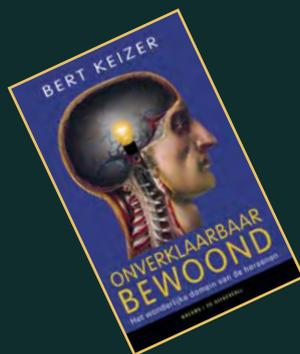
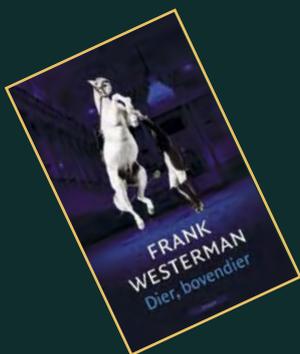
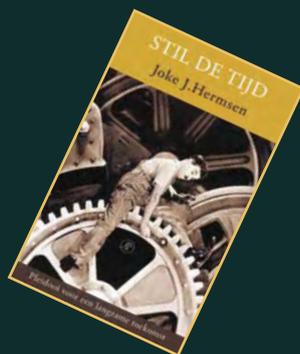


NO. 15 AUTUMN 2010



Quality Non-Fiction From Holland



Foundation for the
Production and
Translation of
Dutch Literature

Douwe Draaisma

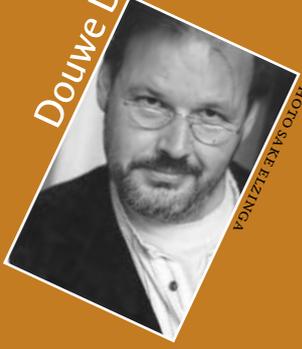


PHOTO SA KE ELZINGA

Frank Westerman



PHOTO BERT NIENHUIS

Minka Nijhuis



PHOTO LOES VAN GELSTEN/JKANP

Bert Keizer

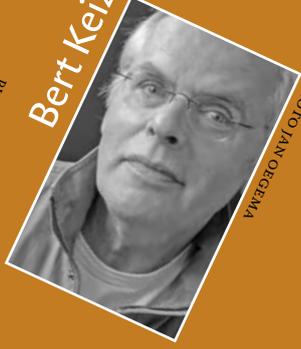


PHOTO JAN OEGEMA

K. Schippers

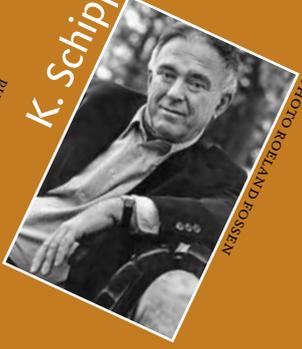


PHOTO ROELAND FOSSEN

Siep Stuurman

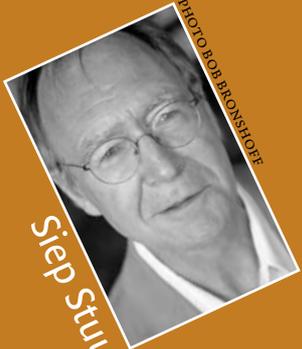


PHOTO BOB BROESEHOFF

Alfred van Cleef

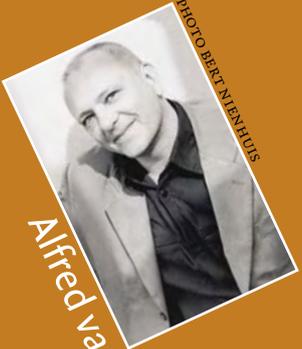


PHOTO BERT NIENHUIS

Mineke Schipper



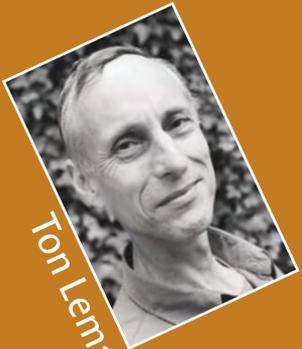
PHOTO ROSA VER BIEVE

Joke J. Hermsen



PHOTO R. ZWAGEMAKER

Ton Lemaire



Douwe Draaisma

Oblivion

Following his books about the puzzling logic of memory, Douwe Draaisma turns to the miracle of forgetting. He claims that far from being a defect, forgetting is one of memory's crucial capacities, blended through it like yeast through dough. Our earliest recollections make us starkly aware of the forgotten years that went before. We can retain information only because of our ability to erase it selectively.

Once again Draaisma demonstrates his talent for bringing together literary and scientific sources both elegantly and originally. Novels, films and newspaper articles alternate with insights from psychology, psychiatry, neurology and philosophy. He dismantles persistent clichés, such as the notion that photographs can refresh the memory: 'A photo needs memories before it can be a real depiction of anything.' In fact, pictures tend to supplant the real faces of old

friends or lost loved ones. As for dreams, Draaisma remarks drily that it cannot be their inscrutability that makes them so easy to forget. 'If I found myself in the basement with the alluring lady next door in real life, I'd definitely remember it a week later, all the more so since we don't have a basement.'

Draaisma has an astonishing ability to raise questions that most of us have never stopped to ask and yet immediately recognise as important. Why, for example, do we have techniques for remembering but not for forgetting? Where do repressed memories reside? What happens to our shared memories when those who share them are no longer around? Can impressions of past events really disappear from our brains, or do they simply become inaccessible? What makes a colleague remember your idea but forget that it was yours?

Draaisma runs precisely that risk with *Oblivion*, a book so full of convincing ideas that you might forget you read them here first.

