

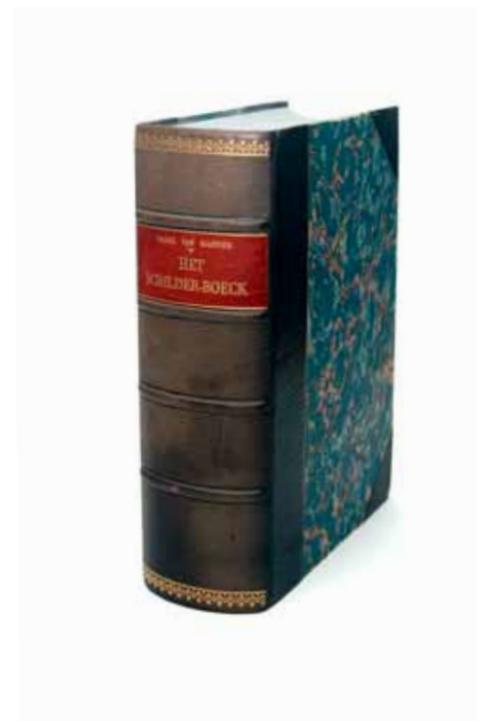
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Dutch
Non-fiction
Classics

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Karel van Mander *The Book of Painters*

Karel van Mander (1548-1606) is known mainly as a poet and author, although in his own day he was also successful as a painter and a designer of prints and tapestries. He was born in Meulebeke in Flanders and spent several years in Rome before settling in Haarlem in 1583 and helping to found an academy of painting, where he taught for twenty years. His pupils included Frans Hals.



Het schilderboek (1604)
200 pp, 100.000 words
With commentary (54.000 words)

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www.letterenfonds.nl/translations

Karel van Mander's monumental *The Book of Painters* of 1604 was underpinned by literary scholarship as well as a familiarity with the practice of painting. It was a winning combination. In writing the book, Van Mander set out to educate young artists who had yet to learn the trade and become its worthy practitioners. Over the years *The Book of Painters* became an indispensable, entertaining source of knowledge, both of the painters of the Low Countries and of their work in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Living in Italy between 1573 and 1577, Van Mander became familiar with the genre of artists' biographies that dated back to antiquity but was given new form around the mid-sixteenth century by Giorgio Vasari in his *Lives of the Most Eminent Architects, Painters and Sculptors*. Van Mander followed Vasari in combining biographies and anecdotes with descriptions of works of art. This formed the core of his work, making up three of the five volumes. He relied on traditional sources for such ancient artists as Zeuxis, Parasius and Apelles, the 'Prince of Painters', while Vasari was his source for the Italians, from Giotto to Michelangelo.

The main significance of Van Mander's work lies in the volume dealing with the 'Illustrious Netherlandish and High-German Painters' in which, based on his own research, he tells the stories of painters and painting in the German lands and especially the Low Countries. Van Mander begins around 1420 with the brothers Jan and Hubert van Eyck, who created the astonishing 'Adoration of the Mystic Lamb' altarpiece that can still be seen in the St. Bavo Cathedral in Ghent. The author regarded them as having laid the foundations for the great tradition of Netherlandish painting.

Of the later Dutch masters, Van Mander reserved his greatest admiration for those who took their lead from the classics and the Italian Renaissance. Among them was Joannes Stradanus, who worked for the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Another, Bartholomaeus Spranger, was on a par with Italian artists at the court of Rudolph II in Prague. In Van Mander's opinion the Haarlem engraver and painter Hendrick Goltzius could rival the great Michelangelo both in style and in his choice of subjects. There is an immediacy to this volume, due in part to the painters' own responses to a list of questions that Van Mander sent them.

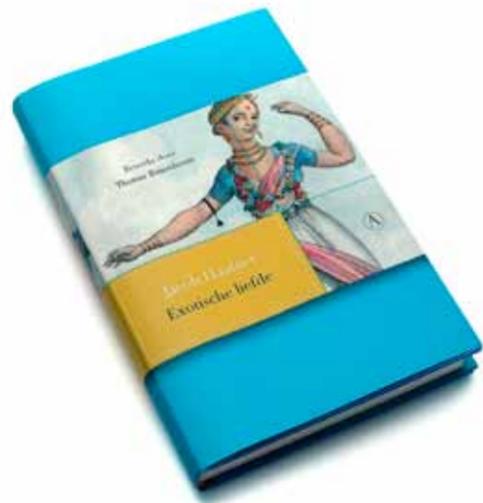
The three biographical volumes of *The Book of Painters* are buttressed by volume one, which covers the theory and practice of the painter's trade, and the final volume, where Van Mander reveals how painters would rely upon Ovid's *Metamorphoses* for mythological themes. The book is a milestone in Dutch art historiography, with its well-documented attention to individual artists and the elevation of their trade to the status of a respectable profession. Van Mander presents extraordinary insights, personal yet based on extensive knowledge, into the artistic world that prepared the way for the famous Dutch Golden Age.

To this day we owe our knowledge of many painters to Van Mander's remarkable work. His writing is lively and personal, anecdotal, amusing and fresh.

