

Quality Non-Fiction from Holland

Vitality
Adversity
Mentality
Testimony
Family
Delights
War
Comparisons
Gardens
Legends

The Foundation

Information

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

Translation Grants

Foreign publishers wishing to publish a translation of Dutch or Frisian literature may apply for a subsidy towards the translation costs. Having acquired the rights, the publisher's application must be accompanied by a copy of the contract with the rights owner and a copy of the contract with the translator. Application forms are available from the Foundation's website. Subsidies are paid after receipt of complimentary copies, with printed acknowledgement of the Foundation's support. A sample translation may be required and evaluated by our external advisors. Applications for translations that have already been published cannot be taken into consideration. Publishers looking for a qualified translator can request a list of endorsed translators for their language area.

Illustrated Books

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

Promotional Travel

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

Writers-in-Residence

The Foundation coordinates writer-in-residence programmes together with foreign universities and institutions. International authors are invited to spend time working in Amsterdam. They may stay one or two months at the writers' lodgings above the Athenaeum Bookshop in Amsterdam.

International Visitors Programme

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

Translators' House

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

Schwob

Schwob draws attention to and supports as-yet undiscovered, untranslated classics of world literature. Each month the editors select new titles on www.schwob.nl.

Background

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

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Rudi Westendorp

Growing Older Without Growing Old

On vitality and ageing

If we look at how the course of human life has changed, two recent developments stand out: more people than ever are growing old, and far more people than ever are growing older. What are the causes of these new developments? Has modern science found the key to eternal life? And what do longer life spans mean for the way we organize our societies? How can older people best prepare themselves for living considerably longer?

Growing Older Without Growing Old is a fascinating study by one of the Netherlands' most prominent experts in geriatric medicine. By combining medical, biological, economic and sociological insights, Rudi Westendorp manages to answer the above questions in a single coherent argument. He covers practically all relevant topics: the rhythm of life, ageing as illness, increasing life expectancy, the quality of life in old age and what to expect in the future.

All kinds of diverse factors including genetic disposition, lifestyle, chance and fate cause us cumulative damage,

ultimately resulting in death. Healthy ageing is a myth; almost without exception we grow older from the age of seventy, suffering two or more ailments. In passing, Westendorp dispenses with fables about nutrition, cosmetics and growth hormones. It is the fantastic ability of modern medicine to repair us that is helping to limit the damage for longer and longer. Barring accidents, a child born in the West today will easily reach the age of a hundred or more.

We need to be prepared for this, both as societies and as individuals. Only an integrated approach by government, industry and science will allow us to tackle the huge challenge that is now upon us: the ageing of the population. Westendorp makes a number of suggestions regarding reforms to the labour market, housing policy and the provision of care. 'But our most important task is to support the organizational capabilities of older people themselves,' he writes. The secret of the art of growing older is to stay active, maintain social networks and keep setting goals for yourself.



Rudi Westendorp is a medical doctor, professor of medicine at Leiden University and founder and director of the Leyden Academy on Vitality and Ageing, which offers courses, conducts research and initiates developments that improve the quality of life for older people. Westendorp frequently appears in the media, making his knowledge available to a wide audience.

An entertaining and revealing book about our delayed ageing and death, about astonishing future prospects and our failure to take simple measures to prevent diseases such as dementia.

De Volkskrant

Westendorp stresses above all the positive aspects of the fact that we are living to an increasingly advanced age. He also explains with great clarity how we can gain control of our long lives.

Trouw

Publishing details

Oud worden zonder het te zijn. Over vitaliteit en veroudering (2014)
296 pp. (75,600 words)
With references
35,000 copies sold

Publisher

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English (Scribe), German (C.H. Beck), Hungarian (Libri) and Italian (Ponte alle Grazie).



- A navigation system for the extra lifetime that lies ahead.
- Argues that since we wanted it and have made it happen, ageing is something we can be proud of and need to turn to our advantage.
- Challenges assumptions about old age, such as the belief that dementia is an escalating problem.

Photo: Annaleen Louwes

Anton Blok

The Innovators

The blessings of adversity in science and art, 1500–2000

In *The Innovators*, cultural anthropologist Anton Blok throws new light on the lives and achievements of pioneers who revolutionized science and art over the past five centuries: adversity rather than talent alone drove them in their innovations.

Blok analyzes the collective biography of ninety innovators, such as Spinoza, Newton, Bach, Sade, Cézanne, Curie, Brâncusi, Einstein, Wittgenstein, Keynes and Goodall. Drawing on insights from anthropology, he finds that adversity involved social exclusion, which provided freedom to develop a passionate interest in some branch of science or art. Assistance came through fortuitous encounters with potential patrons, sponsors or mentors.

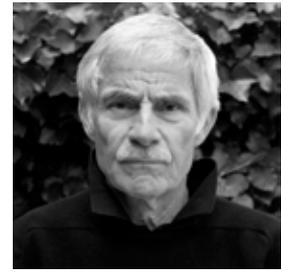
Social adversity took various forms, including illegitimacy, early parental loss, conflict with parents, bankruptcy, homosexuality, a chronic illness, a physical defect, a neurological condition, minority status, exile, imprisonment, poverty and peripheral origins. All had the same effect: alienation from the establishment. As outsiders, the innovators were able to question conventional beliefs and practices. With little to lose, they could take risks and exploit windows of opportunity.

With adversity as a common denominator, the book takes issue with Frank Sulloway's widely acclaimed *Born to Rebel*, which singles out birth order and sibling

rivalry as key variables. Sulloway argues that laterborns are more likely than firstborns to pioneer or support radical innovation in science, art, politics and religion. Blok shows that family dynamics is only one of the many factors that help explain radical innovation.