- * **Elegant and intelligent eulogy for that undervalued quality of memory: forgetting**
- * **With his usual ease of narration, Draaisma once again forges science, literature and history into a self-evident whole**

Douwe Draaisma is Professor of the Theory and History of Psychology at the University of Groningen. His successful *Metaphors of Memory* (1995) has been translated into many languages and was awarded the Heymans Prize by the Dutch Institute of Psychologists. With his bestselling *Why Life Speeds Up As You Get Older* (2001), which has sold more than 100,000 copies, Draaisma won four national prizes and was shortlisted for the 2005 Aventis Prize. *Disturbances of the Mind* (2006) has been published in several languages. *The Nostalgia Factory* (2008) sold 50,000 copies and was translated into German, Italian and Polish.

*

Douwe Draaisma combines encyclopedic knowledge of science and a wonderful sense of history with the most vivid and engaging narrative style.

OLIVER SACKS

Draaisma is a lively and skilled writer, sensitive to nuance, irony, and context.

TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

*

PUBLISHING DETAILS

Vergeetboek (2010)

272 pp (86,500 words)

With illustrations in black-and-white, notes and references

*

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For other translated titles by this author see our website www.nlpvf.nl



Frank Westerman is the author of *The Bridge over the Tara* (1994) and *Srebrenica: The Blackest Scenario* (1997), as well as *The Republic of Grain* (1999) and *Engineers of the Soul* (2002), both of which were awarded prestigious prizes in the Netherlands and became best-sellers. In 2005 Westerman received the Flemish Golden Owl Award for *El Negro and Me*. His previous book, *Ararat* (2007), was nominated for the first Ryszard Kapuscinski Prize, Poland's top award for literary reportage. His work has been sold in fifteen countries.

★

Westerman is a very fine writer and his stories, characters and digressions are as delicately wrought as a watch mechanism. He reminds me of Bruce Chatwin and Ryszard Kapuscinski. Like them, he has elevated the authorial journalist-traveller into a brilliant, magic storyteller.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Frank Westerman writes non-fiction with the pen and bravura of a great novelist.

DE STANDAARD

★

PUBLISHING DETAILS

Dier, bovendier (2010)

256 pp (73,000 words)

With references, maps and pedigree chart

★

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★

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Frank Westerman

Brother Mendel's Perfect Horse

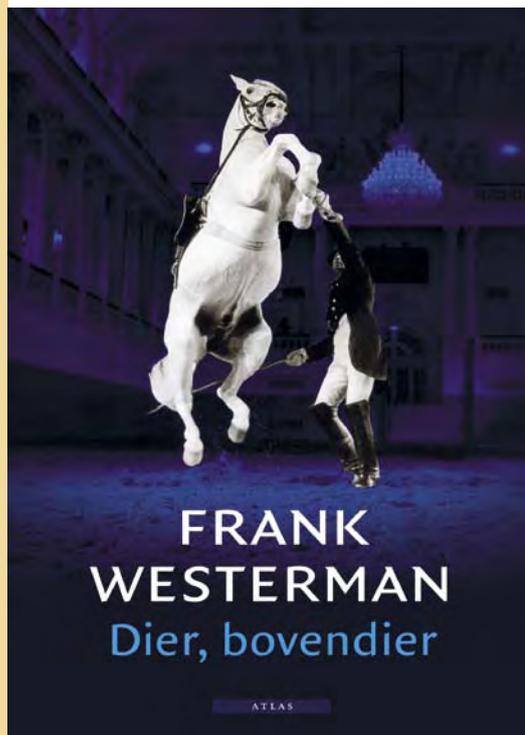
In *Brother Mendel's Perfect Horse* Frank Westerman explores the great human tragedies of the twentieth century through the story of a horse, the Lipizzaner. The stallion *Conversano Primula*, the pride of the manager of the dressage stable where Westerman learnt to ride as a boy, marks the start of an astonishing quest through the pure bloodlines of four generations of Viennese 'school stallions', to discover what they meant to the world's most powerful leaders.

As 'the living crown jewels' of the doomed Habsburg dynasty, the Lipizzaners, an extraordinary troop of pedigree horses originally bred as personal mounts for the Emperor of Austria-Hungary, fell prey to theft, deportation and experimentation by Nazi and Communist breeders. Here the author's background comes into play: he trained as an agricultural engineer and was a newspaper correspondent in Eastern

Europe for many years. As the fairytale of the white horse begins to turn sour, the creation of the Lipizzaner becomes a metaphor for our attitudes to nature and culture, evolution and heredity, and above all a reflection of the irrepressible urge to produce better human beings by applying methods similar to those used in horse-breeding.

Leading figures of the Third Reich became personally involved with Lipizzaner breeding programmes – the Lipizzaner as *Übertier*. Westerman's book reads like a crime novel and he describes all his characters, human and horse, with fascinating attention to detail. Along the way he throws new light on Europe's ideological clashes of the past century, from the fall of the Dual Monarchy through the Cold War to the violent disintegration of Tito's Yugoslavia. Westerman's tales of his travels across the breeding territories of the Lipizzaner, with their history of violence and war, amount to a nuanced yet vivid account of twentieth-century genetics and eugenics, in theory, in practice, and in their most atrocious manifestations.

★ **Westerman is a master at combining the large with the small, the personal with the general, writing, as he does, at the interface between the literary essay and reportage**



Minka Nijhuis works as a freelance journalist for *Trouw*, *Vrij Nederland* and several radio stations. She has reported on conflicts in Cambodia, Burma, Kosovo, East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan. Her book about a family in Baghdad, *Khala's House* (2004), was nominated for the MJ Brusse Prize for non-fiction and this year *Burma. Land of secrets* won the Bob den Uyl Prize for the best Dutch-language travel book.



