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From the editor / De la redaction / Van de redactie	i-iv
<i>Ton J. Broos</i>	1-13
Did Daniel Defoe do Dutch?	
<i>Mary Eggermont-Molenaar</i>	15-30
Over het beulszaard in het Rijksmuseum en de poëzie erop en eromheen. Een kwestie die opkwam bij onderzoek naar de geschiedenis van Huize Bijldorp en haar bewoners te Voorschoten	
<i>Michiel Horn</i>	31-37
Maarten 't Hart and music	
<i>Cornelius J. Jaenen</i>	39-47
Belgian immigrants and language issues on the Canadian prairies	
<i>Beert Verstraete</i>	49-64
The Destruction of Dresden in Kurt Vonnegut's <i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i> and Harry Mulisch's <i>Het Stenen Bruidsbed</i> ('The Stone Bridal Bed'): A Comparative Literary Study	
Reviews	
<i>Donna R. Barnes & Peter G. Rose</i>	65-68
<i>Childhood Pleasures: Dutch Children in the Seventeenth Century</i>	
Reviewed by <i>Elizabeth A. Galway</i>	
<i>David Koker</i> (edited by Robert Jan van Pelt, translated by Michiel Horn & John Irons)	69-77
<i>At the edge of the abyss. A concentration camp diary</i>	
Reviewed by <i>Hendrika Beaulieu</i>	

From the editor

Inge Genee

This issue of the *Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies / Revue canadienne d'études néerlandaises* contains the Proceedings of the CAANS-ACAEN meeting held at Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo, in Waterloo ON, on May 26-27, 2012. Five of the papers presented there were submitted for publication and can be found in these pages. Other presentations included: Gerrit Gerrits (Acadia University): 'The Modern Devotion in two historical novels'; Gus Dierick (University of Toronto): 'De anatomische les: Marsman's poetics anno 1926. With a sidelong glance at Coenen, Gorter, Emants and the Movement of Tachtig'; Christl Verduyn & Conny Steenman-Marcusse (Mount Allison University): 'Perspectives on 65 years of Dutch-Canadian relations'; and Wim Blockmans (Leiden University): 'De eeuwenoude transporteconomie van de Lage Landen.'

The five articles in this issue provide a nice overview of the breadth of Netherlandic studies in Canada, covering a range of authors, periods, geographical regions, and scholarly approaches. Ton Broos, Michiel Horn and Beert Verstraete tackle literary subjects in articles on Daniel Defoe, Maarten 't Hart, Kurt Vonnegut and Harry Mulisch. Mary Eggermont-Molenaar and Cornelius Jaenen discuss topics in Dutch and Belgian history.

Two independently submitted reviews by Hendrika Beaulieu and Elizabeth Galway touch on the Holocaust and on the treatment of Dutch children in the seventeenth century.

This issue was produced with in-kind support from the University of Lethbridge Journal Incubator (<http://www.uleth.ca/lib/incubator/>), a joint initiative of the University of Lethbridge School of Graduate Studies and University of Lethbridge Library. Editorial assistance for this issue was provided by Titilola Babalola.

Financial support was provided by the *Nederlandse Taalunie*, and by Dr. Nancy E. Wright, Executive Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Windsor.

De la Réaction

Inge Genee

Ce numéro de la *Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies / Revue canadienne d'études néerlandaises* contient les Actes de la réunion de CAANS/ACAEN tenue aux Universités Wilfrid Laurier et de Waterloo, à Waterloo (On), les 26 et 27 mai 2012. Cinq des communications qui y ont été faites nous ont été soumises et sont reproduites ici. En plus, on y a entendu : Gerrit Gerrits (Acadia University): 'The Modern Devotion in two historical novels'; Gus Dierick (University of Toronto): 'De anatomische les: Marsman's poetics anno 1926. With a sidelong glance at Coenen, Gorter, Emants and the Movement of Tachtig'; Christl Verduyn & Conny Steenman-Marcusse (Mount Allison University): 'Perspectives on 65 years of Dutch-Canadian relations'; and Wim Blockmans (Leiden University): 'De eeuwenoude transporteconomie van de Lage Landen.'