NRC Handelsblad

Jacob Haafner Travels in a Palanquin

In the late eighteenth century Jacob Haafner travelled to India and Ceylon. He fell in love with the East and learned several of the local languages. In his account, published after his return in 1787, Haafner denounced the rapacity and barbarity of the Dutch and British in their dealings with the natives and with the slaves. His *Travels in a Palanquin* is an outstanding work of Dutch romantic literature. He tells of a thousand-kilometre voyage he made in 1786 along the east coast of India, from Calcutta to Negapatnam, in a palanquin (a luxurious sedan chair), ingeniously interweaving his observations with the tale of his love for a young, beautiful Indian dancer called Mamia and her heartrending death.



Exotische liefde (2011)
254 pp, 100.000 words
With illustrations

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Publisher
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www.uitgeverijatheneum.nl

In the seventeenth century, their Golden Age, the Dutch excelled at painting, innovative business enterprise and adventurous sea travel, voyaging to Africa, Asia, and North and South America. They came upon the Chinese and Japanese, Persians and Javanese, Indians, Khoikhois, Inuit, Papuans, Easter Islanders and Tierra del Fuegians, for whom it was often their first contact with Europeans. Dozens of Dutch seamen, merchants, administrators and military men wrote reports of their travels and encounters, creating a literary genre that became extraordinarily popular in the Netherlands. Sober yet entertaining, their books offered an irresistible combination of adventure, drama and observation. Through the many translations, readers in the rest of Europe gained their first insights into distant regions.

An early example of the genre is a book by Gerrit de Veer, one of the survivors of the winter of 1596 on Nova Zembla, where a ship carrying seventeen Dutchmen became trapped in pack ice during a failed expedition to Asia. They survived the harsh conditions in a house built of driftwood and managed, by some miracle, to return to the Netherlands. De Veer's gripping account became an instant bestseller that is eagerly consumed in the Netherlands to this day (a film based on the book became a box-office hit in 2011).

Other outstanding practitioners of the rich Dutch travel-writing tradition are Adriaen van der Donck, Johan Nieuhoff and Willem Bosman. In 1655 Van der Donck, in service with the Dutch West India Company, was the first to give a detailed description of the lives of the Native Americans in the colony of New Netherland, along the Hudson and Delaware rivers. That same year, Nieuhoff travelled on behalf of the Dutch East India Company to the imperial court in Peking. He failed to secure any trading contracts, but his account is one of the liveliest descriptions we have of seventeenth-century China. Half a century later, Bosman shocked his readers with a disturbing depiction of the slave trade on the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana), where he had become a powerful merchant at the Elmina slave fort.

Two centuries of Dutch stories from overseas

- Gerrit de Veer, *A True Description of Three Voyages by the North-East towards Cathay and China* (Waerachtighe beschryvinghe van de drie seylagien, ter werelt noyt soo vreemt ghehoort, Amsterdam 1598)
- Adriaen van der Donck, *Description of New Netherland* (Beschryvinge van Nieuw Nederlant, Amsterdam 1655)
- Johan Nieuhoff, *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces to the Grand Tartar Cham, Emperor of China* (Het gezantschap der Neerlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie aan den grooten Tartarischen Cham, of Sineeschen Keizer, na Peking in Sina, Amsterdam 1665)
- Willem Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea, Divided into the Gold, the Slave, and the Ivory Coasts* (Nauwkeurige beschryving van de Guinese Goud- Tand- en Slavekust, Utrecht 1704)
- Jacob Haafner, *Travels in a Palanquin* (Reize in eenen Palanquin, Amsterdam 1808)

Haafner deserves to be wrested from oblivion if only because he was so progressive in his day.

Maarten 't Hart

Vincent van Gogh The Best of his Letters

Vincent van Gogh was born in the southern Dutch town of Zundert in 1853. He worked as an apprentice art dealer and as a missionary, but decided in 1880 to devote himself to art. After falling out with his family, and feeling isolated from the art world, he moved to Paris, where his brother Theo lived and worked. There he met Paul Gauguin and several other important young artists. In 1888 he moved to Arles in the South of France, weary of the big city and hoping to find a better atmosphere and quality of light. He toyed with the idea of establishing an artists' cooperative, but periods of intense productivity were punctuated by bouts of severe mental illness. Van Gogh killed himself in 1890.



The Quintessential Van Gogh (1872-1890)
265 letters (151 in Dutch, 112 in French,
1 in English and 1 in English/Dutch)
600 pp, 364.000 words
With 108 sketches (in 52 letters)
Introduction by the editors Leo Jansen,
Hans Luijten and Nienke Bakker, curators at
the Van Gogh Museum (15.000 words)

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www.vangoghletters.org

Translations
The Letters. The complete illustrated and annotated edition, 6 vols. (2009); in Dutch (Amsterdam University Press), English (Yale University Press) and French (Actes Sud)

Vincent van Gogh was a gifted writer as well as a pioneering artist. The hundreds of letters he wrote to his brother Theo and to artist friends including Paul Gauguin and Emile Bernard amount to a running commentary on his life and work. They also helped him to develop his ideas about art, about life, about painting techniques and artistic ambitions. He wrote of his perpetual struggle and his meagre success, of despair and illness. Van Gogh's letters are the most moving artist's correspondence in world literature.

