

# Quality NON-FICTION

from Holland

NO.7 AUTUMN 2002

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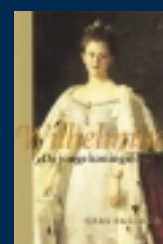
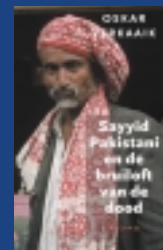
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FOUNDATION FOR  
THE PRODUCTION AND  
TRANSLATION OF  
DUTCH LITERATURE

*A revealing study of female sexuality*

Jelto Drenth

## The Origin of the World

*Facts and myths concerning  
female genitalia*

**T**HE ORIGIN OF THE WORLD is a revealing and liberating study of female sexuality. Sexologist Jelto Drenth writes on his subject soberly and well, and with an appealing touch of humour, thereby giving the impression that his work is perfectly normal. This is an achievement in itself, since public discussion of the most intimate areas of life is still exceptional in the post-feminist age.

Drenth believes that sex is pleasurable and fulfilling, but that to enjoy it to the full you must know 'how it works'. The workings of the female genitalia are described in simple language – with the author even giving us a 'guided tour' of the vagina. Behind the subtitle *Facts and myths concerning female genitalia* lurks a truly encyclopaedic work, in which Drenth examines his subject not only in a sexological light, but historically, anatomically, anthropologically and biologically. He goes back to the Middle Ages, travels through non-Western cultures – clitoridectomy, virginity checks –, tests Freud's theories on coitus, such a headache to so many couples, and deals at length with sexual desire, lovemaking and orgasm – including the use of the vibrator. He provides quotations from feminist and lesbian literature with illuminating critical marginal notes.

Anyone looking in such detail at female sexuality is bound to write a great deal about male sexuality too: consequently both sexes can learn as much as each other from Drenth, about themselves and about the other sex. Drenth approaches his theme from every available angle, jumping from scientific fact to myth and fantasy. The result is an anthology full of insights from the most diverse quarters – at one moment from a fictional novel character, the next from a historical text or a piece of direct testimony – in which stimulating poetry and romantic literature are blended with historical, anthropological and medical data.



*This is an important, well-written book, which deserves to become a classic.*

DE VOLKSKRANT

*The Origin of the World makes infectious reading.*

NRC HANDELSBLAD

*Jelto Drenth has written a fine book. He has a profound knowledge of his subject.*

TROUW

*The book reads like a novel one can't put down. It is extremely well written, lucid and stimulating.*

PSYCHOLOGIE MAGAZINE

#### PUBLISHING DETAILS

*De oorsprong van de wereld. Feiten en mythen over het vrouwelijk geslacht* (2002)  
373 pp, 3,000 copies sold  
With illustrations, notes and references

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Jelto Drenth works as a sexologist at the Rutgers Foundation in Groningen, famed for its woman-friendly, indeed feminist health care. He is something of an exception in the world of sexology, since, in addition to his original training as a doctor, he is also qualified in its more psychotherapeutic aspects. He is published widely in specialist journals.

*Life on Earth is mainly immature*

Midas Dekkers

## The Larva

*On children and metamorphosis*

**W**RITER-BIOLOGIST MIDAS DEKKERS has a great passion: the deeply rooted similarity between humans and animals. His style is ironic and at times simply sarcastic, but attests consistently to a warm love for nature and the animal-in-man. With pointed questions and sometimes disconcerting comparisons Dekkers succeeds in holding the attention of his readers like few others.

In *The Larva* Dekkers addresses the subject of youth. He parades every possible organism before us, from flies and dragonflies to eels, from salamanders and frogs to, of course, humans as well. *The Larva* shows that those who find the subject of youth unspectacular are sorely mistaken; the biodiversity on Earth consists primarily of organisms that have not reached adulthood: life on Earth is mainly immature.

Even nature lovers and those in the biological sciences pay little attention to this remarkable fact, and in daily life, immature organisms like larvae, caterpillars and maggots are regarded as annoying or harmful fellow creatures. We admire butterflies for their splendid colors, but we fight their larvae – the caterpillars – with all the means at our disposal. Dekkers confronts us with many such inconsistencies in our attitude towards nature.