Combining expertise and empathy, Minka Nijhuis paints a moving portrait of the opposition in this tormented country.

JURY REPORT OF THE BOB DEN UYL PRIZE 2010

Loyal, humane, tenacious, compelling and exceptionally courageous. For this book Minka Nijhuis deserves all the journalistic prizes of the rainbow.

GEERT MAK, AUTHOR OF *IN EUROPE*

With her reportage Nijhuis continues to build a remarkable library, not about war but about people in wars.

DE JOURNALIST



PUBLISHING DETAILS

Birma. Land van geheimen (2009)

224 pp (72,000 words)

With references

2,500 copies sold



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Minka Nijhuis

Burma

Land of secrets

Burma is the most photogenic dictatorship on earth: graceful figures wearing longyi's, tropical flowers, pagodas like fancy meringues. Hidden from Western eyes are the prison camps, torture chambers and military offensives against minorities in border areas. An even better kept secret is the Burmese resistance. Students, workers and monks patiently weave their invisible threads straight through the junta's web of secret agents and security forces. Journalist Minka Nijhuis spent seventeen years following key members and she tells their stories in evocative, insightful, often moving reportage.

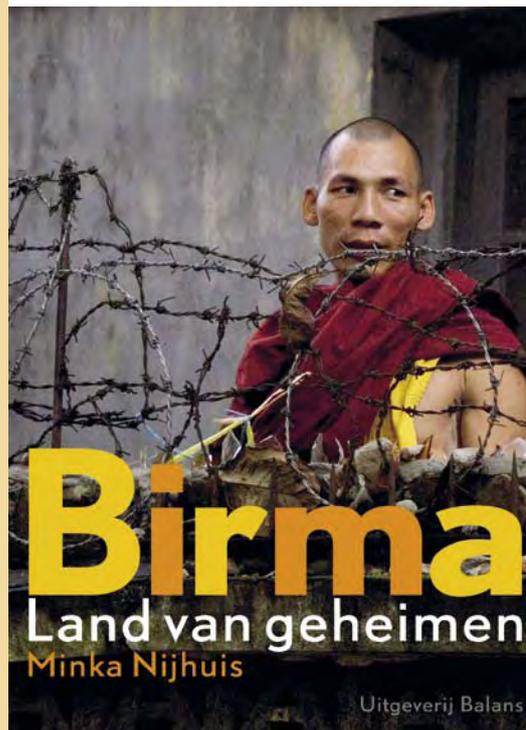
Nijhuis became a friend of Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Prize-winner and Burma's main opposition leader, who has spent fifteen of the past twenty-two years under house arrest. This frail woman, with orchids in her hair and an unshakable faith in freedom and democracy, is a deadly threat to

the junta; a mere glimpse of 'The Lady' through her garden railings makes the hearts of her millions of followers soar.

'Burma's story does have a lot of Beauty and the Beast about it,' Nijhuis writes. She goes after the 'Beast', the unfathomable General Tan Shwe, whose reign of terror is guided by astrologers. Predictions of foreign invasion prompted him to create a new, impregnable capital called Naypyidaw, 200 miles from Rangoon. Nijhuis manages to reach the new city, where penguins reside in an air-conditioned enclosure at the zoo. Meanwhile, a third of Burmese children are malnourished.

Nijhuis secretly visits Burma's pagodas, where monks reveal themselves as 'politicians in saffron robes'. In 2007 tens of thousands of them took to the streets to protest. The junta hesitated briefly before opening fire, and for the first time the outside world witnessed Burma's violent repression, filmed by young Burmese on their mobile phones. World leaders condemned the junta, but Burma's soldiers were more concerned about their karma, stained by the blood of the monks. Whether the 'saffron revolution' was a turning point in Burma's history, only time will tell.

- ★ **The courageous stubbornness of the Burmese resistance is reflected in the fearlessness of Nijhuis' exploration of the country and its history**
- ★ **Unique insights into a people's ineradicable craving for freedom**



Bert Keizer is a physician and philosopher. His bestselling book about life in a nursing home, *Dancing With Mr. D.* (1994), has been translated into several languages. After writing a novel, *Passing Festivities* (1998), and an introduction to the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein, he published a translation of letters by Emily Dickinson in 2008. Keizer is a columnist for *Trouw* and *Medisch Contact*, and a regular contributor to *The Three-penny Review* in Berkeley.



On *Dancing With Mr. D.*:

Very funny, moving and profound... A philosophical memoir of considerable brilliance. Dr Keizer has looked at death more unblinkingly than anyone I know. SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

A brave and illuminating book. The first modern book to give an unvarnished, uncompromising portrait of the greatest fact of life, which is death. A quite extraordinary document. FINANCIAL TIMES



PUBLISHING DETAILS

Onverklaarbaar bewoond (2010)
269 pp (87,000 words)
15,000 copies sold



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For other translated titles by this author see our website www.nlpvf.nl

Bert Keizer

Haunted Tissue

The astonishing domain of neurosurgery

When Bert Keizer was invited to be writer in residence at one of Amsterdam's university hospitals, he had no hesitation in opting for the neurosurgery department. A philosopher and physician, he has always been fascinated by the question of what happens when one person enters another's brain, not in the course of a conversation but in the literal sense, breaking and entering during surgery. A combination of soap, chronicle and philosophical disquisition, his book is in many ways unsettling, although its grimness is undercut by the reckless humour of those with the courage to venture into what is surely the most baffling part of our anatomy.

