmund this time, he found his parental home quiet, for his siblings had left and his mother lived there on her own. The

citizens treated him with deference, since he was the owner of the second largest house, possessed many acres of arable land, was said to spend more than a thousand pounds per annum, and seemed to have acquired some influence at court. Walking between his grown-up daughters in the garden of New Place, he knew that his youth was past. Looking back at the house, he saw his wife, grey-haired, sitting in the shadow of the door and he remembered a time full of the smell of hay and the song of birds. He also recollected the dreadful nights in London, only a short time ago, always longing for that which makes the fire burn still fiercer.

And frantic mad with evermore unrest.
(Sonnet 147, "My love is as a fever").

But although he did not utter a word, life had not defeated him. These are reminiscences of days past in Shakespeare's life, at least in Van Schendel's imagination. Many of such examples have been drawn attention to and many will follow!

At Christmas time the King's Men played for the first time before King James. Because of the plague, the court was at that time at Wilton House, the home of the Earl of Pembroke. There, amidst many newly created noblemen in their dresses of peach-coloured and white satin, adorned with glittering jewels, he saw his friend who had spent two years in the Tower, wrote the biographer. Southampton, rosy and elegant, addressed him courteously, smiling condescendingly, which would have been appropriate towards a common man with whom one has been on a familiar footing in those foolish

years, and after a few words, off he went to dance with one of the young ladies. Nobody had paid attention to this chance meeting. The player of the King was leaning against the wall under a torch; he brushed his hair out of his face with a vacant look. After having come back into the cold city he wrote, according to Van Schendel, the last sonnets for his friend.

With some delay, King James's solemn coronation entry into London took place in March 1604. The King's Men received scarlet cloth for their liveries, and they walked in the procession as the King's retainers.⁵⁶ The biographer continued to state that from then on it was allowed to play in the city, for the plague was abating. New plays written by Shakespeare were staged, such as a play about Greeks and Trojans full of wise words, called *Troilus and Cressida*, and a play, *Measure for Measure*, about the corruption of a city. The Duke, who was low-spirited and disappointed and of whom it was said that he aimed at self-knowledge, spoke, in the disguise of a foreign friar, the following lines to Escalus,

None, but that there is so great a fever on goodness that the dissolution of it must cure it. Novelty is only in request, and it is as dangerous to be aged in any kind of course as it is virtuous to be inconstant in any undertaking. There is scarce truth enough alive to make societies secure, but security enough to make fellowships accursed. Much upon this riddle runs the wisdom of the world. This news is old enough, yet it is everyday's news.

(3.1.480-488).

Then came Othello, a strong personality with great love,

⁵⁶ See for instance in William Shakespeare *The Complete Works*, "But the players seem not to have processed", xxii.

faith and passion, a man who believed both in the virtue of his tempter and his childlike wife. It was not Iago's evil disposition that led him into insanity, Van Schendel maintained, but his own uncompromising pride, just as it is the rage of the wild animal that drives it into the fire, and not the hunter. In this tragedy of the Moor the pain smarts in a disconsolate heart (357-358).

And once again Shakespeare wrote about hatred and he wept although nobody noticed it; he believed that there was much in the world which caused him to cry. He depicted an old man, good, innocent as a child, a broken-hearted man, who fled the Earl of Gloucester's castle in spite of the raging storm, bore the cold earth and the night rather than the looks and words of those who were once so dear to him. Before preparing himself for death, the old king gave all his possessions away and expected love and rest in exchange. When he addressed his dearest daughter Cordelia, in the expectation of a confirmation of her strong attachment, he shrunk on only hearing the dutiful words of a daughter. But, as we all know, Cordelia spoke in this manner on purpose, because she wanted to set her answer alongside the insincere ones uttered by her two sisters. Van Schendel continued his reading of *King Lear* by telling his readers that the king roamed forlornly about, like a thirsty deer looking for a spring to die. He was followed by devils, monsters in human shape, resembling his daughters, who threatened, damned and chased him. The merciless Heaven, black and horrible like people, chastised him with hail, storm and

lightning, a poor, cold octogenarian in the inclement weather. But the pride of his age was as great as his faith, for he cried out,

You think I'll weep.
No, I'll not weep. I have full cause of weeping,
But this heart shall break into a hundred thousand
flaws
Or ere I'll weep.-

(2.2.456-459).

He did not weep. Heaven itself could not humiliate him who had given everything and waited with the name of Cordelia in his heart. When at last the pale sun shone in his eyes, he wept, for his child, his dearest lay there close to him, lifeless. And Kent's parting words,

Vex not his ghost. O, let him pass. He hates him
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.

(5.3.289-291),

are evidence of his insight in what his liege, his King, must have suffered and thought that his passing away must not be protracted (359-360).

After *King Lear* had been performed in spring, the Globe was again closed on account of the plague and the King's Men had to leave the city and went on tour, the biographer continued (according to his chronology it must have been 1605). He thought that Shakespeare was tired and that the only thing he wished for was rest. There was much talk in the village taverns about religious strife, about God and Satan, about fate and predestination. The King kept himself occupied with questions of supernatural powers. And it was taken for granted that devils could assume human shapes which caused many old

women to be persecuted for fear of the spells they could cast on people. Shakespeare was among those, who, when growing older, became convinced that fate surpassed the God of mercy. It was in control of stars and terrestrial creatures, governed good and evil, and it had visible followers. The most innocent man, pursued by fate, was capable of performing horrible deeds. Accustomed by now to Van Schendel's introduction of the birth of a new play by weaving a story around Shakespeare and certain items supposedly favoured by him, we know that this must be the prelude to *Macbeth* in which fate, and innocence versus evil, feature prominently.

Before Christmas, as soon as the court had moved back to Whitehall, the company of players were called upon to perform before the King. It was a play based on the chronicle of a Scottish king, one of King James's forefathers. This tragedy features a warrior, conqueror of a battle, for whom there was no need to engross himself in such controversies as good and evil. It was Hamlet, in Van Schendel's view, who saw the discrepancies and hesitated. The biographer showed time and again that he envisioned the doubting figure of Hamlet both in the person of Shakespeare himself and in many of the latter's characters. And he went on to state that in this play the main characteristic appears to be the monotonous call for blood from the first fatal day, when the witches accosted Macbeth, until the fulfilment of the last prophecy, "of a man not born of woman". Van Schendel's evaluation of *Macbeth* is indeed outspoken, for he said,

Macbeth was an honest, well-meaning man, who possessed no other vice, but the characteristic that he saw matters in a more terrible state than all his anguish would have warranted. The bloodthirsty women chose him, because his fancy scorched by a treacherous spark ignited by them, tortured him with the glaring light of false greatness and carried him into the night where the heavens glow and mankind cries and laments. Fate dangled a dagger before his eyes and brought him a wife with the courage of a man. And once he became aware of the raw smell of blood, he never again could rest himself without hearing sighs and wails, and witnessing dreadful deeds. Then the witches surrounded him more closely to lash out at him until he himself, almost suffocated, was to curse fate in the following lines,

and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace and fear;
And you all know, security
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.
(*Macbeth*, 3.5.30-33).

Like a blind animal that does not feel its wounds any more he gazed at the wilderness of his anxieties, confounded by the evil hidden in his soul. But on the day of his death the sky cleared, the cries of the murdered died out and Macbeth came to himself again. A pensive, but determined person who with his soft, well-known voice exclaimed,

Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.-
(5.5.22-27).

Van Schendel concluded his remarks with the afterthought, "it is a long time ago that the world came into being". (361-362; my interpretation and translation).

The following spring when Doctor Hall came to London to ask him for the hand of his daughter Susanna, Shakespeare, who, according to the biographer, was tired, decided not to

go on a summer tour with the players, but to go home. He promised, however, to come back without fixing a date. He gave the tragedy on which he was working to Burbage, who was to find a playwright who could finish it. It concerns the story of Timon, whose epitaph reads,

Here lie I, Timon, who alive
All living men did hate.
Pass by and curse thy fill, but pass
And stay not here thy gait.
(*Timon of Athens*, 5.5.75-8).⁵⁷

Shakespeare left London, where he had written the greater part of his work.

The fourth chapter of this biography, "Stratford-upon-Avon", is the story of Shakespeare's last years. Van Schendel would have belied his nature if he had not created a tale around the wedding party of Susanna Shakespeare and Doctor John Hall. It is not a picture with the bride and bridegroom at its centre, but of the father of the bride. Not a word is spent on Anne; on the other hand mention is made of Shakespeare's mother and all the guests one after the other. After the departure first of the married couple and later on of the wedding guests, Shakespeare became engrossed in his thoughts, looking back on his life, starting when he set out for London for the first time. The biographer revived this 'sentimental journey' by using the respective plays as the thread. Shakespeare wondered whether it had been the gods who appeared in his empty fabrications as rulers of fate, playing with the

⁵⁷ Stanley Wells remarked that "this supposition is quite interesting in view of the current belief that the play is partly by Middleton".

people as boys do with flies. This is, as a student of Shakespeare immediately recognizes, a reference to *King Lear*,

As flies to wanton boys are we to th'gods,
They kill us for their sport.
(4.1.37-38).

Or was it nature, a sanctuary to the excitable and the haughty; was it perhaps the master of eternal justice of whom simple people spoke with shy gestures and bright eyes; who was it who formed, ordered and directed the possibilities with which he was born? Who had chosen from the numerous possibilities, infinite as his desires, the darkest, and had them grow into a terror of days and nights? I wonder what induced Van Schendel to suppose that Shakespeare was low-spirited at that period; so far I have not read anything to that effect. Nevertheless, the biographer continued, Shakespeare had left his birthplace as an exuberant and light-hearted young man and had come back in great despair. Then he could have uttered, indeed not rapidly enough, the most frivolous mirth when he, like Berowne playful and bubbling over with vitality, satisfied himself with witticisms and mockeries. Van Schendel referred at this point to Rosaline's estimation of Berowne in the following lines,

His eye begets occasion for his wit,
For every object that the one doth catch
The other turns to a mirth-moving jest,
Which his fair tongue, conceit's expositor,
Delivers in such apt and gracious words
That aged ears play truant at his tales,
And younger hearings are quite ravished,
So sweet and voluble is his discourse.
(*Love's Labour's Lost*, 2.1.69-76),

and continued, stating that Berowne, whom Shakespeare had

known as himself, had become a stranger now. The other characters of his plays appeared in his mind's eyes, the one with a well-known gesture, the other with a smile, all representations of the possibilities discovered and inspired by his love in the course of twenty years. For instance, the "star-cross'd lovers of Verona", and Juliet's murmurs heard in a dream,

My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep.
(*Romeo and Juliet*, 2.1.175-176).

From Juliet Shakespeare's thoughts wandered to the two sometime friends Helen and Hermia, referred to as,

Two lovely berries, moulded on one stem-
(*A Midsummernight's Dream*, 3.2.212),

who lived in a world where fairies interfered in the lives of human creatures. It was a happy time indeed when there existed fairies who liked to fool human beings, but he had already detected the pale germs of danger slumbering in the analogy between insanity, love and poetry (365-366).

Continuing his train of thought, Shakespeare saw Richard Duke of Gloucester appear, a strong man, hungry for power, a proud person who held nobody in esteem except himself,

Our eyrie buildeth in the cedar's top,
And dallies with the wind, and scorns the sun.
(*Richard III*, 1.3.262-263).

There were more of these personages created by him, Cassius, Iago, Edmund, men who wanted to be masters of their own destinies. That is what Shakespeare had always tried to aim at, at least in Van Schendel's opinion.

While reviewing the past, Philip Falconbridge, who seemed

to have been a 'brother' to Berowne and Mercutio, a man with a heart as hard as a rock, also emerged. It had been a flourishing period in which Shakespeare gave shape to so many characters. Out of that same airy nothing, where Juliet and Robin Goodfellow came into existence, all the other figures arose, as for example King Richard, the Jew, after all an ordinary human being, Hotspur and Henry, youthful princes, the patient women, Desdemona, Isabella, Helena and Ophelia, and of course the whole mad gang that came together in the Boar's Head in Eastcheap among whom the old Sir John, who was as genial as Falconbridge, as witty as Touchstone, as roguish as Autolycus and just as worldly-wise as any citizen, swayed the sceptre. Was it not Hamlet who referred to the purpose of a play,

To hold the mirror up to nature?
(*Hamlet*, 3.2.22).

Indeed it had been a merry time there in the Globe with the motley gathering of personages, such as Kit Sly, the tinker, Shallow, Malvolio, Viola and her Duke and the tender girls, Celia and Rosalind, who stole out of King Frederick's castle. In her argument with her father Celia refers to her friendship with Rosalind as follows,

We still have slept together,
Rose at an instant, learned, played, eat together,
And whosoe'er we went, like Juno's swans
Still we went coupled and inseparable.
(*As You Like It*, 1.3.72-75; 366-367).

Then the blossoms were falling off. That was the time that Shakespeare kept watch night and day and often sighed. One duke was banished and fled to the forest of Arden, the

other duke left, of his own free will, his city and his responsibilities, because he wanted to think about difficult questions. When lecturing Claudio in the disguise of a friar, Duke Vincentio uttered these wise words,

What's yet in this that bears the name of life?
(*Measure for Measure*, 3.1.38-9).

The shapes became bigger, heavier, darker and sadder, their voices trembled with disappointment, which could not be healed, or forgotten, and which aged them. The biographer commiserated with Lear, who claimed,

I am a man
More sinned against than sinning.
(*King Lear*, 3.2.69-70),

and portioned out his kingdom in order to remove the burden that the office of kingship had placed upon him, in the following lines,

See how the bad ones and the good ones fought each other and fate damned him;
(308; my interpretation and translation).

Timon left the hypocritical society and found a grave near the weeping sea; Macbeth had played with blood and lost,

I have lived long enough.
(*Macbeth*, 5.3.24);

Hamlet succumbed too early to his heavy duty, and Horatio had to continue his story; after having witnessed Lear's sad passing away, the good Kent could only utter these words,

I have a journey, sir, shortly to go:
(*King Lear*, 5.3.297).

Van Schendel interpolated this biography with a few lines to describe contemporaneous intellectual conventions. For that

matter he maintained, that, when the wind from the south blew the renaissance over 'Merrie Old England', people's opinions changed drastically, as has been discussed at an early stage in this thesis. The ideas as regards their destinies depended both on the germs already planted in their souls and the fruits they thought to reap. They wondered about the meaning of the influence of the church. One believed in stars, others in gods - judges, however, not understood by any intellect -, another believed in providence, again someone else in his own power. The most pious of them, Edgar, could only repeat,

Ripeness is all.
(*King Lear*, 5.2.11).

This interpolation serves to show how difficult it was to make a choice, and the conclusion runs as follows, namely, that the preference of Shakespeare also remained unknown, although in his plays, he highlighted various current conventions.

The biographer suspected that the main reason for Shakespeare to go home was not to rest, but the wish to enjoy the happiness of 'old age'. The playwright became a keen gardener and with his younger daughter Judith he was often busy in the garden of New Place, planting shrubs, flowering plants, herbs and fruit trees. Among the latter was a mulberry tree, which he himself planted and which after the poet's death began to live a life of its own in the ensuing legends. References to flowers, shrubs and trees are scattered all through his plays.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ See for instance *Shakespeare's Flowers* (London: Pavilion Books Ltd, 1994) by Jenny de Gex.

In the year that Shakespeare's granddaughter was born, Van Schendel continued, in the same year that in London under the clock of Bow in Bread Street another poet saw the light, a poet who was to sing about Paradise, the King's Men went again on a tour in the country. As has been discussed previously, this is another clear example of the manner in which the biographer referred to data of a public character in veiled language (terseness and implicitness), for instance, by not indicating that his granddaughter was born in 1608, and that the poet in question was John Milton, who is best known for *Paradise Lost* (367-369). However this may be, Hemynge, Condell and Burbage went to see their friend in Stratford-upon-Avon. It was a happy gathering, as it used to be in the past. Since they had last seen him, Will looked much healthier. That is why they pressed him to write a new comedy for the Globe. When a play by Shakespeare was announced, theatre-goers came in great numbers and the box-office receipts were indeed satisfactory. Shakespeare agreed to compose a new play for the King's Men. The play he wrote about a British king does not fit in the category of comedies though. It is the story of Cymbeline, who lost his sons, Guiderius and Arviragus, however, to find them eventually, and of his only daughter, Imogen, and her faith in and deep love for her husband, who did not understand her 'reserve'. She combines, in Van Schendel's view, several qualities of Shakespeare's heroines, such as Isabella's purity, Hermione's tolerance, Juliet's passionate love, Portia's reserved attitude, Rosalind's

childish cheerfulness, and she speaks - with a soft voice - always the simple truth like Cordelia. The biographer himself seemed to have been captivated by Imogen's charm, for he exclaimed,

Look at the lines used by the poet, when he directs the attention to one spot on her body, describing it as a jewel!

On her left breast
A mole, cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops
I'th' bottom of a cowslip.
(*Cymbeline*, 2.2.37-39).

Guiderius and Arviragus, who lived with their reputed father in the hills of Wales, which resembled in Shakespeare's description the countryside along the Avon, were very pleased with the unknown Imogen who arrived unexpectedly in boy's clothes at their cave. They called her 'brother' and when she seemed to have died, their grief was immense, although they had known her for a very short period. This grief turned them into poets, Van Schendel said. Arviragus mourns,

Thou shalt not lack
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose, nor
The azured harebell, like thy veins; no nor
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander
Outsweetened not thy breath. The ruddock would
With charitable bill - O bill sore shaming
Those rich-left heirs that let their fathers lie
Without a monument! - bring thee all this,
Yea, and furred moss besides, when flowers are none,
To winter-gown thy corpse.

and Guiderius chides him,

Prithee, have done,
And do not play in wench-like words with that
Which is so serious. Let us bury him
And not protract with admiration what
Is now due debt. To th'grave.
(*Cymbeline*, 4.2.221-234)
(370-372).

Van Schendel then went on with the following story. When on the farms around Stratford-upon-Avon, the sheep-sharing festivities took place, and Shakespeare, according to an old, wide-spread custom, rode to some of them, he saw a play in his mind's eye with as its leitmotif again lost happiness. But this happiness was recovered in the end, as in *Cymbeline*. Van Schendel noticed that as Shakespeare grew older, he became more inclined to use symbols in his plays, which was already visible in *King Lear*. Like the sons of *Cymbeline*, Perdita, in *The Winter's Tale*, grew up in the country. A shepherd found her as a babe in arms on the coast of Bohemia, a jewel thrown away. When Florizel, the prince of that country, was hawking there, he saw her and fell in love with her. At the sheep-shearing feast Perdita was the most beautiful of all the girls. The festivities were also attended by the old King, Polixenes and his counsellor Camillo, both in disguise, for they had heard rumours that Florizel, the only son of Polixenes, was wooing a shepherdess. They were welcomed by Perdita as follows,

Give me those flowers there, Dorcas. Reverend sirs,
For you there's rosemary and rue. These keep
Seeming and savour all the winter long.
Grace and remembrance be to you both,
And welcome to our shearing.

(*The Winter's Tale*, 4.4.73-77).

Sir, the year growing ancient,
Not yet on summer's death, nor on the birth
Of trembling winter, the fairest flowers o'th'season
Are our carnations and gillyvors,
Which some call nature's bastards -.

(4.4.79-83).

Here's flowers for you:

Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram,
The marigold, that goes to bed wi'th'sun,
And with him, rises, weeping. These are flowers
Of middle summer, and think they are given
To men of middle age. You're very welcome.
(4.4.103-108).

So there are flowers for everybody, for all ages. Then time, which clears up misunderstandings, brought the loveliest creature, adorned with flowers, back to Hermione and Leontes, who, according to Van Schendel, once in his ignorance despised her (I think it was rather malice induced by jealousy! [YS]). The parents were happy after so much misery, although their voices sounded somewhat subdued, because their misunderstanding had killed Mamilius the little prince who had begun to tell the sad tale.

Some people in their old age remember smilingly these fairy tales, but young people do not understand their smiling faces. Van Schendel suspected that there in the quiet of Stratford-upon-Avon Shakespeare conceived his last play about love, the purest emotion between people. With the exception of her father, Miranda had never seen a human being, so once she came in touch with them, she was filled with wonder. Prospero had experienced men's inflictions, but his art did not give him the peace he had wished for and he longed to be again on friendly terms with those who had offended him and were, just as he was, weak mortals. The young man was frightened when he saw the wondrous spectacle disappear into nothing. The

wise man, however, encouraged him as follows⁵⁹,

Be cheerful, sir.
Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air;
And like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-clapped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

(*The Tempest*, 4.1.147-158).

Another couple of years and sleep would follow, "Be cheerful, sir!" Would it not be better to be a player with other players in a dream than to be a magician? He broke his wand to live from then on a simple life. Liberation, it is the resounding refrain of freedom all through the play, on which the epilogue, delivered by Prospero, also ends,

As you from crimes would pardoned be,
Let your indulgence set me free.
(Epilogue, 19-20).

The biographer expressed his ideas on the publication of the King James version of the Bible, which took place almost simultaneously with the creation of *The Tempest* in 1611. In his view new times had arrived and the language was to bear witness to the blessings of the most gifted poet and of the

⁵⁹ This is once again an example of implicitness, terseness of the language. Still I cannot understand Van Schendel's purpose for doing so, because, when he began to write *Shakespeare* in February 1910, he announced this in a letter to his friend Aart van der Leeuw, "I am going to write a life of Shakespeare, which, I hope, will induce those men, among whom especially my friend in Voorburg [meaning Willem Witsen, YS], to read Shakespeare." (G.H. 's-Gravesande, *Arthur van Schendel: zijn Leven en Werk*, 39). In other words, those for whom this biography was meant were not supposed to know, for instance, who this young man was! Besides, L. Turksma maintained, referring to Van Schendel's biography of Shakespeare, that "later [in 1922, YS] it was enlarged with a discussion of some of the playwright's best known plays. One has to have seen or read them, however, if one is to understand this discussion." (*Het Goede Leven: Het Werk van Arthur van Schendel*, 20; my interpretation and translation).

Holy Book, of belief in the beauty of this life on the one hand, and of faith in eternal blessedness on the other (373-375).

It happened that Shakespeare occasionally rode to London to see his friends and when they were sitting in the Mermaid the friends pressed him to write another profitable play. In a cheerful mood Shakespeare promised to write a play on condition that one of the younger playwrights would lend a hand. During the short period that Shakespeare stayed in London, John Fletcher came in the mornings to the back room of the tavern to write a history play, supervised and guided by Shakespeare and before the latter left the capital, Burbage was happy to be in the possession of the manuscript of *Henry VIII*.

When this play was performed for the first time in 1613, the firing of cannon set the thatched roof on fire and the theatre burnt completely down. Van Schendel suggested that probably most of Shakespeare's manuscripts too were consumed by the flames.

In the autumn of 1614, Shakespeare was again in London for business purposes, and again his friends begged him to write a new play. Also this time he agreed and so young playwrights came to see him to discuss the outlines of a play, which they called *Pericles*. Van Schendel referred to the fact that Hemynge and Condell did not accept it as a concoction of Shakespeare, because of the close cooperation with others; that is why it was not included in the 1623 Folio. Having said

this, the biographer's attaching the year of 1614 to the entering of *Pericles* on the Stationers' Register is incorrect. As hinted at above, the authoritative chronological sequence in which Van Schendel told the story of the entering on the Stationers' Register of Shakespeare's plays, and their first publication and/or performance, deviates from the present one(s), for whatever reason. Anyway Shakespeare departed in the spring of 1615; it had been his last visit to London and to the Davenants in Oxford as well.

He was much devoted to his granddaughter; they went together to the May feast and with Judith he went to the harvest festivities. When the November mists came and the sharp morning winds blew, many old people fell ill, including Shakespeare. It was a busy time for Doctor Hall. Shakespeare recovered, but was still rather weak around Christmas. It did not prevent him from telling little Elizabeth, his granddaughter, about the fairies who do not dare to appear to the people wherever on earth, because the cock has told about the birth of the holy child. The grandmother, the doctor and his wife, strict persons, ill-disposed to superstitious, heathen stories, listened, surprised, how he, who on account of his 'wicked' occupation was supposed to have never been a dutiful Christian, could tell a child in simple language, without using biblical terms, about suffering and bliss. Van Schendel is here at his best, inventing these homely scenes around Shakespeare. It could have been wishful thinking on his own part. The more so, for in retrospect, in later years World War

II kept him and his wife separated from their grandchildren, and when he at last came back to Holland, he was ill, too ill to have them sitting on his knee, listening to his tales.