Wherever we look – in a drop of seawater, in a ditch, in the vegetable garden or in a tropical rain forest – we encounter immature life forms everywhere, and everywhere growth and development is the feature of life that is the most striking. The growth towards adulthood occurs mainly by way of intermediate forms – larval stages. According to Dekkers we are guilty of a major error if we consider these larvae incomplete or inferior versions of the adult forms: every larval form is perfectly adapted to its specific situation and outstandingly equipped for the struggle for life.

In actuality each individual stage in the growth process can be regarded as a fully-fledged organism in its own right. This also applies to our own species, human beings. Children far outnumber adults, although the adult minority maintains a firm grasp on its power. The human larva – baby, toddler, adolescent – is fundamentally different from the adult, not only in its anatomy and physiology, but also in its behavior and mental capabilities. In their ability to learn new information, children's brains are dramatically superior to those of adults. In short, the true predecessor of (adult) man is, more than any protohuman, the child.



*THE PRESS ON THE WAY OF ALL FLESH:*

*A mischievous rhapsody about death and decay.*  
*THE INDEPENDENT*

*Dekkers's cheerily cultured broadside against the modern youth cult harnesses a lugubrious humour to wide-ranging readings in history and biology.*  
*THE GUARDIAN*

*Dekkers' anarchic tongue-in-cheek humour is hilarious.* *SPECTATOR*

*Dekkers is a biologist by training and a genius by nature.* *TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT*

*A furious book, a witty book, a fierce book, full of provocation and sarcasm.* *DIE WOCHE*

Midas Dekkers is a biologist, writer and programme maker. His *Lief dier* (Dearest Pet) (1994) and *De vergankelijkheid* (The Way of All Flesh) (1997) garnered international praise and were bestsellers both in the Netherlands and abroad.

#### PUBLISHING DETAILS

*De larf. Over kinderen en metamorfose* (2002)  
288 pp  
With illustrations and references

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#### OTHER TITLES IN TRANSLATION

*Dearest pet: on bestiality* (Lief dier: over bestialiteit). London; New York: Verso, 2000. Also in German (Carl Hanser Verlag, 1994), in Japanese (Kosakusha, 2000), Danish (Tiderne Skifter, 1995), in Korean (in prep.).  
*The Way of All Flesh: a celebration of decay* (De vergankelijkheid). London: Harvill, 2001. Also in Danish (Tiderne Skifter, 2000), German (Goldmann; Bertelsmann, 2001), Italian (Mondadori, in prep.).

## Ton Lemaire

### With Open Senses

*Nature, landscape, earth*

**T**HE PRIMARY CONCERN of philosopher and cultural anthropologist Ton Lemaire is the rehabilitation of the senses. With *Open Senses*, which forms the synthesis of Lemaire's extensive philosophical oeuvre, places not only the ecological debate but also the question of our culture's future in a new and broader perspective.

In the twentieth century the landscape disappeared from both painting and poetry, and this was no accident, according to Lemaire. The world has become an ever more artificial place, from which nature has gradually been eliminated. The natural landscape became the victim: from that point on man found himself in an environment that he himself had created. He became a narcissist in a world in which everything referred only to himself.

With great erudition Lemaire shows how this gradual loss of reality occurred in many areas at once. Modern philosophy made man into an all-powerful being who subjects the world to his will. Literature dissolved into a postmodern game of meanings that referred only to one another. Globalization made every place in the world interchangeable and abstract, uprooting man from the Earth.

But Lemaire does not want to return to a past that cannot be recovered. The road that the modern world has chosen goes in only one direction. If we do not want this to lead to complete alienation and catastrophe, this untamable modernity must be supplemented with a renewed awareness of the limits that reality places on mankind. Ecology teaches that endless growth is not possible, anthropology that we need a place where we can feel at home and philosophy that a meaningful existence is not something we can make ourselves but something that must be granted to us by the world.

Sensuosity is the link that connects all these insights to one another. According to Lemaire, it is only in feeling and observing the world that we notice we are imbedded in a reality upon which we are dependent. *With Open Senses* is written with great passion, personal and poetic, but it is always clearly argued and grounded in facts. As compelling as it is original, it forces us to consider the question of how mankind will be able to survive modernity.