Perhaps the most uneasy encounters in modern medicine take place in the ward on the day after brain surgery. The patients who run the gauntlet of diagnostic procedures and operations are described

here along with their families. Neurosurgery is in some sense a deeply sobering excursion into the outer layers of what we call our 'mental lives' and neurosurgeons operate above a unique abyss, since the outcome of their interventions may well be a damaged soul. Keizer has a keen eye for the philosophical implications and he attempts to relate what he sees to the theories of philosophers ranging from Descartes to Alva Noë.

Philosophers have so far failed to come up with anything better than 'somehow' when asked about cranial residence, yet neurosurgery proves we are lodged inside our skulls and indeed can be dislodged. We inhabit our brains in a way that does not apply to other organs. Having an inflamed gallbladder may be extremely painful, but we do remain ourselves.

In writing this book, Keizer was guided by a line in a letter by Emily Dickinson from 1880: 'I am constantly more astonished that the Body contains the Spirit— Except for overmastering work it could not be borne.' Are we any better able to bear the present-day version, the notion that our mental lives are somehow anchored in our brains?

- ★ An animated, no-holds-barred portrayal of patients and their fate
- ★ Asks critical questions of neurosurgeons about the consequences of their interventions
- ★ Between the lines Keizer addresses the most pertinent questions surrounding the mind-body problem



K. Schippers writes novels, poems, stories and essays. In 1996 he was awarded the P.C. Hooft Prize for his playful work, and his novel *Where Were You* (2005) won the Libris Literature Prize. He is also the author of *Holland Dada* (1974).

★

By looking attentively and writing meticulously, Schippers elegantly blows away the layer formed by hundreds of weighty studies. *Marcel Duchamp's Bride* is a book of rare beauty.

VRIJ NEDERLAND

★

PUBLISHING DETAILS

De bruid van Marcel Duchamp (2010)

259 pp (65,000 words)

With illustrations in black-and-white and references

★

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K. Schippers

Marcel Duchamp's Bride

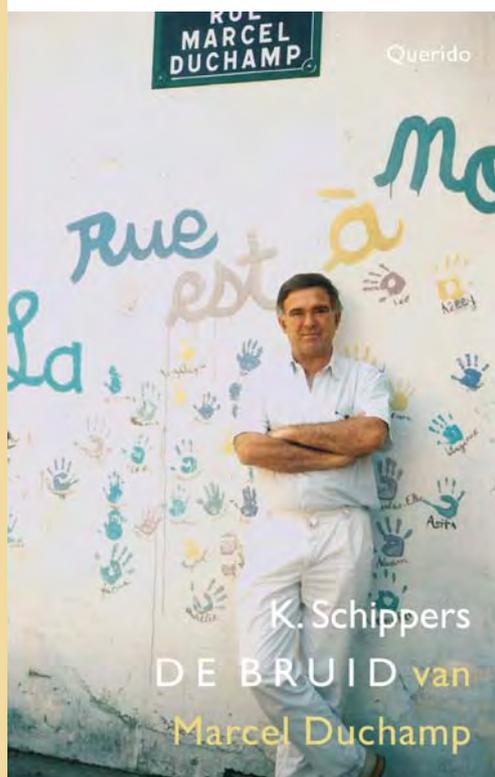
Marcel Duchamp first introduced the theme of the bride into his work in 1912, when he began preparing to create an artwork in glass, *La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même* (The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even). On his death in 1968 he turned out to have been working on a large installation that again features a bride. Yet in the many publications about Duchamp, little attention is paid to the issue of who the bride actually was, a question usually dismissed as too personal – even though the ‘*même*’ of the title can also be read as ‘*m’aime*’ (loves me).

Duchamp was a lifelong inspiration to K. Schippers, who had wide-ranging conversations in the 1970s with Man Ray, Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, Nelly van Doesburg and others close to the artist. In his search for the bride Schippers discovered the many places where Duchamp lived or stayed, in Normandy, Paris, New York,

Philadelphia, Spain, Munich and elsewhere. There are also countless excursions into the life and work of friends and acquaintances, including Piet Mondriaan, Marianne Moore, John Cage and Merce Cunningham. Schippers creates a dazzling picture of the world in which Duchamp moved, bringing him closer despite his preference for invisibility (‘the artist should go underground’). This seething image is made more powerful by the fact that Schippers lets go of chronology, so that the reader hurtles from Normandy in 1904 to New York’s 14th Street in 1954, then back to several addresses in Paris in the 1920s and ‘30s – a thrilling experience.

Who, then, was the bride? Like a true master of suspense, Schippers reveals bit by bit the story of a dramatic love affair, arguing convincingly that it provided Duchamp with a lifelong theme. When reality refuses to comply, Schippers resorts to imagination, as in the moving final scene borrowed from René Clair’s film *Les deux timides*, where the two sweethearts, on the eve of permanent separation, race each other to the river. ‘They don’t know what will happen next. No one does at this point. Myself included.’

- ★ An intriguing hybrid form, combining search, essay and love story, with occasional touches of fiction
- ★ Even if you know nothing about Duchamp, you can still enjoy the story: a young man in his twenties who experiences a ruinous love affair that has a huge influence on his work



Siep Stuurman is Professor of European History at Erasmus University. For his *Francois Poulain de la Barre and the Invention of Modern Equality* (2004) he was awarded the George Mosse Prize by the American Historical Association. His earlier books include *State Formation and Political Theory. Three Essays on Europe* (1995) and *The Tragic Fate of the Countess of Isenburg* (1999).