Les cinq articles de ce numéro offrent un bon aperçu de la largeur des études néerlandaises au Canada, de la variété des auteurs, époques et régions géographiques examinées et des approches savantes qu'on applique. Ton Broos, Michiel Horn et Beert Verstraete abordent des sujets littéraires dans leurs articles sur Daniel Defoe, Maarten 't Hart, Kurt Vonnegut et Harry Mulisch, tandis que Mary Eggermont-Molenaar et Cornelius Jaenen discutent des sujets dans l'histoire néerlandaise et belge.

Deux comptes rendus, soumis indépendamment par Hendrika Beaulieu et Elizabeth Galway, traitent respectivement de l'Holocauste et du traitement des enfants néerlandais aux dix-septième siècle.

Ce numéro a été produit avec l'aide pratique du Journal Incubator de l'Université de Lethbridge (<http://www.uleth.ca/lib/incubator/>), organisme conjoint de la School of Graduate Studies et de la bibliothèque de cette université. Titilola Babalola nous a fourni une aide technique précieuse. Des subventions généreuses nous ont été octroyées par la *Nederlandse Taalunie*, et par le docteur Nancy E. Wright, Executive Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences à l'Université de Windsor. Que tous trouvent ici nos remerciements chaleureux.

Van de redactie

Inge Genee

Dit nummer van *Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies / Revue canadienne d'études néerlandaises* bevat de Verhandelingen van de CAANS-ACAEN bijeenkomst die plaatsvond aan Wilfrid Laurier University en de University of Waterloo, in Waterloo, Ontario, op 26-27 mei 2012. Vijf van de lezingen die daar gegeven werden en die later door hun auteurs in artikelvorm werden aangeboden zijn hier opgenomen. De andere presentaties waren: Gerrit Gerrits (Acadia University): 'The Modern Devotion in two historical novels'; Gus Dierick (University of Toronto): 'De anatomische les: Marsman's poetics anno 1926. With a sidelong glance at Coenen, Gorter, Emants and the Movement of Tachtig'; Christl Verduyn & Conny Steenman-Marcusse (Mount Allison University): 'Perspectives on 65 years of Dutch-Canadian relations'; en Wim Blockmans (Leiden University): 'De eeuwenoude transporteconomie van de Lage Landen.'

De vijf artikelen in dit nummer geven een goed overzicht van de breedte van de neerlandistiek in Canada, en behandelen diverse auteurs, periodes, geografische regio's, en benaderingen. Ton Broos, Michiel Horn en Beert Verstraete behandelen literaire aspecten van het werk van de schrijvers Daniel Defoe, Maarten 't Hart, Kurt Vonnegut en Harry Mulisch. De bijdragen van Mary Eggermont-Molenaar en Cornelius Jaenen hebben onderwerpen op geschiedkundig gebied.

Twee onafhankelijk aangeboden recensies van Hendrika Beaulieu en Elizabeth Galway gaan over boeken met als onderwerp de Holocaust en de behandeling van kinderen in het zeventiende eeuwse Nederland.

Dit nummer is tot stand gekomen met assistentie van de University of Lethbridge Journal Incubator (<http://www.uleth.ca/lib/incubator/>), een gezamenlijk initiatief van de University of Lethbridge School of Graduate Studies en de University of Lethbridge Library. De redactie-assistent was Titilola Balalola.

Financiële ondersteuning werd verstrekt door de *Nederlandse Taalunie* en door Nancy E. Wright, Executive Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Windsor.



Delegates at the Annual CAANS-ACAEN meeting in Waterloo, ON, 26-27 May 2012. From left to right: Wim Blockmans, Marianne Verheyen, Tanja Collet, Mary Eggermont-Molenaar, Geeske de Laat, Willemina Seywerd, Michiel Horn, Beert Verstraete, Gus Dierick, Jacqueline Wesselius, Dirk Smit, Basil Kingstone, Ton Broos. Photo Inge Genee.

Did Daniel Defoe do Dutch?

