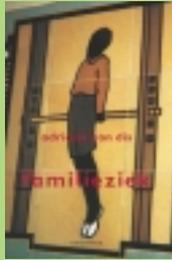


10 Books

from Holland and Flanders



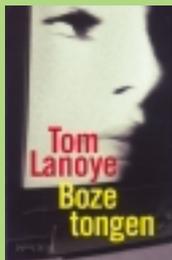
Adriaan van Dis

Oek de Jong



David van Reybrouck

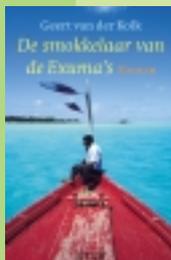
Hella S. Haasse



Tom Lanoye

K. Schippers

Alfred van Cleef



Geert van der Kolk

Esther Gerritsen

Paul Claes

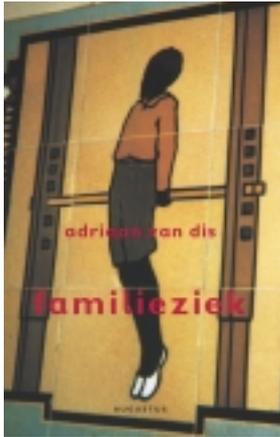


FOUNDATION FOR
THE PRODUCTION AND
TRANSLATION OF
DUTCH LITERATURE

Vlaams
Fonds
voor de
Letteren



Melancholy and bitter slapstick



Adriaan van Dis

Family Fray

ADRIAAN VAN DIS's Indonesian family background has played a major role in many of his novels, including *Indische duinen* (My father's war), which has now been translated into many languages. With *Familieziek*, he has produced a minor masterpiece that is already being hailed as a 'classic' in the Dutch press. As the

subtitle 'a novel in scenes' indicates, *Familieziek* consists of short episodes from the life of a family repatriated from Indonesia to the Netherlands. These scenes are narrated by the son in a humorous yet poignant manner. As the son of the Indonesian Mr Java, his mother's second husband, and as stepbrother to three sisters who grew up in Indonesia, the boy is somewhat the odd one out. He looks through the eyes of an outsider at this remarkable family to which he belongs, like it or not. He is a cuckoo in the nest. He calls his father 'Mr Java' and his three sisters 'Sister 1', 'Sister 2', and 'Sister 3'. Mr Java is an austere, rather awkward father who occasionally attempts to be nice to his timid son, but spends most of his time staring out the window, silent and surly, at a world that no longer exists.

The boy, who is not allowed to attend school but receives home tuition from Mr Java, cannot meet his father's expectations. Nevertheless, despite everything, he does love his father, as his words clearly indicate. He wants to belong to his father's world, to that of his three sisters, but he simply cannot. He is repeatedly pushed out of the nest. It is this tension between love and hate, attraction and rejection, that gives the novel its striking power. The boy refers to this power as 'head power'. "Be like a reed: bend, lie down when the storm comes, be small if you have to, but always rise again", is what Mr Java advises his son. The son heeds this advice: he rises again whereas his father eventually ends up in a psychiatric institution.

Familieziek is a touching novel about will power, about the will to survive of a son who is subjugated by a father.

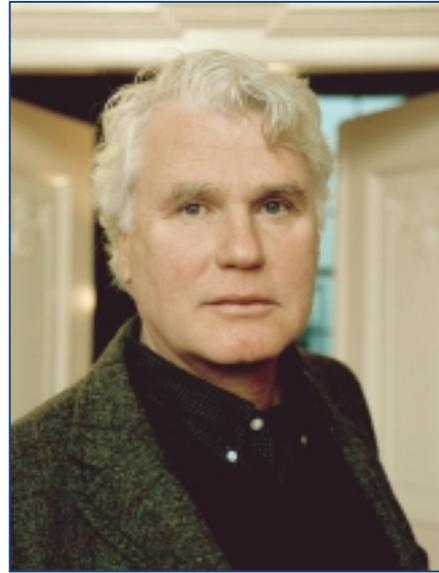


photo Roy Tee

Adriaan van Dis (born 1946) made his debut with the novel *Nathan Sid*, the story of a boy that grew up between two cultures: the paradise of colonial Indonesia and the drabness of the Netherlands after the Second World War. His fascination for other cultures permeates his entire oeuvre, from his travelogues *Het beloofde land* (The promised land), on the farmers in South Africa, and *In Afrika*, on the war in Mozambique, right up to *Indische duinen*, which is Van Dis's greatest success. His last book appeared in 1999: *Dubbelliefde* (Dual love), a splendid and strongly personal account of a young man's maturing and his realisation of his sexual, political and spiritual nature. *Dubbelliefde* also became an enormous best-seller in the Netherlands.

Van Dis's best book. *TROUW*

Familieziek is Adriaan van Dis at his best. After twenty years of authorship, he has found the perfect form and tone to represent the experience of his youth.

DE VOLKSKRANT

You can feel the tragedy and threat seething under the cheerful childishness. *VRIJ NEDERLAND*

A wonder of force and elegance.