The Innovators holds the interest of the general reader with its brief sketches of the early hardships of some of the greatest minds in European and American history. Quite a few capitalized on their adversity, like Beethoven whose increasing deafness isolated him from his friends while creating more time for composing and experimenting. Darwin's chronic illness provided him with an excuse for avoiding social gatherings and getting on with his work. Illness looms large as one of the chance circumstances that give rise to radical innovation. The same goes for the happenstance meeting of a helpful relative, friend, patron or teacher, which can totally change a life. Some important innovations were the result of serendipity; outsiders are by nature more likely to notice anomalies.

The Innovators shows that radical innovation in science and art cannot be planned and is rarely the work of teams. More often it results from experiments by individuals. The book recalls the aphorism derived from Kierkegaard: 'Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards.'



Anton Blok is emeritus professor of cultural anthropology at the University of Amsterdam. He taught at the Radboud University of Nijmegen and was a visiting professor at the University of Michigan, the University of California, Berkeley, and Yale University. His best-known books include *The Mafia of a Sicilian Village* (1974), and a collection of critical essays *Honour and Violence* (2001). His interest in biography and innovation goes back to the early 1960s when he studied anthropology at the University of Amsterdam.

An innovating book about innovation!
Peter Burke

A book that leaves us in no doubt that the author has got hold of something truly remarkable and valuable.
NRC Handelsblad

Publishing details

De vernieuwers. De zegeningen van tegenslag in wetenschap en kunst 1500–2000 (2013)
376 pp. (93,000 words)
With notes and references
2,100 copies sold

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English (Polity).



- Offers a new perspective on radical innovation in science and art on the basis of a substantial collective biography.
- Corrects misunderstandings about radical innovators, including the belief that their achievements are attributable to talent alone.

Photo: Verena Blok

Abram de Swaan

The Killing Compartments

The mentality of mass murder

Why do some regimes commit mass murder, and how do they always find willing participants? That is the terrible question sociologist Abram de Swaan has set out to tackle.

Philosopher Hannah Arendt described war criminal Adolf Eichmann as the very embodiment of 'the banality of evil', just another ordinary man, even though she knew he had been a fanatical Nazi Jew hunter. Arendt's view seemed borne out by American psychologist Stanley Milgram, who staged an experiment which showed that many people were prepared to inflict what appeared to be dangerous electric shocks on a 'student' (in reality an actor). In fact, however, as De Swaan points out, more than a third of participants in that experiment refused to continue at some point.

With his erudition and analytical skill, De Swaan brings us a step closer to discovering why one person becomes a war criminal while another does not, arguing that it depends not merely on circumstance but on personality. Mass murderers are more likely to have served in the army or police, or to have a violent criminal past. Genocidaires, as De Swaan calls them, tend to be obedient to their superiors and loyal to their comrades. They are often also devoted to their families. Almost all deny

responsibility for their atrocities and they hardly ever display remorse, shame or empathy. They rarely show any pity for their victims and are unwilling or unable to identify with them. Looking back on their outrageous crimes, they have a tendency to say: 'Yes, but that wasn't me; I was a different person then.'

It is not enough to look at mass murderers in isolation. They need to be placed in the wider social context of a society going through a process of compartmentalization that separates the target group from the regime's approved people at all levels: in the dominant culture, in social institutions, in everyday interaction and in people's minds. This approach allows us to identify four different modes of mass annihilation: victors' frenzy, rule by terror, losers' triumph and megapogroms.

De Swaan illustrates his discussion of this complex subject with concrete examples. His argument is clear, logical, and soundly constructed. It is also bold. In most studies of genocide the consensus is that ordinary people can commit extraordinary evil and that the perpetrators' own past hardly matters. De Swaan's focus on precisely those personal stories is what makes his book so fascinating: 'Even mass murderers are persons, in many respects different persons, distinct like everyone else.'



Abram de Swaan has been a professor of sociology since 1973 and in 2001 he was appointed professor of social sciences at the University of Amsterdam, where he is now emeritus professor. Among his most successful books are *In Care of the State* (1988), *Human Societies* (1996) and *Words of the World* (2001), which has been translated into ten languages. In 2008 he received the national P.C. Hooft Prize for his entire oeuvre.

De Swaan has written the first sociology of mass murder.
Vrij Nederland

De Swaan commands respect for the sharpness of his observations in the field, the way he sets it all down and the shrewdness of his arguments.
Trouw

One of De Swaan's great qualities is his insatiable curiosity, which ultimately goes far beyond the boundaries of his field of study. His work has enriched not only sociology but Dutch essay writing.
Jury report, P.C. Hooft Prize

Publishing details

Compartmenten van vernietiging. Over genocidale regimes en hun daders (2014)
312 pp. (101,690 words)
With notes and references
4,000 copies sold

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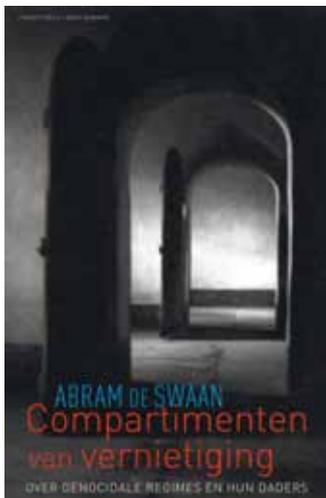
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English (Yale University Press)
and French (Seuil).

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Photo: Bob Bronshoff



- Provides an overall framework for an understanding of genocide as an outcome of the compartmentalization of society.
- Presents a typology of twentieth-century episodes of mass annihilation in order to aid our understanding of specific instances.
- Explores the mind-set of mass murderers.