Even those who feel they know all there is to know about Van Gogh will be surprised by this generous selection from the complete correspondence published to great acclaim in 2009. It demonstrates that the prevailing image of a capricious and restless genius does not reflect the full reality. Van Gogh was not always drunk or depressed, hastily committing the world around him to canvas. His letters are not irrational rants full of incoherent assertions. True, he had great difficulty keeping his personal life on track, but when it comes to his vision of art, his artistic ambitions, the literature he devoured or his opinions on society and human existence, his thinking was structured and purposeful. He was a seeker and he took life seriously in every sense. There are no trivialities here.

The letters offer not only a detailed insight into Van Gogh's inner life but a vision of the world in which he moved, coloured, at times distorted, by his own point of view. He was not so isolated as the myth would suggest. Conscious of the advance of industrialization that typified the nineteenth century, in his youth he read contemporary classics, and as an artist he followed innovative authors such as Zola and Maupassant. He was familiar with the artistic avant-garde in Paris and exchanged ideas and works with its major figures, including Paul Gauguin, Georges Seurat and Paul Signac.

Van Gogh's powers of observation and his astute analyses of people and situations are accompanied by a strong feeling for language and apposite turns of phrase. It has been said that he could have become a writer had he not been an artist. His prose is utterly compelling, straight from the heart and free of sensationalism. Each letter contains an argument, a point, an aim. Van Gogh considered it a mortal sin to be noncommittal; in his writing, as in his art, something was always at stake.

This selection of letters shows that Van Gogh, despite his difficult character and egocentric behaviour, always held to a clearly plotted course. He knew what he was about, and the poignant *document humain* that testifies to the fact has the same characteristic fervour as his art: 'I want to go forward at any price and – I want to be myself.'

There is scarcely one letter by Van Gogh which I, who am certainly no expert, do not find fascinating.

W.H. Auden

The purest of styles

Charles Bukowski

Piet Mondrian

The New Art – The New Life

Piet Mondrian (1872-1944), pioneer of abstract painting, was greeted internationally as the most important Dutch painter since Rembrandt and Vincent van Gogh. To this day he is regarded as one of the top hundred artists of all time. His work is represented in art collections all over the world.

Piet Mondrian's literary oeuvre remains largely undiscovered to this day, despite its immense importance to anyone endeavouring to understand the abstract visual language that made Mondrian one of the most influential figures in modern art. It is of great value in its own right, in that it expresses a firm conviction that art will conquer all domains of life, both individual and public, thereby eventually eliminating itself.

Mondrian's message is so all-encompassing that it led him to use a wide range of literary forms: essays, short prose, philosophical fragments, works for the theatre, journalism and autobiography. No facet of modern life was too trivial to be included in his writing on culture. He was equally likely to explore the significance of bars, the essence of jazz or modern man's need for optimal hygiene.

Although Mondrian lived at a time of economic and political crisis and war, and felt intimidated by the rise of a mass society (to his death he consistently refused to use the telephone), his vision of humanity was remarkably optimistic. He had a sincere semi-religious faith that the good in people would ultimately triumph and that mind would prevail over matter.

From the moment he first fully committed himself to abstract painting, shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, Mondrian felt a need to justify his artistic opinions in writing. The rigour and fervour with which he professed his ideals on paper have rightly led to comparisons with other great prophets of abstraction such as Kandinsky, Malevich and Klee, all three of whose essays on art theory long ago received the worldwide recognition that still awaits Mondrian's writing.

Mondrian's desire for an international career led him to use several different languages in his literary work, depending on which country he was living in at the time – respectively the Netherlands, France (1912-1914 and 1919-1938), Britain (1938-1940) and the United States (1940-1944). His artistic and political choices clearly determined where he lived: Paris because that metropolis was the world's artistic focal point in his day, London because he felt safe there for a while from the rise of national socialism in Germany, and New York because the voluntary exile saw in that city the beginnings of his ideal future: an urban democratic society, shaped by playful human creativity, powered by the latest technologies, breathing to the rhythm of jazz. That dream is tangibly present in everything Mondrian wrote.

It was in editing these writings that I got to understand Mondrian's concepts for the first time.

Robert Motherwell, American abstract painter (responsible in 1945 for the first edition of work by Mondrian written in English)

Mondrian's theoretical attempts constitute a major document of modern culture.

ARTnews

The New Art – The New Life. The collected writings (1986) 400 pp, 200.000 words
With illustrations in black and white, notes and references

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Johan Huizinga

The Waning of the Middle Ages

Johan Huizinga (1872-1945) was the most important Dutch historian of the twentieth century. He published a number of classic works, among them *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (1919) and *Homo Ludens* (1938), as well as a biography of Erasmus (1924) and his final book, *Dutch Civilization in the Seventeenth Century*. Two influential studies in cultural criticism made his name known far beyond his own country and specialist field: *In the Shadow of Tomorrow* (1935) and *Disfigured World* (1946). His meticulous investigation into 'forms of life and thought', his sensitivity and his imaginative power made him a leading figure who, although he did not found an academic school, inspired an intellectual culture.