DE GROENE AMSTERDAMMER

PUBLISHING DETAILS

Familieziek (2002)
208 pp
75,000 copies sold

RIGHTS SOLD

Germany (Hanser), United Kingdom (Heinemann), France (Gallimard), South Africa (Human & Rousseau)

RIGHTS

Augustus
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WEBSITE www.boekenwereld.com

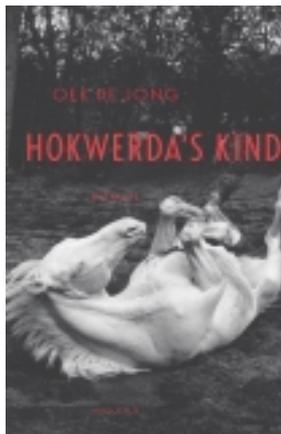
OTHER TITLES IN TRANSLATION

My father's war (Indische duinen). London: Heinemann, in prep. Also in German (München; Wien: Carl Hanser, 1997), in Italian (Baldini & Castoldi, 1996), in French (Actes Sud, 1999), in Norwegian (Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1995) and in many other languages.

Doppelliebe (Dubbelliefde). München: Carl Hanser, in prep. Also in Spanish (Maeva, 2002), in French (Gallimard, in prep.). *Nathan Sid* (Nathan Sid). München; Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1996.



Darkly scintillating romance



Oek de Jong Hokwerda's Child

IN THE EIGHTIES, Oek de Jong's debut, *Opwaaierende zomerjurken* (Waving Summer Dresses), became a genuine cult book for a whole generation of students. It was followed by the beautiful 'Roman' novel *Cirkel in het gras* (Circle in the Grass), after which silence reigned. The announced publication of De Jong's third novel, *Hokwerda's kind*, mesmerised the whole literary

world in the Netherlands. And rightly so: he has issued a brilliant psychological novel that, at one stroke, has placed him among the foremost Dutch authors.

In *Hokwerda's kind*, the writer tells the story of a determined young woman, Lin Hokwerda, who loses herself in love. It is narrated with a broad vision yet with an extraordinary eye for detail. The novel opens with an oppressive scene: as a young girl, Lin Hokwerda is repeatedly thrown into the river by her father, who holds her by one arm and one leg and hurls her into the water that runs behind their house in the Friesian countryside. Every time after the rough splash into the water, she swims back to her father. Again and again she is flung back – until she almost drowns.

The shadow of this scene hangs above the entire book. With her mother and sister, Lin flees her 'untrustworthy' father at a young age. In her twenties, after a successful but prematurely broken sport career, she meets the man of her dreams. But the pattern of their love resembles that of the opening scene: Lin is consistently cast away by Henri but always comes back. When she meets Jelmer, a mild-mannered lawyer, and again falls in love, it appears, for a moment, that she can eradicate her fatal man from her life. However, she cannot quieten her restlessness and seeks out Henri once more. They explore the boundaries of responsibility, and have an affair. She herself turns out to be untrustworthy, just like her father.

In *Hokwerda's kind*, De Jong allows his characters to reach the peaks of love in sensual, erotic scenes, banishing all threats for a moment. But, with great stylistic force, De Jong eventually carries Lin and Henri to the 'outer darkness', to the inevitable doom.

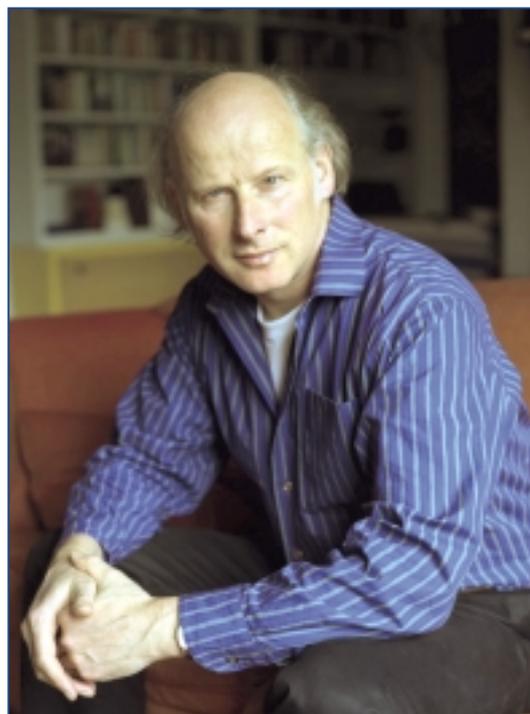


photo Cuny Janssen

Oek de Jong (born 1952) made his debut with a collection of short stories, *De hemelvaart van Massimo* (Massimo's Ascension, 1976), for which he was given the Reina Prinsen Geerligts award. He enjoyed his real breakthrough in 1979 with the novel *Opwaaierende zomerjurken*, an enormous financial success. His second novel *Cirkel in het gras* was extremely well received by both the literary critics and the reading public. It remained disturbingly quiet after the success of these two novels. De Jong made a comeback in 1993 with *De inktvis* (The Octopus) and published a collection of essays *Een man die in de toekomst springt* (A Man Leaping Into the Future) in 1997.

The new masterly novel terminates all speculation about the continuance of De Jong's authorship. He has returned from the unknown, with a romance that possesses a dark scintillation, in which the boundary between love and hate is blurred and is constantly transgressed.