Ton J. Broos

When Dutch King William III started his Glorious Revolution and took over the English Throne, one of his admirers was the now world famous writer Daniel Defoe, author of *Robinson Crusoe* and many other literary works, from pamphlets to novels. In his biography one often finds reference to Holland or the Low Countries, the Dutch and even the Dutch language. Claims are made that he learned the Dutch language and travelled to Holland. However, evidence of this is hard to come by. In 1701, he published *The True-Born Englishman* in defense of William III, to counter xenophobic attacks. How deep was Defoe's interest in Dutch culture?

American Lucius L. Hubbard, collector of imaginary travelogues, found in a curious work entitled *The Mighty Kingdom of Krinke Kesmes* a precursor of *Robinson Crusoe*, which was published eleven years later in 1719. Closer inspection does not prove Hubbard's claim of Defoe's plagiarism. There is no evidence that Defoe could read Dutch, although we do find a few Dutch books in his library. Besides, many travelogues, fictitious or not, can be pointed out as examples of a widening horizon in the minds of writers and publishers. Defoe's description of pirates is considered, as well as his novels *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*. There might be references to Holland and the Dutch, but there is no overwhelming evidence that he read or translated from Dutch sources for his works. His political leanings were favouring William III and after the king's early death he followed the politics of the Low Countries usually in matters of trade and certainly preferring the protestant cause.

Key terms: Daniel Defoe; King William III; Krinke Kesmes; Lucius L. Hubbard; Imaginary Voyages.

On November 1, 1688 there was a strong wind from the east in the English Channel.¹ This favoured the Dutch fleet, which was carrying William III from Hellevoetsluis to Torbay, where he was to land and take over the English throne.

¹ This article is a revised version of a paper given at the annual CAANS-ACAEN meeting in Waterloo on May 27, 2012.

He brought fifty-three warships, ten fireships and about four hundred other vessels to transport troops, supplies and horses. The entire taskforce was four times the size of the Spanish Armada. "The army was made up of 10,692 regular infantry and 3,660 regular cavalry, plus gunners of the artillery train and five thousand gentleman volunteers – expatriate Englishmen, Huguenots and other sympathisers. On top of this there were 9,142 crew members and a further ten thousand men on board the transport vessels" (Jardine 2008, 8). There were 7,000 horses and the fleet "carried a mobile smithy for shoeing horses and repairing weapons, ten thousand pairs of spare boots, a printing press and a large quantity of printing paper" (Jardine 2008, 8).

Jardine's vivid description adds that the press was immediately set to work and "[a] hastily written eyewitness account was rushed into print and distributed throughout the area" (2008, 16). William, on his white horse, made a fantastic spectacle, with many gentlemen in armour and even "two hundred blacks brought from the sugar plantations of the Netherlands in America (Surinam), all dressed in white, turbaned and feathered" (Jardine 2008, 16). They successfully marched to London, thus establishing King William III as the victor in this Glorious Revolution, the triumph of Protestantism over Catholicism. "The Dutch invasion of 1688 was a brilliantly stage-managed sequence of events, forever vivid in the memory of those who witnessed them", writes Jardine (2008, 26). She does not mention that one of those witnesses is a now world famous author. His name was Daniel Defoe.

Daniel Defoe (1660[?]-1731) was an English journalist, poet, novelist, spy and merchant (Backscheider 1989; Booksfactory n.d.; Britain UnLimited n.d.; Jokinen 2007; Richetti 2005). He was bankrupt four times, placed in the pillory for sedition, and is often credited with inventing the modern novel. The son of a Puritan tallow chandler named James Foe, Defoe was a prolific author. He published over 560 books and pamphlets and is considered to be the founder of British journalism. As a very young boy he must have witnessed the plague year in London in 1666 and Michiel de Ruyter and the Dutch fleet sailing up to Chatham to defeat the English on their own territory.

Thirteen-year old Daniel was not admitted to either Oxford or Cambridge Universities as his father did not take an oath of loyalty to the Church of England. He was sent to the excellent Dissident academy at Newington Green, administrated by Reverend Charles Morton. From him, Defoe learned a great deal as the standard of Morton's teaching was almost parallel to that of any English University. Scholars agree that Defoe's literary style was based on Morton's clarity, simplicity and ease in writing. Along with his study in classics, he learnt Latin and Greek as well as Spanish, French, Dutch and Italian. This, in fact, helped him in his career as a pamphleteer and a writer.