After the feast of Epiphany in 1616 the Shakespeares were making preparations for the marriage of Judith and Thomas Qui-ney. Shakespeare was often ill in bed with fever. Whether this was caused by the rains or the bad sewerage in Chapel Lane Doctor Hall did not know and his medicine did not have the desired effect. Shakespeare made his will, but revised it after Judith's marriage.

Ben Jonson and Michael Drayton came to see Shakespeare; they talked about London, plays and players and much drink was consumed. It happened to have been the playwright's last contact with representatives of his former occupation, for soon thereafter, on the twenty-third of April 1616, he died and was buried in the Holy Trinity Church.

Van Schendel ended this eulogy stating that every year towards the end of April thousands of flowers are laid on Shakespeare's tombstone in the church and festivities are being held with plays and concerts. But usually it is a peaceful town; one hears the same vesper bell of the Guild Chapel every evening and around the church where one of the most admirable poets was laid down to rest the wind sighs through the elm trees, bare in winter, green in summer (376-378).

CHAPTER THREE

ARTHUR VAN SCHENDEL'S VIEWS ON FIVE OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS, SHAKESPEARE PERFORMED IN THE NETHERLANDS: ARTHUR VAN SCHENDEL'S INVOLVEMENT, AND A DISCUSSION OF HIS ONLY PLAY *PANDORRA*

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In the introduction I referred to Robert H. Leek's *Shakespeare in Nederland: Kroniek van Vier Eeuwen Shakespeare in Nederlandse Vertalingen en op het Nederlands Toneel* as an authoritative work which gives a very detailed account of Shakespeare's reception in The Netherlands so far as translations and performances of the dramatist's plays are concerned. This excellent and well-documented work has, unfortunately, not reached a wide circle of readers outside the country. The Dutch language in which it is written, spoken only in The Netherlands and Flemish-speaking Belgium, forms an insurmountable barrier. It appears that the choice between the publication of the English original of this work, Leek's two-volumed Dissertation, and the Dutch version depended on the expected sales figures.¹ This argumentation is greatly to be regretted, for otherwise the reception of English works in the Dutch literary world, in particular so far as Shakespeare is concerned, would have come to the fore more prominently.

¹ The source for this remark is A.J. Hoenselaars, University Utrecht, The Netherlands.

After these preliminary lines and the discussion of *Shakespeare* it is sensible to comment first on the discussions of five of Shakespeare's plays which were added in the second enlarged edition, before viewing Van Schendel's other involvements with Shakespeare's drama.

3.2. ARTHUR VAN SCHENDEL'S VIEWS ON FIVE OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

ROMEO AND JULIET

This is the first of the five plays commented upon by Van Schendel. He did not give a complete evaluation of these plays, but confined himself to selected parts. In his introductory lines he expressed his view of love. He said that both young and old, whether or not having experienced love, either positively or negatively, will look with admiration at the pure passion which causes two persons to lose themselves in each other. Van Schendel supposed that such a story has always been favoured, because - in quiet moments - everyone has yearned that such a love would also be part of his or her life. Further he wondered why especially this story about the lovers of Verona had been adopted by story-tellers in many countries. The story had been circulating for some time before Matteo Bandello heard it and thought it perfect. He then wrote down this story, which travelled north, contributing to Europe's imagination the elegance and richness of Italian ideas, to be read or heard eventually by the poet in London. He understood at once the greatness of this story as he would un-

derstand, years later, that Hamlet and Macbeth were personages capable of being infused with human greatness. Van Schendel supposed that Shakespeare grasped that Juliet and her Romeo had found in one night the essence of youthful passion, the truth that passion is the road to heavenly bliss, although it leads man beyond the boundaries of life, both to the abyss and to heaven. In Van Schendel's view Shakespeare was a seeker, a lover, a poet. His power must have been remarkable, if one reminds oneself that the dramatist was capable of expressing such wisdom while he was still in his thirties.

In the period that stirred men's souls, the period that saw the awakening of England by the music of life from the south, man began to think of carefreeness and liberation of the old bonds. Then, in spite of the gloom of darker things in life, young people could not help being full of joy and laughter. Judging from these lines, Van Schendel experienced the lightness of spring as well as the doom of a dark night in the annihilation of life when reading this play. One hears him explain this in his description of the time and setting of *Romeo and Juliet*, in the use of the poet's new language, as Van Schendel referred to it, the language which enabled him to write about these discrepancies between joyful life and annihilation, delight and despair, love and hate in a "two hours' traffic". It is, he said, the atmosphere of the sweetness of the southerly spring which gives a delicate aspect to this tragedy (379-380; my interpretation and translation). It is, however, the fresh breath of our spring in which this play

begins and the cool night of our summer, dark and deep, in which it ends, everything that might awaken imagination from its slumber, which tempts and caresses all that lives in that healthy atmosphere of festivities and angry quarrels, musings and frivolous words, pleasant domesticity and the wonder of an embrace, and above all, this red flame of desire sparked off in the souls. This awakening of two young souls, a sudden, clear awakening into reality, that is what may be heard in the story of Romeo and Juliet, in the fast heart-beat of amazement, the sigh of the enjoyment which ebbs away, anxiety that the world cannot be true, or cannot last. It is, according to Van Schendel, this "touch of nature" (*Troilus and Cressida* 3.3.169), felt by everyone when all appears in a new shape, which breaks open the light within and makes the eyes of the newly-awakened sparkle.

Even that very day Romeo is sighing for another girl, called Rosaline, who does not pay attention to him, but only a few hours later, Van Schendel continued, one can hear Romeo's poetical outpourings about a different girl,

O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
As a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear-
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear.
(1.5.43-46).

After their first meeting where there has scarcely been an opportunity for a word, Juliet's heart is filled with conflicting feelings. She wants to have a private talk with the stars. One hears her begging and trying to come to terms with the name of Romeo. Her voice betrays a flash of madness and

at the same time a touch of womanly wiles,

O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name,
Or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

(2.1.75-78).

In the biographer's view these lines may arouse sympathy in the listener, because of their beauty in the first place, and of the beauty of those two souls singing far beyond earthly boundaries in the second place. And to his delight Van Schendel experienced even in the language of those two souls many differences, differences between the language of a man and a woman.

J. Do not swear at all,
Or if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
Which is the god of my idolatry,
And I'll believe thee.

R. If my heart's dear love-

J. Well, do not swear. Although I joy in thee,
I have no joy of this contract tonight.
It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden,
Too like the lightning which doth cease to be
Ere one can say it lightens. Sweet good night.
(2.1.154-162).

Yes, it is fear, Van Schendel remarked, interpreting, as his habit is, the afore-mentioned lines freely and he went on to elaborate on this item. Indeed, fear that the enchantment will flee and bliss will die out like a dream. Romeo is frightened at the idea of the ties of marriage, Juliet is worried about her virginity, as a woman has to give it up, about all the physical and emotional stages between virginity and motherhood, which a man can understand, but cannot feel, and, besides, the female mind senses that it may become a loadstar.

At Romeo's departure darkness descends on those two, the darkness of the end in which they wander about despairingly until they return to the solid ground of life. Van Schendel wondered, how far they have moved away from the world and the useful wise advice of Friar Lawrence,

Therefore love moderately, long love doth so,
Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.
(2.5.14-15).

In Mantua Romeo still speaks intelligibly, but when, on his return, he discovers Juliet's body, and understands that the sun has set, he becomes just for a short while the Romeo he was before the day began. Then reality is abandoned and his language becomes the language of a play. It is the same with Juliet, for when she awakens from her unnatural sleep, she inquires,

Where is my lord?
I do remember well where I should be,
And there I am. Where is my Romeo?
(5.3.148-150).

In Van Schendel's view the poet finished this tragedy nobly, for it was to be a grand sight, the powerless prince, the friar stripped of wisdom, the fathers and mothers without children now, standing before the corpses of the lovers, who died because happiness proved to be too heavy. There were no tears, for the secret of joy and grief appeared so powerful (381-382).

Incidentally, already before 1922 when Van Schendel enlarged his life of Shakespeare with a discussion of five of the plays of the famous playwright, he had been involved in

productions of these plays in one way or other. In 1911, for instance, only one year after the publication of the first edition of his *Shakespeare*, a Dutch theatre group, De Hagespelers, under their director Eduard Verkade, a close friend of Gordon Craig's, staged *Romeo en Julia* (*Romeo and Juliet*). Eduard Verkade remarked afterwards and I quote in translation,

It proved to be an event. There were many *literati* present, also on account of a new translation of the play [into Dutch] by the poet/painter Jacques van Looy, among them Arthur van Schendel, our distinguished Shakespeare scholar.²

In the autumn of 1916 Die Haghespelers³ put *Romeo en Julia* in their repertory, again directed by Eduard Verkade. Van Schendel wrote an appreciative review, contrary to others, who were not so pleased with this production. The novelist Top Naeff, for instance, was outspoken in her criticism; she had not a good word for it.⁴ In his review the biographer gave a summary of the play and the reasons for being pleased with this production. These reasons are of a general nature and will be treated further on in this chapter.

HAMLET

This is the second play discussed by Van Schendel, who was a great admirer of Hamlet, the poet, as he called him. On many

² E.F. Verkade-Cartier van Dissel, *Eduard Verkade en zijn Strijd voor een Nieuw Toneel*, 193.

³ Die Haghespelers was a newly-established theatre company; several actors of the 'old' company De Hagespelers joined this group.

⁴ See *Shakespeare in Nederland*, etc. by Robert H. Leek. Top Naeff wrote in a review,
It is a sepulchral vault from the beginning till the end:
the chilly breath of death lies over life and the lovers (138).

occasions he had said that Shakespeare imbued this Danish prince with traits of his own, and he went so far as to say, that in a way 'Hamlet is Shakespeare'. Whatever the case may be, the character of Hamlet remained a mystery to Van Schendel. He remarked, conforming to established ideas, that no other tragedy has evoked so much comment in the form of new productions, monographs and articles, and no other tragedy has proved to be an everlasting inspiration for those who think about ways to fathom this enigmatic leading character. Indeed, in Van Schendel's view, Hamlet's character displays various notions of his inner life, notions often contradicting one another. They give the audience the impression that in this figure of Hamlet great mysteries lie hidden, because after witnessing a performance of *Hamlet*, many a person would return home with a feeling of sadness, a kind of dissatisfaction at not being able to understand the motives of the prince. And a reader, having read the play over and again, might put down the copy, absorbed in impenetrable thoughts of a dark nature, and wonder in the oppressive quiet of his own heart whether this sadness brought about by the play is in essence just part of everybody's life. These questions about the why and wherefore, being of all ages, will always remain unsolved. Even the happy ones who know and understand, and believers who hardly know any doubt, may see in this dark prince the burden they have to bear as well.

Following this general introduction, expanding his own thoughts and feelings, Van Schendel gave a summary of Shake-

Shakespeare's successive plays, indicating that the sadness could already be heard in the early play, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and became more forceful in later plays. This item has been mentioned in great detail in Chapter Two, so that this train of thought will not be continued. Then the following question presents itself, namely why the brilliant light of these plays, depicting beautiful times, had to be darkened, to be replaced eventually with the riddles and mysteries in which Hamlet wanders about. Some, so Van Schendel thought, were of the opinion that the reason lay in much grief concerning Shakespeare's social dissatisfaction which has been commented upon earlier in this thesis. Others thought that the hard world robbed him of his hopes. The poet who, like the madman and the lover, imagined that heaven and earth were of equal beauty, experienced along roads of bitter difficulties that the world was actually a salesroom where interest and avarice were most prominent, where all the noble deeds and true love seen in his dreams were measured against fixed standards. Some rather silly people, eager to find a simple reason to describe Shakespeare's sadness, chattered about the poet's unhappy love for a certain "mistress what's-her-name" (Van Schendel's reference, 384), a lady too much exalted, and to boot, he was a married man and earned a living in the service of a Lord.

Those who have often read *Hamlet* and the following tragedies are not content with these suppositions, however, and Van Schendel continued to offer yet another possible source for this sadness, which is not to be found in Shakespeare's

attitude towards man or the world, but in the deepest recesses of his inner being, there where he talks to his Lord. Van Schendel began with the bare facts of the playwright's involvement in religion and ended with all that might be gleaned from his works to compose an insight into his philosophy. Shakespeare was born a Protestant, and in spite of some rumours, he was certainly not a recusant, at least on the authority of the biographer. Shakespeare is reputed to have had a thorough knowledge of the Bible. To base this on bible texts sometimes alluded to or quoted in the plays which are possibly derived from texts heard on Sundays at a time of forced attendance at Church is at least doubtful, said Van Schendel. On the whole, Christian principles are not explicitly propagated in the plays, although it should be immediately admitted that the commandment of charity is repeatedly referred to. The plays resound with such notions as leniency, charity, mildness, and amiability among people, urged on by the playwright with such an unpretentiousness that one might hear the voice of him, referred to by his friends as 'Gentle Will' (383-384).

Examples of these incitements may readily be pointed out by Isabella in *Measure for Measure*,

How would you be
If He which is the top of judgement should
But judge you as you are?

(2.2.77-79),

and also,

Go to your bosom;
Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know
That's like my brother's fault; if it confess
A natural guiltiness, such as is his,

Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue
Against my brother's life.

(2.2.140-146).

Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* says,

consider this:
That in the course of justice none of us
Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy,
(4.1.195-197),

and Hamlet does it in his own way for he urges Polonius,

Use every
man after his desert, and who should scape whipping?
Use them after your own honour and dignity -
the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty.
(2.2.532-536).

Having put forward four possible reasons for a justification of the sadness which grips the spectator or reader of *Hamlet* and finding none of them sufficiently accommodating, Van Schendel dropped the topic. As the biographer thought that contemporary beliefs, thoughts and ideas were incorporated in the plays, he gave a picture of the place of religion in everyday life.

The period of the English Renaissance was rich in controversies, he said. On the one hand the people treated both the Old Church and the Established Church with indifference, which could be proved, in his view, by the equanimity with which the people under Queen Mary underwent the return to the Church of Rome, just as they did when the Church under Queen Elizabeth again took to Anglicanism and church attendance was forced on the people. On the other hand, Van Schendel said, religious feelings were strong, an example of which is the Puritan be-

lief, and the belief in the power of stars over human fate [I for one would not attach the word religious feelings to the 'power' of stars, YS] (384-385). He continued his description of the English Renaissance towards the end of the century with the rise of empiricism, which is, as is well-known, the drive to learn about man and nature through experimental evidence. Empirical research began to establish itself, and those with their feet firmly anchored in the time of the revival of art and literature based on the classics, and still allowing religion a place in their lives, experienced difficulties in adopting these changed principles, on account of the fact that they caused them to lose their tranquillity and happiness. Doctrines put forward by the Church, as for example, predestination, free will, reward, punishment, and especially salvation in the hereafter, were dismissed as foolish by those who had broken their ties with the Church. As for his share in future salvation, of which he was at least in doubt as regards its fulfilment, man freed from the bonds with the Church, sought all his happiness in the present. In place of his former adherence to the Church, he used his reason to decide about good and evil, and his reason found,

there is nothing
either good or bad but thinking makes it so.
(*Hamlet*, 2.2.251-252).

In place of religion, the inner knowledge of the supernatural, man's conscience had become the loadstar of his life. Summarizing, Van Schendel suggested: the young people of those days, acknowledging no other above them, now that they had disco-

vered their own greatness, did not ask God for help, but their own judgement told them how to conduct their lives.

Elaborating on this assumption, Van Schendel pointed to words uttered by Hamlet as a mouthpiece for those young people who tried to find their way in the world of new principles, abandoning religion, but still holding on to something mysterious, a divinity:

and that should teach us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will-
(*Hamlet*, 5.2.9-11).

When Hamlet is compelled by the ghost to take revenge on his uncle for the murder of his father - a task which his conscience already at the outset considers, in the first place, to be too heavy, as may be read in the lines,

The time is out of joint. O cursèd spite
That ever I was born to set it right!
(1.5.189-190),

and, in the second place, would endanger his life - he wonders whether it would be better to live with a "sea of troubles", or to put an end to his life. But one's consciousness turns one into cowards and this melancholic thought does not trigger off a sensible answer; on the contrary, it left Hamlet with still more unanswerable questions, such as,

To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause.
(3.1.67-70).

Generalizing, Van Schendel remarked that to people without religious beliefs a question about the hereafter will remain a

question, and concentrating on Hamlet, he went on,

if Hamlet had been convinced of life hereafter, of eternal sleep, he would have wished it with all his heart, but the fear of uncertain prospects makes him endure this life with its evils rather than exchange it for one of which he knows nothing.

(387; my interpretation and translation).

And the biographer added that this fear is inherent in every human being. On the one hand the soul which believes in eternal bliss, and confidently expects heavenly grace, might have had this fear once, but above all it is convinced that the hand that brought about its creation should treat it well. On the other hand, however, the seeker who has renounced his faith pauses to think about this

dread of something after death.

(*Hamlet*, 3.1.80).

Wisdom is nowhere to be found, and he turns to the temporal.

The seeker of those days found himself, that is the power of man, so wonderful, that he did not see any more that actually man is God's creature. But also the playwright who knew about the

Undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns,

(*Hamlet*, 3.1.81-82),

and that

A man's life is no more than to say 'one'.

(*Hamlet*, 5.2.75),

had to find a path to walk along: it was not inner knowledge, but knowledge gained by experience which would lead him,

Knowledge, the wing wherewith we fly to heaven.

(*2 Henry VI*, 4.7.73).

I think that Van Schendel assumed far too much with regard to

Shakespeare's personal beliefs. One might, of course, glean current ideas from his plays - the dramatist put in Hamlet's mouth the lines about the actors which have been quoted earlier in this thesis,

for they are the abstracts and brief chronicles
of the time

(2.2.527-528) -

but they need not reflect Shakespeare's personal ideas. "And see," Van Schendel said, "what this knowledge has done to Hamlet." (388, my interpretation and translation). Despite his newly-discovered knowledge, Hamlet harks back to his former beliefs and cries out,

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy.

(1.5.168-169).

Pride, based on judgement on the one hand, and the inherent faithfulness, not caused by religious beliefs, on the other, is the struggle in which Hamlet loses his hope for the future. It is the same struggle that will be heard in *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, causing sharp confusion. In Van Schendel's view, the dramatist found back the music of his heart in the last plays. Not wisdom discovered by the mind, but love, desiring nothing, is the leitmotif in them.

Through the centuries Hamlet's anxiety has captivated many, Van Schendel remarked. The unrest of his soul, which remained a mystery, has appealed to many, but in spite of all this, Hamlet has always been loved, rather than censured (386-389; my interpretation and translation).

KING LEAR

It is a dark unmerciful world under the spell of an unknown power in which King Lear spends the last years of his life. According to Van Schendel, the dramatist's mind perceived a happy truth which could give peace and quiet, but his heart was heavy, because of people's miseries and doubts that oppressed them.

Like the other tragedies, *King Lear* hinges on contrasts, this time caused by the legal aspects involving the nomination of an heir; a natural son in this respect has no claim. As the biographer saw it, Shakespeare seemed to have given priority to the heart above the reason, for Edgar says,

speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.
(*The Tragedy of King Lear*, 5.3.300).

Anyway the old King of Britain, knowing that he cannot reign forever, decides to divide his kingdom among his three daughters, but he makes a reservation, so that the appearances of his power will be upheld. He has always wanted to keep his youngest daughter Cordelia, whom he loves very much, for himself. He does not see in his doting blindness that even the strongest will cannot control the future. Van Schendel surely referred to the episode when Lear asks his daughters how great their love for him is. He intends to give Cordelia the greatest moiety, but her words devastate his illusions, said Van Schendel. With the ensuing denunciation of Cordelia it is as if evil passions and practices are unfettered. This is the first rumbling tone of the thunder in this tragedy, man's

weakness which has no other ruler of his fate but himself; in other words, in Van Schendel's view, the dramatist saw that in those turbulent days people let themselves be guided only by their own decisions. He noticed the frozen smile of cynicism, the fragile happiness of passions, which slip by in a few moments, the shy looks of superstition, the struggle of the mind, deceit, or at best the joyless acquiescence in those obscure phenomena in life. With these bleak prospects before him, "how else could the end of the sad grey-haired king be depicted but as a curse in an evil world", Van Schendel remarked. As said before, the world is in a turmoil and Gloucester says,

These late eclipses in the sun and moon
portend no good to us.
(*The Tragedy of King Lear*, 1.2.101-102).

Kent, who undergoes the sorrow patiently, has this to say,

It is the stars,
The stars above us, govern our conditions;
(*The History of King Lear*, 16.33-34).

Gloucester, blind both in eye and soul, struck by the deceit of his son Edmond, acquiesces and addresses the gods as follows,

O you mighty gods,
This world I do renounce, and in your sights
Shake patiently my great affliction off!
If I could bear it no longer, and not fall
To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,
My snuff and loathed part of nature should
Burn itself out.

(*The Tragedy of King Lear*, 4.5.34-40).

And one of the most evil characters of this play, Edmond, who hails nature as his goddess - "Thou nature art my goddess"

(1.2.1) - is an example of those who express the truth, as they think, that man is able to rule his passions of his own accord,

This is the excellent foppery of the world: that when we are sick in fortune - often the surfeits of our own behaviour - we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and stars, as if we were villains on necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance, drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence, and all that we are evil in by a divine thrusting on.

(1.2.116-124).

He continues, saying,

Fut! I should
have been that I am had the maidenliest star in the
firmament twinkled on my bastardizing.

(1.2.128-130).

Still, having unburdened himself, Edmond only pursues the lower passions of avarice and lust, said Van Schendel. According to him, in *King Lear* Shakespeare depicted women like Goneril and Regan, creatures lacking sound reasoning, obsessed by power and wantonness. It must have been a bitter experience for the dramatist, he said, to depict such women, whereas in the earlier plays, most of the girls were happy, lovely creatures much inclined to find their true loves. As has been indicated on many occasions, Van Schendel's imagination knew no bounds. His reading of Shakespeare's plays kindled his fantasy and appeared not to be an altogether objective reading, but as long as it is acknowledged as such, he will not be misunderstood.

The biographer wondered how it came to pass that Lear's daughters, Goneril and Regan, just for displaying their ingra-

titute, had to be robbed of their hearts as well; to put it differently "is ingratitude such a vice that more vices have to be showered on them?" (392; my interpretation and translation). At any rate, even Edmond and Iago, and to a certain extent Lady Macbeth, are not such monsters as Goneril and Regan are, because in their cases some excuse may be put forward, Van Schendel suggested. Still it is a pity that Cordelia, just for speaking the lines as she does to express her love for her dear father, has been censured by him and been rejected as a daughter. The more endearing are his words, after having undergone bad treatment at the hands of his other relatives and gone through phases of madness and recovery, to discover that on the command of Edmond and Goneril his dearest Cordelia has been killed,

And my poor fool is hanged.
(5.3.281).

The pain he felt must have given this old king with his weak constitution extraordinary power, because then he could have killed Cordelia's hangman. He clearly realizes that this daughter had always treated him with love, in spite of his ill-natured behaviour, and he remembers that,

Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman.
(5.3.247-248).

Another father, who has suffered from the evil deeds of his unnatural son, whose eyes have been put out, and who sees before him a dark and dismal world, literally and figuratively, begins to feel the first dawn of consolation, realizing

clearly that he himself has sinned,

I have no way, and therefore want no eyes.
I stumbled when I saw. Full oft 'tis seen
Our means secure us, and our mere defects
Prove our commodities.

(4.1.18-21).

Edgar's compassion at seeing his father with his eyes struck out is expressed in,

O gods! Who is't can say 'I am at the worst'?
(4.1.25),

which gives way to his words of wisdom,

World, world, O world!
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,
Life would not yield to age.

(4.1.10-12).

Since Gloucester's first resignation to his fate, when he sees that,

As flies to wanton boys are we to th'gods;
They kill us for their sport

(4.1.38-39),

this wisdom spreads and is expressed by Edgar in a braver tone in the following lines,

Men must endure
Their going hence even as their coming hither.
Ripeness is all.

(5.2.9-11).

Van Schendel called this still a cold, reluctant acceptance of the miseries of life expressed by Edgar and the latter adds later on in the play,

The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague us.

(5.3.161-163).

Every now and again, in the biographer's view, this rumbling of reluctant resignation is heard, even out of the mouth of

Cordelia,

We are not the first
Who with best meaning have incurred the worst.
(5.3.3-4).

Kent, the true friend, whose warm affection breaks through the dark clouds, reaches complete resignation; his gentleness warms the last dark incidents, and the hope which emanates from his mercy puts on a peaceful quiet to this scene of utter misery,

Vex not his ghost. O, let him pass. He hates him
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.