#### PUBLISHING DETAILS

*Met open zinnen. Natuur, landschap, aarde* (2002)

359 pp, 4,000 copies sold  
With notes and references

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*Lemaire has lost none of his insightfulness in his analysis of our culture. And his feel for paradoxes has remained as sharp as ever.*

TROUW

*With Open Senses is a fascinating and at times even impressive book.*

VRIJ NEDERLAND

*Lemaire succeeds in captivating the reader with his sometimes poetic observations about the Earth, mankind and nature and with his philosophical analyses of social phenomena.*

DE VOLKSKRANT

Ton Lemaire is an anthropologist and philosopher. Earlier in his career he published the bestseller *Filosofie van het landschap* (*Philosophy of the Landscape*, 1970) and since then, among others, *Over de waarde van culturen* (*On the Value of Cultures*, 1976), *De indiaan in ons bewustzijn* (*The Indian in Our Consciousness*, 1986), *Binnenwegen* (*Back Roads*, 1988), *Godenspijs of duivelsbrood* (*Food of the Gods or the Bread of the Devil*, 1995) and *Wandelenderwijs* (*Walk Wise* 1997). Lemaire has lived in France for many years.

*A provocative and a pioneering book*

## Abram de Swaan

# Words of the World

### *The world language system*

**T**HERE ARE OVER FIVE THOUSAND LANGUAGES in the world, and yet humankind has still retained its cohesion. Sociologist Abram de Swaan believes that this is due to the people who speak more than one language. As a result of multilingualism, certain languages within the global system have a kind of 'umbrella function', serving as a means of communication between the speakers of regional languages. For the last half-century or so the 'supercentral' language crowning this linguistic hierarchy has been English.

In *Words of the World* De Swaan describes the process by which a particular language comes to occupy such a central position. The various factors which play a role in that process are illustrated by case studies focusing on the rivalry between Hindi and English in India; the triumph of Malaysian over the former colonial language – Dutch – in Indonesia, contrasted with the persistence of other colonial languages – French and English in Africa –; the complex linguistic regime in South Africa following apartheid; and the only slightly less complicated linguistic situation within the European Union.

All these various scenarios are governed by the same underlying rules. According to De Swaan, it is not until languages come to be regarded as economic goods that it becomes clear what makes these supercentral languages so appealing. Like other 'hypercollective goods' (cable networks, for example), the value of a language increases in proportion to the number of new speakers. An 'invisible hand' guides an ever more intensive process of concentration, in which a central role is reserved for a small number of languages with maximum communicative value. De Swaan shows that that number is fairly simple to calculate.

*Words of the World* is a pioneering book, in that it combines the insights of sociology, sociolinguistics and economics to demonstrate that the concentration in the direction of the super-central languages is both a rational and an undirected process. It is also a provocative book, because it presents this development as a momentous opportunity for human communication, rather than as a threat to the peripheral regional languages.



*De Swaan's book is unique. I know of no other work that sets out the problem of language – together with the solution – with such clarity. NRC HANDELSBLAD*

*Words of the World is a fascinating read. De Swaan writes in a lucid style and constructs his argument with iron-clad logic. HP/DE TIJD*

*Those who are willing to fight to the death to protect or promote their language will find much to quote from in Words of the World. There are few greater compliments for a book. VRIJ NEDERLAND*

Abram de Swaan is Professor of Sociology at the University of Amsterdam. He has previously held chairs at Berkeley, Yale and the Sorbonne. His publications include *De mens is een mens een zorg* (Man is a Worry unto Man) (1982), *Zorg en de staat* (In Care of the State) (1989), *De mensenmaatschappij* (Human Society) (1996), and *De draagbare De Swaan* (The Concise De Swaan) (1999).

#### PUBLISHING DETAILS

*Woorden van de wereld.*  
*Het mondiale talenstelsel*  
(2002)  
298 pp, 3,000 copies sold  
With notes and references

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#### SELECTED TITLES IN TRANSLATION

*The World Language System. A political sociology and political economy of language.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002.  
*Human Society. An Introduction.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001  
*The Management of Normality. Critical essays in health and welfare.* London/New York: Routledge, 1990

*In Care of the State. Health care, education and welfare in Europe and the USA in the Modern Era.* New York/Cambridge: Oxford UP/Polity Press, 1988. Also in French (PUF, 1994), German (Campus Verlag, 1993) and Spanish (Pomares Corredor, 1992).