The assumption about his language skills of the anonymous author of one of the many websites (Booksfactory 2013) makes one curious: How does he/she know that Defoe learned Dutch? Other sources speak of him knowing Dutch also, but what do we know? Where is the proof? How can we find out? We have no contemporary written proof that he wrote Dutch, like we have of James Boswell, who studied Dutch in Utrecht in 1764, and left us with some interesting examples (Barfoot & Bostoen 1994).² Of course most foreign noblemen or noble women did not speak Dutch nor tried to, because even the Dutch nobility preferred French, and most scholars conversed in Latin. But then again, Daniel Defoe was not a nobleman.

Defoe established a business of his own in 1683 when he started a firm dealing in the export of wine, tobacco, and hosiery. A few years later, we see him dealing in civet cats and pantiles. Biographer Paula Backscheider makes an interesting observation:

Defoe's knowledge of pantiles and civet cats suggests that he may have gone to Holland for a short business trip at least, but the numbers of Dissenters educated there and of English merchants who regularly visited the continent confuse the issue. Even had he been in Holland, Defoe probably would have had to hire a Dutch foreman or overseer.

(Backscheider 1989, 64)

Others have him travelling for business to Holland also, even in exile in Rotterdam after the Monmouth rebellion, speculating that he met the established Scottish community there (Richetti 2005, 10). However, I am not aware of any evidence of his stay in the Low Countries.

That same year 1683 was the beginning of his political pamphleteering, which he combined with his commercial enterprising: "His publishing record indicates that he had also invested heavily in the political fortunes of William III" (Schonhorn 1972, xii). According to his biographer Richetti, the dynastic shift from James II to William of Orange was the most important political moment in Defoe's life. Not only did Defoe ride out to greet William III when he landed at Brigham on November 5, 1668, he also took part in the ceremonies in London that welcomed the new king on October 29, 1689 on Lord Mayor's Day. As journalist John Oldmixon eyewitnessed: "Among these Troopers, who were for the most part Dissenters, was Daniel Foe, at that time a Hosier in Freeman's Yard, Cornhill" (Backscheider 1989, 47). He became the champion of William III's cause, "whose memory he continued to revere all his life in his writing" (Richetti

² See Barfoot & Bostoen (1994) for some amusing Boswell quotes in Dutch. Backscheider (1989, 15) does mention that Morton taught "modern languages" but does not specify Dutch as one of them. It is not impossible.

2005, 12). Although Defoe was clearly a supporter of the king and his policies, Richetti states that whether Defoe was actually an intimate counselor of William's is "like so much else in his life uncertain" (Richetti 2005, 13). Still, he wrote more than a dozen tracts supporting his foreign policy. Defoe's second most popular work, the January 1701 poem *The True-Born Englishman* (Defoe 1703),³ was written in defense of William III, to counter what he saw as "the pernicious slanders and xenophobic attack" in the Whig journalist John Tutchin's poem *The Foreigners* (Richetti 2005, 12). It said much about his tolerance, as he confronted the opponents of the monarch, who attacked Dutch William III for employing foreigners and being a foreigner himself.

This country is full of stereotypes, says Defoe: for instance: "Rage rules the Portuguese and Fraud the Scotch, / Revenge the Pole and Avarice the Dutch" (Defoe 1703, 188). He continues in a long litany and scolds his countrymen thus:

These are the heroes that despise the Dutch,
And rail at new-come foreigners so much,
Forgetting that themselves are all derived
From the most scoundrel race that ever lived;
A horrid crowd of rambling thieves and drones,
Who ransacked kingdoms and dispeopled towns,
The Pict and painted Briton, treacherous Scot,
By hunger, theft, and rapine hither brought;
Norwegian pirates, buccaneering Danes,
Whose red-haired offspring everywhere remains,
Who, joined with Norman-French, compound the breed
From whence your true-born Englishmen proceed.