The Invention of Humanity is a pioneering work, enhancing the debate that crops up daily about the similarities and differences between people and cultures.

VRIJ NEDERLAND

The Invention of Humanity reads so smoothly that history passes before your eyes more harmoniously than the account itself maintains.

NRC HANDELSBLAD



PUBLISHING DETAILS

De uitvinding van de mensheid. Korte wereldgeschiedenis van het denken over gelijkheid en cultuurverschil (2010)
573 pp (227,000 words)
With notes and references
3,000 copies sold



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Siep Stuurman

The Invention of Humanity

A brief world history of ideas about equality and cultural difference

Given the number of studies on inequality, Siep Stuurman decided to buck the trend and focus instead on equality. In *The Invention of Humanity* he investigates the history of ideas about common humanity and cross-cultural equality in religious, philosophical, literary and scientific writings from antiquity to the present, ranging from Europe to America, the Islamic world and China. Its global range makes his book unique.

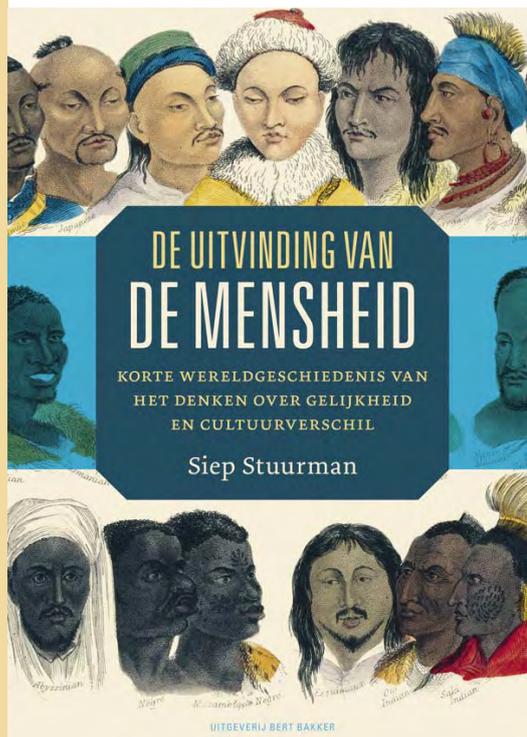
Stuurman shows how acknowledging others as equals has never come naturally but required an intellectual effort and was often risky. Equality had to be imagined and reinvented time and again over the course of history. There were always inquisitive minds who were able to go beyond ethnocentric thought to investigate cultural frontiers, able to see fellow human beings where others saw ‘savages’, ‘barbarians’ or ‘nomads’. Such thinkers often

insisted on the rationale of unfamiliar customs and were able to imagine how outsiders might respond to a supposedly superior civilization.

Stuurman’s discussion of antiquity highlights the radical novelty of Enlightenment thought, which defined European civilization as the highest and final stage of human development, thereby consigning other cultures to a backward status. This way of thinking, termed the ‘hyperreality of Europe’ by Indian historian Dipesh Chakrabarty, is still deeply engrained. Stuurman argues that the West’s ideological dominance can continue as long as it remains an economic and military superpower, despite its downfall as a moral paragon as a result of two world wars.

Most religions and philosophies have posited universalist notions of equality, while asserting the superiority of fellow believers or the like-minded above all others. Similarly, the Enlightenment proclaimed universal equality as a fact of nature while dividing humanity into the enlightened and those who had yet to see the light of reason. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Stuurman concludes, was not simply an application of European Enlightenment ideas. Its radical notion of global equality reflected the convictions and experiences of the Latin Americans, Indians and Chinese who helped to draft it.

- ✱ An invitation to consider the philosophical dilemmas faced by a globalized world
- ✱ Applies anthropological insights to an analysis of the Enlightenment, which turns out to share the tensions and contradictions of the great religions
- ✱ Declines to engage in Huntington-style predictions and therefore allows room for a more open and possibly optimistic vision of the future



Alfred van Cleef is a journalist and writer, and a former editor of *NRC Handelsblad*. In 1994 he published the highly acclaimed *The Lost World of the Berberovic Family*, followed in 1999 by *The Lost Island*, which appeared in translation in Germany and America. His first novel, *Longing*, was published in 2002.

★

On *The Lost Island*:

The Lost Island is a moving story, funny and endearing at times, immensely sad and disturbing at others.

ECONOMIST.COM

Van Cleef's descriptions of the island are clever, but the real fun is the subtle ways in which he uses his dry sense of humor to lampoon French bureaucrats.

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

As serene and scoured as its locale, hard-fought and cleansing for author and reader alike, making for a companionable excursion into forlornness.

KIRKUS REVIEWS

★

PUBLISHING DETAILS

De verborgen ordening. Een ontdekkingsreis langs de nulmeridiaan (2010)
397 pp (118,000 words)
With maps and references

★

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Alfred van Cleef

The Hidden Order

A journey of discovery along the prime meridian

An invisible line runs from the North Pole to the South Pole over mountaintops, through living rooms, restaurants and industrial estates, across villages and towns, seas and rivers. This line was adopted internationally as the prime meridian at a conference in Washington in 1884. Alfred van Cleef has been fascinated since childhood by maps, globes and society's outer edges, and he decided to travel the line overland, from the rainy English village of Tunstall – slowly crumbling into the sea – to the Ghanaian port of Tema.