# Roelof van Gelder & Vibeke Roeper

## In the Company's Service

*Life in the Dutch East India Company in a hundred personal testimonies (1602-1799)*

**I**N THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES the Dutch United East India Company (*voc*) was the largest commercial enterprise in Europe – a private organisation of unprecedented size, the world's first multinational. Its trade network extended from the Cape of Good Hope, Persia and Arabia in the west along the coasts of India, the Indonesian archipelago to the Moluccas, Japan and China in the east.

A million men tried their luck on the *voc*'s ships in Asia; they hoped to earn more than in tradition-bound Europe and some of them felt the pull of the unknown, the exotic. Anyone signing on for a *voc* ship knew that he was in for an adventurous but arduous time. Countless recruits never arrived, others died shortly after their arrival and only a few actually managed to make their fortune.

Much has been written about the business aspects of the *voc*: the trade in pepper and fine spices, china, tea and cotton materials, about the profits made and the management of the scores of *voc* trading posts in Asia. Much less is known about the everyday life of the tens of thousands of Company staff.

*In the Company's Service* allows Company employees to speak about their personal experiences. The authors have chosen a hundred personal stories from the travelogues, ship's journals, letters and memoirs that have survived, many of which have never previously appeared in print. All ranks are represented: from cabin boy to master, from clerk and bookkeeper to Governor-General and from private soldier to major. They are tales of scurvy, fights, heat, hunger, thirst and brutal discipline, of storms and of lying becalmed, as well as of strange encounters with alien peoples and astonishment at extraordinary animals and plants. No one was spared disappointment, homesickness and despair, but there was also the joy on return of meeting old friends, and the thrill of having survived the Asian adventure.

The *voc* was hell on earth, from which an estimated two-thirds of the seamen, soldiers and clerks failed to return alive. The odd individual became wealthy, but the price was too high for the rest and the families they left behind, as is made abundantly clear by the poignant fragments in *In the Company's Service*.



*In the Company's Service* shows the human dimension of the Dutch colonial adventure. (...)

The authors sketch a splendid picture of everyday life on board ship and at the *voc*'s trading posts.

LEEWARDER COURANT

Roelof van Gelder is an historian and an editor of *NRC Handelsblad*. He has written various studies on Dutch cultural history and the history of the *voc*, including *The Dutch East Indian Adventure*, which will appear in German translation at the end of 2002. Vibeke Roeper is a literary scholar, specialising in older Dutch travel literature. She has published various studies and source books and translated several older travelogues into modern Dutch.

#### PUBLISHING DETAILS

*In dienst van de Compagnie* (2002)  
304 pp, 4,000 copies sold  
With notes and references

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#### OTHER TITLES IN TRANSLATION

*The Dutch East Indian Adventure* (Het Oost-Indisch avontuur. Duitsers in dienst van de *voc* (1600-1800). Bremerhaven: Deutsches Schifffahrtsmuseum, in preparation.

*First modern, concise history of the Netherlands*

Maarten Prak

## The Golden Age

*The enigma of the Republic*

**T**HE REPUBLIC of the Seven United Netherlands was the land of Rembrandt, Vermeer and Frans Hals, where Descartes and Spinoza were also able to work out their ideas in peace and tranquillity. The economic and cultural flowering of this small country bordering on the North Sea has been an endless source of fascination down the ages. Until now there was no modern, concise and thorough history of this complex and intriguing state. That lacuna has now been filled by Maarten Prak's *The Golden Age*.

Prak answers the question of how this ragbag collection of provinces – wealthy through trade, powerful due to an efficient army, and politically successful thanks to its intelligent statesmen – was able to throw off the yoke of the Spanish Habsburgers. And how the Netherlands developed into a world power which ruled the seas and, not without reason, was described as the ‘the envy of some, the fear of others, and the wonder of all its neighbours.’

The Netherlands was a paradoxical land. As a state, it consisted of seven sovereign provinces which were dominated by the cities, first and foremost Amsterdam. But within those cities there was no unity, due to conflicts between local political factions. Prak guides the reader through this maze of conflicting relationships. Due to the small scale of these urban communities, people knew each other and this meant that in spite of conflict there was an atmosphere of mutual trust, a concept which plays a key role in this book. Thanks to that trust, the Dutch burgher was easily persuaded to participate in communal projects – such as the country's colonial ventures – and to lend the government money, enabling it to finance costly wars against its powerful neighbours.