Guus Luijters

Children's Chronicle, 1940-45

Letters, testimony and diaries from the Shoah



Children's lives during the Second World War often seem to be represented by just one life, that of Anne Frank. Anne was gifted, loveable, rebellious and hopeful at a time when Jewish life was being sucked out of the cities of Europe. Her personal story stands for that entire almost incomprehensible period, while the sheer extent of the deportations is gradually being lost to our collective memory. Anne Frank represents a vast number who are now out of reach, no longer visible, their very existence in many cases forgotten.

Historian Guus Luijters wants to give them back their identity. They lived, they had names, they were once cherished. Eighteen thousand children like Anne disappeared from the Netherlands, having been categorized as Jews, Roma or Sinti. *Children's Chronicle 1940-45* brings together descriptions of all kinds – witness statements, diaries, post cards and much more – of the lives of those lost children. The reader is introduced to everyday life in a time of absurdity, to the cities where children disappeared from their school classes and to camps in which ‘the babies

melted like snow’. Luijters gives us a sense of how it must have felt as a catastrophe approached that was too bewildering to be recognized as such.

Luijters introduces all the children he could find. John, for example, who escaped deportation by simply walking out of the line. He ‘kicked a stone down the road like an ordinary Amsterdammer’, hands in his pockets, until, rounding a corner, he was able to break into a run. His father had just said to him, ‘Remember, you must never be afraid in life.’ Then there was the toddler who wanted to board the train on which grandma was leaving, because trains were so marvellous, and tiny Michiel, born prematurely, laid in an incubator and given drops of cognac by the camp commandant, who grew stronger and ‘when he weighed six pounds was sent off on the forced-labour train’, and Berthe, who, along with the other children in Bergen-Belsen, ‘played with human bones, because there were no toys’.

Luijters has done his best to find out where and when each child died. To a small but important extent, *Children's Chronicle* restores their dignity simply by remembering them.

Guus Luijters is a historian, writer and poet. He is the editor of the anthologies *Modern French Poetry* (2001) and *Amsterdam: The city in poems* (2001), and the author of *Song of Stars* (2011) and *Empty City: collected memories 1943-1950* (2014). In 2012 he published *In Memoriam: The deported and murdered Jewish, Roma and Sinti children 1942-45* and the accompanying *Addendum*, which gives the names of all the 18,000 children who were murdered, and contains 3,700 photographs.

A monument of inestimable value and significance.
NRC Handelsblad

Publishing details

Kinderkroniek 1940-1945. Brieven, getuigenissen en dagboeken uit de Shoah (2013)
255 pp. (102,000 words)
With references
2,500 copies sold

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- History pays little attention to the fate of children, the greatest victims of any war. This book goes a long way towards filling that gap.
- Succeeds in placing personal experiences and the virtually abstract multitude side by side.
- Offers a vivid picture of everyday wartime reality seen through the eyes of children.

Photo: Eddy Posthuma de Boer

Alfred van Cleef

Lost World

A Bosnian family history

‘A scenery of destruction and human failing’, writes Alfred van Cleef about Republika Srpska, one of the two political entities that make up Bosnia and Herzegovina following the war in former Yugoslavia. For some twenty years the author was close to a Bosnian family from that region, and in *Lost World* he records their trials and tribulations.

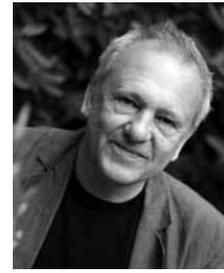
In 1993, Van Cleef met Hamdo Berberovic, a Bosnian refugee living in the Netherlands, who had survived three Serbian-led concentration camps, including the notorious Omarska. Van Cleef had in-depth conversations with him and with his brothers Senad and Hilmija, winning their trust. He is now able to describe their experiences through their eyes.

Lost World is an important book, not least because the author was involved with the family at its centre for so many years. What does enduring so many atrocities do to people? Can they ever find a new way forward? Why did the most pacifist member of the family stay in Bosnia to fight for the unity of his country? One of the most moving passages in the book begins when Hilmija’s wife, who has ended up in Sweden, gives the author a letter for her

husband. He takes it to the city of Travnik, where the situation is far from safe. ‘Always be aware what kind of country you’re in,’ he is told. ‘Here the kalashnikov talks.’ Nevertheless, Van Cleef manages to find Hilmija. The reader has already seen a great deal of killing and suffering and watched friends and colleagues imprison and mistreat each other. The humanity expressed in the letter brings home all the rising tension and profound emotions in the book.

Van Cleef is a journalist with the style of a literary author. ‘The snow-covered mountaintops refuse to acknowledge the war,’ he writes. He sees someone using a bullet hole as an ashtray and notices men on crutches in every village. In 2013 a survivor of the Omarska camp tells him that ‘a bad soul feels good amid evil’.

Even as the ashes of the war in Bosnia still smoulder, new ‘brother-shoots-brother wars’ are going on elsewhere. Readers of this book will see reports of those wars in a new light. *Lost World* is a universal story about the futility of war and the resilience of human beings. After great sacrifices – their father kills himself – the Berberovic brothers become successful immigrants in Sweden and the Netherlands.



Alfred van Cleef is a writer and journalist who for many years worked for *NRC Handelsblad*, including a stint as correspondent during the wars in the Balkans. His previous books include the novel *Longing* (2002) and *The Hidden Order. A journey of exploration along the prime meridian* (2010), which was chosen as the best travel story of the year in the Netherlands and won the German ITB Book Award 2013 as an outstanding travel book.

A relentless and overwhelming family saga.
De Volkskrant

An exciting and tragic true story, well written and told without excessive pathos or sentimentality.
NRC Handelsblad

Van Cleef reduces the war to painfully concrete proportions. An impressive account.
De Morgen

Publishing details

Verloren wereld. Een Bosnische familiegeschiedenis (2014)
336 pp. (105,240 words)
4,000 copies sold

Publisher

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– The descriptions are all the more harrowing because these matters are still unresolved.