(Defoe 1703, 191)

Although we have heard often about the Dutch being great consumers of alcohol, which probably stemmed from the same anti-Dutch sentiment of the Dutch uncle and double-Dutch variety, Defoe has a counter attack by saying:

An Englishman will fairly drink as much
As will maintain two families of Dutch

(Defoe 1703, 198)

And in another quote he is unambiguous about whose side he supports:

William's the name that's spoke by every tongue,

³ There are many versions, editions and websites with the complete text, but the one from Luminarium (Jokinen 2007) seems to be the most extensive. Although the first edition is dated 1701, I used the more extended version of 1703 given on this website.

William's the darling subject of my song.

(Defoe 1703, 210)

The main objective is clear already from his introduction:

But when I see the town full of lampoons and invectives against Dutchmen only because they are foreigners, and the King reproached and insulted by insolent pedants, and ballad-making poets for employing foreigners, and for being a foreigner himself, I confess myself moved by it to remind our nation of their own original, thereby to let them see what a banter is put upon ourselves in it, since, speaking of Englishmen ab origine, we are really all foreigners ourselves.

(Defoe 1703, 178)

And:

but to disown our descent from them, talking big of our ancient families, and long originals, and stand at a distance from foreigners, like the enthusiast in religion, with a "Stand off; I am more holy than thou!"—this is a thing so ridiculous in a nation, derived from foreigners as we are, that I could not but attack them as I have done.

(Defoe 1703, 179)

It is tempting to quote much more from this pamphlet and apply it to today's political discourse in many countries, but that leads us away from our subject. Let me just quote Defoe's last line: "personal virtue only makes us great" (Defoe 1703, 218). The pamphlet had ten reprints in the same year, it had a Dutch translation by Jacob Campo Weyerman in 1720,⁴ and remains one of the most popular of Defoe's many works, second only to *Robinson Crusoe*. This last work of course gave him everlasting fame, but by the time *Crusoe* appeared in 1719, his hero William III had already died in 1702.

How deep was Defoe's interest in Dutch? Did he read Dutch? Yes, said Lucius L. Hubbard, a regent at the University of Michigan, lawyer, geologist and collector of imaginary travelogues, such as *Gulliver*, *Robinson Crusoe* and many others. With an interest in German and Dutch originals, he purchased a curious Dutch book in 1920. The title, translated into English, reads: *The Description of the Mighty Kingdom of Krinke Kesmes. Discovered by Mister Juan de Posos and from his Writings Compiled by H. Smeeks 1708*.

⁴ A very free selection was published in Weyerman's *Rotterdamsche Hermes* nos. 13-17 in 1720, analyzed and republished by Broos (1983).