Prak demonstrates that the country's power, prosperity and cultural vigour were the result of the loose political structure, the general tolerance, the great freedom enjoyed by the burghers, and a mentality which was more inclined to solve problems by discussion and compromise than by musket shots and cannonades. *The Golden Age* combines sweeping analysis with detailed stories of individuals and events. These include ‘ordinary people’ from all the various strata of Dutch society, the career of the painter Johannes Vermeer, the position of Jewish immigrants within Dutch society, and the rise of the tulip.



Prak has succeeded in condensing the massive amount of literature on the subject, including the most recent views, into a balanced and accomplished survey occupying a mere three hundred pages. His book is more pertinent than Simon Schama's *Embarrassment of Riches* and more compact than Jonathan Israel's *The Dutch Republic*. *NRC HANDELSBLAD*

*The Golden Age* is a very human work, in the sense that it brings us into direct contact with the people of that age. *TROUW*

Prak paints the big picture with an ease that is unusual among Dutch historians. This makes *The Golden Age* a book which no one with an interest in history should miss. *VRIJ NEDERLAND*

Prak is a gifted storyteller who uses brief vignettes to focus the reader's attention on the main thread of his argument. Thus the tulip hype of 1637 becomes a paradigm for Holland's market economy. *DE VOLKSKRANT*

Maarten Prak has been Professor of Social and Economic History at Utrecht University since 1992. He also teaches at its English-language University College, and was a visiting professor at the University of Exeter (UK) in 1996 and 2002. He has published widely on the political, social and economic history of the Netherlands and Europe during the early modern period.

#### PUBLISHING DETAILS

*Gouden Eeuw. Het raadsel van de Republiek* (2002)  
341 pp, 4,000 copies sold  
With illustrations, notes and references

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*Uncompromising biography full of entertaining asides*

Cees Fasseur

Wilhelmina

*Queen Pretty Face*

**C**HURCHILL called her the only man in the Dutch cabinet, and the American president Roosevelt confessed to having been 'scared to death' by her. After William the Silent, Queen Wilhelmina is the most famous representative of the House of Orange, as well as being one of the most influential women of the twentieth century.

Only eighteen when she ascended the throne in 1898, she remained queen for half a century. She soon proved to have a powerful and magnetic personality, displaying a principled distaste for political parties. The picture emerges of a severe, authoritarian and, at the same time, unworldly woman, who had little respect for the constitutional restrictions of her office. She tried to influence cabinet policy and was often in open conflict with her ministers.

The climax of Wilhelmina's rule occurred during the five years of the Second World War that she spent in exile in London. There she became the voice and symbol of the free Netherlands, while remaining a firm champion of political renewal, something that again led to friction with her cabinet. Fasseur shows convincingly that she made a better choice than another monarch, Leopold III of Belgium, who stayed put and whose conduct verged on collaboration.

Fasseur argues that Wilhelmina was the first Dutch monarch who can truly be called 'modern'. The monarchy became the embodiment of a 'nation', a people that felt united through a common language, culture and history. This was unquestionably a revolutionary concept for the Netherlands, which, till then, had been a loose federation of provinces, regions and powerful cities. Although Wilhelmina was convinced of her rights and duties as a monarch in the new style, the book teems with examples of the liberties she took with the constitutional limits of her office. Fasseur however also shows that the constitutional monarchy was strong enough to withstand this haughty, authoritarian hereditary ruler.

With Queen Beatrix's authorization, Fasseur was the first author to be granted unconditional access to the private archives of the House of Orange. Wilhelmina's turbulent marriage to the German Duke Hendrik, who was constantly short of money, is dealt with in detail. The result is an original, scintillating and compellingly written portrait of Wilhelmina and her times.



Fasseur has struck the right note. His book is lacking in anything that could be called obsequiousness. Its style is lucid and objective while being spiced with irony. He has an unerring feel for putting things in context.

*NRC HANDELSBLAD*

This book is uncompromising: it holds up a pitiless mirror to its subject. Fasseur has an exceptionally attractive, open style that makes it a delight to read.

*VRIJ NEDERLAND*

This biography is full of entertaining asides. In a style that is both candid and unemphatic, the facts are placed in the author's chosen perspective.

*DE VOLKSKRANT*

Fasseur has an eye for the small details that bring a personality to life.