– Based on oral history, this account straddles the borderline between journalism and literature.

Midas Dekkers

What a Relief

The delights of defecation

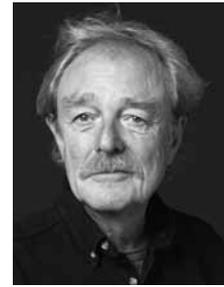
What is the biggest turd ever found? A dinosaur turd forty-five centimetres long. How long are a hippo's intestines? Fifty-five metres. What is a fart? A turd with all the shit scraped out. These and many more fascinating facts about bowel movements, metabolism and the intestines of humans and animals down the centuries are to be found in *What a Relief* by biologist Midas Dekkers.

Much attention is paid nowadays to cooking and eating, but very little to digestion and defecation. As was once true of sex, the biggest obstacle to talking about poo is the shortage of words that are neither vulgar nor medical. But just as sex is not merely for reproduction but for pleasure, shitting is a source of satisfaction. A book about poo may not sound particularly attractive, but Dekkers has managed to build an engaging cultural history around it. We can learn a great deal from this well-constructed discussion of the subject: about potty training, waste treatment, the importance of a high-fibre diet, the role of dung beetles

and dung flies and the collection of guano (bird poo).

The turd does not stand alone. Dekkers shows that it is part of a world in which everything is connected, and not only in a biological sense. He does so clearly and convincingly, holding his readers' attention throughout by regularly changing tone, zooming in and out, swiftly linking past and present, and providing examples and illustrative comparisons, such as his description of the digestive tract as an underground metro network with numerous tracks and stations.

A good deal of space is devoted to everyday events surrounding the evacuation of the bowels, including constipation and other discomforts such as piles, but Dekkers manages to give his study of poo a universal twist. Metabolism is crucial to life on earth and Dekkers places it not only in a Darwinian perspective but in a cosmic context. 'We are on earth to metabolize,' he writes. 'Metabolism is the source of the energy that keeps the world turning.' It is a humbling thought. 'Animals, plants, people: we are all playthings of the sun.'



Midas Dekkers is a bestselling author and biologist. Pieces on hundreds of animals were brought together in his *All Animals* (2010) and he has met with great acclaim, both at home and abroad, for the wonderful illustrated bestsellers *Dearest Pet* (1992), *The Way of All Flesh* (1997), *The Larva* (2002) and *Physical Exercise* (2006).

Dekkers is a good writer, an old-fashioned storyteller who can effortlessly hold the attention of a broad readership.
NRC Handelsblad

Midas Dekkers knows how to hit just the right note. Full of astonishment, always curious and completely devoid of conventional embarrassment.
De Volkskrant

In all his books Dekkers proves he commands a masterful style that is not just unique in biology but has no equal anywhere in Dutch literature. In *What a Relief* he proves once again that he wields a golden pen.
New Scientist

Publishing details

De kleine verlossing of de lust van ontlasten (2014)
256 pp. (96,400 words)
With illustrations in black-and-white and references
30,000 copies sold

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English (Michael Heyward).

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Photo: Annaleen Louwes



- Shows that we're not our brains, we're our guts.
- Pays a great deal of attention to sociological aspects of our bowel movements, while at the same time presenting a fascinating rundown of pooing and farting in world literature.
- With style, humour and expertise, Dekkers persuades us to change our perspective.

Martin Bossenbroek

The Boer War

The Boer War was a tragic colonial accident. Romantic books have been written about it, full of hatred for the *rooineks*, as well as academic standard works, but none has done justice to the hope and despair of all involved. Now historian Martin Bossenbroek has filled that gap with his prizewinning book.

In the two Boer Wars (1880-81 and 1899-1902), the mighty British Empire suffered more than a pinprick. Its wounds were inflicted at places with evocative names like Bronkhorstspuit, Majuba, Stormberg and Magersfontein, and not by a large standing army but by a bunch of farm boys. The British eventually beat the white Afrikaners, but not without losing their supposedly unassailable prestige to guerrilla fighters who looked like Old Testament characters. The Boers, by the end mostly women, children and old men in concentration camps, paid with their lives or health for their impertinence.

Bossenbroek tells a classic story of 'the struggle of a small people for self-preservation', using understatement and empa-

thizing with all parties, whatever their shortcomings. His success as a writer lies in his way of telling personal stories while not neglecting the bigger picture. Dutch involvement in the Boer War – the Boers were descended from courageous sixteenth-century Dutch settlers – is seen through the eyes of lawyer Willem Leyds, close colleague and confidant of 'uncle' Paul Kruger, president of the Transvaal. The description of the British experience is based on the account by young war reporter Winston Churchill, an occasional combatant himself, while the Boers are represented by a young fighter called Deneyts Reitz.

This was the first modern war, with trenches, guerrilla operations, media battles, and the tactics of mass murder and concentration camps. It sowed the seeds of one of the great colonial tragedies of the twentieth century: the apartheid system. The well-worn saying that war has no winners has rarely been made so credible and tangible as it is here, in a book that looks at the same hopeless war from three contrasting perspectives.



Martin Bossenbroek is an assistant professor at Utrecht University and the author of such classics of modern history as *Holland at its Broadest* (1996) and *Line of Flour* (2001). *The Boer War* won him the 2013 Libris History Prize and was shortlisted for the AKO Literature Prize.