Johan Huizinga is the Netherlands' most famous historian, but he is read primarily as a writer. No ordinary historian would create such a variety of work. In his best known books, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, *Erasmus of Rotterdam*, *In the Shadow of Tomorrow* and *Homo Ludens*, he expresses himself as, respectively, a historian, biographer, cultural critic and anthropologist. Huizinga's work is of lasting value as literature; he was the only convincing candidate for the Nobel Prize for Literature the Netherlands has so far produced.

The Waning of the Middle Ages is a classic and, without doubt, Huizinga's masterpiece. It is structured around contrasts: mind and body, life and death, dream and reality, form and content, word and image. His central concern is the relationship between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. He argues that they have more in common with each other than with the modern era and regards the late mediaeval period 'not as the precursor of things to come but as the gradual demise of a world nearing its end'.

The book examines the art of the late Middle Ages, in particular that of Van Eyck. Practically all Huizinga's contemporaries were of the opinion that realism in art, with its painstaking depiction of the world in every detail, should be seen as something new, as the harbinger of the Renaissance. Huizinga was aware of the advent of realism but believed it was purely a matter of technique, while the content of Van Eyck's painting was entirely in keeping with the late mediaeval worldview.

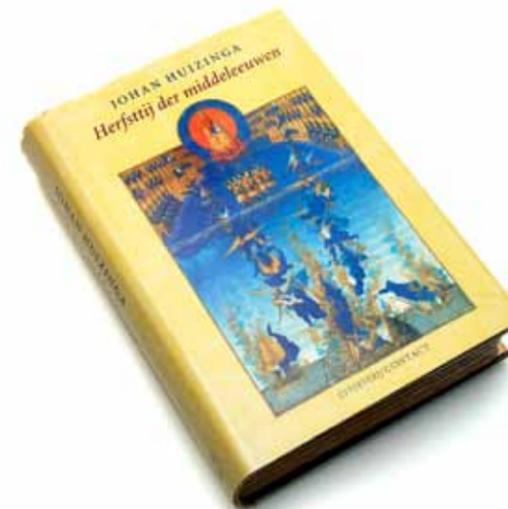
In *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, Huizinga presents a periodic table of mediaeval passion by juxtaposing wealth and poverty, warmth and cold, darkness and light, silence and noise, town and country, despair and happiness, cruelty and tenderness. At the same time he describes the rituals used to channel that passion, the processions and ceremonies, executions and sermons. His almost tactile account of the intricacies of daily life strongly influenced what would later be known as the history of mentalities.

Huizinga was a major influence on art historians. *The Waning of the Middle Ages* culminates in two brilliant chapters about the relationship between word and image in mediaeval culture. He wrote that it almost seemed 'as if that century had painted only its virtues and described only its vices'. His book was an attempt to correct this 'visual error' by returning the ethereal art of the time to its living context and comparing the words written with the images painted. The impact of those two chapters was immense, breathing fresh life into a whole branch of study.

Despite his fame and the continuing popularity of his work, many of Huizinga's potential readers remain unaware of his existence. Much has been translated, much of it badly. Other classic works, especially the magnificent essays he published in two influential collections, are still waiting to be opened up to an international readership. His work is rather like the wreck of a seventeenth-century galleon: treasures await anyone who ventures to raise it.

It is one of the greatest, as well as one of the most enthralling, historical classics of the twentieth century.

Francis Haskell, author of *Patrons and Painters*



Herfstij der middeleeuwen (1919)
471 pp, 176.000 words
40.000 copies sold of 1997 edition

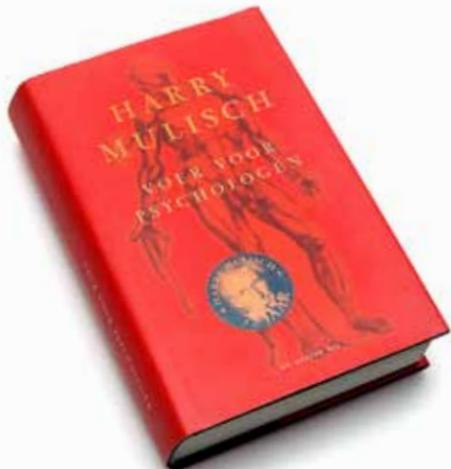
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Harry Mulisch

Fodder for Psychologists

Harry Mulisch (1927-2010) made his debut in 1951 with the novella *Between Hammer and Anvil*. His oeuvre steadily grew to encompass eleven novels, six short-story collections, eight novellas, nine poetry collections, seven stage plays, many books of essays, pamphlets and studies. At the time of the student and workers' revolts of the 1960s, Mulisch wrote mainly political essays rather than novels. One of his most important non-fiction works is *Criminal Case 40/61*, in which he reports on the trial of Adolf Eichmann and dissects the fascistic personality.