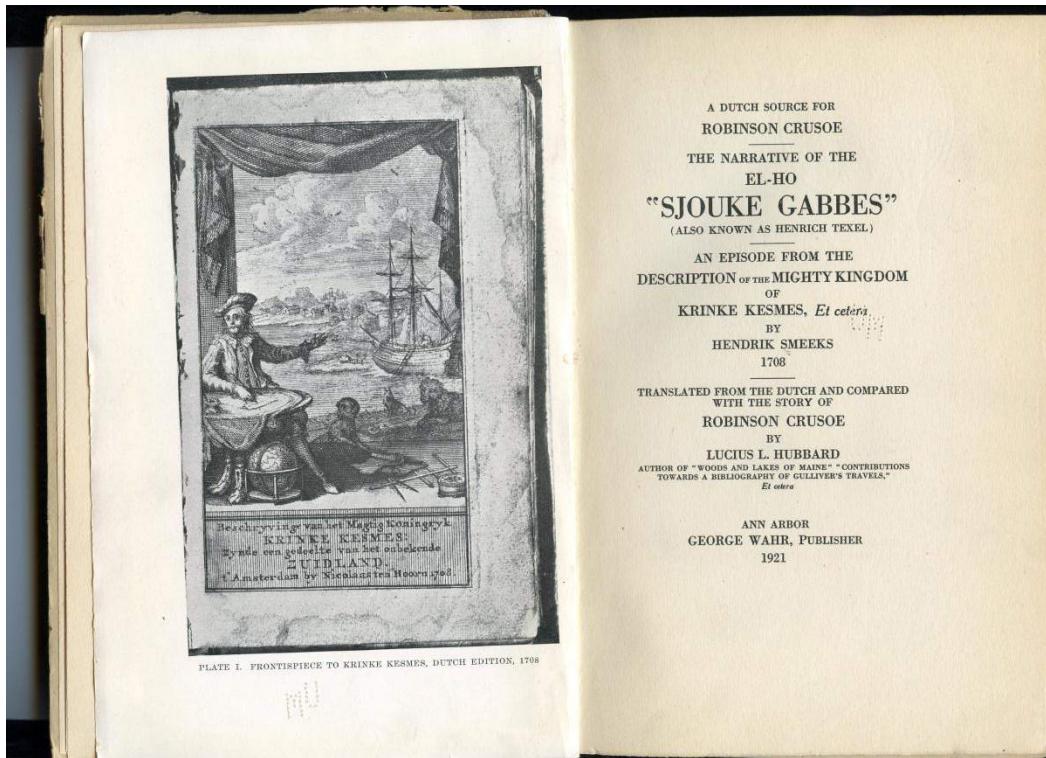
Title page. H. Smeeks. 1732. BESCHRYVINGE Van het Magtig Koningryk KRINKE KESMES. Etc.
Reprinted with permission, Hubbard Collection of Imaginary Voyages, Special Collections Library,
University of Michigan, Hubbard PT 5679 .S8 B5 1732.

Krinke Kesmes is an anagram of the writer Henrik Smeeks and this work was considered by Hubbard and others to be the source for Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.



Frontispice. H. Smeeks. 1708. Beschryvinge van het Magtig Koningryk KRINKE KESMES: Zynde een gedeelte van het onbekende ZUIDLAND. Reprinted with permission, Hubbard Collection of Imaginary Voyages, Special Collections Library, University of Michigan, Hubbard PT 5679 .S8 B5.

Hubbard's extensive investigation led him to publish in 1921 a work called: *A Dutch source for Robinson Crusoe. The Narrative of the El-Ho "Sjouke Gabbes" (also known as Henrich Texel). An Episode from the Description of the Mighty Kingdom of Krinke Kesmes, Et cetera, by Hendrik Smeeks, 1708. Translated from the Dutch and compared with the story of Robinson Crusoe.*



Title page. *Lucius L. Hubbard. 1921. A Dutch Source for Robinson Crusoe etc. Ann Arbor, MI: George Wahr. Reprinted with permission, Hubbard Collection of Imaginary Voyages, Special Collections Library, University of Michigan, Hubbard PT 5679 .S8 B51 1921.*

One strong argument seemed to be that the Dutch book was published in 1708, eleven years before *Robinson Crusoe*, and could be called the oldest European desert island story. It is “a hybrid work, a mixture of novel, imaginary travel story, and utopian vision, permeated with the Enlightenment ideals of freedom, equality, and fraternity” (Hermans 2009, 330). This characterization differs from Defoe’s work and we have to limit our textual comparison to fragments. Hubbard set about to translate a part of the story, in which a young boy, whom he calls Sjouke Gabbes, is stranded on a desert island. The Dutch boy goes through the routine of finding shelter, shooting birds and looking for fresh water. Hubbard finds passages that could be linked and interpreted, but do not follow the story line: “On the way I thought I saw a mast behind a dune, with its top sticking out above. I thought also that I saw footprints, but these again disappeared” (Hubbard 1921, 16-17) compares to the following fragments from *Robinson Crusoe*: “and looking out to Sea in hopes of seeing a ship” and: “I was exceedingly surpriz’d with the Print of a Man’s naked Foot on the Shore” (Hubbard 1921, 16-17).