We all know the outcome, yet the book remains thrilling for 600 pages. *Het Parool*

Bossenbroek proves himself a skilful storyteller. *De Volkskrant*

Publishing details

De Boerenoorlog (2012)
613 pp. (178,500 words)
With maps, notes and references
45,000 copies sold

Publisher

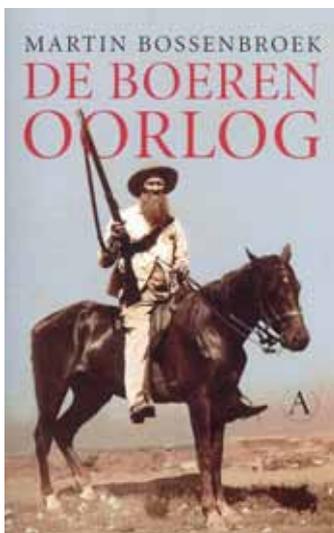
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English (Seven Stories) and
Afrikaans (Jacana).



- The way Bossenbroek makes use of a multitude of personal accounts lifts the book out of the genre of non-fiction to the highest literary level.
- Shows the Netherlands to be the missing link in the development of the conflict.

Maarten Asscher

Apples and Oranges

In praise of comparisons

In attempting to go straight to the heart of a matter, it helps if you simplify reality, or magnify some part of it. This is what Maarten Asscher does in his collection of personal essays *Apples and Oranges*, using the method of comparison to shed light on an array of subjects in the field of art, history and literature.

Set Telemachus next to Hamlet – two sons obliged to avenge their fathers' honour – and soon you'll be discussing willpower versus existential indecision. Compare Marcel Proust, who opted for the life of a hermit, with writers whose work emerged from behind prison walls and the nature of a writer's freedom becomes clear. Rather than sticking to whatever is topical, Asscher is guided by an insatiable historical curiosity and a continual awareness of contemporary concerns.

Themes that occupy him in particular are identity and morality. Asscher is intrigued by how writer and critic Anatole Broyard managed to conceal the fact that he was black even from his children. His outrage at a biographer who readily assumes Primo Levi committed suicide prompts a wonderful essay about the difference between suicide as a right and

suicide as a duty. He deals with thorny issues, but other discoveries and insights are no less valuable, such as that living next to the wrong sea can affect how you judge a book, or that Sigmund Freud based his psychoanalytical method on the work of archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann, who laid bare the history of Troy by delving through layer upon layer of remains.

Sometimes Asscher slackens the reins and uses comparison purely to express admiration, for instance for Paul Valéry's *Cahiers*, which are so far removed from the concept of the novel that they might almost be called a modernist alternative. Or for the way Delmore Schwartz describes his parents' marriage in the short story 'In Dreams Begin Responsibilities'.

Engaging in this kind of comparison means starting with the extraordinary and moving on to the universal. Asscher would like to see the same approach taken up by art historians; only specialists, he believes, can become authoritative generalists. Comparison is not an aim in itself but an analytical method and a means of sparking a debate. The insight to be derived from these inspiring and sometimes provocative essays is proof of the author's point.



- Surprising lines of approach and a graceful, elegant style.
- Sometimes lightfooted, sometimes melancholy, but always right on the mark.



Maarten Asscher trained as a lawyer, then became a writer and a publisher before turning to bookselling as director of the Athenaeum Bookshop in Amsterdam. He has published a collection of poetry, *Night Fodder* (2002), a novel called *The Hour and the Day* (2005) and a book about the Netherlands and its water, *H2Olland* (2009). Five of his books have appeared in German translation. He also translates poetry and has contributed columns to various newspapers.

With wit, intelligence and an admirable lightness of touch, Asscher juggles literature and politics, philosophy and religion, the present and the past, in an astonishing display of erudition and perspicacity, showing us common features and unexpected mirrorings. In *Apples and Oranges*, Asscher elevates the humble device of comparison to a high art form. Alberto Manguel

Its multiplicity of ideas, captivating details and anecdotes make this the perfect collection to quietly absorb and contemplate.

NRC Handelsblad

Publishing details

Appels en peren
Lof van de vergelijking (2013)
 224 pp. (60,200 words)
 With references
 2,000 copies sold

Publisher

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English (Four Winds).

For other translated titles by this author see our website www.letterenfonds.nl/translations/

Photo: Merlijn Doomernik

Hella S. Haasse

The Gardens of Bomarzo

A literary nonfiction classic

The Gardens of Bomarzo can be read both as a personal essay and as a study in cultural history, but above all it is a historical whodunit. Intrigued by the mysteries surrounding the Parco dei Mostri (Park of the Monsters) in the ancient Italian town of Bomarzo, Hella S. Haasse follows a trail that leads back to a nobleman of the sixteenth century who ordered twenty monsters to be sculpted in stone in his castle garden.

Orsino Orsini, illegitimate, deformed and one-eyed, whose wife was seduced by Pope Alexander VI, built a 'park of sex and violence' in order to 'reflect upon his hatred' – of the pope (a Borgia), of his unfaithful wife and of a world that refused to accept him. As Haasse attempts to interpret the symbolism of the park with its twenty monstrous statues, she takes us with her to the labyrinth of Knossos on Crete, the 'rituals and sun-worship of the dawn of history', to themes and motifs from epics by Ariosto and other Renaissance poets, and to the dynastic squabbles between the Borgia and Farnese families in around 1500.

Other writers and artists preceded Haasse in their obsession with the Sacro Bosco (Sacred Grove) at the foot of the

Orsini castle, its battling giants, enormous nymph, elephant, dragon, leaning house and huge head with wide-open mouth. Salvador Dalí was the most influential of them; the report of his visit to Bomarzo in 1948 prompted the rediscovery of the overgrown gardens. After him came writers including Mario Praz and Manuel Mujica Lainez, and artists Carel Willink and Niki de Saint Phalle. What makes Haasse different is that she was dissatisfied with existing theories. Why did Orsini, supposedly its creator, ask so many questions in his surviving letters about the figures to be found in his park? Why did he furnish the sculptures with inscriptions that suggest 'that he, astounded and perplexed, consulted others about those riddles'?