The boundary between the eastern and western hemispheres has often been a matter of dispute. In 1634 King Louis XIII personally banned all alternatives to the Paris meridian, while the Anglo-Saxon world insisted Greenwich should be the universal reference point for cartography and time zones. In reality this

was a struggle for world hegemony between France and England that lasted two centuries, until the Washington conference resolved the disagreement. Even so, for many years the French continued to use a meridian that ran through their own capital.

The journey Van Cleef undertakes, equipped with only the bare necessities and a GPS receiver, reads like an exotic road novel. He has an eye for the preposterous and absurd that his journey along an artificial straight line naturally brings with it, and he encounters reactions he could not have foreseen, from local chiefs, for example, who want to use him to promote their villages. Then there are the inevitable misunderstandings: 'A car slowed down and the driver asked through the window whether I needed any help, but no, I was kneeling next to my car only so I could record a zero point.'

The Hidden Order is an atmospheric account of a journey through outlying districts and across deserts, interspersed with passages about geography and history. The slightly melancholy story includes moments of perplexity, such as a subdued New Year's Eve party in Africa: 'No ardent hugs. No women clinking lemonade glasses. No explosions of dynamite.' In the Ghanaian coastal town of Tema the journey ends at the Meridian Hotel, once luxury tourist accommodation, now inhabited by homeless families and criminals. Following that single unbroken line, Van Cleef creates a marvellous portrayal of the differences and the common ground between people in Europe and Africa.

★ **A thrilling travel story as well as a history of the prime meridian, time zones and the international dateline**



Mineke Schipper is Professor of Intercultural Literary Studies at the University of Leiden and the author of numerous books including *Imagining Insiders. Africa and the Question of Belonging* (1999). Her *Never Marry a Woman with Big Feet* (2004) was translated worldwide. She has also published three novels.

★

Schipper has written a delightful book – profound, sharp-witted, discerning, pleasingly objective, paying meticulous attention to the smallest details.

DE VOLKSKRANT

On *Never Marry a Woman with Big Feet*:

A fine contribution to the cosmopolitan conversation that ought to come about with globalization.

K. ANTHONY APPIAH, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

★

PUBLISHING DETAILS

In het begin was er niemand.

Hoe het komt dat er mensen zijn

320 pp (91,000 words)

With notes and references

★

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★

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Mineke Schipper

In the Beginning There Was No One

How the first people came into being

Did Adam and Eve come from Saudi Arabia? A taxi driver in Egypt tells Mineke Schipper they did, but it grew so hot there that they fled to south-east Africa, where scientists now believe humans originated. People everywhere have wondered about our beginnings. Who were our first ancestors? Why are there two sexes? Their answers can be found in myths of origin and in creation stories, of which the biblical version is but one example.

Schipper has collected hundreds of stories from all over the world and looked for shared patterns. The stories are remarkable and fascinating, and they have a surprising amount in common. Part one of *In the Beginning There Was No One* is about the first human beings: How did we get here? Were we cast down from heaven or did we crawl out of a hole in the ground? Or hatch from a golden egg? Were we fashioned from clay or wood, stone or gold, or did a

powerful word from our creator do the job?

Part two looks into the origins of man and woman. The human sexual apparatus fascinated early storytellers, as it fascinates people today. Perhaps the fact that in real life women give birth to sons as well as daughters disrupted the balance between the sexes. Some stories compensate for this unfairness by having male gods give life to the first humans, or making the first man create his own wife. Even the first pregnancy is not necessarily a female matter; sometimes it results from intercourse between two men, one of them turning into a woman just long enough to give birth. In other stories, by contrast, the first humans are exclusively women.

As with Schipper's previous book, in which she analysed proverbs about women, her ambitious approach makes for an informative, amusing and unique read. We are taken on a spellbinding journey through different cultures, the author always ensuring that a clear thread runs through her rich material. She concludes: 'To know where we want to go, it's good to grasp where we come from. The echoes of old stories reverberate in contemporary relations, in a world where billions of believers and non-believers interact more with each other than ever before.'

- ★ Examines the basic questions about the beginnings of humanity that have pre-occupied all cultures and collects a multiplicity of answers together for the first time
- ★ The profound fears expressed between the lines of ancient creation myths seem strangely familiar to people living today
- ★ Provides innumerable insights into human nature and religious thought, contributing to the building of bridges between cultures



Mineke Schipper

In het begin was er niemand

Hoe het komt dat er mensen zijn

Uitgeverij Bert Bakker

Joke J. Hermsen studied literature and philosophy in Amsterdam and Paris. Her debut novel *The Lady Sacrifice* (1998) was followed by *Double Darkness* (2001), which was translated into German. She broke through to a broad readership with *The Profile Sketch* (2004) and her fourth novel, *So It's Love* (2008), was nominated for the Libris Literature Prize and won the Halewijn Prize. She also writes essays on art, literature and philosophy.



Engagingly and with great vitality, Hermsen charts the richness of our inner lives. This makes her book successful and inspiring, an exhortation to cherish things like sensitivity, intuition and responsiveness.

NRC HANDELSBLAD

Hermsen shows with absolute clarity how boredom and slowness can awaken creativity.

DE MORGEN



PUBLISHING DETAILS

Stil de tijd.

Pleidooi voor een langzame toekomst (2009)

272 pp (71,000 words)

With illustrations in colour and black-and-white

15,000 copies sold



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For other translated titles by this author see our website www.nlpvf.nl

Joke J. Hermsen

Time On Our Side

Manifesto for a slow future

The clock was originally meant to help us organize work, transport and trade. 'By far the most artificial of all our inventions,' W.G. Sebald called it. Nowadays it rules our entire lives and this book is a fervent plea to free ourselves from the dictatorship of the clock and find a new balance, to go back to doing nothing, to embrace boredom and repose.