TROUW

PUBLISHING DETAILS

Hokwerda's kind (2002)
444 pp, 25,000 copies sold

RIGHTS SOLD

Germany (Piper), France (Gallimard),
Denmark (Gyldendal)

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OTHER TITLES IN TRANSLATION

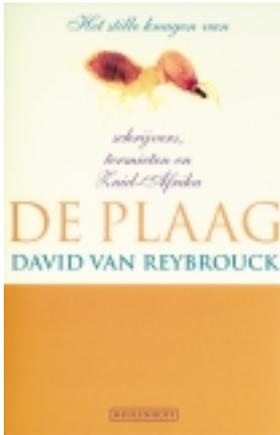
Fladdrande sommarklänningar (Opwaaierende zomerjurken.). Stockholm: P.A. Norstedt & Söners Förlag, 1983.
Ein Kreis im Gras (Cirkel in het gras.). München; Zürich: Piper, 2000. Also in Swedish (Norstedts, 1987), in Romanian (Editura Univers, 1991), in Danish (Gyldendal, 1988), in Norwegian (Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1988) and in Finnish (Tammi, 1988).



Scientific and journalistic odyssey

David van Reybrouck

The Plague



WHILE WORKING on his thesis on prehistoric architecture, David van Reybrouck comes across the accusation that the Belgian writer and Nobel Prize winner Maurice Maeterlinck had plagiarised from the work of the South African author, journalist and physicist Eugène Marais, in his book *La vie des termites* (1926). He decides to investigate the case himself. Why did Maeterlinck write about insects? Are their indications

that he was familiar with Marais' work? His quest leads him from Maeterlinck's archive in Belgium, via a collector of Maeterlinck paraphernalia, libraries, the Internet and mountains of reading matter to South Africa itself, where he picks up Marais' trail. In an inhospitable area to the north of Pretoria, where Marais, meanwhile addicted to drugs and suffering from depression, had retired in 1906 to observe and write about baboons and where he finally committed suicide, the hunter finds himself treading on the tail of the hunted. He stumbles on a collection of old medicine bottles that make Marais' tragic life highly tangible.

In this animated account of his scientific and journalistic odyssey, David van Reybrouck immerses himself in the lives of Maeterlinck and Marais and ploughs through documentation on ants and termites. He skilfully interweaves his findings with socio-economic and political information, with details of artistic fashions and the spirit of the time in which the two authors lived, finally placing it all in the context of cultural history and scientific developments. His most sobering confrontation is with the new South Africa. His courage sometimes fails him when the futility of his enterprise in this light becomes apparent and, like Marais, he is occasionally overwhelmed by a sense of transience and despair.

De plaag steers a course between a literary study, a historical scientific essay, an adventure story and an unusual travel report. David van Reybrouck surprises his reader with unexpected links and parallels between his various subjects, such as the organisation of the termite hill and the construction of a human society. Along the way, the reader sees the book itself grow into an anthropological metaphor for life itself, in which the majority of the individual elements prove to be interrelated. *De plaag* sweeps the reader along in a thrilling postmodernist literary adventure, which leaves its image on the retina of the mind's eye long after the last page has been turned.

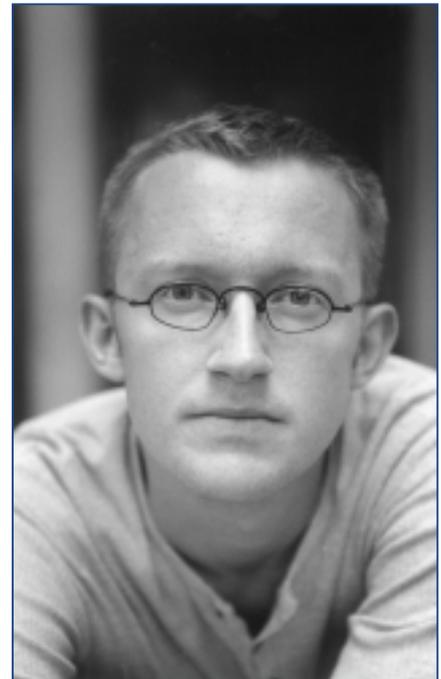


photo Lieve Blancquart

David van Reybrouck (1971) studied archaeology and philosophy at Leuven University. He has a master's degree in World Archaeology from Cambridge and obtained a doctorate from the University of Leiden in 2000. Today, he is a cultural historian affiliated with the Catholic University of Leuven and works as a freelancer for the Belgian daily newspaper, *De Morgen*. He won the Belgian Literary Debut Prize with *De Plaa* in 2002.

De plaag is a book you can read for various reasons: to find out the real circumstances of plagiarism or to read how Maeterlinck's alleged injustice leads van Reybrouck to post-apartheid South Africa, where he is assailed by a far more real and harrowing injustice. (...) With this book it seems Van Reybrouck, who had solely scientific publications to his name before *De plaag*, has written himself out of the cocoon of scientific discourse.

DE STANDAARD

PUBLISHING DETAILS

De plaag (2001)
302 pages, 2800 copies sold

RIGHTS SOLD

South Africa (Protea)

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Masterly, mysterious composition



Hella Haasse

Eye of the Key

DESPITE HER ADVANCED YEARS, Hella S. Haasse always succeeds magnificently in penning novels that add something new and radical to her majestic oeuvre. Her latest novel has even been hailed by Dutch literary critics as one of the best she has ever written.

In *Sleuteloog*, Haasse returns to the Dutch East Indies, to her native soil and the place she considers the breeding ground of her imagination. This was also the setting for her debut novel from 1948, *Oeroeg*, which brought her overnight recognition as a Dutch writer. In *Oeroeg*, she describes the deterioration of a friendship between two boys, one Indonesian and the other from white Dutch parentage, just before and after the Second World War. A friendship from that time is also the central theme of *Sleuteloog*, but this time one between two girls and later young women: Herma Warner, from a white Dutch family, and Dee Meijers, from Indonesian-European origins.