The Gardens of Bomarzo was a chance for Haasse to tell a gripping story about an 'embittered and obsessed' nobleman who, like a kind of Minotaur, sits lamenting his fate in a labyrinth of his own making – an alternative to the novel Haasse was initially intending to write. The fact that this book expands upon the central themes of Haasse's work – the suffering of the outsider and the complex relationship between men and women – makes it all the more intriguing.



Hella S. Haasse (1918-2011) is one of the most important Dutch authors of the twentieth century. Having found fame as the writer of historical novels such as *In a Dark Wood* *Wandering* (1949, translated into nine languages) and *The Scarlet City* (1952, seven languages), she is best known today for her labyrinthine books full of references to mythology and history.

Rarely has the essence of the Renaissance been described so concisely yet so revealingly. *De Volkskrant*

Publishing details

De tuinen van Bomarzo (1968)
148 pp. (41,000 words)
30,000 copies sold

Publisher

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www.querido.nl

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Translations

French (Seuil) and
Romanian (Meridiane).

For other translated titles by this author see our website www.letterenfonds.nl/translations/



- An account of a personal fascination by one of the Netherlands' most translated literary writers. A classic.
- Provides an unforgettable picture of the Renaissance, centred on the story behind the world-famous sculpture garden of Bomarzo.
- Combines the certainties of the novelist with the hesitancy of the essayist.

Jan Cleijne

Legends of the Tour

A graphic novel about the world's greatest race

No sport is so closely associated with heroism and suffering as cycling. No spectacle nourishes the romance of gruelling struggle quite like the Tour de France. Ideal material for a graphic novel, thought Jan Cleijne, who conceived a story in ten evocative stages.

'My work is all about life, silence, loneliness and desire, and I aim for a generally realistic and sketch-like style that gives prominence to atmosphere, light and colour.' That is how Cleijne has described his artistic project, and no one opening *Legends of the Tour* will be disappointed. He plays a subtle game with his palette. The sepia of old photographs dominates the earliest episodes, in 1903, then yellow is introduced (from the *maillot jaune*) and the book ends in the bright colours of advertising.

Cleijne, himself an amateur racing cyclist, focuses on the sporting successes of legends like Jacques Anquetil, Fausto

Coppi and Eddy Merckx, but this is no mere gallery of greats. *Legends of the Tour* shows the evolution of the sport from its naive beginnings – with competitors who stopped halfway for a beer – into today's monstrous money-making machine to which so much, if not everything, has been sacrificed, epitomized by Lance Armstrong's seven discredited victories.

How does Cleijne achieve this? He draws close-ups of suffering faces, of bent backs and tormented calf muscles, in a sketchy style that gives the images a fragile look, as vulnerable as the cyclists themselves. But he also has great imagination, seeing in the approaching pack a herd of raging bulls, or portraying the 'cannibal' Merckx as a titan ready to eat his teammates alive. We see the soul of Tom Simpson, who died on Mont Ventoux in 1967, blown from the mountain like a cloud of dust. Even the cult of excruciating effort can make a great graphic documentary.



Jan Cleijne began his career in 2001 by illustrating children's books and designing scenarios for *Donald Duck* magazine. He has since worked for a wide range of publishers, theatrical productions, media and museums. He is currently dividing his time between a cartoon-strip book about a man walking the Appalachian Trail, a web comic for production studio Submarine and a graphic novel called *Zuidas* with a script by Jantiene de Kroon.

What a fantastic book this is. Not only is it a wonderfully concise history of the Tour, its competitors' stoicism and skulduggery displayed to compelling effect, it is quite ravishing to behold.
The Guardian

Cleijne is at his best when he allows his imagination free rein in his drawings.
Het Parool

Publishing details

Helden van de Tour (2014)
144 pp. (6,800 words)
4,000 copies sold

Publisher

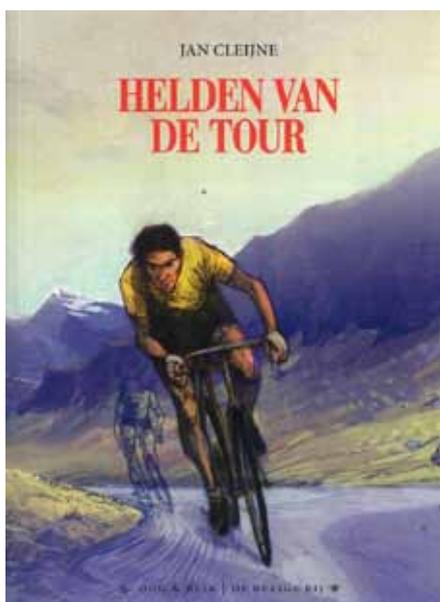
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Danish (Turbine), English (Head of Zeus), French (Paquet) and German (Covadonga).



- Filmic, evocative style; stunning drawings in an expressive range of colours that draw you in.
- Portrays sporting and personal highs and lows with an unfailing eye for detail.