*ELSEVIER*

Cees Fasseur, lawyer and historian, is Professor of History at the University of Leiden. He has published a number of books on the Dutch colonial past in Indonesia, such as *De indologen* (The Indologists), *De weg naar het paradijs* (The Way To Paradise) en *Indischgasten*. For a number of years he held the post of senior adviser at the Ministry of Justice. He was awarded the triennial prize for biography from the city of Dordrecht for *Wilhelmina*.

**PUBLISHING DETAILS**

*Wilhelmina* (1998)

600 pp, 100,000 copies sold

With illustrations, notes and references

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## Ad van Liempt

# A Price on Their Heads

*Dutch bounty hunters in search of Jews, 1943*

**I**N THE SPRING OF 1943, when the deportation of Dutch Jews was in danger of stagnating, the occupying German forces took a remarkable step: premiums were offered for bringing in Jews who had gone into hiding. Part of the staff of the *Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung* (Central Office for Jewish Emigration) was given the task of tracking down Jews. This became the *Recherchegruppe Henneicke* ('Henneicke Column') and to a large extent it was the premiums, the *kopgeld* – literally 'head-money' –, that stimulated their activities.

Until now no historical research has been done about this group. On the one hand because much of the work of the 'Jew hunters' took place in secret and the vast majority of their victims could no longer bear witness to their experiences, on the other hand because it was difficult to gain access to the judicial records. Journalist Ad van Liempt was the first to receive permission to examine the bounty hunters' criminal dossiers. On the basis of this information he described the group of perpetrators and reconstructed a large number of their activities.

As a result of Van Liempt's astonishing research many unknown facts have come to light. The group of civilian Jew hunters arrested a total of 8000 to 9000 Jews. Van Liempt describes some particularly shocking cases. The most gripping are the arrests of young children. Two bounty hunters travelled hundreds of kilometres across the country to get their hands on a two year old girl who was living in a safe house; a month later she was gassed at Sobibor. The father of three other young children had all his teeth knocked out; in this way the Henneicke Column were able to learn the addresses where the children were being put up.

In court the Jew hunters consistently maintained that they received no premiums for their work, but Van Liempt's research has clearly shown the opposite to be true. Family members of the perpetrators give detailed accounts of how much was earned from their activities and where all the money went.

The civilian Jew hunt was undoubtedly the blackest page in Dutch history. It is striking how few Germans appear in Van Liempt's book: the arrest of Jews was carried out exclusively by the Dutch. *A Price on Their Heads* sketches a depressing world: motivated by a thirst for power and wealth, ordinary Dutchmen, socially unsuccessful, were prepared to turn their Jewish countrymen over to the Germans.



1943  
staat  
echt in  
klein  
kapitaal  
halfvet

*A magnificently written book on a new theme: the role of ordinary Amsterdammers in the hunt for Jews.*

JOHANNES HOUWINK TEN CATE,  
DUTCH INSTITUTE FOR WAR  
DOCUMENTATION

Ad van Liempt is the editor-in-chief of the historical television program *Andere Tijden* (Other Times). He has written a number of books: *Een mooi woord voor oorlog* (A Nice Word for War) about the first police action in Indonesia, *De lijk trein* (The Corpse Train) about a fatal prisoner transport in East Java in 1947 and, in collaboration with Ger van Westing, the successful *Klem in de draaideur* (Stuck in the Revolving Door), which is to be filmed later this year.

#### PUBLISHING DETAILS

*Kopgeld. Nederlandse premiejagers op zoek naar joden, 1943* (2002)

300 pp

With illustrations, notes and references

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## Frank Westerman

### Engineers of the Soul

**E**NGINEERS OF THE SOUL is the riveting story of how authors were forced to write in service of an ideology, in this case communism as it was practiced in the Soviet Union. Westerman's sharp pen combines a fine example of investigative journalism with a dash of literary history. In the book's ingenious construction he continually contrasts the Soviet past with present-day Russia, leading the reader into a maze of mirrors through Absurdistan.

It was in 1932 that Stalin first used the expression 'engineers of the soul' to refer to Soviet writers. It would become a well-known phrase and a feared concept. Together with the actual engineers, these engineers of the soul were supposed to contribute to the definitive establishment of the Communist paradise: by changing the appearance of the country with ambitious waterworks – Moscow Seaport! – and by playing upon the souls of its inhabitants in books in such a way that the New Man would rise up, respectively.