One could question Hubbard’s familiarity with 18th century Dutch: he puts “[sic]” after “*quam*” (Hubbard 1921, 166) and “*ontrent*” (Hubbard 1921,

163) although both are correct spellings for the Dutch words *kwam* ‘came’ and *omtrent* ‘around’. More examples can be given and nowhere are there paragraphs or sentences that are verbatim translations to prove plagiarism. A man on an island is bound to look for water, food and shelter, and this is also described in other stories published at the time. Scholars like Staverman, Ullrich, Secord, and Buijnsters have refuted Hubbard’s arguments and nowadays it is not really a serious consideration (Broos 1992, 19).

A strong case against Hubbard is also the fact that he was unable to prove that Defoe could read Dutch. The fortunate result of Hubbard’s interests is that we possess in Ann Arbor at the university of Michigan some 140 early Dutch travelogues and four editions of *Krinke Kesmes*, including the only extant 1732 edition. The special collections library is very proud of its Hubbard collection of Imaginary Voyages.

This would be the end of the matter, until Australian author David Fausett published *The Strange Surprizing Sources of Robinson Crusoe* in 1994. He claims that Smeeks’ story “textually seems to be a direct precursor to, and probably model for, that of Defoe” (Fausset 1994, 97). Fausett rightly points to the extensive Dutch maritime activity, especially in the Australian waters, and he is correct that Dutch sources are always overlooked. However, he forgets that there are other stories in similar vein preceding Smeeks’ – one can think of Henry Neville’s *The Isle of Pines* (London 1668), Gabriel de Foigny’s *La Terre Australe Connue* (Geneva 1676), and Denis de Vairasse’s *Historie der Sevarambes* (Amsterdam 1701). Travel literature followed the mood in the age of discovery and went in all kinds of directions, including fantasies in theology and philosophy, and desert islands regarded as utopia or dystopia (Broos et al. 1992).

Defoe was a product of his time. He loved a good adventure and the last sentence on Robinson Crusoe’s title page says that he was “delivered by Pirates”. This gives me a bridge to a publication attributed to Defoe: *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the most notorious Pyrates*, published 1724.⁵ One of his sources was a Dutch work called *De Americaensche Zee-roovers* ‘The American Sea-robbers’ by A. O. Exquemelin. Exquemelin was a French Huguenot, who had sailed from France to the West-Indies. Unfortunately for him (perhaps not for his patients), he had to leave again because he was a self-made and not a

⁵ There remains discussion about the authenticity of Defoe’s authorship in favor of Nathaniel Mist. Defoe occasionally wrote for his weekly Mist’ Journal. Editor Schonhorn follows John Robert Moore, who argued that Captain Charles Johnson is Defoe’s pen name, based on style and ideas and interests. Defoe-specialist Paula Backscheider includes the work in her bibliography of works by or attributed to Defoe p. 620. She writes that Defoe published extensively on crime and criminals and “[a]t first most of his serious attention went to pirates, for they discouraged trade and colonization” (Backscheider page 477).

registered surgeon. In Amsterdam he succeeded in the medical profession, but also as a storyteller of his adventures and encounters with pirates. This was food for a keen publisher called Jan ten Hoorn, who just happened also to have Krinke Kesmes in his fund of popular books. This led some researchers to the idea that Exquemelin was a corruption of ‘Enrique Smeex’. We now know that these are two different people, although both were surgeons, a profession that seems to generate storytellers.⁶

There are no indications or references that Defoe ever met them, or was acquainted with them. Did he read their books? Not likely in Dutch, but there seems to be little doubt that this prolific writer with an inquisitive mind as a journalist, as a visitor to Newgate goal, who knew sailors like Alexander Selkirk, must have come across the appealing stories about pirates and privateers. Defoe’s collection of pirates has no Dutch examples and he has a reason for this:

I have not so much as heard of a Dutch Pyrate: It is not that I take them to be honester than their Neighbours; (...) The Reason I take to be, that after a War, when the Dutch ships are laid up, they have a Fishery, where their Seamen find immediate Business.

(Schonhorn 1972, 5)

Is there anything Dutch in Robinson Crusoe? Not much, although we find several references to the Low Countries, starting with the description of his own life on the first page: “I had two elder brothers, one of whom was lieutenant-colonel to an English regiment of foot in Flanders, formerly commanded by the famous Colonel Lockhart, and was killed at the battle near Dunkirk against the Spaniards” (Ross 1974, 27). He refers to the Battle of the Dunes of 1658 and William Lockhart (1621-75) who at the age of 13 had joined the Dutch army, before his English career. No other references bring Holland, the Low Countries or Dutch connections to life in his most famous novel.