In the opening sentences of the novel, a journalist asks Herma Warner for information on Dee Meijers. The journalist's request forces Herma to look over her shoulder. Back to Indonesia, and back in time. It soon becomes clear that Herma has developed a blind spot where many issues from the past are concerned. Was there actually any friendship between the two girls? What really happened? And what was the relationship between Dee and Taco Tadema, later Herma's husband, who also grew up in Batavia?

These are questions Herma has no adequate answer for. An ebony chest symbolises delving into the dim and distant past. It should contain notes and photographs of Dee and her husband, but the key is missing. This is a typical process in Haasse's work: little by little, Herma's past becomes clearer, without the mystery ever being entirely solved.

The masterly, mysterious composition of *Sleuteloog* does not, incidentally, prevent Haasse from taking a sharp view of Herma's guilt feelings, nor even from levelling heavy criticism at the European presence and disinterest in Indonesia. Herma Warner is all too aware of the fact that she was essentially a foreigner there. This theme, which has occupied Hella S. Haasse from the beginning of her writing career, has been reincarnated in *Sleuteloog* in a thrilling, socially involved and subtle manner.



photo Roy Tee

Hella S. Haasse (1918) debuted in 1945, she debuted with a collection of poems, entitled, *Stroomversnelling*. She made her name three years later with *Oeroeg*, which have been greatly enjoyed by several generations. Haasse has received several prestigious literary awards.

Sleuteloog is a tale that has everything: drama, suspense, intrigue, infidelity, broken friendship and a whole lot of clashes between Indonesia and Holland, between swarthy and white, between second generation Dutch Indonesians and mixed families.

NRC HANDELSBLAD

Sleuteloog is a novel that approaches perfection: touching, gripping, biting, informative and thrilling. What more could a reader ask?

ALGEMEEN DAGBLAD

PUBLISHING DETAILS

Sleuteloog (2002)
200 pp, 80,000 copies sold

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SELECTED TITLES IN TRANSLATION

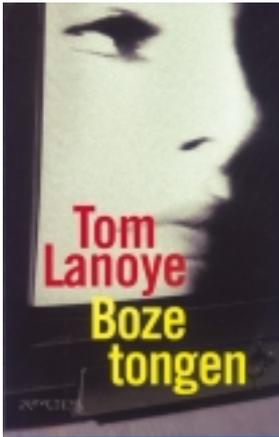
Les initiés (De ingewijden). Arles: Actes Sud, 2003.
Un long week-end dans les Ardennes (Fenrir). Arles, Actes Sud / Leméac, 2001. Also in Italian (Iperborea, in prep.)
Wald der Erwartung (Het woud der verwachting). Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999. Also in English (Academy Chicago Publishers, 1997), in Portuguese (Lisboa: Teorema, in prep.) and in Spanish (Edhasa, 2001).
La source cachée (De verborgen bron). Arles: Actes

Sud, 2000. Also in Italian (Iperborea, 1997) and in Russian (Mai, 1998).

Les routes de l'imaginaire (De wegen der verbeelding). Arles: Actes Sud, 1996. Also in German (Bertelsmann, 1999), in Italian (Iperborea, 2000).
Die Teebarone (Heren van de thee). Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2001. Also in French (Éditions du Seuil, 1996), in Italian (Rizzoli, 1997), in Spanish (Ediciones Península, 1999) and in many other languages.



Impressive and insistent



Tom Lanoye

Evil Tongues

AT THE BEGINNING of Lanoye's trilogy, the daughter of the family, Katrien Deschryver, shoots her husband dead during a hunt, and the family fears that further research will reveal a number of sordid affairs. The unstable Katrien cannot come to terms with herself and also cannot fulfil the role expected of her. She is the weakest link in the family chain and she is the one

who initiates the ensuing calamities.

In the third volume, *Boze tongen*, Katrien's father is pursued by a relentless examining magistrate, her brother dies during a strangulation sex session, and her uncle is so overwhelmed by hopeless business intrigues that he opts for a very radical solution. Katrien mutilates herself horribly in a moment of despair, and this changes her life drastically. She finally finds peace of mind as a victim from whom nothing more can be expected.

In his book, Tom Lanoye continually refers to known reality. Those who followed Belgian news in the nineties will discern recognisable facts, such as the affair around Marc Dutroux, the kidnapper and murderer of children. Nevertheless, the trilogy is not a chronicle. Lanoye processes the notorious events in a new context with fictive characters, outlining the symbolic value and disclosing more hidden tendencies. The growing collection of dead characters who, released from all inhibitions, freely associate with one another and observe the wretched affairs of the living rather compassionately, receives special significance.

After the masterly apotheosis of *Boze tongen*, in which an enormous inferno accompanies a gigantic pile up on the nearby motorway, the reader is left with a penetrating image of a Belgium that appears to be undermined by a destructive attitude of opportunism and indifference, relish of power, and emotional shortcoming. It is a country that is at the mercy of irreversible moral decline, in which people are desperately seeking their true nature and identity. Just like Katrien, the country is hoping for catharsis to purify itself of the evil that is lurking everywhere. It is seeking a new bond with innocence and tranquillity. With this impressive epic, Tom Lanoye can assume a permanent place in the line of great Flemish novelists.