(5.3.289-291).

Van Schendel remarked that indeed the virtuous seem to have proved to be the stronger in this play, as in *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and *Othello*, but it is a sad victory, not providing any consolation. One sees this victory without feeling it, as if it were a dream instead of reality; it is in fact the principle that is shown, the pious hope after evil has done its work, the hope without which no poet can exist. And the biographer continued his considerations, suggesting that real bliss, however, consists of a certainty that all the torments and all the miseries cannot deprive man of his most precious possession. For instance, the old king has suffered all possible miseries, but in the end - his head encircled by a halo - he is to see, by miraculous grace, the last vision of his dead beloved daughter, set in a supernatural sphere. This saintly vision, unseen by the other onlookers, induces him to cry out,

Do you see this? Look on her. Look her lips.
Look there, look there.

(5.3.286-287).

Van Schendel's interpretation of this scene, which is so often commented upon, is indeed uncommon (394-396; my interpretation and translation). Stanley Wells remarked that Van Schendel's interpretation is not unique and he referred to Ian J. Kirby's article in *Shakespeare Survey* 41 (1989), called "The Passing of King Lear"⁵ and to the actors Robert Stephens and Ian Holm who in the role of King Lear seem to have suggested a vision of Cordelia when acting out his death. In this respect Margaret A. Varnell discussing a production of *King Lear* in London (27 March-9 September, 1997) had this to say, "Standing over the dead Cordelia, Lear speaks his final line "Look there, look there!" not to his companions but to the overarching heavens".⁶ However the case may be Van Schendel's interpretation dates back to 1922, whereas Ian Kirby's article and the acting of Stephens and Holm are of a more recent date (1989 and 1997 respectively), so that it is likely to be Van Schendel's own insight, not influenced by others.

The biographer ended his discussion of *King Lear* with a summary of the successive streams of social and intellectual attitudes from the Middle Ages up to the Renaissance. It is in fact a rephrasing of what has been said already on many occasions and in the last lines of his discussion of the play Van Schendel praised the playwright as follows,

⁵ 145-157.

⁶ In *Shakespeare Bulletin: a Journal of Performance Criticism and Scholarship*. Vol. 16. No 1 (Winter 1998): 22-23.

But his heart was so rich in love not heard before, his imagination so resourceful, that he felt himself strong enough to bring forth more from the depths of his soul, to speak of what stirred him, of the deprivation of people and of his hopes and the warmth which created these lovely images.

(396; my interpretation and translation).

MACBETH

The portrayal of Macbeth, Van Schendel said, presents the least amiable of all the tragic heroes, but it fills us with awe. By killing Desdemona, Othello became victim of his ensign and at the same time executioner of a mean crime; Hamlet fell victim to his conscience, and Lear eventually succumbed to age and heartless deeds. Not having exhausted his resources, the playwright decided on evil powers - and not people - which at the beginning are to choose brave Macbeth, noble Macbeth for their game. At their first appearance before Macbeth, the witches cry,

When the battle's lost and won,-
(*Macbeth*, 1.1.4),

and,

Fair is foul, and foul is fair.
(1.1.10).

But, Van Schendel said, when they appear later on dancing around a cauldron, or talking to Hecate, there is no indication whatsoever that they foretell fatal disasters. The first words uttered by Macbeth,

So foul and fair a day I have not seen,-
(1.3.36),

resemble the same confusion of good and evil, expressed by the

weird sisters, before he has even seen them. Van Schendel wondered whether the germ of evil had already begun to work in him, or whether this hellish enchantment had fallen down on him unseen, when he was fighting courageously in the battle. When the witches hail him as Glamis, Cawdor, King, he starts as if he fears these wonderful predictions. Had he already contemplated the deed in the darkness of the unknown before they even stir his thoughts? And where does the origin of this sight lie, inside or outside himself? Van Schendel thought that however purposely these are put before us, the power outside, the predictions of the sisters of fate alone seem not to be sufficient to lead Macbeth into damnation. Therefore the professed tool, human wickedness, is applied, that is in this case, Lady Macbeth. When this image of a woman great in wicked deeds loomed before Shakespeare, he forgot that it had been his wish - in Van Schendel's view at least - to find a reason beyond man's will in order to soften the suffering. The spell of the witches becomes a harmless game, far beyond the dreadful truth of this monster, by which Van Schendel meant Lady Macbeth. He continued, saying, that suddenly through her eyes we discover the abyss in Macbeth's nature. It is not the supernatural beings in which we had to believe initially, not the temptress, his equal, who unlocks for him the darkness of disasters, but the destruction in himself which governs his fate. The woman knows his nature, for he has too much mildness, desire without evil, and he fears too much to do that which he wishes not to have left undone,

wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win.
(1.5.20-21).

Van Schendel remarked that in these lines the notion of sin has been depicted in sharp distinctive words such as had seldom been done before. The picture of Macbeth seen through the eyes of his wife becomes clearer, but enveloped in a milder hue. He is a human being like anyone else who perishes on account of his own wickedness. And according to the author, a criminal whom we cannot hate, because we fear him as we fear ourselves, since our hearts know the desire to do evil things, without being evil at heart. He continued by saying that Shakespeare depicted the successive steps in Macbeth's train of thoughts and emotions very clearly. In the beginning Macbeth, tempted by his desire, sees the murder in his mind's eye. This obscures the boundary between good and evil and he calls "the fairest day the foulest". Then he is frightened of what he sees in his imagination, and his thoughts scorched by the imagined crime leave him helpless, to be censured eventually by Lady Macbeth with these harsh words,

Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it.
(1.4.18-19).

Van Schendel proceeded to try to pinpoint the causes of Macbeth's downfall. He remarked that, more than for Hamlet and Lear, characters of the same period whom Macbeth resembles in not fighting against temptation or fate as a hero should do, the playwright tried to seek the cause for Macbeth's downfall outside himself. But instead he found that original sin is the

cause of all evil. Having said this, Shakespeare did not invent a plausible thought of grace, for instance, to prevent Macbeth's inevitable fall. On the contrary, he let Macbeth come under the influence of the weird sisters and his wife, but they do not constitute an excuse. I wonder why Van Schendel should have wanted Shakespeare, whom he admired, to have written a different *Macbeth* with these suggestions! Anyway he ended his reflections by suggesting that the dramatist did not find a sound reason, but man's sinfulness for Macbeth's final downfall. It is the same stoic spirit of Friar Lawrence in *Romeo and Juliet* which holds the forces of nature as the mistress of life (*Romeo and Juliet*, 2.2.1-30) (391-400).

Although his attempts to find an answer for Shakespeare's motives to depict Macbeth as he did appear to be somewhat strained, Van Schendel, as I see it, was able to fathom Macbeth's innermost feelings quite well. The picture he sketched of this ambitious general is to the point,

Macbeth sees in his mind the terrifying deeds as a consequence of the first evil one. They begin with the 'wound' in his imagination, when already the soul sooner than the hand had done the deed; to continue with the dagger created by his imagination before the murder has taken place. Then immediately after the deed he hears a noise and when he sees his dead liege lying there, the image of which - "This is a sorry sight" (2.1.18), etched in his memory -, entails a heartfelt despair, a thousand times worse than all the misery the weird sisters could possibly cause, he whispers:

But wherefore could I not pronounce 'Amen'?
I had most need of blessing, and 'Amen'
Stuck in my throat.

(2.2.29-31).

(400; my interpretation and translation).

In this entire second act, insight reaches a greatness

which is not to be surpassed by what follows, and the images found for the sorrow of the soul are great in their austerity. His hand will spill more blood, sooner than the bloodstains are washed out. Macbeth's remark when coming from the slain King early the next morning is shrewd indeed, for he says,

there the murderers,
Steeped in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breeched with gore. Who could refrain,
That had a heart to love, and in that heart
Courage to make's love known?

(2.3.114-118),

and yet, for those who understand the inner voice, it is a humble confession, a despair for which there is no remedy,

Had I but died an hour before this chance
I had lived a blessed time, for from this instant
There's nothing serious in mortality.
All is but toys.

(2.3.90-93).

Tortured by dreadful dreams, Macbeth feels that after Duncan's murder his life has been thoroughly devastated to which even the murder of Banquo and the further crimes can add nothing. He seeks the support of the weird sisters whom he does not fear. But although he would have liked to feel safe believing in the prediction that nothing can harm him until Birnam Wood shall come to Dunsinane, or until a man not born of woman will fight him, he knows that for him there can be no solution and long before the end he suffers the severest punishment, that is the loneliness of someone shunned by others.

The worst, however, is over when he feels the last day approaching. Then, as he despises himself thoroughly, he be-

comes great and formidable,

I have lived long enough. My way of life
Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf,
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends
I must not look to have, but in their stead
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath
Which the poor heart would fain deny and dare not.
(5.3.24-30).

When, according to Van Schendel, Macbeth loses his only support, his helpmate, who just with her presence proved to have been a comfort to him in those sleepless nights, and now has gone before him, he is capable of evaluating his miserable life in the opposition between tomorrow - when Lady Macbeth should have died - and yesterday. Mankind seems to expect that the tomorrows will bring satisfaction of one's wishes and longings, whereas the yesterdays light fools on their way to death. These considerations urge him to call out that his light ought to be extinguished,

Out, out brief candle.
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

(5.5.22-27).

So Macbeth must have gone through the darkest abyss of despair. He meets with his fate when his head is being struck off, 'signifying nothing'. Van Schendel wondered why such a despicable person should have been treated with awe. But everyone knows, according to Van Schendel, that this fictional story of Macbeth - more than the creations of a Hamlet or Othello - poses a threat to man and might lead him into des-

truction as well (401-402).

THE TEMPEST

Van Schendel introduced this play with the following summary. After the tragedy of that criminal [he means Macbeth], the following play is called *Timon of Athens*, which he described as a curse on the lack of charity, the idolization of misanthropy. In his disgust the dramatist could, according to Van Schendel, not see the beauty of mankind any more, and blinded by despair he wrote this play, the terrifying cry of a tortured heart, but then the worst had been gone through. The latter plays emanate quite another mood, almost the same as the earlier plays, with this difference that at this stage such oppositions as youth and old age, questions and comprehension, desire and wisdom, are part and parcel of them. Van Schendel continued his outpourings with ideas and suggestions encountered before in his biography of Shakespeare and discussions of the plays. They boil down to a too close identification of the personal feelings of Shakespeare with the feelings of the various characters in his plays, of which I am quite aware. I have drawn attention to it on several occasions, often rephrasing my uneasiness.

According to Van Schendel in *The Tempest* the playwright expressed his wisdom in clear words. This wisdom is a wonderful gift, a magic book which pre-eminently the blessed may read. Love is treated here in a different way, for instance, when Miranda sees a young man for the first time in her life,

I might call him
A thing divine; for nothing natural
I ever saw so noble.
(*The Tempest*, 1.2.420-422).

Then, having seen no one else except her father in all her
life, she remarks, on seeing other human beings,

O wonder!
How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world
That has such people in't!
(5.1.184-187).

"'Tis new to thee" (5.1.188), says Prospero. He who has known
many gives evidence in an aside as an answer to Gonzalo's
tale,

for some of you there present
Are worse than devils.
(3.3.35-36).

Although Prospero has suffered from their injustice, he is one
of them, who feels their virtues and vices as his own, who has
borne the same passions as they have. And he also has to for-
give them, because, Van Schendel said, they are bound by an
indissoluble tie. Instead of playing with them in the short
while which resembles a storm, he wishes rather to break his
magic staff and return into their company. After their recon-
ciliation, Prospero promises to tell the story of his life,
how he and Miranda twelve years ago were carried away by the
waves to land on the present island, where they have lived
ever since. The story, however, is not told in the following
lines. We, the spectators and the readers, know the story, be-
cause it is told in the beginning of the play. Van Schendel,
however, then introduced this tale, which has been cited in

full in the previous chapter.

It is indeed one of Prospero's tales, but it is not his life story. In any case, Van Schendel saw this play as a dream, a fine play, written by the greatest poet of his day.

3.3. ARTHUR VAN SCHENDEL'S INVOLVEMENT

Having discussed Van Schendel's treatment of these five plays, I shall now turn to his other involvements with Shakespeare's drama. In the foregoing, reference was made to Van Schendel's presence at the performance of *Romeo en Julia* in 1911, and to the fact that the director, Eduard Verkade, used Jacques van Looy's new translation of the play. Although Robert Leek and many actors are and were not content with Van Looy's new idiom invented to meet Shakespeare's Elizabethan English - half-way in Leek's view -, there were, however, quite a few pieces aptly translated owing to Van Looy's excellent interpretation of the text.⁷

In this respect Charles Vergeer drew my attention to letters from Van Schendel to Van Looy, dated 2nd and 4th December 1911 respectively, the latter's answer to Van Schendel, dated 31st December 1911, and an undated letter from Van Looy to his former teacher of The Amsterdam Academy, Professor August Allebé. The first letter is a first draft and is kept in the Van Schendel Archives of the *LM*, and so is the second letter; the other two are kept in the Van Looy Archives in the

⁷ See Robert H. Leek (170). Van Looy had translated four of Shakespeare's plays, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The last play, which proves to be his best, was not used by any of the theatre companies.

Frans Halsmuseum in Haarlem. In the letter of 4th December 1911 Van Schendel wrote that their mutual friend Jan Vogelaar had reminded him to send Van Looy his comments concerning the translation of *Hamlet* (1907). Before, however, listing quite a number of these suggestions, Van Schendel assured Van Looy that the translation was good and that it was written in the real spirit of Shakespeare at the time he wrote *Hamlet*. In his letter to Allebé, Van Looy mentioned one of Van Schendel's remarks, which was a real eye-opener. It concerns a few lines in one of Hamlet's conversations with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, namely,

I am but mad north-north west; when the wind
is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw.
(2.2.380-381).

First Van Schendel gave an explanation about north and north-west winds; these are said to be detrimental to madness. When the handsaw flies southwards borne by the north wind, the hawker, standing in the south, cannot see him clearly. If, however, the wind blows from the south - mad people are mostly in their right senses then - the hawker can distinguish clearly whether it is a hawk or a handsaw. According to Van Schendel, Hamlet means that he is not always mad and that the King has sent his hawks - his spies - to find the handsaw - he himself - out.⁸ Secondly Van Schendel discussed the rendering of 'hawk from a handsaw' into Dutch. This was in Van Looy's view

⁸ It is an unnumbered page in the set of copies sent to me by Charles Vergeer. For this piece of information Van Schendel is partly indebted to Edward Dowden, *The Works of Shakespeare: The Tragedy of Hamlet* 1899 (London: Methuen & Co Ltd., 1919), note on 82, "I am mad in only one point of the compass".

more interesting and he mentioned it in an undated letter to his former teacher of The Amsterdam Academy, Professor August Allebé, namely that he rendered "hawk from a handsaw" into "havik van een handzaag" (= a tool). Van Schendel, however, suggested to change this into "havik van een reiger (= heron)".⁹ Van Looy seems to have taken Van Schendel's correction to heart, but when he heard "havik van een reiger" spoken on the stage, he regretted having lost the alliteration.¹⁰ The letter referred to, of which I received a copy from Charles Vergeer (see footnote 8), had a note attached to it, saying that Van Looy's second translation of *Hamlet* was published in 1912. With the acknowledgement of the translator in his letter to Allebé we may take it for granted that many of Van Schendel's remarks have found their way into this second edition.

One of the pieces which constitute his collection of short stories called *De Zomerreis* (1938; The Summer-tour) is "Mid-summernight's Dream" [sic].¹¹ Van Schendel began the story wondering what the dramatist had to write down when a gen-

⁹ As a second meaning of 'handsaw' the word is considered to be a corruption of 'heronshaw' or 'hernsew', the meaning recommended by Van Schendel. In *The OED VI* (Oxford: UP, 1989), 1079. There seems to exist a second corruption. According to Gerda Taranov 'hawk' is a corruption of hack (= tool). *The Bernhardt Hamlet: Culture and Context* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 1996) 29. The *OED*, however does not mention a corruption, but gives: 'hawk' = a plasterer's tool, VII, 24.

¹⁰ Was it perhaps Shakespeare's objective to use handsaw in the second meaning, that is a comparison between two 'birds' (according to *The OED* this second meaning was adopted for the first time in Shakespeare's text), because of the dissimilarity between hawk and handsaw (= tool)? In Dutch the comparison between 'havik and handzaag' is just as odd as it is in English. So Van Schendel's suggestion to render the phrase into 'havik van een reiger' (also two 'birds') is sensible. Whereas in Dutch the alliteration disappears with the introduction of 'reiger', in English it does not.

¹¹ *VW* vol. 5: 519-521.

tleman commissioned him to think of a play for the celebration of a wedding. At first he conjured up the figure of Hymen. But when he appeared before him without a smile only staring darkly at flowers dried up long ago, he knew that he could not be induced to play in an airy drama. Cupid would have been a better choice, had he not been a rascal on whom decent people dared not build their future. Besides, according to the writer, Shakespeare knew all too well that in spite of a number of allegorical spectacles set up to divert the nobles, spectacles in which the blindfolded little boy, the goddess of love born from the sea-foam, and the old keeper of marriage uttered their grand wishes, nobody - experienced in life - both in the palace and the theatre believed in the fulfilment of these wishes.

In his mind's eye the poet saw the feast as a dream by moonlight, full of the allurements of love. Everything went by so fast, however, for it was pure entertainment, which did not last long, it was just a moment of poetry. This was what the dramatist saw, the most beautiful beginning of a marriage: a hall full of flowers, music of string instruments, a flute or hautboy alternating with music to dance to.

The imagination of this dramatist would not bring forth a burlesque antithesis unless it were covered in a veil of poetry. Scarcely has the play begun when one hears the old theme already expressed by generations: "I love you", she says and he answers, "Alas, I love another." The noble spectator may choose from three wise remarks the first of which, pro-

nounced by Lysander, runs as follows,

Ay me, for aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale of history,
The course of true love never did run smooth,
(*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1.1.132-134),

and he need not fear a sad ending to the course of love, because the spirit of joy has awakened with rapid wings. They are reminded just for a moment that love may turn into red blood and black mourning when the grotesque company of Bottom appears on the scene to learn their parts by heart. They belong to the lower-class and everyone knows that the simple man only sees the sad face and tears of love.

The tragedy of *Pyramus and Thisbe* chosen to be played before Theseus and his party is the only indication that in the other part of the antithesis disaster lies hidden. That is why it is allowed to poke fun at such creatures as the Athenian craftsmen. As the spectators understand they become fools, much more stupid than they themselves.

It is different with the two couples playing puss in the corner with their hearts; they become fools by the spell cast on them by Oberon and Robin Goodfellow and can not help wandering about in the woods and being tricked, far from love to unfaithfulness, quarrel, hatred, and back to where they began.

Even the fairies become fools and this is a rare phenomenon, for one must not think that they are common fairies, such as are known among countrymen, comely females, white as milk or green as the young hawthorn, fairies who mingle with pleasure with human beings. These fairies belong to a world

of a more delicate make. It is but accidental that they happen to be in the woods near Athens; the reason is that Oberon wants to bless the ducal wedding and besides, he and his queen have quarrelled. It is a serious question of will against will as if they were human beings and all that for a 'toy'. Oberon can, of course, with ease, win Titania over by opening her eyes, so that she sees how she has erred and how foolish the people are. Then the audience can hear the second wise remark of the spirit of joy, namely when Robin Goodfellow says,

Lord, what fools these mortals be!
(3.2.115).

At daybreak with the music of the hounds,

so musical a discord, such sweet thunder
(4.1.117),

the spectators will hear the third piece of wisdom, as they think, out of the mouth of the biggest fool. Bottom sitting in the grass with garlands of flowers hanging round his neck wonders what has happened,

I have had a dream past the wit of man to say what dream it was. Man is but an ass if he go about t'expound this dream.
(4.1.202-204).

Well then, Van Schendel said, everyone may choose his or her favourite piece of wisdom. What they have seen is a play conceived by the poet of all poets (519-521).

In 1936, approximately at the same time that Van Schendel was writing the collection of short stories *De Zomerreis* (1930-1937), he wrote the programme note for *Een Midzomernachtsdroom* introducing the performance of De Amsterdamse To-

neelvereniging (The Amsterdam Theatre Company) under their director Albert van Dalsum. Het Concertgebouw Orkest (The Concertgebouw Orchestra), conducted by Willem Mengelberg, played the Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* composed by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartoldy. This programme note is almost identical to the short story referred to above. The conductor added a few lines,

Felix Mendelssohn's Overture to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was performed for the first time in Potsdam on 14 October 1843.¹²

Separated by centuries, races and cultures Shakespeare meets the highly-gifted composer, and the work reveals a world of beauty, an elevation and at the same time a lesson for our age.¹³

Van Schendel was also known as a theatre critic. One notable article has been preserved. His review of *Romeo en Julia* (autumn 1916/March 1917)¹⁴ appeared in *De Nieuwe Amsterdammer* of 10th March 1917, No 115. He expressed his pleasure with this production of *Die Haghespelers*, for in his view it came close to the original performance staged at The Globe in Shakespeare's time. Then the spectator could see the whole play before him free of all meaningless embellishments, insults to taste and imagination. He wanted to see the tragedy and here

¹² See *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* XXII, Stanley Sadie ed. (1878, London: MacMillan Publishers Ltd, 1980). There it says, "Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, performed for the first time in Stettin, April 1827 by Carl Loewe", 137. Further details provided by Stanley Wells are: The overture was written first in 1826. The complete incidental music was performed for the first time in 1843.

¹³ File S 312/1.a.28(2) LM.

¹⁴ The first date was mentioned by E.F. Verkade-Cartier-van Dissel in *Eduard Verkade*, 283, and the second by Robert H. Leek in *Shakespeare in Nederland*, etc., 389. Judging from the date of the review it is more likely that the second date is correct, unless this production was staged over a long period which is not customary in The Netherlands. In this respect it is also unlikely that reviews should have appeared so much later than the performances in question.

it was; his eyes were not blinded by incidental circumstances.

This dramatic story passes in four or five days from Benvolio's intrusion at the feast of the Capulets until the 'glooming peace' of the last morning. The skirmish of the servants, the hatred of the two houses, the banter of the friends to the detriment of Romeo, Mercutio and Tybalt's fall, the blissful night, all these events pass by with speed and fervour, just as love's impetuosity does. The lover of this tragedy, Van Schendel wrote, recognizes here true love, true rhythm, and a display of poetry. The equilibrium dominating this poetry and its style is continued in the play, so that the contradictions do not clash as they do when actors - everyone for him- or herself - demand more attention than they deserve, but melt into a flawless entity.

The director and the actors admire this play, said Van Schendel, and they were wise to entrust themselves completely to it, for that is why the dramatist is present and the enchantment invoked by the players is through his words. And he continued, Romeo is indeed an amiable young man envied or pitied and Juliet, whose warm words make the spectator muse over their significance, is brilliant. Present theatre-goers (1917) are spoilt, for they cannot visualize the wealth of Italy only by hearing a story acted before a simple curtain, as the Londoners of Shakespeare's time could. And he continued, those who listen attentively to Die Haghespelers' acting against a simple background of arches, the balcony in the middle, the porch underneath, will be richly rewarded. The feast at the

Capulets', Juliet's closet, the lovely images of the garden, the only window through which daybreak becomes visible, the farewell scene of the lovers, what else is there to be wished for? The imagination is happily free in the theatre to rule over the play and lead the spectator to great joy.

Van Schendel was endowed with a rich imagination, therefore he did not need lavish properties. Evidence for it are his collections of short stories, already conceived in detail before ever written down. His friend Jan Greshoff uttered his admiration for Van Schendel's gift in an article in *De Groene Amsterdammer* of 16th June 1934, in which he stated that Van Schendel's memory and his ability to concentrate border on the incredible. This rare ability reaches so far that fifty stories compiled in *Herinneringen van een Domme Jongen* (1934; Reminiscences of a Dull Boy)¹⁵ all had their definite shape before he put them to paper. Only because of this was he capable of writing down quietly this incredibly motley collection of five hundred pages of print as if it were clerical work.¹⁶ It is not surprising that Van Schendel's interest in drama, especially in Shakespeare's, should culminate in composing plays himself. That he should have written one play only is remarkable, for after 1919, the year in which he wrote the play, he was to write many novels, collections of short stories, non-fiction and poems until shortly before his death,

¹⁵ VW vol. 4 : 315-619.

¹⁶ As a matter of fact the first edition (1934) consisted of 431 pages.

but not one play among them.