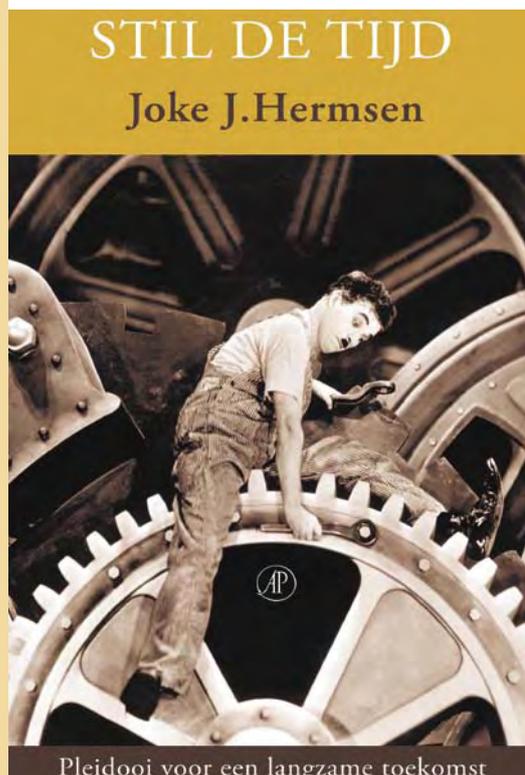
In her search for the experience of time, Joke Hermsen draws upon a wide range of writers and thinkers, from the ancient world to the present. One of the more important is the Frenchman Henri Bergson, whose philosophy enables Hermsen to distinguish between 'clock time' and 'inner time'. It is the latter that leads to reflection, creativity and a zest for life. This may sound naive or apolitical, but for Bergson much was at stake. Like Charlie Chaplin in the film *Modern Times*, he feared for a world in which the individual was

being destroyed by industrialization.

Boredom is good, since out of that nothingness philosophy is born, wrote Martin Heidegger. It can offer access to the past, as in Proust's quest for the buried memories of youth. Hermsen shows that in painting (Mark Rothko with his 'transcendental experiences'), photography (Margriet Luyten's portraits of the elderly) and music (a genre that places itself outside time), the inner experience of time is fundamental.

Hermsen intersperses her manifesto with extracts from the diaries she wrote in Italy and Greece while working on the book. Under the Athenian sun she wanders past the places where 'thinking about time began'. She finds herself in bed with food poisoning, having to rest for five days, and there she experiences the dark side of timelessness: 'It's almost as if time is slowly fading out, becoming a grey mass that no longer offers any footing or point of departure. It seems as if this time could eat me up, the way Cronus consumed his children, without leaving so much as a crumb of me behind.'

- ★ **A philosophical plea to slow down that makes you think about how you plan your own time**
- ★ **A warning of the socio-political dangers of a society that is restless and in many ways adrift**



Ton Lemaire is an anthropologist and a philosopher. Early in his career he published the bestselling *Philosophy of the Landscape* (1970) before going on to write books including *On the Value of Cultures* (1976), *The Indian in Our Consciousness* (1986), *Food of the Gods or the Bread of the Devil* (1995), *With Open Senses* (2002), *On Wings of the Soul* (2007) and *Claude Lévi-Strauss* (2008). He has lived for many years in the French countryside.

★

The Fall of Prometheus is a miracle of nuance, reasonableness and profundity. This is the ideal handbook for thinking about sustainability.

VRIJ NEDERLAND

The Fall of Prometheus is an important book with a message that deserves to be heard.

DE VOLKSKRANT

★

PUBLISHING DETAILS

De val van Prometheus. Over de keerzijden van de vooruitgang (2010)

375 pp (98,000 words)

With notes and references

3,000 copies sold

★

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★

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Ton Lemaire

The Fall of Prometheus

On the downside of progress

In *The Fall of Prometheus* Ton Lemaire explores the negative consequences of our irrational faith in the future, beginning with the depletion of natural resources, climate change and other environmental crises, before going on to examine the chronic dissatisfaction and emptiness typical of so many lives in the world's most prosperous countries. People seek happiness in consumerism and hedonism, and are increasingly miserable as a result.

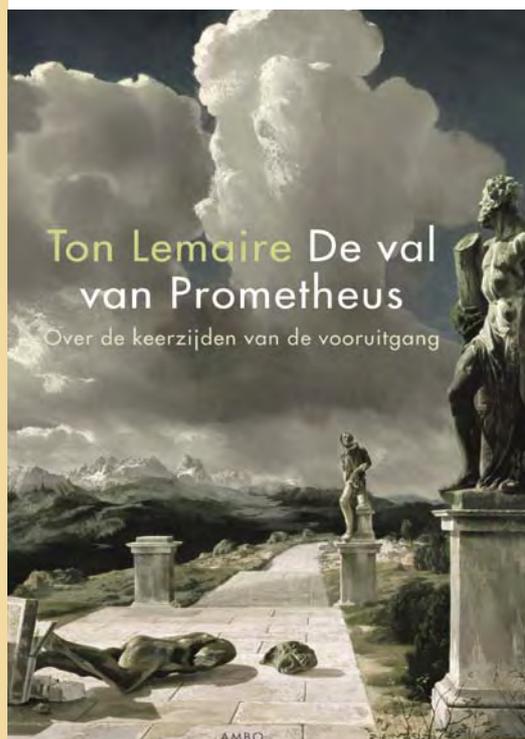
Lemaire shows how our society is obsessed with economic growth, addicted to consumption and trapped in a spiral of desire. In light of the approaching scarcity of fossil fuels, we seem like giants with feet of clay, blinded by the illusion that technology has a solution to everything, that the earth's bounty is inexhaustible and that there are no limits to what mankind can do.