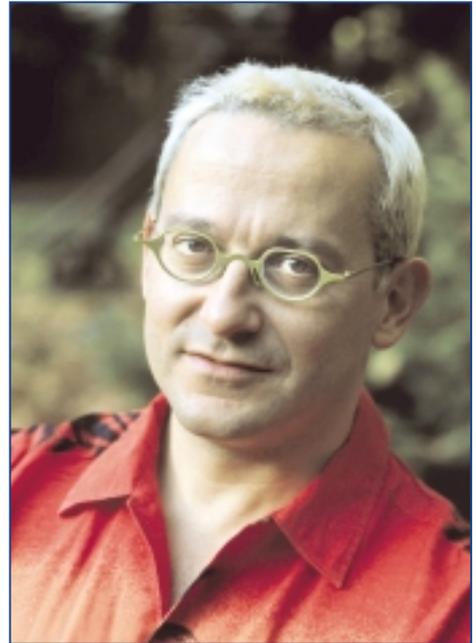


photo Klaas Koppe

Tom Lanoye (born 1958) published the first part of an ambitious trilogy in 1999 *Het goddelijke monster* (*The Divine Monster*, 1997), aimed at establishing his reputation as a novelist besides the renown he already enjoyed as a columnist and playwright. In much the same way as Hugo Claus projected wartime and post-war Belgium in *Het verdriet van België* (1983) and Walter van den Broeck described the country for the benefit of King Boudewijn in *Het beleg van Laken* (1985-1992), Tom Lanoye has charted Belgium in the nineties. The central theme is the degeneration of a large, important family that includes a Minister and a powerful carpet manufacturer, against a background of a country that is scarred by scandals and increasing discord among the population.

The most relevant writer of the Low Countries.
DE GROENE AMSTERDAMMER

PUBLISHING DETAILS

Boze tongen (2002)
437 pages, 35,000 copies sold

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OTHER TITLES IN TRANSLATION

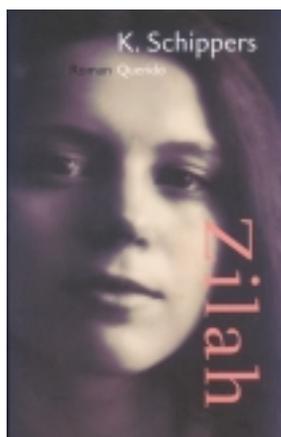
Metzgerssohn mit schriller Brille und andere Geschichten (Een slagerszoon met een brillette). Hildesheim: Claassen, 1995.
Pappschachteln (Kartonnen dozen). Hildesheim: Claassen, 1993. Also in African (Queillerie, 1996).
Schlachten! Nach den Rosenkriegen von William Shakespeare (Ten oorlog). Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der Autoren, 1999.
Mamma Medea (titel) Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der Autoren, xxxx
Célibat (Celibaat) Stad: Lansman, xxxx



Subtle relationship with language

K. Schippers

Zilah



SCHIPPERS is not a writer of clear-cut novels. He always puts forward an idea, a philosophy or a surprising insight and lets this determine the course of the story, and not the other way around. This is less common among novelists than poets or essayists. That said, it should come as no surprise that in Schipper's multi-faceted oeuvre, which he began in the early 1960s,

genres blend fluently into one another: his poetry has a rather prosaic quality to it; his essays are not infrequently short stories, and his novels contain poems and observations you might expect to find in an essay.

The latter is also true for his latest novel *Zilah*. The writer came across this meaningless word in an old British book full of code words for telegrams, which intrigued him tremendously. In the novel *Zilah* is a beautiful, intelligent woman of about thirty, who works for the Course Advertising Agency. She herself is someone who has to think up words for things that do not exist yet, like a name for a new beer. When *Zilah* goes to the Trademark Office to register the brand name "Dumb Blonde" for the beer, on a lark she also decides to buy the rights to "The Dutch Language."

That decision has far-reaching consequences. In the course of the novel it turns out that for 12.50 *Zilah* has in fact acquired control of the language. The things she thinks and writes actually happen. *Zilah* can make storm winds die down or cause a love from her youth to bloom again. She can now turn her fantasy into reality in every possible way and determine the course of events. Not everyone in the book is happy about that. For the officials at the Ministry of Special Affairs (a hitherto unnoticed government department, a typical Schippers invention), it is a spanner in the works. It so happens that Special Affairs had hatched a scheme to sell the Dutch language to America and make English the new official language of the Netherlands. When it turns out they do not even own the language, they set off in ruthless pursuit of *Zilah*.

Zilah is the sort of book you read on the edge of your seat. In part because you want to know how it all ends, but also because of the stimulating linguistic experiment K. Schippers performs under your very eyes.

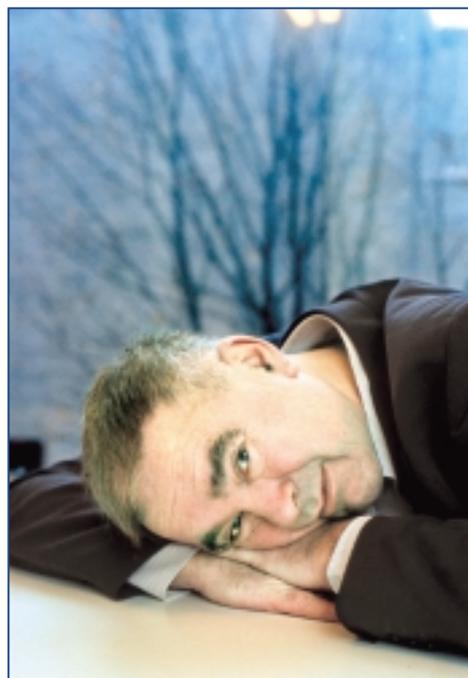


photo Klaas Koppe

K. Schippers (b. 1936) is the pseudonym of Gerard Stigter. He made his debut in 1963 with the poetry collection *Truth as The Cow*. In addition to poetry Schippers has written novels, short stories, essays and interviews. Recent novels are *Volatile Property* (1993) and *Powder and Wind* (1996). In 1996 Schippers was awarded the P.C. Hooft Prize for his essays. "Schippers' perspective makes even the most ordinary things seem startling."