3.4. A DISCUSSION OF *PANDORRA*

3.4.a. DATE AND HISTORY

Pandorra is a play written by Arthur van Schendel in 1919, between the first edition of *Shakespeare* and the second. This play is called a preliminary study to *Der Liefde Bloesem* (1920, *Love's Blossom*).¹⁷ In spring 1919 the preparations for the first performance were in an advanced stage. For instance, the playbill had been drawn by Jan H. Toorop, a painter and designer of the symbolist movement, the scenery had been designed by H.Th. Wijdeveld, an architect, and even the music for the love-song in act IV scene vii of the play had been composed in December 1918 by Allard de Ridder who was married to a girl called Mendelssohn's-Bartholdy.¹⁸ The performance had to be cancelled, however, for the theatre company under

¹⁷ VW vol. 2: 240-385. File S 312/2.b.1 (3) LM.

Mira in *Pandorra* acknowledges that her life has changed, as a consequence of which she feels that she can be wife and mother now instead of being a courtesan, but at the moment that she expresses her changed mentality she is stabbed to death. Dianora in *Der Liefde Bloesem*, finding herself in approximately the same situation as Mira, is spared; she is allowed to live on be it at a high cost, for without their knowledge their little daughter is beheaded.

In an article on Arthur van Schendel H.G. Cannegieter explained that the author had interwoven the theme of such a love as that between Dianora and Landro in many of his works, although he also introduced conflicting ideas and mentalities into these stories (in my opinion this holds good for *Pandorra* as well). "As the cultural atmosphere of the old world sea and the Jewish land envelop *De Mens van Nazareth*", he said, "so does the spirit of Italy and the Medicis the two lovers Landro and Dianora in *Der Liefde Bloesem*." Their tragic life is a reflection of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. ("Arthur van Schendel" in *De Socialistische Gids* [The Socialist Guide], 23, No. 3, 1938: 133-142, 136; my interpretation and translation).

¹⁸ File AVS/1.a.29 LM.

I cannot account for the 's in the name Mendelssohn's-Bartholdy. The reason for this reference must surely have been to communicate the kinship with the great composer Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. See *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. XXII, ed. Stanley Sadie, 134.

the directorship of Eduard Verkade went bankrupt¹⁹, and besides - as has already been mentioned - Enny Vrede who was to play the role of Mira, drowned with her husband, when on 18th April 1919, their ship, the freighter *Amstel I*, presumably struck a mine and sank off the coast of Norway.²⁰ There is no indication why this play was not staged later, although Van Heerikhuizen heard from Eduard Verkade that it was still worth performing²¹, and moreover, several theatre companies existed simultaneously, not only performing plays by Shakespeare, for instance, but also plays by contemporary foreign and Dutch dramatists.

In the newspaper *Het Parool* of 16th March 1983 the following announcement may be read:

"Een ander beeld van 'patriarch' Arthur van Schendel"
(Another picture of 'patriarch' Arthur van Schendel)

by Marjo van der Meulen

Together with the publishers BZZTôH and J.M. Meulenhoff the SLAA (Stichting Literaire Activiteiten [The Society Literary Activities]) in Amsterdam is organizing two evenings devoted to Arthur van Schendel, one on 30th March next in The Hague and the other on 31st March in Amsterdam. One of the items in the programme is the performance of a scene from Van Schendel's only play *Pandorra*.

(my interpretation and translation).

To my regret I could not find an article with a discussion of

¹⁹ F.W. van Heerikhuizen, *Het Werk van Arthur van Schendel: Achtergronden, Karakter, Ontwikkeling*, 157; G.H. van 's-Gravesande, *Arthur van Schendel: zijn Leven en Werk*, 47.

²⁰ File AVS/2.b.1(3) LM. However, E.F. Verkade mentioned in *Eduard Verkade, etc.*, "The fatal news could be read in the newspaper of 16 April 1919", 318.

²¹ *Het Werk van Arthur van Schendel: Achtergronden, Karakter, Ontwikkeling*, 157.

the items of the programme and a review of the performance of a scene from *Pandorra*.

Pandorra, set in Italy towards the end of the fifteenth century, is the story of a courtesan. It is a drama of passion, fear and revenge, an exploration of passion, will and reason.

Mira is the personification of the negative consequences of a longing for a perfect everlasting happiness, which she persistently pursues.²²

Since such a happiness is unattainable, the tragic outcome of the play is inevitable.

As has been referred to earlier in this thesis, Van Schendel appears to have immersed himself in the study of the Italian Renaissance. Evidence for this is given by P. Angelini in her article in *Études germaniques*, "Arthur van Schendel et l'Italie: les Notes sur la Renaissance", in which she mentioned among other things the various novels and collections of short stories set in Renaissance Italy and his long stay in this country from 1920 onwards.²³ Shakespeare's plays set in Venice, Verona, Padua, Messina might have kindled Van Schendel's curiosity to learn more about the past of his future second mother country.

The dialogue in *Pandorra* is fast-moving, almost sober, without the paraphrased repetitions which occur in *Shakespeare* here and there.

²² F.W. van Heerikhuizen, *Het Werk van Arthur van Schendel: Achtergronden, Karakter, Ontwikkeling*, 157 (my interpretation and translation).

²³ 1965: 511-521.

3.4.b. THE TITLE

The curious thing about the title is that Pandorra is written with two rs instead of one. The story of Pandora is well known; the Greek form of the legend depicts the woman as the cause of all man's woes, she is in particular fatal to men who come into contact with her. This description fits the woman Mira of the play, for there are distinct references, such as, Perino Bongardo: that Pandorra, as she is called, who brought evil to many a house, is detested (86).

Mira: If I fear myself, if I am evil, please rescue me from myself (89).

Ruffo Ruffini: It was but a woman, Sir, one of the kind we do not see any more in this place (111).

Montalto: She has done more evil deeds than you may understand. She is called the Pandorra, because she causes disaster to everyone who comes close to her (115).

to mention a few (my interpretation and translation). Summarizing, Van Schendel must have known quite well how to spell Pandorra and therefore I cannot understand why he failed to do so, or if he did it on purpose, what his motives were.

3.4.c. INTERTEXTUALITY AND INTERTRAFFIC OF THE MIND

Although this study deals with the creative reception of Shakespeare by a Dutch writer, it stands to reason that ideas and plots of other dramatists and writers have been influential as well, especially as it concerns Arthur van Schendel who, as has been stated in Chapter One, had read widely, and read and spoke many languages. With this in mind it occurred to me to read the play *Pandora's Box* (1904) by Frank Wedekind,

the "Theaterdichter", who was a contemporary of Van Schendel. There is indeed intertraffic of the mind between this play and Van Schendel's *Pandorra*, but Wedekind's *Pandora's Box* is "deliberately disgusting" according to Samuel A. Eliot Jr²⁴, as I quite agree. In his view,

In it, quite unrealistically, is passionately expressed what *Pandora's Box* implies, the hopelessness, the impossibility of happiness (for one, that is, whose conception of happiness is physical) from life as at present organized (xx).

It is a play of ideas and so is Van Schendel's play. Another appropriation might be the 'merchandise' theme in *Pandorra* when Mira says,

Now a high-placed person is to offer Rossi and her father a high position, if Rossi's friends were to give Bongardo reprieve of his exile. Meanwhile Montalto has set aside the dowry for his daughter, Bongardo's fiancée. This whole chain depends on her, Mira.

(138; my interpretation and translation).

And in *Pandora's Box* when Lulu says,

but I can't let myself be sold of my own accord.
That is worse than prison!

(*Tragedies of Sex*, 256).

There are echoes of *Measure for Measure* in *Pandorra*. Firstly, the play set in the Florence of 1494, opens with the topic of the day, notably that all courtesans who exercise the world's oldest profession have to leave the town on the command of the Chancellor of the town, expressed in,

Dino: The Chancellor? Bongardo?

Ciprian: That is exactly the person who has decreed
the exile and pronounced the sentence (70).

²⁴ Translator and editor of *Tragedies of Sex*. (London: Frank Henderson [1923]), xx.

Ruffo Ruffini: They say that Pandorra has caused the fall of so many men and that only because of her the Chancellor chases away the whole kind (74).

Perino Bongardo: I have ordered your exile (86).
(my interpretation and translation).

And in *Measure for Measure*, set in Vienna,

First Gentleman: But most of all agreeing with the proclamation.
(1.2.77-78).

Pompey: All the houses in the suburbs of Vienna must be plucked down.
(1.2.87-88).

Mistress Overdone: But shall all our houses of resort in the suburbs be pulled down?
(1.2.93-94).

The "law" referred to in *Pandorra* and the "proclamation" in *Measure for Measure* boil down to the same measure hinted at by Van Schendel in his collection *Oude Italiaanse Steden* (Old Italian Cities) (1924), and of course to Shakespeare's sources. Van Schendel related that Pope Julius, who was not as lenient as his predecessor towards the courtesans, banished them from Rome, but they were gladly received in Venice.²⁵

A second example of Van Schendel's possible appropriation of Shakespeare's realm of ideas is the following. In *Measure for Measure* Angelo becomes infatuated with Isabella. Since she is a novice intended to enter the sisterhood of the votarists of St Clare (1.4.5), she is forbidden fruit. Besides, the pro-

²⁵ VW vol. 2: 654-740, 708.

Van Schendel is evidently referring to Pope Julius II, whose predecessor was the notorious Pope Alexander VI, Rodrigo Borgia. The dates, however, do not tally. And it must be admitted that in between the reigns of these two popes there was another pontiff, who died after a couple of weeks, so that he made no mark on the pontificate. See *The Catholic Encyclopedia* vol VIII, eds. Charles Hebermann, Edward E. Pace, etc. (London: Caxton Publishing Co., 1910) 562.

clamation forms a punishable obstacle to an intimate relationship between two of the opposite sexes not originating in honourable motives of marriage.

In this respect in *Pandorra* the Chancellor is in love with the courtesan Mira, although he has seen her only once and well knows that his farewell visit to her will be used by his adversaries to his detriment. Moreover, he is engaged to be married to his cousin Serafina Montalto, a young innocent girl.

As an introduction to the third example of intertraffic of the mind it is interesting to note what follows. In "Agatopisto en de Zelfmoord" (Agatopisto and Suicide), which appears in *De Zomerreis*²⁶, Van Schendel related the story of the conception of suicide within certain cultures. In Africa [Egypt], for instance, Queen Cleopatra tried several deadly poisons out on convicts to discover eventually that the poison released by the bite of an adder was the least distressing, for it worked immediately without causing pain. Having read this story, which appeared nineteen years later, one wonders why Van Schendel had not an adder play a role in, for instance, *Pandorra*, or was it his objective to point to a possible source for Shakespeare's use of the little snake in Cleopatra's suicide?

In this matter of killings in *Pandorra* Van Schendel departed both from *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*,

²⁶ VW vol. 3: 475-479.

for Perino stabs Mira to death, since he sees no future for the love they feel for each other, and he himself is killed in a duel by Mazzeo Rossi who thus revenges Mira's murder. *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Pandorra* share the infatuation of a character occupying an official function for an interesting fashionable lady. In this respect Cleopatra is referred to by Philo as the courtesan queen,

Take good note, and you shall see in him
The triple pillar of the world transformed
Into a strumpet's fool.

(*Anthony and Cleopatra*, (1.1.11-13)).

Whereas Antony gives in to his infatuation with Cleopatra by staying away from Rome and his second wife, Caesar's sister, Perino tries to suppress his love for Mira, as he first and foremost loves his town Florence and his work there to improve the standard of life²⁷; he eagerly wants to go back after the expiration of his exile, which was imposed on him as a punishment for his involvement with Mira, i.e. by paying her a farewell visit and her entering his house three months later without his consent. Nevertheless Chancellor Perino Bongardo has a strong will which clashes with Mira's. Still he succumbs not to his will nor to Mira's, but to his desire for her.

3.4.d. THE PLAY

A concise description of the play will follow. As has already been referred to, Florence decreed the law, that all the la-

²⁷ He is a follower of Savonarola.

dies of pleasure, those who wore the yellow veil²⁸, were exiled on punishment of whipping and branding if they did not leave before an appointed date.

Mira Valdarno, the daughter of a gentleman, whose beauty has attracted both men who make use of her services and those who love her in a platonic manner, as Petrarch did his Laura, or otherwise is one of these courtesans. If, however, Mira were to marry one of her customers, a certain Mazzeo Rossi, she would be accepted in the community and could stay in Florence as Signora Rossi. This is the dearest wish of her father, but since Mira does not love the gentleman, although he loves her and promises to try to win her love, she decides to leave for Venice.

On the eve of her departure the strict, honest, talented Chancellor Perino Bongardo visits her, with no other purpose than to see her once again. He knows that she is beautiful, for he has seen her once before. This visit proves to be his downfall. Mira is in love with Perino who, as we know, is affianced to his cousin Serafina Montalto.

She stays away for three months, but drawn by her wish to see Perino, she secretly comes back to Florence, where she is immediately recognized, however. With the help of Ruffo Ruffini, one of her former 'lovers' who plays an evil game and thinks that Mira is in love with Perino's cousin, Borso Mon-

²⁸ Lynne Lawner, *Lives of the Courtesans* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987) noted that the yellow requirement was relaxed in Venice during C16, though in Florence courtesans were required to wear a yellow veil (54). In Gordon Williams, *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespeare and Stuart Literature*. Vol. 3 (Q-Z) (London and Atlantic Highlands, 1994), "whore's dress": 1530-1532, 1531.

talto - who lives with his father and sister in the house next to Perino's -, she even enters the house of the Chancellor. In the ensuing confrontation Ruffini is killed in a duel with Borso Montalto. When eventually, after Serafina Montalto's repeated urgent requests, she is about to leave the house, Mira is arrested. Because one is not supposed to speak to an exile, let alone receive him or her into one's house, the Chancellor is stripped of his dignities and banished; Mira is whipped and branded in public in the Piazza. Nobody intervenes and more dead than alive she is allowed to stay at her father's house for three months to recover.

When Mira is about to leave Florence for the second time, although she is still too weak to travel, she learns that Borso Montalto, who was singing a love song in the garden of her house, has been stabbed in the back, by, as it is assumed, one of Ruffini's relatives to revenge his death. Perino Bongardo, who has secretly returned, also enters the house at the very moment that his cousin Borso dies. He is drawn to Mira, against his will, and wants to see the wound on her forehead. With the words "I love you" he stabs her and is then killed in a duel with Mazzeo Rossi. He must have realized that this would happen, in other words: he knew that both were to die.

Mira, called Pandorra, has indeed left a train of disasters and sad people behind her. Here too Van Schendel used the 'Moiras', the fateful idea as an undertone in this play.²⁹

²⁹ See G.H. 's-Gravesande, "The fateful idea, the Moira, remained detectable in all his works", in *Arthur van Schendel: zijn Leven en Werk* (50; my interpretation and translation).

Van Schendel's *Pandorra*, reflecting various influences, mainly from Shakespeare, is in my view an interesting play which brings to the attention of the reader the exploration of the human soul. In Van Heerikhuizen's view, *Pandorra* is not only a tragedy of passion, but also a tragedy of abysmal anxiety.³⁰ (my interpretation and translation).

The discussion of *Pandorra* is the last item of the list of subjects which shows Van Schendel's direct involvement in Shakespeare's drama. But it does not mean that an end has come to Van Schendel's resourcefulness in appropriating characters and/or ideas from the works of the great dramatist in, for instance, his novels. This will be treated in the following chapter where *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will be at the centre stage, since it is considered to be at the very heart of *Me-
neer Oberon en Mevrouw*.

³⁰ In *Het Werk van Arthur van Schendel: Achtergronden, Karakter, Ontwikkeling*, 160.

CHAPTER FOUR

*MENEER OBERON EN MEVROUW (1940)*¹

4.1. INTRODUCTION AND A DISCUSSION OF SOME OF VAN SCHENDEL'S SHORT STORIES

Between Van Schendel's demonstrable appropriation of Shakespeare's world of ideas and characters in *Pandorra* and *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* (Mr Oberon and Mrs Titania²) there is a gap of more than two decades. Although the name Oberon had appeared in legends and literature before Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the adoption of the name of Titania as the fairy queen in this play was a novelty.³ Therefore it is reasonable to speak of intertextuality between Shakespeare's *Dream* and Van Schendel's *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* as far as the names Oberon and Titania are concerned, taking into account, of course, that the novelist had a thorough knowledge of Shakespeare's characters as has been drawn attention to earlier in this thesis. Investigation and discussion of their portrayal and 'function' in the novel will be carried out fur-

¹ 1940, VW vol. 6: 283-436.

² It was not easy to find a suitable translation for the title of this novel, for even in Dutch it is unusual to say 'Meneer Jansen en Mevrouw'. The correct epithet would be 'Meneer en Mevrouw Jansen'. In English it is unacceptable to say 'Mr Jansen and Mrs'. The possible reason for Van Schendel to formulate the title as he did is, in my view, that he wanted to emphasize the fact that Titania, although she asked Oberon for advice in many instances and waited for his approval before acting in one way or other, more often than not behaved as it suited her.

³ See Katharine Briggs, *A Dictionary of Fairies* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1976), "As an epithet attached to Diana, Titania is Shakespeare's name for the fairy queen in *Midsummer Night's Dream*", 401. Stanley Wells, ed. of New Penguin Shakespeare *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1967, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1976) said, "Titania's name seems to have come from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where it is used as an adjective for more than one goddess descended of the Titans", 15.

ther on.

As was his usual way of preparing himself for the composition of a novel or his only play, Van Schendel read much around the subject. As was mentioned previously in Chapter One, he acquired knowledge by reading Shakespeare's plays and other literary and historical works from the time that he was a student at the Academy of Drama. He often proceeded to write a short story bearing upon the subject, which may or may not appear before or simultaneously with the publication of the novel proper. In the case of the novel under discussion Van Schendel wrote a short story about Oberon, called "Het Geslacht Oberon" (The Lineage of Oberon)⁴, in which he gave the same particulars as may be found in any dictionary of legends and fairies, although they were discussed more thoroughly by him. Van Schendel related that with the coming of Christianity fairies, dwarfs and fates were still part and parcel of the realm of thought of the Celtic and Germanic peoples from the Mediterranean to Iceland. He continued his story with the fates. They were mighty once, especially those called Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos, who were known to be cold, deaf, blind and heartless. They sat behind the spinning-wheel, the first fluffed flax, the second span, and the third cut thread, representing in this way the distance between the past and the future. They were referred to in Chapter One as Moira.

Then Van Schendel introduced King Arthur who after having

⁴ In *De Zomerreis*, "Het Geslacht Oberon", 1938 (VW vol. 5: 513-518).

been fatally wounded was carried away in a barge to Avalon by three queens: his sister Morgan la Faye, the Queen of North Wales, and the Queen of the Waste Lands, accompanied by the dwarfs Malabron and Zabulon. Avalon became known as the home of the fairies. They gradually disappeared, however. He continued his tale mentioning the 'evidence' of this phenomenon, derived from the Wife of Bath, who says,

In th'olde dayes of the Kyng Arthour,
Of which that Britons speken greet honour,
Al was this land fulfild of fayerye.
The elf-queene, with hir joly compaignye
Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede.
(857-861).⁵

Van Schendel went on to refer to this tale, saying that at that time there were the mendicants

Blessynge halles, chambres, kichenes, boures,
Citees, burghes, castels, hye toures,
Tropes, bernes, shipnes, dayeryes -
(869-871),

which caused the fairies to disappear:

This maketh that ther ben no fayeryes.
(the Wife of Bath's pronouncement in
"The Wife of Bath's Tale", 872).

Conforming to accepted legends, Van Schendel wrote that Oberon was called King of the Fairies and no mention was made of another fairy king. The name Oberon is thought by some to have been derived from a German dwarf, later King Alberich, who at a very old age met Huon of Bordeaux in Syria.⁶ He then called himself Auberon, having changed, as Van Schendel observed, the

⁵ *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. by F.N. Robinson (1968, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979), "The Wife of Bath's Tale": 84-88.

⁶ According to E.K. Chambers, "Oberon comes ultimately from the romance *Huon of Bordeaux*, and an old play with this title was given by Sussex' men in 1593-1594". In *William Shakespeare: a Study of Facts and Problems* (Oxford, 1930), vol. 1, 363.

ending -ich into -on, a Celtic affix, cf. Malabron and Zabulon, and was reborn, for instance, in the works of two poets. In Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* he is mentioned in passing and referred to as the father of Gloriana⁷, but in the comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Shakespeare gave him new life and this is the Oberon known to many. A few others also appropriated him, Robert Greene for instance in his romantic play *James the Fourth* (written by 1592; published posthumously in 1598)⁸ and Jonson in a masque *Oberon the Faery Prince* (1611), performed on the occasion of Henry's investiture as the Prince of Wales.⁹ Also Michael Drayton used Oberon in a comic fairy tale in the Spenserian tradition, called *Nymphidia* (1627), and Carl Maria von Weber composed the music for the opera *Oberon* to a libretto by the English playwright James Robinson Planché (1826). When Auberon died - so he was a mortal like all the fairies - his Christian leanings became known through his will. This digression into the story of Oberon will prove relevant to the discussion of *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* and so does Greshoff's reference to Van Schendel's ideas of one's double life which will be discussed later on.

In the foregoing chapters I pointed to instances when and how

⁷ In "The II Booke", Cant. X, Strophes 75 & 76 (1966, Oxford, Melbourne, etc.: Oxford UP, 1979) 125.

⁸ In *Longman Companion to English Literature* (1977), 556. In the *Annals of English Drama 975-1700* (1940) by Alfred Harbage, rev. Samuel Schoenbaum (London: Methuen, 1964) the date of composition is given as: 1590-1591.

⁹ See "Prince Henry, Maecenas of the Arts: A Study of the Links Between the Court and Patronage", Doctoraal Scriptie, University of Amsterdam (comparable to an MA dissertation), by Yvonne Steinmetz-Ardaseer, May 1989, 4.

Van Schendel's imaginative faculty was at work. One notable example is the short story "Maneschiijn" (Moonlight).¹⁰ It is the story of a seaman called Alfric who sailed away, arrived at a port, and never returned to his native town. One day two seamen moored their ship in the harbour of the same port, because they wanted to meet Alfric the brother of one of them. The sailor was quite surprised to find his brother greatly changed. They were sitting in the garden of Alfric's house; it was moonlight and the white fragrant stocks in the fields were clearly visible and their scent was perceptible. Alfric began to tell his life story. He told about the girl, Lois, whom he had seen when he arrived. He immediately fell in love with her and always tried to get a glimpse of her. Her father was rich, so he knew that he would not be eligible to marry Lois, but he remained in that town. One night when the moon was shining and as usual he was staring at the house, the girl came into the garden and called him. They sat together on the bench. It appeared that she was in love with him. The following morning her father came to see him and asked him to come to live in the house; then the preparations for the marriage took place. They were happy and a son was born to Lois and himself, but he had forgotten the name of their child. Then Lois died when their son was eight years old. The boy and he were very distressed. The son wished to see his mother once again and Alfric too wanted to see Lois with all his heart.

¹⁰ 1913, VW vol. 1: 281-287.

And indeed one night when it was again moonlight he noticed her sitting on the bench in the garden in her red dress, but she looked different. Suddenly an old man, whom he had seen before - precisely on the day when his happiness began - put his hand on his shoulder. He had a horrible face and with a smile he said, "Young friend you are dreaming, cover your head and be careful when you walk in the moonlight." Alfric continuing with his life story said, that he turned and saw Lois sitting in the same posture and it occurred to him that this grey-haired man must be a magician. Then the stranger went on with his speech, "You are still the same young man, your ship is waiting in the harbour. Be grateful for a happy dream!" and he walked away. It was then, after calling the name of his son in vain, that he realized the truth, that is, that he had dreamt everything. Since the moon had played with him, he had mistaken the dream for his ordinary life. He fell ill, but recovered eventually. The girl with whom he had fallen in love had been a real girl. Alfric earned a great amount of money with the shipping of cargoes and when the girl and her father moved, he bought their house. He was in a way happy with his 'memories' (my interpretation and translation). This story demonstrates Van Schendel's ability to weave dream and reality together as Shakespeare had in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The novel *De Berg van Dromen* (The Mountain of Dreams)¹¹ re-

¹¹ 1913, VW vol.1: 415-587.

semples *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in its exploration of the integration of the world of mankind, the animal world and the fairy world. Man, animal and fairy-tale figures are on an equal footing and 'speak' to each other. This phenomenon is brought about by a journey which I will comment upon later. That this novel is essentially a quest, a symbolic journey to find pure happiness is of no importance to the train of thoughts developed here. What does matter is the ease with which Peter, a man, Reinbern, a boy, and Corinna, a girl, travel by boat from their own world to an imaginary world high on a mountaintop. Upon arrival they converse naturally with birds, animals and fairies and try to meet the princess who personifies pure happiness. After some time they travel back to their own world and adapt themselves quite naturally to their usual way of life as if nothing had happened. This story, the interweaving of reality and fantasy, is also an example of the ease with which Van Schendel switches from one world to another, from one layer to another, as a consequence of which the personages lead a double life.