Voer voor psychologen (1961)
251 pp, 80.000 words

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For over half a century Harry Mulisch has been the Netherlands' most eminent writer. He is still recognized as such all over the world because of the profound questions about human existence he addresses in his work, yet there is nothing ponderous about his style; a love story with an exciting plot can be read as a philosophical essay about basic human values. All his writing explores issues of conscience and ways of orienting ourselves in a rapidly changing society.

The central concern is always humanity's moral lapse, which Mulisch saw as culminating in the Second World War, a crucial disjunction in the history of civilization. That war rendered former values redundant, and concepts of guilt and innocence became relative. In his early novel *The Stone Bridal Bed* Mulisch puts this insight into the mind of an American pilot who has dropped bombs on Dresden. In his last novel, *Siegfried*, he goes so far as to subject Adolf Hitler to a thought experiment in which the final remnants of his humanity fall away. With astonishing ease, Mulisch connects pioneering technological advances with new moral dilemmas. His masterpiece *The Discovery of Heaven* is an extended critique of the technology-dominated society towards which the twenty-first century is headed.

In Mulisch's view any serious writer is morally obliged to weigh social change against humanity's universal moral standards. As a consequence he investigates and calls to account his own authorship. He was one of the first Dutch writers to analyse what he was doing, and his *Fodder for Psychologists* remains topical to this day, having lost none of its power as an examination of the conscience of the twenty-first-century individual. In the autobiographical sections he presents ironic descriptions of the origins and development of his life as a writer, interspersing them with short stories, dialogues and philosophical or scientific disquisitions. The book includes one of the most moving and sharply observed passages of Mulisch's entire oeuvre, in which he describes his father's death.

Crucial to *Fodder for Psychologists* are Mulisch's pronouncements on the writing profession, some of which have become common currency in the Dutch literary world, such as: 'It's not the writer's imagination that counts but the reader's.' Or: 'Anyone who writes affects people. The change he causes in people, in society, in literature, is *him*. He lives on in it.' Most often quoted is his final declaration: 'It is best to magnify the mystery.' This sentence has often been used to characterize Mulisch's complex work, and it is precisely what continues to make *Fodder for Psychologists* so fascinating: he gives an account of his authorship that is at times moving, at times comical, but in the end the power of a literary work remains a mystery.

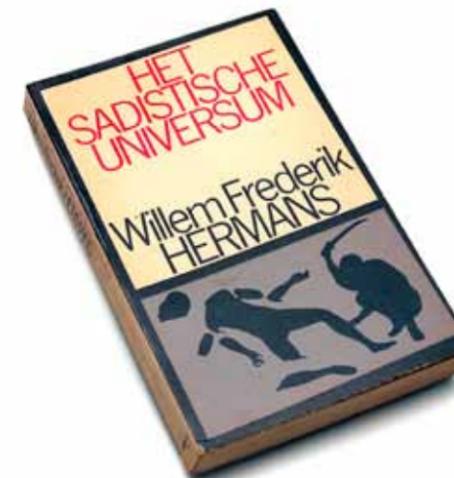
If you want to read a beautiful and powerful book, an asset to our literature, then throw yourself upon this *Fodder for Psychologists*.

Louis Paul Boon

Willem Frederik Hermans

The Sadistic Universe

Willem Frederik Hermans (1921-1995) is considered by many to be the Netherlands' greatest writer, based on several classic novels that include *Acacia's Tears*, *The Darkroom of Damocles* and *Beyond Sleep*. Initially he practised criticism as polemic, as a means of demanding attention and space for his fiction and for the ideas at its root. This resulted in the most famous collection of polemic in Dutch literature, *Mandarins in Sulphuric Acid*. Hermans also wrote many essays that have gained classic status in the Netherlands, summarizing his outlook in the term *mondo cane*, a dog's world in which the human being is nothing more than 'a chemical process' and nothing less than a 'jungle animal'.



Het sadistische universum (1965)
179 pp, 70.000 words

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The Sadistic Universe is the most remarkable essay collection of post-war Dutch literature – as the author intended. In his foreword Hermans announces a completely new type of essay, resolving to name his sources, translate all quotations and draw conclusions that will not please the reader.

Willem Frederik Hermans regarded himself above all as a novelist, yet at least a third of his oeuvre consists of essays and criticism, intended to challenge as well as elucidate. Hermans employs a scorched-earth policy to clear a path for his own ideas and methods. Some of the 'monologues' in *The Sadistic Universe* have become classics, targeting the English ('Monologue of an Anglophobe'), horse-lovers, doctors, filmmakers and crime writers. At the same time they are grimly cheerful, using humour as a defensive tactic.

Among the essays are exposés of a kind that would make Roland Barthes proud: 'The phenomenology of the pin-up girl' links its subject to 'everything that is dead, unused, and immaculate', while 'The new nature' describes the modern cultured person as a new barbarian who understands less about his surroundings than a Trobriand Islander in New Guinea. In the series 'Minor Protocols', about a visit to Oradour sur Glane, a climb up Etna and a journey through Spain, he listens to the sinister insinuations of a sadistic universe which underlies everyday reality.