At the core of his mercurial manner of observing and thinking is a fascination with language, above all with the peculiar tension between words and their meaning.

EINDHOVENS DAGBLAD

Schippers's novel is packed with word-games (e.g. three-word sentences that are the same in English as in Dutch), absurd mental leaps, linguistic inventions, insight into the workings of the advertising industry, dream images and humor. You constantly discover new meanings in the situations that Schippers sketches.

ALGEMEEN DAGBLAD

PUBLISHING DETAILS

Zilah (2002)
301 pp., 3000 copies

RIGHTS

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Exciting search for a lost past

Alfred van Cleef

Longing



LONGING, Alfred van Cleef's first novel, tells the story of investigative journalist Albert Ossedrijver and his exciting search into the past of his family, who were killed in World War II. His quest leads him to another family, his girlfriend Esther's family, members of whom had been in the Dutch pro-Nazi NSB party. Without

either one of them knowing it, it turns out that both families were marked by the past: Albert's grandfather was betrayed to the Nazis; Esther's grandfather was a traitor. Van Cleef is not concerned with drawing a distinction between good and evil, the categories people into people generally were placed during the War, but rather with exploring the gray area in-between. He does this by stressing the human side in everyone: the need for love, for a family life, children and a normal, everyday life in a community, in this case the Rivierenbuurt in Amsterdam, a neighborhood where many Jewish people lived before the war.

Albert and Esther live in an Amsterdam commune, a form of housing from the seventies and eighties that is described with a great deal of irony and humor. They want to have a baby, and Albert already has a name picked out for his son: Moses Baruch, a name that honors both his Jewish ancestry and his grandfather. Albert turns out to be infertile, and to his great sorrow this makes him the last surviving member of his family. He obsessively goes off in search of his family history so that he can tell it to the son he will never have.

Albert becomes intrigued by his grandmother's missing photo album, which might be able to shed some light on his hidden past. Armed with his curiosity and the methods of an investigative journalist, he begins his search. He learns things he never could have imagined, things that prove to have a direct influence on his present love life, things that bring the past chillingly close...



photo Bert Nienhuis

Alfred van Cleef (1954) is a freelance journalist. He made his literary debut in 1994 with the non-fiction book *The Lost World of the Berberovia Family*, in which he traces the history of a Bosnian Muslim family, which was split up by the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The non-fiction book *The Errant Island*, from 1999, is about his passion for the most inaccessible island on Earth. It is located at 37°50' south latitude in the Indian Ocean and bears the name Amsterdam. *The Errant Island* is to be published in translation in Germany and America.

Longing is a human book about what it feels like to fail.
NIW

PUBLISHING DETAILS

Longing (2002)
237 pages, 5,000 copies sold

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OTHER TITLES IN TRANSLATION

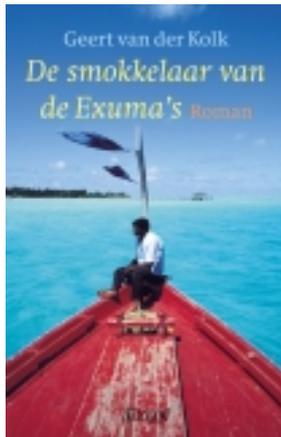
Die verirrte Insel (Het verdwaalde eiland). Hamburg: MareBuch, 2002. Also in English (New York: Metropolitan, in prep.)



Razor-sharp coral, menacing beaches

Geert van der Kolk

The Smuggler of the Exuma's



THE MOLA MOLA is a solitary, pelagic fish that can grow to a length of three metres, with a weight of more than a thousand kilos. It has no tail and is a poor swimmer. It drifts along on the great ocean currents and lives on plankton and jellyfish. In some regions it is called the 'sunfish' because it occasionally lies on the surface, basking in the sun. Elsewhere it is called the 'moonfish' due to its shape.'

Gramm, the taciturn and surly main character of *The Smuggler of the Exuma's* is the owner of a boat named after this fish. He skirts around the Bermudian archipelago, commissioned by a ship owner to look for his 'friend' Frank Black-

well who disappeared with a chartered boat, *Gallant Lady*, a year previously.

In the harbour of Bemini, Gramm takes the 11-year-old Rolle on board, as a guide to pilot him along the dangerous sandbanks and coral reefs. Gramm gets shot while filling up with water on an uninhabited island, probably by Colombian drug smugglers. Thanks to Rolle, they manage to reach the island of Stan-chion Cay, where Blackwell turns out to be hiding from the consequences of a murder he committed while transporting smuggled goods. Blackwell cannot travel back to Florida, where the owner of *Gallant Lady* is waiting. Gramm had started out in the hope of receiving part of the insurance money if he could prove that the boat had been lost. But now that this possibility has been ruled out, Gramm and Blackwell decide to initiate another lucrative but nasty business. Blackwell is to take Haitians aboard, Gramm will subsequently smuggle them into Florida. But things turn out differently. Blackwell turns out to be a very unreliable partner, and the deal ends in a violent scene. Gramm and Rolle can only just escape, only to run into a heavy storm.