On account of his friendship with Van Schendel, Jan Greshoff (1880-1971) was in a position to observe him from close by and, as a man of letters himself, his views concerning Van Schendel's intellectual and, to a certain extent, emotional characteristics are of great value. One of these features, as he saw it, is Van Schendel's 'double life', and he remarked,

This conception is, in my view, irrevocably related to

the notion of poetry. Every poet leads a double life, but not every poet shows it as obviously, and in front of everybody, as Van Schendel does.¹²

(19; my interpretation and translation).

He went on to explain that Van Schendel had the habit of suddenly leaving the company, not in person, however, but in his thoughts to remain completely absorbed in his own world, his first and real world; this, our world was for him only of secondary importance. Van Schendel was conscious of the meaning of this double life - the main theme of which is the journey - for his existence. It appears from its adoption in his works, as, for instance, in *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* and in particular in "De Clown en zijn ander ik" (The Clown and his other self).¹³ Van Schendel wrote in this short story,

To be able to lead a double life is one of the wildest dreams one can have and only few people realize its charm. It is, however, easy to understand how much joy one could have, how greater and more agreeable life would become if one could be two persons instead of one.

(435; my interpretation and translation).¹⁴

These particulars bearing in a way on *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* will be worked out more elaborately in a discussion of the novel.

4.2. REVIEWS WHICH APPEARED ON THE PUBLICATION OF *MENEER*

OBERON EN MEVROUW

The publication of *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* provoked much com-

¹² "Jan Greshoff over Arthur van Schendel" in *De Stoep* ser. 1 (1940-1943), 6 (July 1942): 5-32; in *Herinneringen van een Domme Jongen*, VW vol. 4: 315-619, 435-441.

¹³ 1934, In *Herinneringen van een Domme Jongen*, VW vol. 4: 435-441.

¹⁴ I am indebted to Jan Greshoff for this reference, see "Jan Greshoff over Arthur van Schendel", 19.

ment as did and would his other novels and collections of short stories; articles in literary journals and newspapers were lavishly showered on the reader. Most of them were positive in their criticism, others - and they were far in the minority - were neither positive nor negative, and only one or two were outspokenly negative in their assessment of "yet another novel by Van Schendel", as some of them said.

The author himself sketched in a few lines the contents of this novel. In a letter to H.G. 's-Gravesande from Amsterdam, dated 17th March 1940, he wrote,

I cannot tell you the contents of the novel, otherwise I'll have to explain the whole book. In short, two good spirits want to guide a couple towards their future along the right path, but they are, of course, thwarted in this enterprise by two evil spirits. The destiny of the couple, however, turns out to be quite different from what was wished for and expected.¹⁵

(my interpretation and translation).

In 1941 Victor E. van Vriesland, a well-known poet and critic, told what he thought of the contents of this novel - together with the ones by three other novelists - in an article called, "Korte Boekaankondigingen" (Notices of forthcoming novels)¹⁶,

Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw is a curious novel. Van Schendel has mixed fantasy and reality in it in such a manner that he has not adopted since *De Berg van Dromen* for instance. The two couples who try to exert their influences on the boy and the girl are, however, no ordinary mortals, but earthly figures endowed with extra-terrestrial powers and spirits.

With such a difficult and imaginary subject everything depends on the way of its realization. And Van Schendel does it skilfully. As with E.T.A. Hoffmann, Alfred Kubin, and Kafka the reader is taken into the reality of the imagination, for the ordinary rational and the

¹⁵ Arthur van Schendel: *Zijn Leven en Werk*, 84.

¹⁶ In a journal called, *Kroniek van Hedendaagse Kunst en Cultuur*, vol. 6 (1941): 28-29.

fairy-like irrational worlds in this novel pass into one another undisturbed and unnoticed.

(28, my interpretation and translation).

The well-known Dutch novelist Simon Vestdijk also wrote two articles in the literary section of the newspaper *Het Vaderland*. The first one is called, "S. Vestdijk over Arthur van Schendel" (S. Vestdijk about Arthur van Schendel), and was published on 3rd August 1941. He wrote that, just as in *De Wereld een Dansfeest*,

in this novel a young couple has to be made happy according to the standards of the ideal, and all the shrewd pairing off may be considered to be equal to the resourcefulness of a Joseph Conrad.

(my interpretation and translation).

He further drew attention to the fact that from 1930 onwards Van Schendel's novels had displayed the theme of responsibility in various shapes, whereas before that date his novels treated medieval fantasies underscored by the motif of the acceptance of one's fate, of resignation, the pursuit of perfection or whatever epithet one would attach to them.¹⁷ He alluded to *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* as an example of a story in which high priority is given to responsibility with these lines,

¹⁷ Jan Greshoff had another opinion as regards these two periods, although there is a slight difference so far as the commencement of the second period is concerned. He said, "Van Schendel opened his first period of creativity with the novel *Drogon*, his second with the triptych: *Ben Hollands Drama*, *De Rijke Man* and *De Grauwe Vogels*. In between these works, the author's creative output did not change. The first novel was written by a young man, the triptych by a mature writer with a wide experience; in the first period the novels portray an imagined country, at an imagined time, in the second period they portray The Netherlands in the 19th century. The only similarity to be noticed is that in both periods the novels are based on questions of fate" ("Jan Greshoff over Arthur van Schendel", 24, my translation). Charles Vergeer referred in an article, "Brieven van de Buissche Heide" (Letters from the Buissche Heath) (*Maatstaf* 44 [Dec. 1996]: 62-72) to a letter of 11th March 1930 in which Richard Roland Holst wrote to Van Schendel complimenting him on his latest novel, *Het Fregatschip Johanna-Maria* (1930), i.e. his innovatory train of thought. Charles Vergeer was of the opinion that Roland Holst was perhaps the first to mention this new aspect of Van Schendel's body of thought (70-71; my interpretation and translation).

but variants so free and yet so related as those conceived by Van Schendel grafted onto the ground motif of human responsibility, will be sought in vain.
(my interpretation and translation).

In the second article, that of 12th October 1941, which was written on the publication of Van Schendel's *De Mensenha-ter* (1941) (The Misanthrope) and called, "S. Vestdijk over de Nieuwe Roman van Arthur van Schendel, de Geschiedenis van een Misantroop" (S. Vestdijk about a New Novel by Arthur van Schendel, the Story of a Misanthrope), he first discussed this novel, then he elaborated on the varieties of the theme of responsibility - mentioned in the previous article -, which in this novel again form the leitmotif around which the story develops. He remarked that this leitmotif, starting with *Een Hollands Drama* (1935) (*The House in Haarlem* [1940]), was further developed in *De Zeven Tuinen* (1939) and was given a pedagogical dimension in *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw*. In these novels, youth is not only the object of pedagogy, but also its victim and even its guinea pig. In the novel last mentioned Van Schendel ventured to portray a pedagogical experiment in a fairy-tale frame,

Oberon and Titania not only want to educate children or youngsters, but their objective is to create a perfect young couple.

(my interpretation and translation).

Elaborating on this pedagogical element which became so apparent in later years, A.J. Schneiders stated in an article on the publication of *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* in *Het Vaderland* of 24th November 1940 called, "Arthur van Schendel als Paedagoog" (Arthur van Schendel in the Role of Pedagog),

Van Schendel illuminates two influences which are of weighty significance to the education of a human being and which alternately dominate him: materialism, the *carpe diem* attitude, and humanism, the urge for knowledge and comprehension, and also the longing for beauty and real happiness. Van Schendel has personified these antithetical conceptions of life in an extraordinary way, namely in two couples, in Oberon/Titania and the Selvergedaens.

But although the author is a Humanist¹⁸, he is versatile enough to demonstrate a third philosophy of life, namely Christianity. Thus a work of art has come into being, which is both a novel and an educational treatise, and at one and the same time a fairy-tale, a novel and a pedagogical dissertation.

(my interpretation and translation).

In *Paedagogische Studiën* of 1st January 1941¹⁹ Schneiders wrote another article on *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw*, called, "Arthur van Schendel over de Opvoeding" (Arthur van Schendel on Education). In it he referred to the well-known phenomenon that in all didactic work instruction, analysis, and reasoning are dangerous to the artistic. That is why, he continued,

this didactic *cum* artistic genre has known only few examples, indeed masterpieces, such as *Van den Vos Reynaerde* (*Roman de Renart*, c. 1175-1250), *De Roman van de Rose* (*Roman de la Rose*, c. 1230) and *Elckerlijck* (*Everyman*, c. 1509-1519). These three works have one characteristic in common, that is the allegorical one.

One could write an interesting, but then a purely literary contribution, about the means used by Van Schendel to incorporate his educational ideas into this novel,

said Schneiders. Some of these means are mentioned in passing by him such as the portrayal of the allegorical personages as

¹⁸ This opinion is not shared by everybody. In an article called "Van Schendel en de Wereld van de Romanschrijver" (Van Schendel and the World of the Novelist) Jeanne van Schaik-Willing, for instance, referred to Van Schendel as a Calvinist. (In: *Critisch Bulletin*, vol. 16, Feb. 1949: 66-69). His father was a Roman Catholic, but Arthur was baptized a Protestant.

¹⁹ Vol. 21: 381-395.

very human and varied - as far as age, sex, talent and social position are concerned; they strike up conversations, serious and also slightly humorous ones; the author described outings and enjoyable evenings to mention a few. All these are means, according to Schneiders,

to conceal his pedagogical aim and at the same time to demonstrate it. It is like a continual plucking the strings; we hear the tones and at the same time also the harmonic and sub-harmonic ones; almost every sentence has its real and symbolic meanings.

He ended his eulogy by asserting,

It is through his extremely subtle insight into human nature and his ability to express his observations that this work as a novel may be called a masterpiece.
(384-386; my interpretation and translation).

In an article in *Het Vaderland* of 27th October 1940 called, "Een Boek van Verbeelding en Werkelijkheid" (A Book about Fantasy and Reality), one of Van Schendel's biographers, H.G. 's-Gravesande, pointed to yet another aspect of this novel, for he states,

Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw is from a psychological point of view very interesting.

On the other hand Gabriel Smit's opinion in the *Maasbode* of 30th November 1941, expressed in an article called, "Oberon in den Haarlemmerhout", is not altogether favourable. The Haarlemmerhout is a wooded area close to a town called Haarlem, where Van Schendel spent some time as a little boy. In later years he lived there for a short period and once again when he was a teacher of English in a private college. His novel *Een Hollands Drama* is set in this town and one of the main characters, the boy Floris, often roams through the

woods, as Van Schendel did. Smit said,

Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw too is a story told indirectly as are *De Wereld een Dansfeest* and *De Zeven Tuinen*. This time we see the story not through the eyes of human beings, but through the strange eyes of the Fairy King Oberon. This among other things causes several disadvantages. Those who would then conclude that the novel is a failure are mistaken.

He went on,

Oberon is not a human being, he is according to our standards not a complete individual, but he knows this and so does Van Schendel. He is an element rather than a human being, a vague symbolic figure, a personified sphere of influence.

(my interpretation and translation).

Cor Barend Termaat also emphasised Van Schendel's strong affinity with Haarlem and its environment in one of his pronouncements, i.e. "De Haarlemmerhout, zijn betoverde woud" (The Haarlemmerhout, his magic forest, 24) in an article called, "Een aangenaam mens in de Haarlemmerhout" (An amiable person in the Haarlemmerhout).²⁰ Termaat distinguished in Van Schendel's work three layers of involvement in Haarlem and its "Hout"; the first two layers are grounded on autobiographical details, that is Van Schendel's reminiscences, real and imaginative, but the third one, although partly underlined by factual data, was, in Termaat's view, triggered off by Van Schendel's curiosity. Termaat explained his opinion by stating,

Those who think back to their childhood will often wonder what the course of their lives would have been, if a certain event had not taken place or had developed differently.

In this light it seems that Van Schendel has written two novels in which he describes a deviation from the existing course. In both cases the Haarlemmerhout played

²⁰ In *Zomaar wat Verhalen en Gedichten* (Haarlem: Literaire Instuif Haarlem vol. 54-55, 1988): 24-31.

its part, viz. in the third layer of his involvement or the layer of speculation in which also the dark sides of his personality are subjected to an examination.

He referred to *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* as the second example of the two books mentioned, and continued,

He [Van Schendel] has tried to visualize what could have happened, if he had married the girl, his little friend in The Hague.²¹

(27; 29; my interpretation and translation).

Termaat's article is a well-wrought piece, based, as said before, on the novelist's own remarks and observations which were, among other things, laid down in his autobiographical *Fratilamur*. See for instance Charles Vergeer's remarks in Chapter One. But the only person who could assert or deny the 'layer of speculation' in *Meneer Oberon and Mevrouw* as proposed by Termaat is dead. That is why I would say, *Se non è vero, è ben trovato*.²² However, fairness requires the admission that Termaat used the same procedure as exerted by Van Schendel when writing his biography of Shakespeare!

Many other critics expressed more or less the same opinions as are displayed in the aforementioned reviews. One of them, however, a certain H.B., considered the novel under discussion to be a 'failure'. He said in an article called "Het

²¹ This 'story' is told in *Fratilamur* (VW vol. 3, 335). So in Termaat's view Jan Morgenrood, one of the main characters in *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* is a fictitious portrayal of Arthur van Schendel himself.

²² In *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* are instances which, I think, could have been a reference to Van Schendel's own reminiscences of his youth. Mrs Morgenrood, Jan's mother, for instance, decided to move from The Hague to Amsterdam for several reasons, one of them was that her elder daughter Dem, just married, had left the country to settle in the West (322). One of Van Schendel's sisters married and indeed went to live in the former Dutch colonies [the East]; she died there very young. Oberon discovers that Jan is fond of poetry and follows him when he goes to second-hand bookstalls to browse through collections of poetry (337). In *Arthur van Schendel* Vergeer pointed to notes of Van Schendel written down for Jan Greshoff, when he lived in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1899,

"I wrote many poems and tragedies from my 13th to my 18th year" (44; my interpretation and translation).

Literaire Getij" (The Literary Tide) in *De Standaard* of 23rd November 1940,

If Oberon had really become a Shakespearean figure, we would have appreciated him as an artistic creation. As a modern human being he failed, on the one hand because of his modern clothes, on the other because of his artificial appearance.

(my interpretation and translation).²³

And last but not least the article "Arthur Oberon van Schendel" by J. van Heugten in *Boekenschouw: Geïllustreerd Letterkundig Tijdschrift*²⁴ is worth discussing. In this essay the author first gave a general summary of Van Schendel's work and then began to discuss the novel. Judging from its jocular title one might suggest that Van Heugten saw the author as a kind of Oberon himself, which he indeed acknowledged further on in this review. He was, however, straightforward in his opinion of Oberon and Titania, for he said,

Oberon and Titania possess some of the attributes of fairies and behave somewhat like fairies in their dealings with their protégés. But one never knows where one stands with them, they are neither fairies nor human beings.

Van Heughten ended his article with the following lines,

The idealistic theme of this novel is constituted by the struggle between the simple realistic demands of life and the artistic spiritual needs. Besides Dina [the maid-servant of Oberon & Titania] represents the religious aspects and she has wise matters to tell. Van Schendel is a master at interweaving all kinds of tendencies and pursuits, without expressing the last word explicitly; this last word often stands as a question-mark at the end of his novel or story. It is possible that the author has no other option but to create airy intermezzi between his more realistic works with such novels as *De Zeven Tuinen* and *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw*. In this case the critics would adopt a bad policy to attach too much importance

²³ I could not find out what the initials H.B. stand for.

²⁴ Voorhout: Foreholte, vol. 34 (1940-1941): 313-318.

to them. Van Schendel has a playful spirit and justifiably ridicules all kinds of criticism which would be beside the mark. He himself likes to play Oberon; one wonders, as others do, whether this novel means to Van Schendel the same as *The Tempest* did to Shakespeare.
(318; my interpretation and translation).

His last remark proved in retrospect to have been wishful thinking, for after *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw*, until his death, Van Schendel was to write more novels, collections of short stories and poems.

4.3. AN EVALUATION OF *MENEER OBERON EN MEVROUW*

Having read the comments and assessments of this novel, only some of which have been discussed here, one wonders whether all these interpretations and assumptions would have met the approval of Van Schendel himself. It is well-known that readers may detect trains of thought, themes, etc., which have crept unconsciously into the work of a poet, playwright or novelist. It is also not at all uncommon for critics and scholars to read more in a work than can be justified or was meant as such by the author. A clear example of such a tendency is, for instance in the case of Shakespeare, Van Schendel's *Shakespeare*. After an initial supposition or opinion the biographer retracts his words later on in the text or in an endnote (see examples in Chapter Two). He is, however, no exception at all.

With regard to Van Schendel, I agree that *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* may have been written as a complaint against the - in the author's eyes - materialistic tendencies in the society of his days. Who else could have been more appropriate than

the artistic couple Oberon and Titania to play a role in his reasoning and arguments against this overvaluation of wealth, fame or bodily comfort, etc., in other words, of the dawn of the permissive society? In this light it is evident that in the novel moralistic preaching is frequently used to convince the other party; to phrase it differently *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* is heavily moralistic, as a number of critics remarked. It is interesting to notice that in this respect Shakespeare's attitude is completely different from Van Schendel's. This is put forward by David Young in his remark in *Something of Great Constancy: the Art of A Midsummer Night's Dream*,

We do not escape the difficulty by pretending that Shakespeare was a bland mirror of the world, without opinions of his own. But the absence of preaching and direct commentary in his plays does not suggest that he regarded his art as an end in itself rather than a means to something else.²⁵

Young left the door open by posing, that 'But the absence of preaching and direct commentary, etc.... else', does not preclude the playwright's moral concerns. Stanley Wells, however, has a more pronounced opinion, for he said that *The Dream* indeed displays moral concerns, and I quote,

An ideal of courtesy is implied in this play, as in *Love's Labour's Lost*, even though none of the characters finds that he can easily live up to it. Mockery is a denial of the ideal, a failure of the imagination. However bad the play they are watching, says Theseus, 'in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.' And this goes along with an ideal of married chastity without which all is strife and dissension, but which, observed, will earn Oberon's blessing:

'So shall all the couples three
Ever true in loving be.'

²⁵ (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1966) 178.

(5.1.396-397).

A Midsummer Night's Dream is not as heavily moralistic as *Love's Labour's Lost*, but I think it shows similar moral concerns.²⁶

Turning to *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw*, I am surprised that relatively few critics have discussed this novel in relation to Shakespeare's *Dream*, especially in the light of several Dutch translations of the complete works of Shakespeare²⁷ and performances of his plays on the Dutch stage. Whatever the case may be a discussion of the novel by a Shakespeare student will possibly show whether Van Schendel's intertextuality has been a happy one.

4.3.a. THE STYLE

The style of this novel shows the same particulars as Van Schendel's other works, which were discussed in Chapter One. In particular Van Eijk's view, illustrated by examples in *Mededelingsvormen by Arthur van Schendel*, that Van Schendel's style shows influences of English grammatical rules, resulting in occasional Anglo-Dutch phrases, has been put forward. Vergeer on the other hand thought that Van Schendel's style gives the impression of being Latinized²⁸. However, I am not convinced that either Anglicism or Latinization should be the

²⁶ See "Shakespeare Without Sources", *Shakespearean Comedy, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies* 14 (1972): 58-74, 64.

²⁷ The phrase 'several Dutch translations of the complete works of Shakespeare' does not reveal that it actually points to a constant practice of translating Shakespeare's works in The Netherlands since L.A.J. Burgersdijk in the 1890s. This bears upon the constant adaptation process of the Dutch language - its modernization - in the first place.

²⁸ He said, "But exactly this terseness brings forth sentences which give the impression of being Latinized" in "Van Schendels Noodlot" (Van Schendel's Fate), *Maatstaf* (1976), vol. 24-2: 34-42, 38 (my translation). I think that this point of view is a valuable one as well.

case in all the instances where Van Schendel's stylistic and/or grammatical expressions deviate from the existing rules.²⁹ Anyhow I have no explanation for these 'unusual' phrases.

4.3.b. THE TITLE

The Shakespeare student becomes alert on reading the title of this novel. By providing *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* with this specific title Van Schendel possibly wanted to emphasize the fact that Oberon and Titania's intervention in the lives of Jan Morgenrood and Klaartje Vink is of more importance than the story of the growing up of the boy and the girl. This idea is not shared by some critics. In his article, "Arthur Oberon van Schendel"³⁰, J. van Heugten, irrespective of the title of this novel, criticized precisely the fact that less prominence is given to the life-story of the boy and the girl. Personally I am of the opinion that the story of Jan and Klaartje is used as a stepping stone for an evaluation of Oberon and Titania's involvement. And so are the interventions of the other couple, Mr and Mrs Selvergedaen, who are actually neighbours of Oberon and Titania and personify the materialistic side of life, of secondary importance. At any rate my purpose will be to discuss the novel from the perspectives of Oberon and Titania and their influence on the lives of the young couple, who in the course of the story grow into middle-aged people. Also the

²⁹ See for instance pp. 328, 356, 369 and 396.

³⁰ See *Boekenschouw*, 34^e jaargang, 317.

third couple will be drawn into the discussion. Besides, the title *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* foreshadows a dualistic portrayal of human beings (meneer/mevrouw) on the one hand and fairies or spirits (Oberon/Titania) on the other; to put it differently, it points to a depiction of their double lives, which, as was indicated above, had intrigued the author immensely. Whether this novel, as a consequence of Van Schendel's choice of this specific title, displays appropriations of personages and their features, and themes or otherwise - adapted to his purpose of course - of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will be examined.

4.3.c. THE STORY: ANALOGIES BETWEEN *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* AND *MENEER OBERON EN MEVROUW*

The evaluation of the various comments on the novel under discussion has already made it clear that two spirits, Oberon and Titania, are having a 'dream', for they want to guide a boy and a girl towards a perfect future, which implies that, with their help and care, these children are to become fine creatures. In other words they 'adopt' these human beings. In Shakespeare's *Dream* Titania tells Oberon that when her friend died in childbirth ("she, being mortal" [2.1.135]), she was to rear up the babe for her friend's sake and would not part with it. She even does not wish to give the boy to Oberon, who says,

I do but beg a little changeling boy
To be my henchman.

(2.1.120-121).

And Puck tells a fairy,

And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild.
(2.1.24-25).

In this case it is a real adoption of a human being by the Queen of fairies, a spirit. Further in Shakespeare's play nothing is heard of this "changeling boy" any more after Titania, on account of the crude joke played upon her, has surrendered the child to Oberon to become his attendant, whereas in *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* the portrayal of the growing up of the boy and girl and their subsequent married life covers a considerable time.

The novel opens with these remarkable words, "Op die avond was het begonnen" (It was on that night that it all began, 285; my translation). What began on that night? This question intrigues the reader and it is only towards the end of the first chapter that the veil is lifted, for in this exposition Van Schendel acquainted the reader with a boy, Jan Morgenrood, and a girl, Klaartje (or Klara) Vink, who happen to have heard the names of Oberon and Titania for the first time in their lives. They are about seven years of age, are of Dutch extraction, and live in The Hague. This might explain why the names of the Fairy King and Queen are not as familiar to them as they might have been to an English boy and girl.

To his astonishment the reader is, after the opening words, introduced into a typically Dutch bourgeois environment, and realizes that this is quite different from Shakespeare's environment in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is

set in the Athenian court and the court of the Fairy Queen in the Athenian woods close by, although analogies might be pointed out.

Already in the beginning of *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw Van Schendel* 'foretold' the end of the story, which, however, might not be evident to the reader at first sight. This way of 'foreshadowing' the outcome of the story was not uncommon for the author. He applied similar procedures in one or two of his other novels, see for instance also the reference to 'cyclic' procedures in Chapter One. As early as the second chapter Oberon hints at the eventual resolution of Jan and Klaartje to discontinue the guidance of both Oberon and Titania and the Selvergedaens. They will seek support and encouragement from God, which Van Schendel in his letter to Van 's-Gravesande, however, refrained from mentioning (see above). The information is given in this chapter when Oberon and Titania are discussing mankind. Especially Oberon is rather pessimistic about the present generation and he remarks,

Do you ever hear them talk about us? The best of them - and there are not many - only rely on God. They are in the right. If they are content with their portion, they do not need us, I quite agree.

(295; my interpretation and translation).