The writers (the *liriki*) were also given the special task of lavishing praise on the builders (the *fiziki*): this became a literary-propagandistic genre in its own right, to which Westerman, himself once a student of hydraulic engineering, devotes much of his attention. For this book he undertook two spectacular journeys: the first was to the Gulf of Kara Bogaz, now a muddy bay in the Caspian Sea, but once described by Konstantin Paustovski as a marvel of hydraulic engineering, and the second led through the books – and the lives – of other Soviet writers, like Maxim Gorki, Andrej Platonov, Boris Pilnjak and Isaak Babel.

Paustovski is well-chosen as the main character of this drama in many acts: in the Soviet period he was an intriguing figure, who became a virtual legend with his six-volume autobiography *Story of My Life*, but in those volumes you will find practically nothing of what Westerman came to learn about his life in the course of his travels. The fact that for this reason *Engineers of the Soul* also has acquired literary newsworthiness is an additional merit of an outstanding book, which has given writers their history back – at the very place where their freedom of expression was taken away from them.



*Endlessly fascinating, breathtaking. Engineers of the Soul is surprising and original, not to mention meticulously researched and well-written.*

DE VOLKSKRANT

*Engineers of the Soul is a beautifully written, well-documented, extraordinarily fascinating book, full of wonderful anecdotes.*

VRIJ NEDERLAND

*Engineers of the Soul is a gripping and witty book...in many respects a model of superior investigative journalism.*

DE GROENE AMSTERDAMMER

*Engineers of the Soul makes clear that we should not be so quick to pass judgment on the writers who sang the praises of the Russian state.*

HET FINANCIËLE DAGBLAD

#### PUBLISHING DETAILS

*Ingenieurs van de ziel* (2002)  
288 pp, 10,000 copies sold  
With references

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Frank Westerman has lived and worked as a writer and journalist in Moscow for the last five years. His last book, *De graanrepubliek* (The Republic of Grain) was nominated for the General Bank Literature Prize and the Golden Owl and received the Dr. Lou de Jong Prize for contemporary history.

## Oskar Verkaaik

### Sayyid Pakistani and the Wedding of the Dead



ANYONE WANTING TO UNDERSTAND what has been going on in the world of Islam during recent years would do well to read the new book by anthropologist Oskar Verkaaik. The central theme is political violence and Islam in Pakistan. Because the author's style is descriptive and anthropological rather than analytical, this book suggests very different underlying reasons for the events described from those normally given by social scientists, journalists, politicians and other foreign analysts – such as poverty, political aspirations or religious fanaticism.

Verkaaik meets political militants working for various ethnic and religious movements, students at Koran schools and intellectuals, but above all he interviews 'ordinary people'. His subjects are presented as human actors trying to make sense of the world they live in. The result is a picture of people trying to cope with Islam in modern times, in which religion is increasingly a matter of consciousness, struggle and self-definition rather than a given and unproblematic tradition.

In this way we get to know the tailor master Sayyid Pakistani, the two friends and political activists Javed and Adil, one of whom gets married while the other seeks a martyr's death, the Koran students Habib and Imdad, whose aim in life is to follow in the steps of the Prophet, the erudite Ibrahim Saqi, who knew Gandhi and Jinnah and who is taking flute lessons in his old age, and the cosmopolitan woman journalist Fauzia, who displays a provocative concern with radical Muslim youth.

As a professional anthropologist with many years of field experience in Pakistan, Verkaaik is not just another foreign observer. He speaks fluent Urdu and is a well-informed interviewer who regularly confronts the people he encounters with his own point of view on Islam and Pakistani culture. This makes the book a rare and attractive combination of *belles lettres*, anthropology, travelogue and investigative journalism. *Sayyid Pakistani and the Wedding of the Dead* is exceptionally beautifully written and sheds an intimate light on a world with which Verkaaik is thoroughly familiar.

Verkaaik has done for Pakistan what the anthropologist Nigel Barley did for Cameroon. By behaving unobtrusively, he succeeded in forming spontaneous relations with Pakistanis, so that they are just as willing to talk with him about love as about Islam. Mazhar, the gardener, Waheed, the tailor, Azmat, the boxer – Verkaaik sits with them in a cemetery, a tea house or on a carpet in a warehouse, and gradually you hear the call of the muezzin and see the lamps and ornaments of the mosque through their eyes. One by one these Pakistanis step out of the shadow cast by religion and begin to belong to a comprehensible and impressionable world, one that is both cruel and poetic, in which Al Qaida, Taliban, religious fundamentalism, the differences between Muslims and Hindus, Shiites and Sunnites – all these abstract terms that have recently provoked so much anxiety in the West – acquire a meaning of their own.