The events mark *The Smuggler of the Exuma's* as an adventure novel *par excellence*. Van der Kolk tells his modern pirate story with the pace and suppleness of Hemingway. But it is more than an exciting boys' book. Particularly the evocation of the boat trip under the sheer blue sky swept clear by the trade winds, beyond desolate islands with virgin beaches, wide panoramas, and the many-coloured sea make reading this book an unprecedented pleasure. Van der Kolk, who has sailed the Bermudas, knows exactly how to wake the dormant adventurer in every reader.



photo Oline van der Kolk

At the beginning of the eighties, Geert van der Kolk worked as a freelance journalist in Poland and also lived for some time in former East Berlin. He now lives and works in the United States. He made his debut in 1987 with the collection of stories *De nieuwe stad* (The new City), followed by *Klein Amerika* (Small America, 1988) and *De bokser en andere verhalen* (The Boxer and other stories, 1989). His first novel, *Käthe Jahn*, appeared in 1991. Prior to *The Exuma Smuggler*, he published *Twee geheimen* (Two Secrets, 1997), which was well received.

The Exuma Smuggler displays the virtues of the Dutch language: the merit and expressiveness of the minimum.

DE VOLKSKRANT

However parallels can be established between Melville's Moby Dick and Hemingway's The Old Man and the Sea, like its great predecessors, Van der Kolk's The Smuggler grabs hold of you from the very first page.

NOORDHOLLANDS DAGBLAD

PUBLISHING DETAILS

The Smuggler of the Exuma's (2002)
175 pp, 3,000 copies sold

RIGHTS

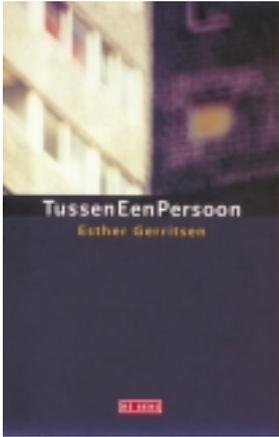
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The dark side of a passionate love

Esther Gerritsen

Between One Person



TUSSENEENPERSOON, the debut novel by Esther Gerritsen, is the oppressive monologue delivered by a woman to her boyfriend whom she has literally bound and gagged. It takes place entirely in their home on the attic floor of a house from where they are supposed to be moving that day. The young woman has tied up her lover, laid him on the bed and started to talk to him. About herself, her family, their relationship. She is neither defending nor

attacking. She does not wish to harm him in any way. What she primarily wants is to regard him with new eyes – as a stranger would, as someone standing between her and herself. The very silent, helpless presence of her boyfriend prompts her into reflection.

What motivates her? She seems, in any event, to want to break radically with her present and her past, in which she is beginning to perceive her wish to converge with, to blend with her lover as constrictive. As she remarks, 'I don't want to become your habit'. Very likely that is her motivation, resistance to the power of the everyday, to the emptiness of routine gestures, to the tediousness of trivial actions – to the sense of drifting aimlessly with a tide of events without actually being part of them. She refuses to accept the erosion to which every love and every life is subject, with all the disastrous consequences that entails.

Poignant, with a good feeling for detail, Gerritsen describes the dark sides of a passionate love and the troubled spirit of a woman who refuses to accept the world as it is.



photo Marc Mildner

Esther Gerritsen graduated from the Academy of Art in Utrecht in 1995 in Playwriting and Literary Studies. She has written plays for several companies for which she received, amongst other things, the Charlotte Köhler scholarship. In 2000, she debuted as a prose writer with the collection of short stories, *Bevoorrecht bewustzijn* (Privileged Consciousness), which, like *Tussen Een Persoon*, has been favourably received.

Everything falls into place beautifully in this novel.

HET PAROOL

Esther Gerritsen proves she can handle absurdity and surprise with skilln

NRC HANDELSBLAD

The emphasis on the verbal and the inner worlds of the characters is what makes the book so breathtaking.

DE VOLKSKRANT

PUBLISHING DETAILS

Tussen Een Persoon (2002)
132 pages, 2,200 copies sold

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Erudite and multifaceted

Paul Claes

The Heart of the Scorpion



IN *HET HART VAN DE SCHORPIOEN*, Claes has written an unusual autobiography, in which he largely satisfies one's curiosity as to the author behind the intriguing, creative imitations. Instead of a conventional, often chronological narrative, Paul Claes has opted for a series of short paragraphs based on key words, interspersed with lists, musings, bald statements and snatches of translation.

For him, language has been the driving force behind his intellectual development. Born into a traditional Belgian family, at home and at school he learned to be seen and not heard. It was reading that opened up the world of language for him and, via imitation, he grew to master the art of words. The achievements this generated gained him recognition and admiration. His thirst for knowledge, his indefatigable urge to fathom the mysteries forged by language and his fascination for languages and translating emerge in this book as his major motivations. As an author he is an uncompromising advocate for 'formal restrictions, rules and styling'. As a critic and translator his philosophy is that 'the poet encodes in imagery that requires deciphering'. He finds entirely new meaning in Rilke's epitaph and, after more than a century, throws light on Rimbaud's *Illuminations*, long considered inexplicable. His fascination is itself fascinating.