The title of the collection is taken from its first essay, about the Marquis de Sade, but it represents Hermans' entire project as a writer, which is to look 'behind no-trespassing signs', to bring out the jungle animal lodged in us all. For Hermans there are really only two types of writer: those who say what the public wants to hear (the 'whorenalists'), and those who say what the public actually knows to be true but has no wish to hear, 'what it has dreamed but repressed on waking'.

In the central essay, 'Antipathetic characters in novels', he accounts for his authorship in a way no Dutch writer before him had done. Here again are those blunt dichotomies. There are two kinds of fictional character, likeable and unlikeable, and two kinds of writer: 'The first try to justify themselves as people, while the second try to justify themselves as writers.'

Hermans' oeuvre is specific to his own reality. We cannot know how the world really is and supposedly realistic novels are essentially mythical – unconsciously so, whereas Hermans' goal is deliberately to create a mythology. He consciously 'wants the impossible' and when asked precisely what he means by that, he responds: to be immortal – an impossible notion, since 'actual immortality ought to make it possible for him one day to make good everything that has gone wrong, to put right all the damage done'.

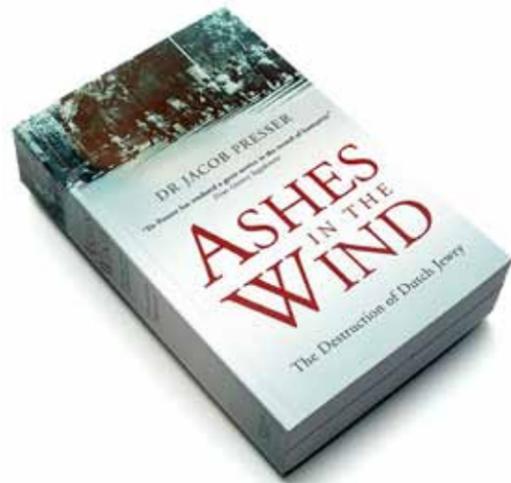
It's possible to see *The Sadistic Universe* as a range of exhibits, as a fat dossier packed with facts, entertaining, odd and scientific, that testify to copious knowledge and inventiveness, along with fantastic illustrations and gruff rebuttals: all in all an impressive accumulation of incriminating evidence against life.

Het Parool

Jacques Presser

Ashes in the Wind

Jacques Presser, historian and author, was an enthusiastic, highly original contemporary historian who regarded history writing as an art rather than an academic discipline. He came to fame as a committed chronicler of the murder of the Jews and as a much-loved professor, making frequent use of what he calls 'ego documents' – a term now commonly used for written sources of a distinctly personal character. *Ashes in the Wind* was his last book, and it demanded the utmost of him.



Ashes in the Wind by historian Jacques Presser is a raw book, an emotional and bitter account of the fate of the Jews of the Netherlands. The memoirs, diaries and letters used to illustrate it cannot fail to affect the reader. Presser felt duty-bound 'to be an interpreter for those who are condemned to eternal silence; only here and now, only this one time, could they make themselves heard once more'. Nowadays it goes without saying that no history of genocide against the Jews can confine itself to the perspective of the perpetrators, but when this book appeared in the 1960s that was far from the case.

Presser was himself one of the persecuted. *Ashes in the Wind* includes his personal experiences, and his identity card with its 'J' for Jew. He survived the war by going underground; his wife was deported and murdered. He had great trouble embarking on the book, until the writing of his novella *Night of the Girondists* (1957) helped him to break through. Its protagonist at the Dutch transit camp Westerbork cooperates in the selection and transport of Jews, becoming increasingly aware of his own Jewishness as his identity crisis moves towards its tragic climax.

Night of the Girondists is obviously personal, a reflection of Presser's own attitude as he became more engaged with his Jewishness, which from that point on he regarded as an inescapable community of fate. It was this hard-won sense of solidarity, combined with an urge to commemorate the dead, that guided him in writing *Ashes in the Wind*. Presser spares no one. He points firmly to the share of responsibility that falls to Dutch society, and in the name of the victims he passes harsh judgment on the behaviour of the leaders of the Jewish community: 'You were the tools of our mortal enemies. You helped with our deportation. You owe your lives to that obscene activity.'

Judgement passed on the Jewish leaders is more nuanced today, recognizing the stark 'choiceless choices' they faced, but at the time *Ashes in the Wind* was published, the war had barely passed into history, and only a few years earlier Adolf Eichmann had been executed after a sensational trial. Presser's book prompted self-examination. 'What did we Dutch do?' wrote a reviewer in 1965. 'We may have felt sympathy, but we didn't prevent what happened.' Perhaps even more importantly, Presser inspired a new generation to continue researching the persecution and extermination of the Jews. More than fifty years later, *Ashes in the Wind* still moves readers and forces them to think.

Presser saw the best and the worst of the Dutch response to Nazi occupation. To an impressive extent he carried this balanced view into his remarkable book.

The Jewish Chronicle

Presser has rendered a great service to the record of humanity. *Ashes in the wind* is a monument to the memory of the Jewish citizens of Holland who were massacred.