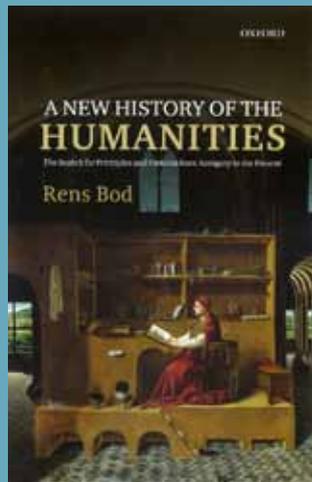
Recent Translations



André Aleman
Our Ageing Brain

Het seniorenbrein

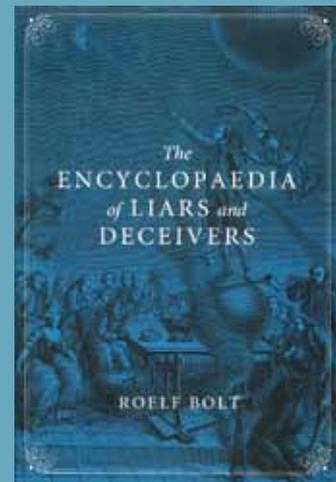
Published in German by Beck in 2013. Translated by Bärbel Jänicke and Marlene Müller-Haas. Also in English (Scribe), French (Autrement), Hungarian (Corvina) and Turkish (Alfa).



Rens Bod
A New History of the Humanities

De vergeten wetenschappen

Published in English by Oxford University Press in 2013. Translated by Lynne Richards. Also in Chinese (Peking University Press), Polish (Aletheia) and Ukrainian (Zhupansky).



Roelf Bolt
The Encyclopaedia of Liars and Deceivers

Leugenaars en vervalsers

Published in English by Reaktion Books in 2014. Translated by Andy Brown.



Douwe Draaisma
Disturbances of the Mind

Ontregelde geesten

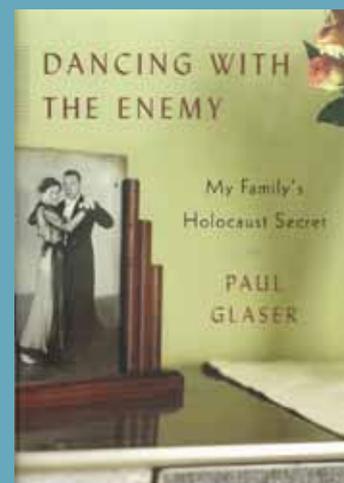
Published in Japanese by Kodansha in 2014. Translated by Sho Suzuki. Also in Arabic (Al Arabi), Chinese (Orient), English (Cambridge University Press), French (Seuil), German (Eichborn / Piper), Hungarian (Gondolat), Korean (Eco Livres), Polish (PIW), Spanish (Ariel) and Turkish (Yapi Kredi).



Desiderius Erasmus
Discourse on Free Will

De libero arbitrio

Published in Arabic by Sefsafa in 2014. Translated by Mohamed Atef Habib. Also in Spanish (Cuenco de plata) and other languages.



Paul Glaser
Dancing with the Enemy

Tante Roosje

Published in English by Nan A. Talese in 2013. Translated by Brian Doyle. Also in Czech (Triton), German (Aufbau), Italian (Bompiani), Portuguese (Rocco), Russian (Corpus) and Slovakian (Motyl).

Recent Translations



Vincent van Gogh
The Best of his Letters

De kunst van het woord. Zijn mooiste brieven

Published in Italian by Donzelli in 2013. Translated by Marianna Matullo and Laura Pignatti. Also in Arabic (Al Kotob Khan), English (Yale University Press), German (Beck), Japanese (Shincho-sha), Norwegian (Aschehoug) and Turkish (Yapi Kredi).



Jacob Israël de Haan
Palestine

Palestina

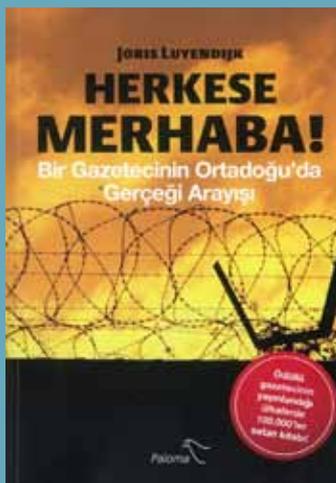
Published in French by André Versaille in 2013. Translated by Nathan Weinstock.



Johan Huizinga
The Task of Cultural History

De taak der cultuurgeschiedenis

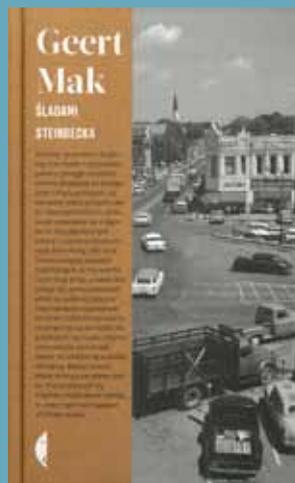
Published in Estonian by Tallinn University Press in 2013. Translated by Mati Serkel. Also in many other languages.



Joris Luyendijk
Hello Everybody!

Het zijn net mensen

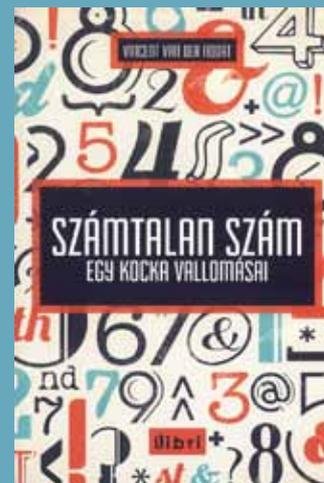
Published in Turkish by Paloma in 2013. Translated by Banu Erol. Also in Arabic (Arabic Scientific Publishers), Danish (Informations), English (Profile / Soft Skull / Scribe), French (Nevicata), German (Tropen), Hungarian (Nytott), Italian (Saggiatore), Japanese (Eiji), Korean (Across), Polish (Draga), Slovenian (Mladinska) and Spanish (Peninsula).