Apart from the fact that it is strange to hear Oberon, who prides himself on his high descent from Hermes and Mnemosyne (297), speak of God, and not of the gods and goddesses, it should be an indication for the reader that there is more to it; to put it differently, that already in the beginning it is obvious that Oberon and Titania's influence will eventually

be negligible, for Jan and Klaartje will put their trust in God. In the last chapter but one, when Oberon and Titania are sojourning on a Greek island, they receive a letter from their maidservant Dina in which she relates what has happened in the house of the Morgenroods (Jan and Klaartje got married in the course of the story and have three children) during their absence. She writes that Jan and Klaartje, having gone through much misery, in particular the illness of their only daughter, have discovered that religion would be a safe haven. When the girl recovers against all expectations, they feel that they owe God gratitude. In the short story "Het Geslacht Oberon", mentioned above, Van Schendel told about King Auberons Christian leanings. In my view it is therefore predictable that Van Schendel should have introduced an ending to the story of Jan and Klaartje with Christian (Calvinistic) overtones. It is sufficiently known that writers in general not only appropriate ideas, etc. from others, but sometimes also use their own pronouncements or themes, displayed in earlier works, for the second time.³¹

I mentioned in passing the instance that Oberon and Titania were sojourning on a Greek island when they received a letter from their maidservant. The main reason for them to leave their cottage in Haarlem every year in autumn and spend

³¹ See for instance Stanley Wells's remarks about Shakespeare,

"One of the most prominent characteristics of Shakespeare's playwriting career is a constant striving not to repeat himself, at any rate in essentials...At the same time there are close relationships between many of them. He seems to have enjoyed playing variations on a theme, making use of similar material in different ways." In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 16.

some months in the Greek archipelago is that they want to keep away from the chilly, cold winters in Northern Europe. Moreover Van Schendel described their stay in Greece as carefree, away not only from cold weather, but also from conventions - they wear casual clothes and walk barefoot on the beaches for instance as opposed to the fashionable dresses they wear at home. Van Schendel had possibly in mind the passages in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* about Titania and her train of fairies enjoying themselves in an innocent way in the Athenian woods with dances and moonlight revels (2.1.140-141). The reference to a 'sojourn', in this case on a Greek island, of Oberon and Titania in Van Schendel's novel, and their eventual return has another implication as well, for it is one of the aspects of the pastoral myth, that is a temporary staying away from home, which points to the opposition of urban and country- or sea-side. Similar places of sojourn - alternative worlds - are mentioned in some of Shakespeare's plays, for instance the forest in *As You Like It* where Duke Senior lives during his exile with his attendants, and which later also becomes the dwelling place of Celia, Rosalind, Touchstone, and Orlando. Lear's stay on the heath during a storm and his wandering through the countryside of Dover, Perdita's upbringing in Bohemia, and of course Prospero and Miranda's long stay on an uninhabited island in the Mediterranean are examples of the introduction of, in any case, features of the pastoral myth into Shakespeare's plays. But in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the stay of the four Athenian young people nearby in the woods is

not considered to be a sojourn, according to David Young at least, for he said in his book, *The Heart's Forest: A Study of Shakespeare's Pastoral Plays*,

One night does not seem to me to amount to a sojourn".³²

However, in "Shakespeare Without Sources" Stanley Wells said,

The device [pastoral] is fully present in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with its escape of the lovers into the forest at night.³³

Van Schendel mentioned another example of 'enjoying oneself' in the portrayal of a concert of French songs among other things, given in the music stand in the Haarlemmerhout (Van Schendel's magic forest, see Termaat). The two couples Oberon and Titania and Mr and Mrs Selvergedaen are present, which is no surprise for they live close-by. Although they sit together at one table - Mr Selvergedaen has forced their company upon Oberon and Titania - the animosity between them is undeniable; they despise one another (363-365). Van Schendel had called the Selvergedaens "evil spirits" in his description of the novel (see his letter to H.G. 's-Gravesande). This reminds me of the conversation between Oberon and Puck,

Puck: And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger,
At whose approach, ghosts wand'ring here and there,
Troop home to churchyards; damnèd spirits all,

Obe: But we are spirits of another sort:

(3.2.381-389).

And so are Oberon and Titania 'spirits of another sort', compared to Mr and Mrs Selvergedaen, in *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw*.

³² (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1972) 37.

³³ In *Shakespearean Comedy*, *Stratford-upon-Avon Studies* 14 (1972): 58-74, 68.

In the novel we find the same enmity as displayed in the play. What also attracts attention is that in the opening paragraph - and further on as well - Van Schendel appeared to ridicule the bourgeoisie for he portrays several grown-ups playing at ombre as their only pastime (compare this for instance with Theseus and Hippolyta's leisure occupation of hunting, which is popular among the upper classes). This pastime is indeed not an isolated phenomenon, for Van Schendel poked fun at more practices in the course of the story, such as Abram Appelaar's enthusiasm for building kennels and henhouses when he is at his leisure. Anyway the card-game ombre proves to be so contagious that, after her removal from The Hague to Amsterdam, Mrs Morgenrood, who is addicted to it, continues to spend her evenings playing ombre with even more players than before. She gathers round the card-table her old friend Koenraad Sekeris, guardian of her children, who had earlier moved to Amsterdam, his friend Mr Ombelet, a teacher of Dutch literature, Mr Selvergedaen, the evil genius, in later years her daughter Angeniet, and after the death of his wife even Major Vink, Klaartje's father. Van Schendel did not fail to depict them still playing (for small amounts of money) - more than forty years after the introduction of the respective families in the first chapter - when they are grey-haired. One evening when Klara - a mother of three children now - accompanied by Mrs Selvergedaen, is visiting Mrs Morgenrood who is playing at ombre, the latter tells her visitors about her views on the merits of the card-game in between two games when the cards are being

shuffled. Van Schendel put a few ridiculous pronouncements in her mouth, which boils down to the following lines addressed to her daughter-in-law,

Hopefully my child you will reach old age in the same mind as we do, unshaken by the troubles which are sometimes part of one's life.

At the next opportunity she continues her speech, saying,

It is the young people who yearn after love, one need not be surprised although it often ends in disillusion. And looking around how many elderly people do find satisfaction in love? I do not know a single person. What does it prove? Well, love is not everlasting. The same holds good for religion. It is true, one is not always sure about it, unless, without thinking, one adheres to the rules and in that case it is also an innocent pastime. What then is left to grow old and to be content at the same time? We would say, it is the card-game, whether it be ombre, whist or bridge - which is popular nowadays - it makes no difference. The most important thing is that one's peace of mind is not in jeopardy from the whims and adventures of life.

(405-406; my interpretation and translation).

Van Schendel picked up Mrs Morgenrood's ideas to weave a continuation of this idea of filling one's time with the card-game, but at that moment Klara and Mrs Selvergedaen are totally averse to any card-game. This subject will be dealt with later on.

Before posing the question what Mrs Morgenrood means by 'love' in the previous lines, I want to draw attention to Van Schendel's inclination to ridicule people's practices or characteristics. A similar procedure happens in Shakespeare's *Dream* in the first place by the portrayal of the Athenian "hempen homespuns" and their numerous malapropisms - as we think to all appearances a deliberate procedure to draw laughter - in the second place by Titania's falling in love with

one of the crude mechanicals transformed into an ass, and in the third place by the interpolation of the farcical play-within-the play, which displays a derision of the theme of love and elicits from the courtiers nasty remarks about the lines and the clumsy acting of the artisans. It is also used, so it seems, as a parody of dramatic arts.

Already in the first chapters, Van Schendel discussed the various kinds of love put in the mouths of Oberon and Titania by introducing Eros among other things. The narrator remarked with regard to Oberon and Titania,

"A happy couple" a passer-by would say, but he would err if he thinks that they are never at variance with one another. On the contrary, except in the case of *love and fidelity*, they hardly ever come to an agreement unless they hold lengthy talks about their different views on many subjects.

(293; my interpretation, translation and italics).

One of these discussions is on the subject of love, which emerges when the experiment of conferring their 'benefactions' on a boy and a girl - meaning to guide them towards a happy, perfect future - is being considered. In this novel Oberon, showing off his rhetoric and delivering his evaluation of the feelings and attitudes of the human race, begins this argument by reminding Titania that the virtues and vices inherent in human beings are inherited from their ancestors. Which virtue or vice will develop depends on various circumstances and can only be guessed at. But, he says,

there will be a day when the instinct which attracts the sexes towards one another becomes more prominent than other human desires and feelings. This instinct depends on an incomprehensible spirit. He can be either well-disposed towards the children or not. And without his favour

the experiment will fail.

Titania asks,

Do you mean love, as it is called by human beings? We do not care about it you know. But, what is love actually?
(311; my interpretation and translation).

As in Oberon's following remark, Titania clearly distinguishes the human race from their race of beings, he is descended from the gods and she was born out of a dream.³⁴

Oberon mentions a variety of the shapes of love known through the stories in the handbooks of love written by ancient Roman authors, such as the love of Zeus displayed in his amorous adventures, Narcissus' self-love, the love of Daphnis and Chloë, etc., and continues to describe what love means to human beings. Titania becomes agitated and interrupts him impatiently,

I know, it is a fire that wants to be extinguished and at the same time consumes. We agreed at the time that we were to preserve ourselves from it. You said, it is the beginning of all worries, so let us refrain from it, then we will have eternal youth, although we will not be immortal. And further that we then would have no offspring. For that matter children are the cause of an early end of one's life. We have no off-spring, but your words make me blush and my hands tremble. Is this then love?

Oberon, older and wiser and never at a loss for an answer, says,

Consider this love, our love [Platonic love], as the will to remain beautiful together, as straight as a sunbeam, as clear as water, as pure as the air. Just call it a different kind of love, for I cannot explain everything.

³⁴ Van Schendel's assumption that Titania was born out of a 'dream' - the moon gave Euphrosyne, the most beautiful and sweetest of the three Graces, a dream and this was Titania (298) - recalls, in particular, all that cannot be grasped, and also Shakespeare's title for this specific play, and Botton's assertion that he has had "a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was," (4.1.204-205) as well.

But it is the kind of love for us, not for mankind. They want to be slaves of Eros.

(312-313; my interpretation and translation).

Indeed the love between Oberon and Titania in this novel is different from the love of Oberon and Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for in their exchange of angry words Titania says,

What, jealous Oberon! - Fairies, skip hence.

I have forsworn his bed and company.

(1.2.61-2).

She accuses Oberon of having had a couple of sweethearts, one of whom is Hippolyta, his sometime mistress, who is going to marry Theseus soon, and Oberon accuses Titania of her "love of Theseus" (1.2.64-80). Besides, Titania falls in love with Bottom who, although he has an ass-head clapped on by Puck, is recognized by her as a human being, a mortal ("I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again" [3.2.130] and "Be kind and courteous to this gentleman" [3.2.156]), in spite of the fact that Puck in his conversation with Oberon refers to him as an ass, in the literal meaning in my view ("And left sweet Pyramus translated there" [3.2.32] and "Titania waked and straightway loved an ass" [3.2. 34]). It is confusing indeed, for in Shakespeare's play the Fairy King and Queen seem to have had intimate relationships with one another and with human beings, which is out of the question in Van Schendel's novel.

Van Schendel's introduction of Eros is interesting, for as we know, in Greek mythology Eros is the god of sensual love comparable to Amor or Cupid in the Roman tradition. The latter name is used by Shakespeare in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

she is a singer and just like Klaartje a student at the School of Music. When they are approximately sixteen, in early summer Bram and Debora's parents are giving a party to celebrate their silver wedding anniversary; they have invited quite a number of friends and acquaintances. The youngsters, among them of course Jan and Klaartje, are seated at a special table and the feast goes on into the small hours. The young people decide not to go home, but to go for a walk to see the sun rise at dawn. This is in my view an echo of the May-Day festivities in general and of those mentioned in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in particular. For example, when indicating where to meet Hermia, Lysander says,

Where I did meet thee once with Helena
To do observance to a morn of May,
(1.1.167),

and also Theseus's remark when the company discover the four lovers asleep in the woods,

No doubt they rose up early to observe
The rite of May,
(4.1.131-132),

points in this direction. By the way James L. Calderwood says that

these festivities [going-a-Maying] are derived from archaic fertility rites.³⁵

But at the same time Theseus connects the rite of May with Saint Valentine's Day (14 February), "the day on which birds were supposed to choose their mates"³⁶, and later in time the

³⁵ Ed. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (New York, London, etc.: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992) xix.

³⁶ The Arden Shakespeare *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Harold F. Brooks (1979) (London and New York: Methuen and Co Ltd, 1990) 95.

day on which a card is sent anonymously to one's sweetheart. To phrase it differently Theseus links the observance of May Day with the choice of one's mate/sweetheart. After this digression Van Schendel's story continues with the young people walking arm in arm through the quiet streets, taking the ferry across the IJ (a stretch of water near Amsterdam) to the toll-gate and playing there on the swings and other playground equipment, waiting for dawn. When, after having joined the others for a while, Jan and Klaartje are standing somewhat apart near a thicket looking at the sky, they suddenly see a short gentleman in summer clothes - wearing a straw hat and looking around him - walk on the footpath close by. In the eastern sky a light-coloured cloud becomes visible. It so happens that at a certain moment, when Jan holds aside a low-hanging branch for Klara to pass, their hands touch. For a moment they look at each other, then gaze into the distance. Klaartje has the impression that his hand is still holding hers and that they are going together somewhere. The gentleman on the footpath, having witnessed this gesture raises his hat and smiles, but Jan and Klaartje have no idea whom he greets. We, the readers, guess that it is Eros who has passed! He made Jan and Klaartje realize that they belong to one another. Van Schendel linked the observance of sun-rising with the meeting of Eros, parallel to Theseus' practice of relating May Day with Saint Valentine's Day, mentioned earlier. This event, described in a subtle evasive manner, is typical of Van Schendel. It is besides an example of the interweaving of reality

and imagination, the latter being presented in two layers: the first one is the portrayal of a coincidence bordering on the magic, that is the unexpected presence of Meneer Oberon, human being and spirit, at a very early hour at quite a distance from his cottage in Haarlem, and the second one constitutes the 'presence' of Eros, unnoticed by Jan and Klaartje, of course, but greeted by Oberon. Also Oberon's double life is clearly emphasized here, that of a human being and at the same time that of a spirit. It is an image of reality in a frame of unreality. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the merging of the fairy-world, the world of the Athenian courtiers, and that of the tradesmen, causes the same unreal images, but, surprisingly enough, the audience accepts it without question.

After this little story of Eros' intervention, which is after all important enough to have been mentioned as an illustration of the respective layers in the novel, it is interesting to consider the consequences of the appearance of the god of love. Jan and Klaartje having fallen in love with each other discover that especially Klaartje's father opposes their desire to become engaged to be married. But they are still very young and have to wait at least a couple of years. Van Schendel's treatment of Major Vink's opposition towards a future marriage is comparable with Shakespeare's theme - in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* - of 'father opposes a daughter's falling in love with an, in his eyes, undesirable person', which is a traditional theme of (Roman) comedy. This provides an obstacle in the eyes of the lovers, but in both cases it

is removed, although it happens for different reasons. In the case of Hermia and Lysander, for instance, Theseus initially endorsed Egeus' command that his daughter Hermia was to marry his favourite, Demetrius, instead of her lover, Lysander, on punishment of death should she not obey. According to "the ancient privilege of Athens" (1.1.41) Hermia's father is entitled to have his way. However, when it appeared that in the first place in the recent past Demetrius had wooed Helena and won her soul (1.1.106-110), and in the second place both Hermia and Lysander, and also Helena and Demetrius, had spent the night in the Athenian woods, unchaperoned, the Duke of Athens thinks it appropriate not to withhold but to give his consent for the marriage of Hermia and Lysander. That, because of Oberon's application of the love-juice to Demetrius' eyelids, Helena and Demetrius have again become lovers, and are to celebrate their wedding on the same day as Theseus and Hippolyta, and Hermia and Lysander, is a happy solution to all the quarrels.

As far as Van Schendel's courting couple is concerned Klaartje's father is of the opinion that the marriage would be a *mésalliance*, because Jan belongs to a lower class than that of the Vinks. Therefore he forbids them to see each other, but Jan and Klaartje do not care and continue seeing one another, though secretly. With Lysander, Jan could rightly say,

Ay me, for aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth,

(1.1.133-135).

After a year, however, for no obvious reason Major Vink gives up his opposition and Jan and Klaartje become engaged, although, as Van Schendel said, the freshness of their attachment has worn off (365).

Critics have remarked that Van Schendel introduced the fairy-like, the magical into this novel, but not many of them have made the link with the Shakespearean characters of Oberon and Titania. The discussions between Oberon and Titania in *Me-
neer Oberon en Mevrouw* make it clear that they consider themselves to be neither fairies nor human beings. They possess extraordinary, magic powers, however, for when they are looking for a nice boy and girl in the western hemisphere, viz. in France, England, or Holland, they leave before midday and come home hours before dark. Incidentally Titania changes her clothes as if she were going on a real journey; she wears for the occasion a nice frock, a mantle of a subdued colour, and a hat with lace. The trip will only take a couple of hours, longer indeed than Puck's swift flight when Oberon sends him on an errand to fetch the flower called 'love-in-idleness'. Oberon orders Puck to return "ere the leviathan can swim a league" (2.1.174) and also, perhaps more relevant is Puck's reply,

I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes.

(2.1.175-176).

And again when the angry Oberon orders Puck to undo the mistaken application of the love-juice, the latter says,

I go, I go - look how I go,
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow.
(3.2.100-101).

Oberon too refers to their ability to cover long distances without effort in a very short time, when he says to Titania after their reconciliation,

We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wandering moon.
(4.1.96-97).

Towards the end of *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw Oberon* says,

I have flown round the globe to catch up with yesterday,
when Jan was a boy of seven sitting under the table and
Klaartje a little girl wearing plaits.
(434; my interpretation and translation).

These examples show that Van Schendel endowed his Oberon and Titania with the same magic powers of, for instance, the ability to move very fast from one part of the globe to an other and the ability to make oneself invisible. Another example of their magic capacities is Oberon's power to mint gold, money, out of nothing - as happens in fairy-tales -, when staying on a Greek island. It came to pass as follows. When Klara turns forty, she becomes capricious, to the astonishment of her family and their servant-girl Fientje. It is not surprising that in this state of mind she is more easily tempted to consider the proposals of the witch Mrs Selvergedaen to go abroad seriously. She is nasty, in particular to Fientje, who suspects what is going on, and one day she announces that she is going to Paris with Mrs Selvergedaen.

It does not end with one visit to Paris, however, for the ladies go again the following winter and they even travel to

the south of France taking Idaatje, Klara's only daughter, with them, although it is sufficiently known that Jan's business is going downhill. Besides, Klara loses large sums of money at the casino, of all places. This is the bizarre 'continuation' of the tale of Jan's mother playing at ombre with her friends for little money, that is: Klara, initially averse to playing any card-game for money, stakes sums at the casino. At this point in the history of the kind offices of Oberon and Titania the couple find themselves wandering from one Greek island to another, when they receive several letters with a cry for help to provide money. Oberon, however, is loath to give money, for it is against his principles. With pleasure he would give a collection of poems, or would bring about a person's removal to another place as he had done with Major Vink (this removal from The Hague to Amsterdam is acknowledged by Oberon himself on page 338!), but money would be out of the question. Titania, knowing that Oberon is fond of Fientje, tells him that the girl has sent a letter with the same plea as the others have: to send money. And she goes on,

We have undertaken the task of helping those two, and now we turn ourselves away at their first misfortune. We leave Mr Selvergedaen and his helpmate in possession of the field. This would be a defeat. Just remember Oberon, I have already said that I am fed up staying on these islands any longer; always peaches and apricots, today on Lesbos, tomorrow on Andros or Naxos, just waiting until all the troubles will be sorted out there. And also think of Fientje - how glad she will be when her master and mistress are happy once again. Then you will see the twinkling in her ambercoloured eyes.

To which Oberon says, "Enough! We will make money for the Morgenroods to see Fientje smiling again!" (415; my interpreta-

tion and translation). He calls it a whim of Fortune. From these examples it is clear that Van Schendel had endowed his human beings with characteristics of fairies, whereas Shakespeare seemed to have given his fairies some definite features of the human race.

Apart from being an example of Oberon's magic power, 'to mint gold' is at the same time another example of the dualistic world of Oberon and Titania, a fairy-tale activity taking place in the realistic world. Jan, however, refuses Oberon's gold/money on that occasion, for after her misfortune, Klara won a large sum of money at the casino. Later on, when Jan wants to discontinue his partnership in his business enterprise with Mr Selvergedaen, he happily accepts Oberon's offer.

Since the relationships between the partners of the respective couples, judging from the basis on which they have been established, are mutually divergent, it is interesting to examine them first. As related above, Oberon and Titania discuss freely and extensively their points of view as far as their relationship between themselves and also their attitude towards their environment, and in particular towards Klaartje and Jan, are concerned, so that the reader gets a clear picture of them.

From the time that they were only seven and in the first stages of their blossoming love, Jan and Klaartje discussed everything with each other, but later on and in their married life they grow apart, they cannot understand each other any more.

In the case of the Selvergedaens, they are never seen talking to one another, but they talk all the more, aggressively, to others to persuade them to do the 'right' thing, not avoiding sharp practices if necessary, in order for instance to get a better position in life, and consequently to earn more money. To put it differently, they advise the young people to adopt the *Carpe diem* attitude. Besides, in his conversation with Major Vink Mr Selvergedaen says nasty things about his wife, accusing her of being nicer to others than to him in the following words,

I have been entertaining the thought already for a long time to divorce my wife, for she is a benefactress to many, but only an enemy to her husband.

(341; my interpretation and translation).

The two couples of 'spirits', Oberon and Titania and Mr and Mrs Selvergedaen, try to draw the young couple into their own spheres, as said before, in the case of Oberon and Titania the world of beauty, happiness and arts, but in the case of the Selvergedaens the world of gain, good positions, and enjoying oneself. It is indeed surprising after all those years that Jan and Klaartje decide to free themselves from these influences.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Titania and also the courtiers are drawn into a world of delusion because of the trick played on them by Oberon and Puck. The delusion of the Fairy Queen being in love with a mortal *cum* ass is even for Oberon sad to look at, and when Titania in this state consents to relinquish the boy, he hastens to undo the spell.

After the first introduction of Oberon and Titania mentioned above, Van Schendel gave more details. Although the description of their outer appearances and their way of life might seem trivial, it is indeed essential to discover the attributes with which the author endowed Oberon and Titania, which distinguish the couple from ordinary human beings and elicited from diverse reviewers a whole scale of qualifications, from "extra-terrestrial beings", "neither human beings nor fairies" to "personified sphere of influence", whereas Van Schendel himself called them "spirits".

Oberon and Titania live in a cottage bordering the Haarlemmerhout, which is in no way comparable to the Athenian woods or the Forest of Arden. From their back-garden they have a wide view of meadows intersected by a stream. He is rather short, fair-haired and dressed in the height of fashion. She seems to be much younger, with a slim figure and is also blonde. Titania always wears light coloured dresses, preferably light-blue, a hat with ribbons and flowers on her breast. They have different calendars, he the old and she the new one, which is at times so confusing, said Van Schendel, that they stay away in Greece longer than they have planned (to be honest I cannot grasp why the discrepancy of calendars should cause at one point an extended sojourning of three summers at a stretch in the Greek archipelago). When Oberon finds the boy Jan and Titania the girl Klaartje, the children are very young. So they have to wait some ten years before their guidance may be effective and only if Eros should be sympathetic

towards them, which indeed - as mentioned above - occurs. In the meantime Oberon advises Titania not to come into contact with Klaartje just as he will refrain from seeing Jan. Titania is not content with this advice, for she must look upon Mrs Selvergedaen's frequent visits to Klaartje with sorrow. She knows exactly what her game is, for the lady tries to win Klaartje over by flattering her good looks and her piano playing, and by giving her presents, such as a mirror and a beauty case, which only increase her vanity. When Titania complains to Oberon that Klaartje will be spoilt before she, Titania, will be in a position to teach and guide her, Oberon refers to his earlier explanation of the virtues and vices inherent in every person on which he elaborates by saying,

It is not the cultural influences that form a child's mind in the first place. The numerous ancestors of the child are of greater influence than its educator and during the growth of 'your' girl thousands of characteristics get the chance to develop anew. The growth of her mind does not mean that her mind expands as regards its dimension or achievements, for it is already equipped in its allotted space.³⁷

In what way characteristics, inherent or 'taught', will develop eventually is unknown to us. Only when Eros has touched them, will we be able to see which of them has a chance to survive and then our task will begin. If Eros does not appear, we will have to look for another couple of children.