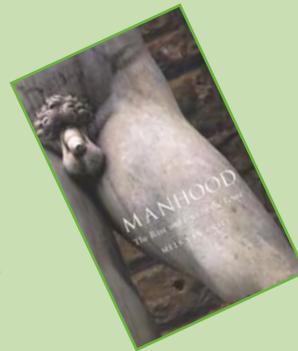
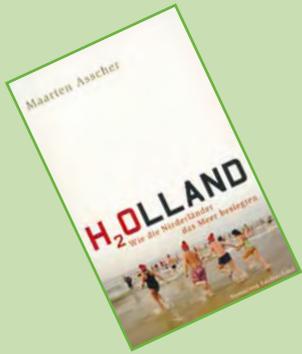
The root cause of our reckless addiction to growth lies in our belief in progress,

which Lemaire regards as the ultimate religion of modernity, nourished by the ancient myth of Prometheus, who stole fire from the gods and gave it to mankind. The dark side of this Prometheanism emerged in the twentieth century, when devastating wars, totalitarian regimes and unprecedented environmental destruction proved Prometheus' fire capable not only of providing human beings with light and warmth but of blinding or even consuming them.

Lemaire advocates active conservation policies combined with a thoroughgoing reform of agriculture, the redistribution of wealth and a simpler, more natural lifestyle. He also proposes a new kind of spirituality, in which people define and experience their place in nature in new ways. While resisting the eco-fundamentalism and anti-humanism that exist within certain groups of radical environmentalists, he insists it would be fatal for us to continue on our present course. A rational approach to the natural world, the source of our prosperity and scientific knowledge, must be accompanied by a realization that we are part of nature and cannot bend it to our will with impunity.

- ★ A salutary mixture of Calvinism, Buddhism, maturity and erudition in response to an era of hedonism
- ★ Lemaire's advocacy of negative growth demonstrates his intellectual courage and theoretical consistency





Non-Fiction Recent translations

Maarten Asscher

H₂Olland

(H₂Olland)

Published in German by Luchterhand in 2010.



Pauline de Bok

Blankow

(Blankow, of het verlangen naar Heimat)

Published in German by Weissbooks in 2009.



Douwe Draaisma

Why Life Speeds Up As You Get Older

(Waarom het leven sneller gaat als je ouder wordt)

Published in Portuguese by Relógio d'Água in 2009. Also in Arabic (Ray Publishing & Science, 2009), Czech (Academia, 2009) and Japanese (Kodansha, 2009).

Mels van Driel

Manhood

(Geheime delen)

Published in English in 2009.



Vincent van Gogh

The Letters

(De brieven)

Published in English by Thames and Hudson in 2009.

Also in French (Actes Sud, 2009).

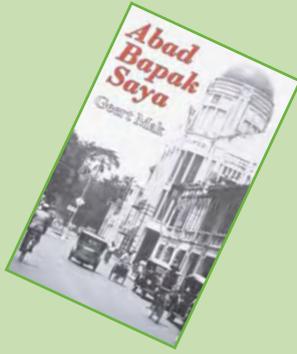


Janny Groen and Annieke Kranenberg

Women Warriors for Allah

(Strijdsters van Allah)

Published in English by University of Pennsylvania Press in 2010.



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Tim Krabbé

The Rider

(De renner)

Published in Spanish by Los libros del lince in 2010.



Ton Lemaire

With Open Senses

(Met open zinnen)

Published in Chinese by Guangxi Normal University Press in 2009.



Geert Mak

My Father's Century

(De eeuw van mijn vader)

Published in Indonesian by Suara Harapan Bangsa in 2009.
Also in Danish (Tiderne Skifter, 2009).

Karel van Mander

The Book of Painters

(Het schilder-boeck)

Published in Chinese by Orient Publishing Center in 2010.



Geert Mommersteeg

In the City of the Marabouts

(In de stad van de marabouts)

Published in French by Grandvaux in 2009.

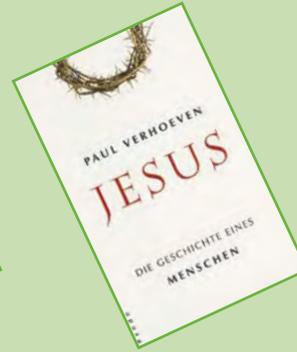


Henk van Nierop

Treason in the Northern Quarter

(Het verraad van het Noorderkwartier)

Published in English by Princeton University Press in 2009.



Non-Fiction Recent translations

Minka Nijhuis

Khala's House

(Het huis van Khala)

Published in Italian by Bruno Mondadori in 2010. Also in Turkish (Kitap Yayınevi, 2009).



Lotte van de Pol

The Burgher and the Whore

(De burger en de hoer)

Published in Chinese by People's Literature Publishing House in 2009.



Sjeng Scheijen

Diaghilev

(Diaghilev)

Published in English by Profile Books in 2009.

Jeroen de Valk

Chet Baker

(Chet Baker)

Published in Hungarian by Silenos in 2010.



Paul Verhoeven

Jesus

(Jezus van Nazaret)

Published in German by Pendo in 2009. Also in English (Seven Stories Press, 2010) and Italian (Marsilio, 2010).



Frank Westerman

The Republic of Grain

(De graanrepubliek)

Published in German by Links in 2009.

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