Geert Mak
In America

Reizen zonder John

Published in Polish by Czarne in 2014. Translated by Małgorzata Diederer-Woźniak. Also in Croatian (Durieux), Danish (Tiderne Skifter), English (Harvill Secker), German (Siedler) and Norwegian (Cappelen).

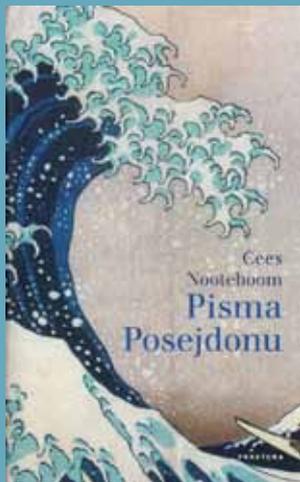


Vincent van der Noort
Numbers Are Your Best Friends

Getallen zijn je beste vrienden

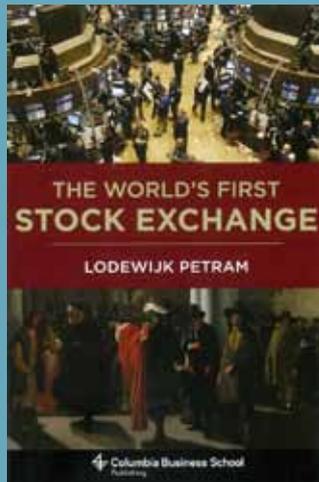
Published in Hungarian by Libri in 2013. Translated by Viktor Zákányi.

Recent Translations



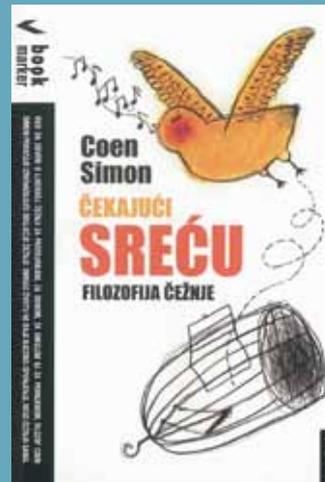
Cees Nootboom
Letters to Poseidon

Brieven aan Poseidon
Published in Croatian by Fraktura in 2014.
Translated by Radovan Lučić. Also in English (MacLehose) and German (Suhrkamp).



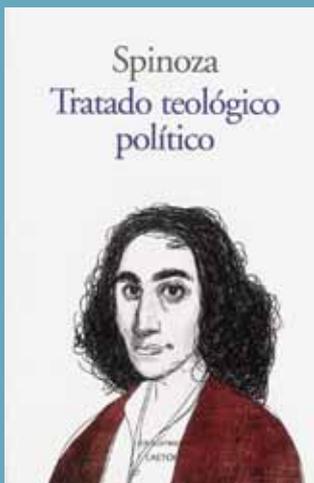
Lodewijk Petram
The World's First Stock Exchange

De bakermat van de beurs
Published in English by Columbia University Press in 2014. Translated by Lynne Richards. Also in Greek (Aiora).



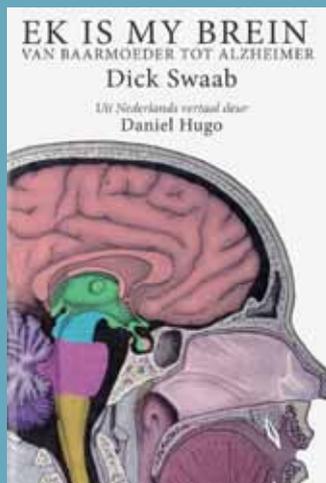
Coen Simon
Waiting for Happiness

Wachten op geluk
Published in Croatian by Ljevak in 2013.
Translated by Snježana Cimić. Also in German (WBG) and Spanish (Ariel).



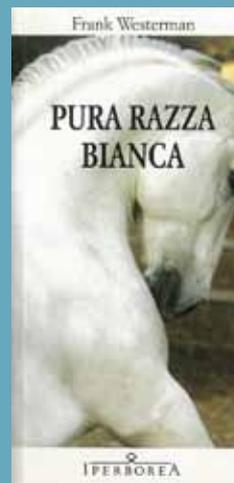
Baruch de Spinoza
A Theological-Political Treatise

Tractatus theologico-politicus
Published in Spanish by Laetoli in 2014.
Translated by José Luis Gil Aristu. Also in Albanian (Pika), Chinese (Horizon), Czech (Oikoymenh), Hungarian (Osiris) and other languages.



Dick Swaab
We Are Our Brains

Wij zijn ons brein
Published in Afrikaans by Protea in 2014.
Translated by Daniel Hugo. Also in Chinese (Cheers), English (Spiegel & Grau), German (Droemer), Hebrew (Zmora Kinneret), Hungarian (Libri), Italian (Elliot / Orme), Korean (Open Books), Russian (Limbakh), Serbian (Plato), Spanish (Plataforma), Taiwanese (Azoth) and Turkish (Arkadas).



Frank Westerman
Brother Mendel's Perfect Horse

Dier, bovendien
Published in Italian by Iperborea in 2013.
Translated by Cecilia Casamonti. Also in Croatian (Durieux), Czech (Host), English (Harvill Secker), German (Beck), Hungarian (Helikon), Polish (Czarne), Slovenian (Studentska) and Spanish (Siruela).

Rudi Westendorp
Growing Older Without
Growing Old

Anton Blok
The Innovators

Abram de Swaan
The Killing Compartments

Guus Luijters
Children's Chronicle, 1940-45

Alfred van Cleef
Lost World

Midas Dekkers
What a Relief

Martin Bossenbroek
The Boer War

Maarten Asscher
Apples and Oranges

Hella S. Haasse
The Gardens of Bomarzo

Jan Cleijne
Legends of the Tour

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