Times Literary Supplement

Ondergang. De vernietiging en verdelging van het Nederlandse jodendom 1940-1945 (1965)
556 pp, 250.000 words,
English authorized edition (1968/2010)
More than 200.000 copies sold

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Karel van het Reve

Hours with Henk Broekhuis

Karel van het Reve (1921-1999) was a Slavist, writer and translator. From 1957 to 1983 he was professor of Slavic literature at the University of Leiden, with a break in 1967-1968 when he served as Moscow correspondent for the Dutch daily newspaper *Het Parool*. He was a productive essayist and a newspaper and radio columnist, as well as the author of two novels. He made his name with his *History of Russian Literature from St. Vladimir to Anton Chekhov* and in 1981 he was awarded the P.C. Hooft Prize for his essays.



Karel van het Reve was a professor of Slavic literature, but he is mainly known as an essayist. For decades his was the voice of common sense, as he picked holes in fashionable beliefs before consigning them to the bin. He was at his best when letting fly at popular 'truths', whether derived from everyday life or borrowed from acknowledged authorities. He questioned, often to devastating effect, Freud's ideas, Darwin's theory of evolution, literary studies, the communist world view, Dostoyevsky's reputation, sociology, the revolutionary left, religion and much more. His weapons were level-headedness, humour, an irrepressible urge to rile and pester, and above all a clear, deceptively simple style.

Van het Reve came from a communist background. His books and articles about Russian writing included *The Soviet Annexation of the Classics*, a contrarian history of the country's literature up to the end of the nineteenth century. Van het Reve worked as a correspondent in Moscow for a year, from 1967 to 1968. As a result of coming into contact with *samizdat* Russian writers, some of whom became his friends, he set up the Alexander Herzen Foundation to ensure that their work could be published in the West. One of his most important books was *The Faith of the Comrades*, a masterly dismantling of communist doctrine. Having abandoned the communist faith, Van het Reve seems to have resolved never again to become the victim of any such delusionary system. He could spot humbug at ten paces and would fervently set about combating it.

Hours with Henk Broekhuis is a collection of articles first published in a prominent newspaper. Henk Broekhuis was the upright Dutch persona he adopted for the collection. Each article analyses and refutes a popular misconception, received idea or fashionable opinion. He writes about the pencil as a phallic symbol, a light bulb that would burn for a century, the dangers of swimming in ebb and flood tides, the poor getting poorer as the rich get richer, the influence of advertising, the Russian revolution, Jewish dietary laws – in short, all manner of issues in the fields of culture, politics, religion and society. These essays have lost none of their topicality.

In recent years Van het Reve's collected works have been published in a seven-volume India-paper edition (6,500 pages in total), meeting with a degree of success unprecedented for essayistic writing. More than ten years after his death, he is back at the centre of public debate. On many an issue, columnists sigh: 'I wonder what his opinion would have been about this,' or, 'If only Karel van het Reve was still alive.'

Irresistible: a lucid style, brilliant examples, and, throughout, the deadpan expression of a man standing aside and refusing to be flustered by all the fuss.

De Volkskrant

With his feigned innocence, Karel van het Reve has been making the Netherlands think for some fifty years.

Vrij Nederland

Uren met Henk Broekhuis (1978)
136 pp, 62.000 words
12.000 copies sold

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Rudy Kousbroek

The Secret of the Past

Forty Black-and-White Journeys through Time

Rudy Kousbroek (1929-2010) wrote more than forty books over the course of half a century. The polemical core of his work is *The East Indies Camp Syndrome* (1992) in which he uses intense childhood memories to analyse political relations in the colonial East Indies as well as the controversial realities of the wartime internment camps. In all his essays Kousbroek is extraordinarily successful at switching back and forth between history and politics on the one hand and personal and autobiographical material on the other, which makes his work both immediate and universal.



Opgespoorde wonderen (2003-2010)
90 pp, 40.000 words
40 illustrations in black and white

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While novelists Harry Mulisch and Willem Frederik Hermans were giving the Second World War its place in Dutch literature, essayist and journalist Rudy Kousbroek immortalized the drama of decolonization in the Dutch East Indies as no other writer has done. He approached his subject from many perspectives (political, historical, autobiographical), but only towards the end of his life did he discover the ideal form. He called it 'photosynthesis', a combination of a black-and-white photograph printed on ordinary paper and an essay of just one thousand words. He published three collections of such pieces, almost a hundred in all, and *The Secret of the Past* contains a careful selection of these visual-literary journeys through time. They are a monument to autobiographical memory as well as an eloquent protest at the passing of time.

Born in Sumatra in 1929, the son of a Dutch planter, Kousbroek emigrated to the Netherlands in 1946 and lived in Amsterdam for only four years before settling in Paris, where his studies included Japanese, Chinese and mathematics. He lived abroad for almost fifty years altogether, yet along with Slavist Karel van het Reve he is regarded as the most important essayist of postwar Dutch literature. In 1975 he was awarded the P.C. Hooft Prize for his oeuvre to date, the highest literary honour in the Netherlands.