(335; my interpretation and translation).

Oberon's pronouncements on moral issues must have been the reason why some critics have labelled this novel pedagogical, educational or even psychological, as has been mentioned earlier. Anyway Van Schendel's supposed intentions for writing

³⁷ So, according to Van Schendel a child is not born with a 'tabula rasa'.

this novel - a reason has been given at the beginning of this chapter - are quite different from Shakespeare's purpose in writing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As is taken for granted one of Shakespeare's motives was to entertain his audience, but, as already noticed, at the same time moral concerns are woven into *The Dream*, such as, courteous behaviour towards one another, and "an ideal of married chastity". The play has a light-heartedness which is totally absent from Van Schendel's novel.

Early in the discussion of *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw*, I pointed out the similarity of the theme of 'adoption' in this novel and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. One could also look at it from another perspective, that is to say that in these two works Jan and Klaartje and the changeling boy comprise a bone of contention. To begin with Shakespeare's play: the quarrel between Oberon and Titania was solved on account of Oberon's trick and they became reconciled. In Van Schendel's novel the quarrel proves to have been twofold. In the first place it is the contention between Oberon and Titania and the Selvergedaens, and in the second place the contention between Oberon and Titania; the quarrels in the novel are not solved completely, however.

The animosity between the two couples of spirits has been referred to several times, but it comes into the open when one day they all attend a concert in the Hout, which has been mentioned earlier in this thesis. Oberon and Titania are already seated when Mr and Mrs Selvergedaen arrive. These two thrust

themselves on Oberon and Titania and take up the two vacant places at their table. Mr Selvergedaen opens the conversation, saying,

When we left the bride and groom, my dear sir [referring to Jan and Klaartje], I had the intention to confer with you as soon as possible about the way to secure the well-being of the married couple - everyone in his own way, of course, my wife and your lady included. I am afraid that we are not altogether in agreement as yet, but I think that with some goodwill on your side you will become convinced that my point of view is the better one. For that matter we complement one another.

Oberon's answer is to the point,

You cannot convince me of anything sir, but of your impudence.

But Mr Selvergedaen does not let himself be held back by these words and continues his argument. After many digressions he arrives at the essence of his reasoning which will be given below in an abridged version,

Let us not mince matters Mr Oberon, we have known each other for quite a long time, unfortunately as contrasts. They were stupid people who divided the spirit, our spirit, in two parts, one half of which they allotted to me, my wife, and our peers, and the other half to you and your peers. In the beginning it was called gods and demons, the chosen ones and the doomed, the virtuous people and the wicked ones. It was the self-interest and egoism of those stupid people that caused this division between the characteristics called by one group good and by the other bad. And they conceived of many laws to suppress that which stood in their way; their descendants called this the birth of civilization.

(363-364; my interpretation and translation).

After this speech Oberon and Titania leave the Hout. The Selvergedaens do not let things stand, however, and at a second encounter, after the two couples have been dismissed by their protégés, the evil genius suggests that they adopt more young people and guide them jointly, but Oberon turns a deaf ear to

these suggestions. This second time - they have entered the garden of their neighbours without any announcement - Oberon has this to say to the intruders,

I always thought that you were clever, not sensible, otherwise you would have known that there are differences between the two of you and Titania and myself. Every word uttered by you has for us a different meaning, as far as we are capable of understanding it. Therefore you will also look differently at a human being than we do. In your view he is dust, we consider him to be a beloved of the gods, fallen down on the earth. This is possibly more than you can understand.

(428; my interpretation and translation).

And he adds to these words the request to leave their garden immediately. This shows that there is no reconciliation, which is no surprise at all.

With Oberon and Titania, who similarly quarrel about Jan and Klara, it is another situation. When going home, after Jan has dismissed the kind offices of Oberon and Titania, it seems that Oberon does not take offence at Jan and Klara's decision, for he takes leave of the couple, smiling (423). At home the two discuss briefly the lives of their protégés, and all of a sudden Oberon blames Titania for not having paid sufficient attention to the intrigues of Mrs Selvergedaen, and Titania, rather cross, blames Oberon for having taken his task too lightly. And she goes on,

I already knew that you would never become a good leader, neither of children, nor of grown-ups. You are too naive, too carefree. Like a good gardener you should have watched continually that those false persons and louts would not spoil everything. Not only the evil Selvergedaen, but also Sekeris, Major Vink, Adriaan Boel, and all the others. It was up to you to see that Jan had good friends. You have been too light-hearted and you have forgotten what the poet says, "A noble tree does not thrive in an unclean corner". And now you say that we

have lost, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. But I will not give up, I still have Fientje there.

(425-426; my interpretation and translation).

As a matter of fact this is one of the examples - mentioned in connection with the uncommon title - in which Titania shows that Oberon and she are well-matched. Surprisingly enough Oberon does not object to Titania's reasoning or rather accusations. Anyway in both the play and the novel the bone of contention is realistic enough, although in the novel it is far more important.

Apart from the quarrels we also see that Van Schendel's Oberon and Titania are much involved in the lives of human beings, as are Shakespeare's characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Take for instance one of Titania's last lines in the novel,

Do we have to wait for such a long time? [she wants to adopt another boy and girl]. Then hundreds of thousands will pass in time. Although these two were insensible Oberon, we still love them and that is why we will have to begin with another couple.

(436; my interpretation and translation).

Oberon speaks of "beloved of the gods", and Titania says, "we still love them". In the play there are instances where the Fairy King and Queen are caring for human beings. Towards the end, after the play-within-a-play, Oberon and Titania with all their train come to bless the chambers and especially the bride-beds of the three couples. Their blessing is meant to ward off all evil from the issue of the newly-wed (5.1.31-52).

There is still another important subject to discuss. Considering Mr Selvergedaen's speech in the Hout in which he

explains the existence of good and bad qualities side by side in the human soul, this is exactly the axiom which forms the point of departure in *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw*. In the novel Van Schendel explored whether it is possible to guide young persons in such a way that they embrace only the good, harmonious and artistic things in life, without being drawn to wealth, plenitude or fame. The answer to this query cannot be yes or no. Actually the story shows the reader three possibilities, which will be explained as follows. I have already mentioned that, as far as Jan and Klara are concerned, they break with the two couples who tried to guide them; they choose a life, independent of any influence from the outside, but as I see it, a life which is a combination of the two trends discussed above; the elder son Toon and his fiancée clearly adopt a way of life promoted by Oberon and Titania; and the younger son Koen lets himself be guided by the evil genius, and thus opts for a permissive way of life. After the dismissal of both the Selvergedaens and Oberon and Titania, Jan and Klara turn to God. But, and this is contrary to a distinct separation between good and bad intentions in the human soul, one is accepted by God both with his or her good and bad inclinations. Still one expects that in time the good will prevail over the evil, although the latter will remain there.

Of quite another nature is the remark which will be the last item of the suggested analogies between the play and the novel. There are directors who endorse the idea of doubling

the roles of Theseus and Oberon and Hippolyta and Titania in productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, perhaps to underline the dualistic nature of these personages. In *Plays and Players* of June 1989, for instance, Rod Dungate reviews John Caird's production *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre featuring John Carlisle as Theseus and Oberon and Clare Higgins as Hippolyta and Titania. He said,

Love's capricious nature is authoritatively signalled at the outset by John Carlisle and Clare Higgins (Theseus and Hippolyta); the air quivers with tension between them - his eagerness for their wedding, her wish to delay it. When the four young people appear, with their love problems, strong ensemble playing reveals an interesting sub-text - that they too are wholly aware of the tensions between Theseus and Hippolyta.

What could be more natural, then, than that these tensions should weave themselves into a dream, with Theseus and Hippolyta appearing as an estranged fairy king and queen? (24).³⁸

So it is possible to say that this view supposes a multiplying of characters.³⁹ *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* displays a different doubling which was, as indicated above, Van Schendel's objective when he conceived this novel. His idea resulted in the creation of the two sides of the human soul, the good and the evil, personified by the two couples of spirits. I wonder whether one could argue that this doubling is essentially of a converging nature, for the mere fact that, although the two couples try to influence them, Jan and Klara ultimately let themselves be guided by God. In the foregoing, elaborate at-

³⁸ See the interesting discussion of 'the double' in Peter Holland's (ed.) *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 96-98.

³⁹ See for the discussion of character multiplying and converging Peter Holland. Ed. *The Oxford Shakespeare A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 96-98.

tention has already been paid to this phenomenon. This discussion has shown that also the practice of doubling proves to be analogous in both the play and the novel.

After having pointed out analogies between Shakespeare's play and Van Schendel's novel, I will end this discussion with lines taken out of an article by Johan Koning, "De Mensch en zijn Omgeving: Het Conflict tussen Twee Levenshoudingen" (Man and his Environment: The Clash between Two Attitudes to Life).⁴⁰ He remarks,

One has to attach the same symbolic meaning to "Meneer Oberon" in Van Schendel's new novel as in preceeding instances, namely that his 'Oberon' also helps human beings and is their friend as he did and was in the Old French Epic of Huon of Bordeaux round 1220, and also with Chaucer in the fourteenth century, with Shakespeare round 1600 and with Wieland in 1780 - on whose text Weber composed his opera *Oberon* in 1826. In world literature these are the only examples of 'Oberon' adaptations [as I mentioned earlier in this thesis there are more examples, YS]. Do we then assume too much if we suggest that with the introduction of the Oberon-theme into the world of the Dutch novel, Arthur van Schendel has accomplished a literary and artistic deed of extraordinary importance? Especially since he did it in such a beautiful and poetic manner.

(my interpretation and translation).

4.4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The appropriation of Shakespeare's characters of Oberon and Titania by Van Schendel in his novel has, in my view, produced a story at times quite interesting, but occasionally somewhat tedious on account of the long monologues on moral issues put forward by Oberon and Mr Selvergedaen. Nevertheless with Me-

⁴⁰ File S 312/Knipsels LM.

neer Oberon en Mevrouw, Van Schendel had again shown that his creativity was of paramount importance and his imaginative power very strong. If we accept the fairy world in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, we have to accept these human beings *cum* spirits in *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* as well. Those who object to the extra, spirit-like dimension applied to some of Van Schendel's characters in this novel, have possibly never embraced Shakespeare's *Dream* as we have.

CONCLUSION

As has been explained in the previous chapters, Van Schendel's body of thought reflected in his works is an example of someone whose admiration for Shakespeare made him adopt ideas and characters from the works of the great playwright and adapt them to his own purposes. What seems remarkable to me is that in his old age he wrote poems and pieces of prose reflecting experiences related to his years as a young man. See for instance his poem about Stratford-on-Avon and his reminiscences of his years as a foreign teacher in Tuxford and London, which he wrote in 1944, whereas he lived in Tuxford, London and Stratford-upon-Avon round the turn of the century. It seems as if Van Schendel's memory had not lost the sharpness of his youthful impressions.

Fortunately his heirs saw it as their task to preserve their father's inheritance, supported for instance by Charles Vergeer and Rens Zomerdijs whom they knew personally. Ultimately manuscripts, correspondence, pictures, etc. were given into the hands of the *Literary Museum and Documentation Centre* in The Hague, the place where literary works and documentation of prominent Dutch poets and authors are catalogued and kept for posterity. At the moment the *LM*, has set up an exhibition of 19th and 20th-century Dutch poets and authors, categorized according to the stream to which they belong and the best-known works they produced are paid attention to. Among them Van Schendel has found his niche. As has been mentioned ear-

lier, in 1978 his oeuvre was compiled and published in eight volumes by a collective of editors among whom are Arthur van Schendel Jr., Corinna van Schendel and Charles Vergeer.

Mention is made of Van Schendel's habit of keeping himself in the background and not willing to give away particulars about his personal life. So it is understandable that after his death poems, short stories, and an unfinished novel, some in manuscript, were discovered among his papers. Most of this unpublished material was included in VW vol. 8 (485-630). However, a short story called "De Geheimzinnige Vrouw" (The Mysterious Woman) escaped the perceptivity of the editors, because it was written on a small pad with a pencil in a small hand which - according to Rens Zomerdijs - could only be deciphered with the help of a magnifying glass. He edited this story and it appeared in *Buzzlletin Voorbg*¹. In Zomerdijs's view more material might come to light if all the pads were thoroughly perused. In the introduction to "De Geheimzinnige Vrouw" the editor remarked,

One of the best writers of short stories The Netherlands has known is Arthur van Schendel.

And he continued,

There is no writer in our country who left such a rich variety of stories as Arthur van Schendel did, not only ghost stories, often melancholic, but also humorous ones. Seriousness is brought in in a subtle way and his humour does not invite the reader to roar with laughter. Besides, those two strands are more often than not interwoven in the stories.

(43-44; my interpretation and translation).

¹ (1979-1980), 68 (September 1979): 43-44 and 46-47.

His admiration for Van Schendel was referred to in Chapter One in connection with the introduction he wrote to Elizabeth Harding's essay "The Moth". That Van Schendel was well-known as a story-teller may point, in my view, to his highly-developed creativity.

Also a portrait of Arthur van Schendel was shown on TV. In an announcement of the film Wim Kuypers wrote in the newspaper *De Gelderlander* of 22nd August 1977, "Nieuwe Onthullende Feiten over Van Schendel's Kindertijd" (New Revelatory Facts about Arthur van Schendel's Childhood). In it he said,

That which has always been regarded as Van Schendel's dream fantasies are indeed based on autobiographical experiences.

(my interpretation and translation).

This film shown on Monday 22nd August 1977 under the direction of Wim Hazen, Chairman of Culture and Drama of the NCRV (licensed broadcasting company), is called "Dromen van Leven" (Dreams of Life) and lasted for forty minutes. In it Corinna van Schendel and Philo Bregstein revealed in a conversation important events of Van Schendel's life. In *Tubantia* of 23rd August 1977 Jan Zitman reviewed this film. He was somewhat disappointed for only bare facts were mentioned. He would rather have heard an exposition of Van Schendel's inclinations and preferences, which he put as follows,

why was nothing said about Van Schendel's favourite subjects, nothing about his attitude towards Calvinism in Holland; why was nothing said about the appreciation and revilement he met with, why nothing about his superior play with the Dutch language?

(my interpretation and translation).

In the course of this thesis many critics have been given the

floor. There are, however, one or two who have not been mentioned, such as Fr. van Oldenburgh Ermke. In his article called, "Arthur van Schendel of de Kunst der Verandering" (Arthur van Schendel or the Art of Change)², he said,

But it is that one tone - the prevailing tone of which Matthijs Vermeulen wrote that it is lasting - which is not to be dated, before or after Christ, which comes into life unchangeable, indestructible, it never diminishes, and its enchantment will never end. This tone will immediately be recognized, because it is everywhere.

It is the sound, the tone, the rhythm and the voice of real objective, real art. As Bach sang himself away and effaces himself away fugue after fugue, cantata after cantata and every tiniest phrase is a phrase by Bach; in the same way does Van Schendel write himself away in novel after novel, short story after short story and lives in every word, every image, it is his voice, his looks, the cry of a bird, the breaking of a wave, the call of a lonely person, the tone of a harp.

(738-739; my interpretation and translation).

Again another writer, J.W.F. Werumeus Buning, described Van Schendel's art from a different angle. In his article, "Over Arthur van Schendel. Weinige Woorden over een Levenslange Liefde" (About Arthur van Schendel. Few Words about a Lifelong Love)³, he observed,

How many of Van Schendel's characters do not have those light sides? How many personages walk and live in an enchanting light; it can be clear, it can be dark as with his strict religious personages. One can say: it is more the light of Vermeer than that of Rembrandt, but one could rather say: it is the light of Van Schendel. In the beginning it was endearing, as the years pass by, it comes from higher regions, at times it can be stricter, and at other times more playful, the playfulness of a wise man with the whims of Puck, the seriousness of a wise man with the love and grudge of Prospero.

(6; my interpretation and translation).

With these remarks Werumeus Buning probably wanted to empha-

² In *De Stem*. Vol. 2. (Arnhem: Van Lochem Slaterus, 1944): 737-743.

³ (Amsterdam: Nygh & Van Ditmar; Rotterdam: J.M. Meulenhoff, n.d.): 1-15.

size the uniqueness of Van Schendel, which, of course, holds good for every person. Nevertheless Van Schendel's uniqueness also consists of traits to be detected in other persons, as, for instance, in Rembrandt, Vermeer, Puck or Prospero. These range of traits, varying from the serious to the light-hearted and playful, points to the novelist's versatility and to his creativity as well.

G.H. 's-Gravesande captured Arthur van Schendel in one definition, i.e. the type of the Apollonian artist, because of his strict mastering of the matter, and the transfiguration of matter into image. He said that the strict command precisely shows Van Schendel's vital power. He also uses dialogue sparsely - as has been discussed in Chapter One - because it is contrary to the Apollonian character of his work.⁴

Hardly any of Van Schendel's critics who have highlighted one or other angle of his craftsmanship mentioned Shakespeare's lasting influence on the novelist and his work. The examples were discussed in the previous chapters, starting with Van Schendel's life of Shakespeare, the play *Pandorra*, and the novel *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw* to mention the most important works. I hope that this thesis has given due credit to Van Schendel's adoration of Shakespeare and has shown his creative appropriation of the body of thought of the great playwright.

⁴ In "Liederen van een Zwerver", 73.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

DICTIONARIES

A Dictionary of Fairies. Katharine Mary Briggs. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1976.

A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature. 3 vols. Gordon Williams. London & Atlantic Highlands, New York: Athlone Press, 1994. Vol. 3 (Q-Z).

A Visual Dictionary of Art. Ed. Ann Hill. London: William Heinemann/Secker & Warburg Ltd., 1974.

Catholic Encyclopedia. XV vols. Eds. Charles Hebermann, Edward E. Pace, et al. London: Caxton Publishing Co., 1908. Vol. VIII, 1910.

Encyclopedia Britannica. XXV vols. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 11th ed. 1910-1926, vol. IX.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary. 1911. Ed. R.E. Allen. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 8th ed., 1991.

The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians. XX vols. Ed. Stanley Sadi. London: Macmillan, 1980. Vol. XII.

The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. 1941. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2nd ed. 1962.

The Oxford English Dictionary. XX vols. Eds. James A.H. Murray, Henry Bradley, et al. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd ed. 1989. Vols. VI & VII.

OTHER WORKS

Anbeek, Ton. *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Literatuur tussen 1885-1985*. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij De Arbeiderspers, 1990.

Angelini, P. "Arthur van Schendel et l'Italie: les Notes sur la Renaissance." *Études germaniques*, 1965: 511-521.

"Arthur van Schendel Moralist." Editorial. *De Tijd* 17th Nov. 1940.

Ashley, Maurice. *England in the Seventeenth Century (1603-1714)*. Melbourne, London, etc.: Penguin Books, 1952.

- Aubrey, John. *Brief Lives* (chiefly of contemporaries between the years 1669 & 1696). Ed. Andrew Clark. 2 vols. Vol. 2 (I-Y). Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1898.
- Baer, Ann. Ed. *Frank Sidgwick's Diary and Other Material Relating to A.H. Bullen and The Shakespeare Head Press at Stratford-upon-Avon. 1904-1905*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975.
- Baere, C. de. "Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw." *Contact* (Antwerp 1934), 15th Apr., 1941, 23.
- Baker, Susan. "Shakespearean Authority in the Classic Detective Story." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 46 (1995): 424-448.
- Bearman, Robert. *Shakespeare in the Stratford Records*. Stratford-upon-Avon, The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1994.
- Begemann, Nienke. "De Engelse Komedianten in de Nederlanden." *De Gids* 1964 I: 398-412.
- B.H. "Het Literaire Getij." *De Standaard* 23rd Nov. 1940.
- Bishop, T.G. *Shakespeare and the Theatre of Wonder*. Ser. Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture 9. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.
- Bourbon, Louis de. "Cultuur en Kunst." *De Gelderlander* 26th Nov. 1940.
- Bradley, A.C. *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*. 1909. "Shakespeare the Man." London: Macmillan, 2nd ed. 1937: 311-357.
- , *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth*. 1909. London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd.; New York: The Macmillan & Co, 2nd ed. 1937.
- Brassington, William Salt. *Shakespeare's Homeland*. London: J.M. Dent & Co., 1903.
- Buisman de Savornin Lohman, F. Louise W.M. *Wie was Shakespeare? Feiten en Hypothesen over de Identiteit van de "Bard van Stratford"*. Amsterdam: H.J. Paris, 1964.
- Burgersdijk, L.A.J. *De Werken van William Shakespeare*. Trans. William Shakespeare 12 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1884-1888. 3rd, rev. ed. Leiden: Sijthoff, 1983. Trans. of Shakespeare's Works.
- Buurman, Henk. *Over Een Hollands Drama van Arthur van Schendel*. Amsterdam: Wetenschappelijke Uitgeverij B.V., 1979.

- Cannegieter, H.G. "Arthur van Schendel." *De Socialistische Gids* XXXIII (1938): 133-142.
- Carlyle, Thomas. *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*. 1898. The Centenary Edition of the Works of Thomas Carlyle. London: Chapman and Hall, 1901.
- Chambers, E.K. *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*. 2 vols. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1930.
- Charney, Maurice. *All of Shakespeare*. New York: Columbia UP, 1993.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Wife of Bath's Tale*. ca. 1387. *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*. Ed. F.N. Robinson. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979: 84-88.
- Clegg, Neline C. *The Waterman*. Trans. Arthur van Schendel. Leiden: Sijthoff; London: Heinemann, 1963. Trans. of *De Waterman*, 1933.
- Clement, Marja. "Present-preterite: Tense and Narrative Point of View." *Linguistics in The Netherlands* 1991: 11-20.
- Coenen, Frans. *Studiën van de Tachtiger Beweging*. 1924. Utrecht: Reflex, 1979.
- Craig, Edward. *Gordon Craig: The Story of His Life*. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1968.
- Downs, Brian W. *The Johanna Maria*. Trans. Arthur van Schendel. London: Jonathan Cape, 1935. Trans. of *Het Fregatschip Johanna Maria*. 1930.
- Drijkoningen, Frank en Ans van Kemenade. *Linguistics in The Netherlands*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1991.
- Dubois, Pierre H. "Het Levensgevoel van Arthur van Schendel." *Spectator* 12 Oct. 1947.
- Dungate, Ron. "A Midsummer Night's Dream". *Plays and Players* June 1989: 24-25.
- Dutton, Richard. *William Shakespeare: A Literary Life*. Basingstoke and London: The Macmillan Press, 1989.
- Eckeren, Gerard van. "Nederlands Proza." *Groot Nederlands Letterkundig Tijdschrift*. Vol. 38, III. Amsterdam: Van Holkema & Warendorf N.V., 1940: 960-966.
- Eijk, Henricus Petrus Antonius. *Mededelingsvormen bij Arthur van Schendel*. Diss. U Utrecht. Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp-

ny N.V. Dr. H.J. Prakke & H.G.M. Prakke, 1965.

Eliot, Samuel A. Jr. *Tragedies of Sex*. Trans. Frank Wedekind. London: Frank Henderson, [1923]: 217-304. Trans. of a.o. *Die Büchse der Pandora*. 1904.

Flower, Sarah. *Great Aunt Sarah's Diary, 1846-1892*. Privately printed, 1964. Prefaced by the early reminiscences of C(harles).E(dward).F(lower).

Franssen, Paul J.C.M. "Portraits of Mr WS: the Myth of Sweet Master Shakespeare in Asimov, Wilde and Burgess." *Reclamations of Shakespeare*. Ed. A.J. Hoenselaars. Amsterdam - Atlanta: Rodopi, 1994: 139-150.

Fraser, Russell. *Shakespeare: The Later Years*. New York: Columbia UP, 1991.

Fripp, Edgar I. *Shakespeare Man and Artist*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford UP; London: Humphrey Milford, 1938.

Fox, Levi. "The Early History of King Edward VI School." Stratford-upon-Avon. *Dugdale Society Occasional Papers*, No. 29 (1984), 8.

Gex, Jenny de. Comp. *Shakespeare's Flowers*. London: Pavilion Books Ltd., 1994.

's-Gravesande, G.H. [G.H. Pannekoek Jr.]. *Arthur van Schendel: Zijn Leven en Werk*. 's-Gravenhage: BZZTôH, 1981.

---. "Een Boek van Verbeelding en Werkelijkheid: Tussen Goede en Kwade Geesten." *Het Vaderland* 27th Oct. 1940.

---. "Liederen van een Zwerver". *Sestri Levante*, 15th Sept. 1938; 's-Gravenhage: File G.747/H.1 LM, 1948. 124 pp. Unpublished.

