

## Slavery on Scene: Locating Dutch Theatre in the Abolitionist Debate (1775-1825)

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Slavery on Scene will be the first systematic study to explore the representation of slavery on the Dutch stage in an age of significant ideological and political change (1775-1825). Similar to today's newsreel, late 18th-century theatre serves as an excellent gauge to consider political debates during that period. Hitherto, scholars of Dutch colonial literature have invariably focused on written texts to investigate the representation of slavery and (anti)slavery thought. This project aims to not prioritise text over performance, yet to consider them as equally important carriers of meaning. Drawing on a wide range of political-philosophical texts combined with plays performed between 1775-1825, this project seeks to situate staged slavery within the Dutch abolition discussion. It is my ambition to gain insight into the ways in which the performance of slavery became a conduit to advance abolitionist discourses, and to detail the nature of the antislavery attitudes on the Dutch stage. The Dutch emancipation, however, was a very complex process that had to compete persistent ideas of black inferiority or the economic necessity of slavery. Slavery on Scene considers the theatrical portraits of slavery as tributary to their time and will attempt to trace subdued discrepancy within antislavery imaginings. This project will therefore not only contribute to Dutch colonial historiography, it will also shed light on the complexities of the abolitionist ideology of that time.

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