LIEVE JORIS,

AUTHOR OF BACK TO THE CONGO AND THE

LEOPARD'S DANCE

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KLEINER?

Oskar Verkaaik is a journalist and anthropologist who has conducted research in Pakistan over the past ten years. He was awarded a PhD with distinction at the University of Amsterdam for his published dissertation *Inside the Citadel: Fun, Violence and Religious Nationalism in Hyderabad, Pakistan* (1999). He is currently Assistant Professor at the Research Centre for Religion and Society at the University of Amsterdam.

#### PUBLISHING DETAILS

*Sayyid Pakistani en de bruiloft van de dood* (2002)

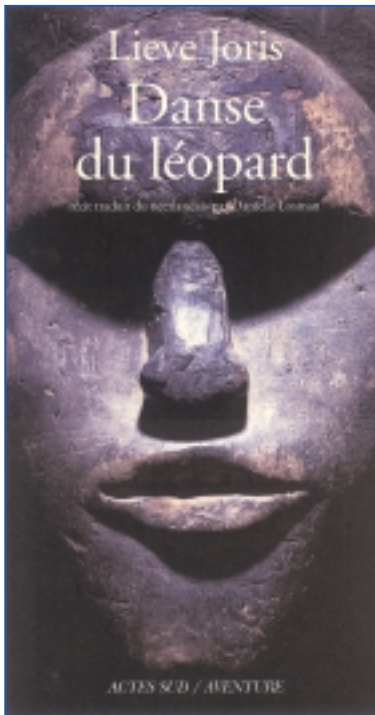
256 pp

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## Recent publications

Lieve Joris  
The Leopard's Dance



*The Leopard's Dance* by the renowned travel book author Lieve Joris was published by Actes Sud in France earlier this year. *Le Monde* described this harrowing portrait of the Congo ravaged by civil war as follows: 'Lieve Joris est une portraitiste hors pair. *Danse du léopard* s'impose comme un moment majeur dans une oeuvre qui déjà se profile' ('Lieve Joris is an unparalleled portraitist. *The Leopard's Dance* is a major point in an oeuvre that is already beginning to stand out.')

### OTHER STRIKING TRANSLATIONS THAT HAVE APPEARED IN THE PAST YEAR INCLUDE:

Matthijs van Boxsel  
**Die Enzyklopädie der Dummheit**

(The Encyclopedia of Stupidity)

Published in German by Eichborn

Han Israëls

**El caso Freud**

(The Freud Case)

Published in Spanish by Turner

Tim Krabbé

**The Rider**

(De renner)

Published in English by Bloomsbury

Joris Luyendijk

**Die Kinder der Midaq-Gasse**

(A Good Man Sometimes Hits his Wife)

Published in German by Rotbuch

Geert Mak

**Apám évszázada**

(My Father's Century)

Published in Hungarian by Osiris

Herman Pleij

**Dreaming of Cockaigne**

(Dromen van Cocagne)

Published in English by Columbia University Press

Nico Roozen & Frans van der Hoff

**L'aventure du commerce équitable**

(Fair Trade)

Published in French by Jean-Claude Lattès

René van Royen & Sunnyva van der Vegt

**Asterix auf grosser Fahrt**

(Asterix and the Big Wide World)

Published in German by C.H. Beck

Koen Vergeer

**Formel 1**

(The Formula One Fanatic)

Published in German by Rütten & Loening

Teun Voeten

**How de body?**

(How de body?)

Published in English by St. Martin's Press

H.L. Wesseling

**La spartizione dell' Africa 1880-1914**

(Divide and Rule)

Published in Italy by Corbaccio

Most of these books were covered previously in our QNF brochures. For a complete list of translations of Dutch quality non-fiction, please consult our website: [www.nlpvf.nl](http://www.nlpvf.nl)

**QUALITY NON-FICTION FROM HOLLAND** is published by the Foundation for the Production and Translation of Dutch Literature. The bulletin is distributed free of charge to foreign publishers and editors. If you would like to receive *Quality Non-Fiction from Holland* please contact the editorial office.

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