---. "Persoonlijke Herinneringen aan Arthur van Schendel." *Podium: Literair Maandblad* V, 1949: 707-716.

Greshoff, Jan. *Aanteekeningen over Jan Compagnie en De Waterman*. Rotterdam: Nygh & Van Ditmar, 1943.

---. "Arthur van Schendel's Dubbelleven." *Volière*, 's-Gravenhage: A.A.M. Stols, 1956: 20-27.

--. "Arthur van Schendel. *De Grauwe Vogels*." *NRC* 10th Dec. 1937.

---. "Hoe Arthur van Schendel Werkt." *De Groene Amsterdammer* 16th Jun. 1934.

- Greshoff, Jan. "Jan Greshoff over Arthur van Schendel." *De Stoep* 6 (Jul. 1944): 9-30.
- "Grey Birds by Arthur van Schendel. Trans. M.S. Stephens." Editorial. *TLS* 21th Oct., 1939, 611.
- Griffith, Trevor R. Ed. *Shakespeare in Production: A Midsummer Night's Dream*. New York, NY: Cambridge UP, 1996.
- Halliwell-Phillips, James O. *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare* 1884. 2 vols. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 7th ed. 1887.
- Harbage, Alfred & Samuel Schoenbaum. *Annals of English Drama 975-1700*. London: Methuen, 1st ed. 1964.
- Harding, Elizabeth. "The Moth." Trans. Arthur van Schendel. *the Paper* Jan. 1983, No. 7, 8. Trans. "De Nachtuil" 1937.
- Harrison, G.B. *Introducing Shakespeare*. Middlesex: Pelican, 1948.
- Heerikhuizen, F.H. *Het Werk van Arthur van Schendel: Achtergronden, Karakter, Ontwikkeling*. Diss. U of Amsterdam. Amsterdam: J.M. Meulenhoff, 1961.
- Heywood, Thomas. *An Apology for Actors* 1612 and Stephen Gosson. *School of Abuse* 1579. London: Repr. for the Shakespeare Society, 1841.
- Hoenselaars, A.J. Ed. *Reclamations of Shakespeare*. Amsterdam - Atlanta GA: Rodopi, 1994.
- Hollander, May. "Shakespeare." Trans. Arthur van Schendel. 's-Gravenhage: File AVS/1.a.27(6) *LM*, n.d. Trans. of *Shakespeare* 1922 (+ only three of the five plays by Shakespeare). Unpublished.
- Honigmann, E.A.J. *Shakespeare: The Lost Years*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1985.
- Hullu, J. de. Eds J.R. Bruijn en J. Lucassen. *Op de Schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie: Vijf Artikelen van J. de Hullu*. Ser. Historische Studies XLI. Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff/Bouma's Boekhuis BV, 1980.
- Intveld-Sevensma, W.G. "Arthur van Schendel en Engeland". Diss. (MA) 1968. U of Amsterdam, Instituut voor Neerlandistiek, Afdeling DNL, No. 1060.
- Jaggard, Gerald. *Stratford Mosaic*. London: Christopher Johnson, 1960.

- Jonson, Ben. *Discoveries*. 1641. *Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden*. 1619. London: John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd.; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1923.
- Kay, Dennis. *Shakespeare: His Life, Work and Era*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1991.
- . *William Shakespeare: His Life and Times*. Twayne's English Authors Serie Amherst, Massachusetts U. New York: Twayne Publishers; Toronto: Macmillan Canada, 1995.
- Kirby, Ian J. "The Passing of King Lear." *Shakespeare Survey* 41. Ed. Stanley Wells. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989: 145-157.
- Kloos, Willem, Alphons Diepenbrock et al. *Beschouwingen over Arthur van Schendel*. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff Nederland, 1976.
- Koning, Johan. "De Mensch en zijn Omgeving: Het Conflict tussen Twee Levenshoudingen". 1940. File S 312/Knipsels LM.
- Kranendonk, A.G. van. *Shakespeare en zijn Tijd*. Amsterdam: N.V. E.M. Querido's Uitgevers Mij., 1938.
- Kremer-Priest, Maud. "A Dutch Writer and an English Girl." 's-Gravenhage: File AVS/3.a.15 LM, ca. 1910. 50 pp in MS. Unpublished.
- "Kroniek: Boekbespreking." Editorial. *Elsevier's Maandschrift* 1914: 147-150.
- Kuipers, Wim. "Nieuwe Onthullende Feiten over Kindertijd Arthur van Schendel." *De Gelderlander*, 22nd Aug. 1977.
- Lawner, Lynne. *Lives of the Courtesans*. New York: Rizolli, 1987.
- Lee, Sidney. *A Life of Shakespeare*. London: John Murray, 3rd ed. rev. vers. 1922.
- . *Stratford-upon-Avon: From the Earliest Times to the Death of Shakespeare*. London: Seely & Co. Ltd., new rev. ed. with a new preface 1907.
- Leishman, J.B. Ed. *The Three Parnassus Plays (1598-1601)*. London: Ivor Nicholson & Watson Ltd., 1949.
- Leek, Robert H. *Shakespeare in Nederland: Kroniek van Vier Eeuwen Shakespeare in Nederlandse Vertalingen en op het Nederlandse Toneel*. Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1988.
- Leeuwe, H.H.J. de. "Shakespeare op het Nederlandse Toneel".

De Gids 1964 I: 324-339.

Looy, Jacques van, et al. *Enny Vrede: In Memoriam Maria Magdalena Müller*. Amsterdam: L.J. Veen [1919].

Macquerlot, Jean Pierre & Michèle Willems. Eds. *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare's Time*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.

Madden, Dodgson Hamilton. *The Diary of Master William Silence*. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1897.

---. *Shakespeare and his Fellows: An Attempt to Decipher the Man and his Nature*. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1916.

Markham, Clements R. Ed. *The Hawkins' Voyages during the Reigns of Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth and James I*. London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1878.

Marres, René. *Arthur van Schendel's Werk Revisited: Leven in Vrijheid of Gebondenheid*. Leiden: Dimensie, 1944.

McElwee, William. *History of England*. Aylesbury: The English Universities Press Ltd., 1973.

Meulen, Marja van der. "Een Ander Beeld van 'Patriarch' Arthur van Schendel." *Het Parool* 16th Mar. 1983.

Middendorp, Herman. "Literaire Kroniek." *Tijdspiegel* Jun. 1917: 138-143.

Mooij, J.J.A. *Fictional Realities: the Uses of Literary Imagination*. Utrecht Publications in General and Comparative Literature Vol. 30. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamin Publishing Co., 1993.

"New Novels, *The Johanna Maria*, trans. by Brian Downs." Editorial. *TLS* 9th May 1935, 300.

Newman, L.M. *Gordon Craig Archives: International Survey*. London: The Malkin Press, 1976.

Nicoll, Charles. *A Cup of News: The Life of Thomas Nashe*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984.

Nichols, John. *The Processes, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities of King James the First, his Royal Consort, Family and Court*. 2 vols. London: Printed by and for J.B. Nichols, 1828. Vol. 1

Noë, Joris C.M.C. *Arthur van Schendel. Ontmoetingen, Literaire Monografieën* 28. Brugge: Desclée de Brouwer, 1961.

- Noort, B. van. "Arthur van Schendel: Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw." *Nederlandsche Biographie* 85, Nov. 1940, 43.
- "Novels of the Week." Editorial. "Good and Evil: *The House in Haarlem*, trans. M.S. Stephens." *TLS* 24th Feb. 1940, 97.
- Nuttall, A.D. *A New Mimesis: Shakespeare and the Representation of Reality*. London, etc.: Methuen, 1983.
- Nijlen, Jan N. "Arthur van Schendel." *Maasbode* 5th Mar. 1938. File S 312/Biografische Artikelen LM.
- Oldenburgh Ermke, Fr. van. "Arthur van Schendel of de Kunst der Verandering." *De Stem* XX. Arnhem: Van Lochum Slaterus, 1940: 737-743.
- Paap, Wouter. "Oberon onder de Menschen." *De Stem* XXI (1941): 284-287.
- Panhuysen, Jos. "De Schrijver van het Noodlot." *Het Binnenhof* 16th Mar. 1974.
- Pennink, Renetta. *Nederland en Shakespeare: Achttiende Eeuw en Vroege Romantiek*. Diss. U Utrecht. 's-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1936.
- Pulinckx, R. *Arthur van Schendel: Zijn Werk en Beteekenis*. Ser. Keurbladzijde uit de Nederlandsche Letterkunde. Diest: Pro Arte, 1944.
- Quiller-Couch, Arthur. Introduction. *The JM*. By Brian W. Downs. Trans. Arthur van Schendel. London, Toronto: Jonathan Cape, 1935. Trans. *Het Fregatschip de Johanna Maria*. 1930: 5-11.
- Ramondt, Marie. "Arthur van Schendel's Laatste Phase." *De Gids*. Vol. 112 (1949): 15-37.
- Roodnat, Joyce en Jessica Voeten. "Het Werk Moet Voort, Anders Staat Men Stil." *NRC Handelsblad* 1st Apr. 1983.
- Rosevelt, Frans van. *John Compagny*. Trans. Arthur van Schendel. Ed. E.M. Beekman. Amherst: U of Massachusetts Press, 1983. Trans. of *Jan Compagnie* 1932.
- Sams, Eric. *The Real Shakespeare: Retrieving the Early Years 1564-1594*. New Haven & London: Yale UP, 1995.
- Schaik-Willing, Jeanne van. "Van Schendel en de Wereld van de Romanschrijver." *Critisch Bulletin*. Vol. 16, Feb. 1949: 66-69.
- Schendel, Arthur van, *Jeugdherinneringen een Document*. Reeks

- Meulenhoff ed. E 1034. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1989.
- Schendel, Arthur van. *Arthur van Schendel Verzameld Werk*. 8 vols. Eds. A.F.E. van Schendel et al. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff Nederland, 1976-1978.
- . "Romeo en Julia bij Die Haghespelers." *De Nieuwe Amsterdammer*. Vol. 3 (1917) No. 115.
- . "Sweets to the Sweet, Farewell." Ed. Jacques van Looy et al. *Enny Vrede: In Memoriam Maria Magdalena Müller*. Amsterdam: L.J. Veen [1919]: 5-7.
- Schendel, A.F.E. van et al. Eds. *Arthur van Schendel Verzameld Werk*. 8 vols. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff Nederland, 1976-1978.
- Schendel, Corinna van & Gerrit Borgers. Eds. *Schrijvers Prentenboek*. Vol. 19. "Arthur van Schendel." Amsterdam: Bezige Bij, 1976.
- Schneiders, A. J. "Arthur van Schendel als Pedagoog." *Het Vaderland* 24th Nov. 1940.
- . "Arthur van Schendel over de Opvoeding." *Paedagogische Studiën*. Vol. 21, 1st Jan. 1941: 381-395.
- . "Een Opvoedkundige Roman." *Het Kind*. Vol. 42, 19th Jul. 1941: 171-172.
- Schoenbaum, Samuel. *Shakespeare and Others*. Washington: The Folger Library; London: Scolar Press Associated University Presses Inc., 1985.
- . *Shakespeare's Lives*. 1970. Oxford: Clarendon Press, new ed. 1991.
- Schoneveld, Cornelis W. *Intertraffic of the Mind*. Diss. U Leiden. Leiden: E.J. Bull Universitaire Pers, 1983.
- . *Sea-changes: Studies in Three Centuries of Anglo-Dutch Cultural Transmission*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996.
- Schröder, P.H. "Boekbesprekingen. Arthur van Schendel: *Meneer Oberon en Mevrouw*." *Levende Talen* 122 (1942): 305-310.
- Shakespeare, William. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Ed. Harold F. Brooks. The Arden Shakespeare. 1979. London & New York: Routledge, 1990.
- . *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Ed. James L. Calderwood. Harvester New Critical Introductions to Shakespeare. New York, London, etc.: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992.

- Shakespeare, William. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Ed. Peter Holland. The Oxford Shakespeare. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.
- . *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Ed. Stanley W. Wells. New Penguin Shakespeare. 1962. Harmondworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1976.
- . *The Works of Shakespeare: The Tragedy of Hamlet*. 1899. Ed. Edward Dowden. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 5th ed. 1919.
- . *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*. 1986. Gen. Eds. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.
- Sidney, Philip. *Astrophel and Stella*. 1598. *Silver Poets of the Sixteenth Century*. Ed. Gerald Bullett. London, Melbourne, etc.: Dent, 1982: 173-225.
- Smit, Gabriel. "Oberon in den Haarlemmerhout." *De Gelderlander* 26th Nov. 1940.
- . "Wierook voor de Muze: Arthur van Schendel's Afscheid." *Nieuwe Eeuw* 11th Dec. 1948, 7.
- Smith, J.C. and E. de Selincourt. Eds. *The Faerie Queene*. 1589-1595. *Spenser Poetical Works*. 1970. Oxford, New York: Oxford UP, 1983: 1-406.
- Sparshott, F.E. *The Structure of Aesthetics*. Toronto: U of Toronto Press; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963.
- Spender, Steven. *The Lulu Plays and Other Sex Tragedies*. Trans. Frank Wedekind. London: Calder and Boyars, 1972. Trans. of plays a.o. *Die Büchse der Pandora*. 1904.
- Stephens, M.S. *Grey Birds*. Trans. Arthur van Schendel. London: G. Routledge & Sons, 1939. Trans. of *De Grauwe Vogels*. 1937.
- . *The House in Haarlem*. Trans. Arthur van Schendel. London: G. Routledge & Sons, 1940. Trans. of *Het Oude Huis*. 1935.
- Stopes, Charlotte Carmichael. *Shakespeare's Environment*. London: E. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 2nd ed. 1918.
- . *Shakespeare's Warwickshire Contemporaries*. Stratford-upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, rev. enl. ed. 1907.
- Stuiveling, G. "Aantekeningen bij Van Schendels Roman *Het Oude Huis*. "Overdruk uit het *Album Prof.Dr. Frank Baur: den Jubilaris bij zijn Zestigsten Verjaardag als Huldeblijk*

- Aangeboden door Collega's Vakgenoten en Oud-leerlingen". Antwerpen, etc.: Standaard, 1948. 2 vols. Vol. 2: 292-296.
- Stuiveling, G. *Vijftien Verhalen van Arthur van Schendel*. Amsterdam: J.M. Meulenhoff, 1950.
- Taranov, Gerda. *The Bernhardt Hamlet: Culture and Context*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 1996.
- Termaat, Cor Barend. "Arthur van Schendels *Fratilamur*: Mystificatie of Onthulling." *SIC Tilburg* 3 (1988) 3 (autumn): 53-59.
- . "Een Aangenaam Mens in de Haarlemmerhout." *Zomaar wat Verhalen en Gedichten*. Haarlem: Literaire Instuif Haarlem vol. 54-55 (1988): 24-31.
- Turksma, L. *Het Goede Leven: Het Werk van Arthur van Schendel*. Amersfoort, Leuven, Acco, 1987.
- Uyldert, Maurits. "Arthur van Schendel als Paedagoog." *Algemeen Handelsblad* 24th Nov. 1940.
- Vallance, Rosalind. *Pandora's Box. Fifteen Modern Plays*. Ed. John Hampden. London, Edinburgh, etc.: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd. n.d.: 150-158; 310-314 acting nn.
- VanderLinden, Sonja. *De Dansende Burger: A. van Schendels Sociale Visie*. Diss. U Leuven 1975. Recueil de Travaux d'Histoire et de Philologie, 6th ser., fascicule 21. Louvain: Éditions Nauwelaerts, 1980.
- Varnell, Margaret A. "On King Lear." *Shakespeare Bulletin: A Journal of Performance Criticism and Scholarship*. Vol 6 No. 1 (Winter 1998): 22-23.
- Vergeer, Charles. *Arthur van Schendel*. 's-Gravenhage: BZZTôH, 1983.
- . *Arthur van Schendel en Zijn Vrienden* (Tentoonstelling Amsterdams Historisch Museum). Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1983.
- . "Brieven van de Buissche Heide." *Maatstaf: Maandblad voor de Letteren* 44 (Dec. 1996): 62-72.
- . "De Optocht der Coorengelen." *SIC Tilburg* 1 (1986) 3 (Autumn): 52-60.
- . "De Vroegste Brieven van Arthur van Schendel." *Maatstaf: Maandblad voor de Letteren* 24 (Nov. 1976): 43-53.
- . *Gewezen en Gemaskerd: Over de Jonge Arthur van Schendel*.

Leiden: Dimensie, 1988.

- Vergeer, Charles. "Portfolio Arthur van Schendel." *Maatstaf* 24 (Nov. 1976): 24-33.
- . "Toelichting op Onderschatting en Overschatting." *Buzzlletin Voorbg* 5 (1976-1977) 38 (Sep. 1976), 39.
- . "Van Schendels Noodlot." *Maatstaf: Maandblad voor de Letteren* 24 (Nov. 1976): 34-42.
- Verkade-Cartier van Dissel, E.P. *Eduard Verkade en Zijn Strijd voor een Nieuw Toneel*. Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1978.
- Verwey, Albert. "Arthur van Schendels Shakespeare." *Buzzlletin Voorbg* 5 (1976-1977) 38 (Sep. 1976): 16-19.
- Vestdijk, Simon. "Arthur van Schendel, Paedagogische Horticultuur." *Muiterij tegen het Etmaal*. Vol. 1 (Proza). 's-Gravenhage A.A.M. Stols, 1941 [i.e. 1942]: 15-19.
- . "Simon Vestdijk over Arthur van Schendel: De Verantwoordelijkheidsgedachte uitgebeeld." *Het Vaderland* 3rd Mar. 1941.
- Vickers, Brian. *Appropriating Shakespeare: Contemporary Critical Quarrels*. New Haven, London: Yale UP, 1993.
- Vriesland, Victor E. van. "Korte Boekaankondigingen." *Kroniek van Hedendaagse Kunst en Cultuur*. 1946 6: 28-29.
- Walton, Michael. Ed. *Craig on Theatre*. London: Methuen, 1938.
- "Wat Lezen Wij?: Een Engels Oordeel over Arthur van Schendel." Editorial. *Hollands Weekblad* 6th Jul. 1935.
- Webster, John. *The White Devil* 1612. Ed. Russell Brown. London, Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1965.
- Wells, Stanley W. Ed. & Comp. *Shakespeare in The Theatre: An Anthology of Criticism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.
- . "Shakespeare Without Sources." *Shakespearean Comedy. Stratford-upon-Avon Studies* 41 (1972): 58-74.
- Werumeus Buning, J.W.F. *Over Arthur van Schendel: Weinige Woorden over een Levenslange Liefde*. Amsterdam: J.M. Meulenhoff, [1942].
- Westerweel, Bart en Theo d'Haen. Eds. *Something Understood: Studies in Anglo-Dutch Translation*. Amsterdam, Atlanta GA: Rodopi, 1990.

Wise, John R. *Shakespere: His Birthplace and its Neighbourhood*. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1861.

Wolfensperger, Peter. *Shakespeare: Impartial and Partial. Strategies in Persuasion in the Comedies*. Tübingen, Basil: A. Francke Verlag, 1994.

Young, David. *Something of Great Constancy: The Art of A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Yale Studies in English. Vol. 164. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1966.

---. *The Heart's Forest: A Study of Shakespeare's Pastoral Plays*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1972.

Zitman, Jan. "Een Hollander in Sestri Levante: Portret van Arthur van Schendel door Philo Bregstein." *Tubantia* 23rd Aug. 1977.

Zomerdijs, Rens. "De Geheimzinnige Vrouw: Een Ongepubliceerd Verhaal van Arthur van Schendel." *Buzzlletin Voorbg* 68 (1979-1980): 43-47.

MISCELLANEOUS

Letters to S.J. Bouberg Wilson, dated 14th Feb. 1893 and 17th Mar. 1893 respectively. File S 00312 B.1 LM.

Letter from Arthur van Schendel in Tuxford to Willem Kloos in Holland. Tuxford, 8th Jan. 1897. File KB 69 E 7 Nr. 1.

Two letters from Edouard Louvel in Tuxford to Arthur van Schendel in Amsterdam, dated 17th Jun. 1897 and 25th Jun. 1897 respectively. File AVS/2.b.7(L) LM.

Letter from Arthur van Schendel in London to Willem Witsen in Holland. Wimbledon-London, 20th Oct. 1899. File AVS/2.b.7(W)(a) LM.

Letter from Arthur van Schendel in Stratford-upon-Avon to Willem Witsen in Holland. Stratford-upon-Avon, Albany Place, 7th Dec. 1900. File AVS/2.b.7(W-Z) LM.

Letter from Arthur van Schendel to S.J. Boubert Wilson from Dangaard, Jutland Denmark dated 17th Sep. 1904. Archives Theater Instituut Nederland, Doos 8A: 'Diverse Stukken. 1904'.

Letter from Mayor's Parlour Town Hall Stratford-upon-Avon, John A. Priest, to Arthur van Schendel in Holland. Stratford-upon-Avon, 29th Sep. 1909. File AVS/2.a.4 (N-Q) LM.

Letter from Arthur van Schendel to Z.E. de Minister van Onderwijs, Kunsten en Wetenschappen. Ede, 27th Dec. 1909. File AVS/2.a.1(L-O) LM.

Letters from *The Shakespeare Club*, signed by Mr R. Latimer Greene, to Arthur van Schendel dated 18th Feb. 1910 and 27th Mar. 1910 respectively. Files Records of *The Shakespeare Club*, 1874-1948, Stratford-upon-Avon, Record Office; AVS/2.a.2 (G)(2) LM.

Letter from William S. Brassington, The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, to Arthur van Schendel in Holland. Stratford-upon-Avon, 9th Jun. 1910. File AVS/3.a.13 LM.

Letter from Arthur van Schendel in Stratford-upon-Avon to Aart van der Leeuw in Holland. Stratford-upon-Avon, 27 Albany Place, 31st Jul. 1910. File AVS/2.b.7(L) LM.

Letter from William S. Brassington, The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, to Arthur van Schendel. Stratford-upon-Avon, 3rd Jul. 1911. File AVS/2.a.2(B) LM.

Letter from Arthur van Schendel to Jacques van Looy. Domburg, 2nd Dec. 1911. File AVS/2.a.3(L) LM.

Letter from Arthur van Schendel to Jacques van Looy. Domburg, 4th Dec. 1911. File AVS/2.a.3(L) LM.

Letter from Jacques van Looy to Arthur van Schendel dated 31st Dec. 1911. Van Looy Collectie, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.

Letter from Jacques van Looy to Professor August Allebé in Amsterdam, undated. Van Looy Collectie, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.

Invitation from the Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon extended to Arthur van Schendel to accompany him to Divine Service at the Parish Church on Sunday. Apr. 28th, 1912. File AVS/3.a.14(2) LM.

Invitation extended to Arthur van Schendel in Ede, Holland, to attend a meeting of *The Shakespeare Club*, dated 11th Oct. 1915. Original: Rens Zomerdijs and Elizabeth Harding, Warmerhuizen, The Netherlands.

Picture postcard from Gordon Craig to Arthur van Schendel. n.d. [1923?], n.p. File AVS/3(2).2.2.a(C) LM.

Letter from Arthur van Schendel to Jan Greshoff. Rapallo, 1st Jun. 1923. File S 00312 B.1 LM.

Letter from Arthur van Schendel to Jan Greshoff. 25th Jun.

1933. File S 00312 B.1 LM.

Letter from Arthur van Schendel to G.H. 's-Gravesande in The Netherlands. Sestri Levante, 20th Jul. 1942. File S 00312 B.1 LM.

Letter from Arthur van Schendel from Sestri Levante to Jan Nijlen in The Netherlands, dated 6th Jul. 1943. File AVS/2.a.2(M-W) LM.

Letter from W.H. Howe, principal of Grove House School in Stratford-upon-Avon, to Arthur van Schendel in The Netherlands. Grove House, 15th Feb. 1946. File AVS/3.a.13 LM.

Letter from Elizabeth Harding to Charles Vergeer. Warmerhuizen, n.d. File AVS/2.b.3(5) LM.

Programme Note written by Arthur van Schendel for a performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by De Amsterdamse Toneelvereniging. The Concert Gebouw Orchestre conducted by Willem Mengelberg played the "The Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*" by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy on 23rd, 24th and 26th May 1936. File AVS/1.a.28/2 LM.

The score of the love song in Arthur van Schendel's play *Pandorra* comp. by Allard de Ridder in Dec. 1918. File AVS/1.a.29 LM.

A Portrait of Arthur van Schendel on TV, called *Dromen van Leven*. Director Wim Hazen (NCRV) on Monday, 22nd Aug. 1977. *De Gelderlander* 22nd Aug. 1977.