As a writer of political and cultural essays, Kousbroek was a critical rationalist and a polemicist. Averse to such varied phenomena as religion, Maoism, factory farming, fashion and sport, he could be vehement to the point of activism. The enormous breadth of his interests stemmed from his scientifically trained, investigative spirit, coupled with a great enthusiasm for methodical thinking and the miracles of technology.

His yearning for the 'country of origin', the long-lost East Indies, nourished Kousbroek's writing, providing him with a wide range of memories, dreams and fantasies. It also shaped his many attempts to delve into history at other times and places. In *The Secret of the Past* a Proustian autobiographical quest broadens into a comprehensive bid to recreate the landscape, the music, the architecture, the tenderness and the smells of a permanently 'lost time' with the maximum possible precision. Ruins in the jungle, the airships of the inter-war years, demolished railway stations, dead pets, the streets of Paris, a little church on the Banda Islands, the departure of an ocean steamer: the gamut of emotions conjured up by Kousbroek is perfectly balanced by the accuracy with which he investigates and presents his discoveries. The apparently simple photograph of his father which ends the book is transformed by its accompanying essay into an enchanting portrait of a man loved by all. There are few non-fiction books in Dutch literature that so stimulate the reader to identify with an author's deepest impulses.

His knowledge and his often brilliant comprehension of technical matters help him in accurately deciphering a photograph, while the emotion with which he greets the discovery makes it meaningful, giving it a place in a wide world of knowledge and experience.

Vrij Nederland

The Dutch Foundation for Literature / Nederlands Letterenfonds

supports writers, translators and Dutch literature in translation

Information

The Foundation's advisors on literary fiction, quality non-fiction, poetry and children's and youth literature are present each year at prominent book fairs, including Frankfurt, London, Beijing and Bologna. The brochures *Books from Holland and Flanders*, *Quality Non-Fiction from Holland* and *Children's Books from Holland* recommend highlights from each category's selection.

Translation Grants

Foreign publishers wishing to publish a translation of Dutch or Frisian literature may apply for a subsidy towards the translation costs. Having acquired the rights, the publisher's application must be accompanied by a copy of the contract with the rights owner and a copy of the contract with the translator. Application forms are available from the Foundation's website. Subsidies are disbursed after receipt of proof samples, citing the subsidy. If the Foundation is not acquainted with the translator, a sample translation will be evaluated by external advisors. The maximum subsidy is 70% of the cost of translation. Applications for translations that have already been published cannot be taken into consideration. Publishers looking for a qualified translator can request a list of endorsed translators for their specific language area.

Illustrated Books

In the case of illustrated children's books and/or graphic novels, foreign publishers can apply for assistance to cover a portion of the production costs. Subsidies are jointly funded by the Mondrian Foundation and the Dutch Foundation for Literature.

Documentation centre

The documentation centre is an extensive information resource regarding Dutch literature abroad. The library contains more than 11.000 translated titles in more than seventy-five languages. The documentation centre can be visited by appointment. One significant component, the database of Dutch-language literature in translation, can be perused online at www.vertalingendatabase.nl.

Promotional travel

The Foundation is able to support a publisher wishing to invite an author for interviews or public appearances. Literary festivals are likewise eligible for support. Additionally, the Foundation organizes international literary events in co-operation with local publishers, festivals and book fairs.

Writers-in-residence

The Foundation coordinates writer-in-residence programmes together with foreign universities and institutions. Foreign authors are also invited to spend time working in Amsterdam. They may stay one or two months at the writers' lodgings above the Athenaeum Bookshop on the Spui (in co-operation with the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts). In addition, Amsterdam Vluchtstad offers accommodation to writers fleeing the regime of their home country.

International visitors programme

The visitors programme and the annual Amsterdam Fellowship offer publishers and editors the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the publishing business and the literary infrastructure of the Netherlands.

Translators' House

The Translators' House offers translators the opportunity to live and work in Amsterdam for a period of time. It is involved with numerous activities assisting and advancing translators' skills. Each year the Literary Translation Days are held for those translating to and from Dutch. The event also includes translation workshops.

Grants

The Foundation for Literature is active locally, offering travel and work grants to authors and translators in the field of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and children's and youth literature. Workshops are also organized for beginning translators into Dutch.

Schwob

Schwob draws attention to as-yet undiscovered, untranslated world literature. Each month the editors select a modern classic, spotlighting it on www.schwob.nl, by way of reviews and sample translations.

Background

The Dutch Foundation for Literature, created in 2010 as the result of the merger between the Foundation for the Production and Translation of Dutch Literature (NLPVF) and the Foundation for Literature (FvdL), is an independent organization financed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Policies and projects are carried out in close co-operation with the Flemish Literature Foundation.

Interested in receiving a newsletter via e-mail? Send your request to post@letterenfonds.nl or sign up on the website www.letterenfonds.nl

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for literature

‘Much of the best postwar fiction written in Dutch has recently become available in English. Much still remains to be done.’

Tim Parks, *The New York Review of Books*

Website

All titles in this brochure can be found on the Foundation's website: www.letterenfonds.nl. The category 'Authors and translators' offers information on the work of nearly 500 Dutch-language authors, and has a searchable database of more than 17.000 translations from Dutch into other languages.

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