Striking, however, is the way he distances himself. He divulges extremely personal details regarding his parents and his youth, even in the form of a Freudian dream analysis or the results of a psychological test. When he speaks of himself, however, it is as 'he' or 'you' and others he refers to as 'the parents', or 'the friend'. You cannot catch him out in emotionally charged expression; his timidity or melancholy is simply acknowledged, not expressed. 'You can do anything. Anything except put feelings into words,' he says of himself. Language is a goal in itself for Claes, not a medium for expressing mood. This makes *Het hart van de scorpioen* not only impressively erudite and multifaceted, but also a paradoxical book: the author's timidity transforms into shy exhibitionism. Claes, who considers the biography of the author behind the work irrelevant, has written a revealing book about himself. Wise, cautious and stoical, but nonetheless not devoid of the irony and ambiguity so typical of him.

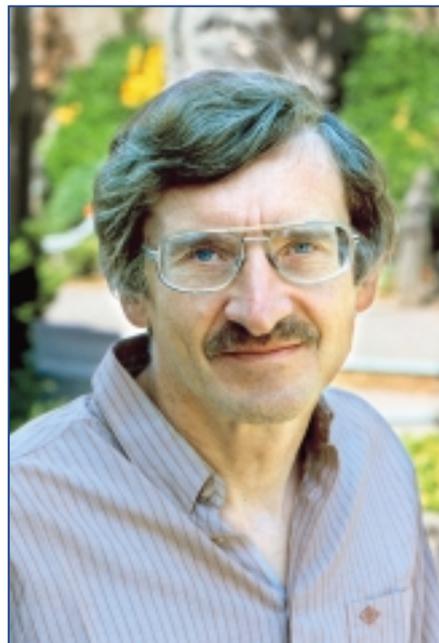


photo Klaas Koppe

Over the past ten years, the poet, essayist and translator Paul Claes (1943) has published five remarkable novels entirely in keeping with the style and detail of the historical period in which they are set; from the age of antiquity to the Eve of the Enlightenment. The most recent, *De Kameleon* (*The Chameleon*, 2001), in which an ingenious game of changing places and masquerades is interwoven with the European political balance and libertine lifestyle of the 18th century, has been awarded with several prizes.

Paul Claes is easily the most virtuoso writer in the Dutch language. (...) Skilful play with an autobiographical representation.

TROUW

PUBLISHING DETAILS

Het hart van de scorpioen (2002)
173 pages, 2,500 copies sold

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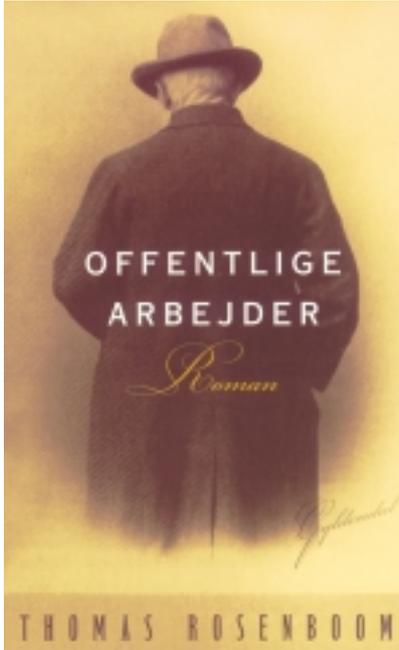
OTHER TITLES IN TRANSLATION

Der Phoenix (De phoenix).
Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2001



Recent publications

Thomas Rosenboom Public Works



Offentlige arbejder (Public Works) was published in Denmark by Gyldendal. In this powerful novel Thomas Rosenboom has modern times clashing with old, by juxtaposing late nineteenth-century Amsterdam with the provincial town of Hoogeveen.

The writer leads the two characters who believe the most unconditionally in Progress mercilessly to their downfall. The novel won the Libris Prize 2000. "A magnificent book which seems to stem from a different age, but which will stay with us for another century at least", wrote *Het Financiële Dagblad*.

Littérature en Flandre: 33 auteurs contemporains

Published in French by Le Castor Astral

Kader Abdolah Cunéiforme

(Cuneiform)

Published in French by Gallimard

Hugo Claus

Le dernier lit et autres récits

(The last bed and other stories)

Published in French by Seuil

Adriaan van Dis

Fichue famille

(Family Fray)

Published in French by Gallimard

Renate Dorrestein

Álbum de familia

(Heart of stone)

Published in Spanish by Anagrama

Jessica Durlacher

Die Tochter

(The daughter)

Published in German by Diogenes

Hella S. Haasse

Drogi wyobrazni

(De wegen der verbeelding)

Published in Polish by Noir sur Blanc

Margriet de Moor

Le rendez-vous

(Sea-Inside)

Published in French by Seuil

Erwin Mortier

Next of skin

(Mijn tweede huid)

Published in English by Harvill

Harry Mulisch

Siegfried

(Siegfried)

Published in French by Gallimard

Cees Nooteboom

Nomad's hotel

(Nootebooms hotel)

Published in English by Harvill

Anne Provoost

Voyagers on the ark

(De arkvaarders)

Published in English by Scholastic / Arthur A. Levine.

Leon de Winter

Malibu

(God's gym)

Published in German by Diogenes

Most of these books were covered previously in our 10 Books brochures.

For a complete list of translations of Dutch fiction, please consult our website: www.nlpvf.nl

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