Neither is there any evidence that Defoe plagiarized or ‘borrowed’ from the Dutch *Krinke Kesmes* via another language. A translation into German was not published until after *Robinson Crusoe*, in 1721, as *Der Hollaendische Robinson Crusoe*, proving that the name Robinson appealed to readers and had become a publisher’s dream title (Buijnsters 1975, 60-61).⁷ Was he able to read the far from easy Dutch text? We might find an indication in his book collection. There happens to be a catalogue of the combined libraries of Daniel Defoe and a

⁶ H.de la Fontaine Verwey published about Exquemelin (De la Fontaine Verwey 1976, 171-191) and Buijnsters after dismissing Defoe’s plagiarism, also rejects the Exquemelin theory, originated by Hoogewerff (Buijnsters 1975, 56).

⁷ Titles like De Haagsche Robinson, De Walchersche Robinson and De Gevallen van den jonge en oude Robinson are just a few examples of Dutch ‘robinsonades’ published in the 18th century.

Phillips Farewell (Heidenreich 1970). With the uncertainty of ownership in mind, we do find a few publications in Dutch: the Dutch-English dictionary by famous Dutch Quaker and historian William Sewel, published in 1691, an old and new testament, a book on Amsterdam's business ventures, the well-known painters' biographies by Houbraken (1718), and a *Historie der Sevarambes* by D.Vairasse d'Allais (1701), an utopian novel. The skepticism of the catalogue's editor is obvious when he states:

There has been some speculation on whether Greek, Dutch, German, Spanish or Portuguese were among the languages he knew (...) On survey, one finds in this collection a considerable number of books in Spanish, but few written in Dutch or German and only one in Portuguese. (...) his atrocious way of spelling names and words of other languages too, shows that he can have had no more than just a smattering of these. Even so, as a linguist, he probably compared fairly well with most of his contemporaries.

(Heidenreich 1970, XXVI)

Lastly, for other Dutch inspirations, we could consider a Defoe novel of 1724 called *Roxana, the fortunate Mistress*, in fact a 'fallen woman', who travels all over Europe and after meeting a sympathetic Dutch merchant, especially to Holland. She becomes a merchant in jewelry, lives in The Hague, but dies in debtor's prison, albeit a good Christian, in Amsterdam (Defoe 1982). This adventurous or picaresque novel of sorts is another example of Defoe's friendly attitude towards the Dutch. Likewise, in 1722 he wrote a wonderful story of the then famous *Moll Flanders*, who, according to the title page,

was born in Newgate, and during a Life of continued Variety for threescore Years, besides her childhood, was twelve year a whore, five times a wife (whereof once to her own brother), twelve year a thief, eight year a transported felon in Virginia, at last grew rich, lived honest and died a penitent.

(Kelly 1973, 1)

The straightforwardness and bawdy details of the title page could well have been Dutch. Her story was translated into Dutch in 1752 as *De Levensgevallen en Bedryven van Vlaamsche Mie* (1752).

So, to answer the question of my title: did Daniel Defoe "do Dutch"? The answer is: yes and no. His interest in politics seems clearly on the side of Dutch king William III. After the king's death, he stays on his political line. In later years, an occasional pamphlet may be more critical towards a Dutch political move, often regarding trade, while definitely supporting a protestant cause. It is

certainly not unrealistic to suppose that he travelled to the Low Countries for business, although scholarly biographers are less certain about this than the more superficial websites.

There is only very slim and circumstantial evidence that Defoe read Dutch. His education contained ‘modern languages’ which could include Dutch, but however flattering it might be for the Dutch, I do not think this likely. The intriguing story of Krinke Kesmes has a desert island fragment, but this remains too vague and unspecific to stand out as unique among other examples of similar stories that were known internationally. It does not compare stylistically, and I do not think that a stylometric comparison will change this outcome. While Robinson Crusoe has been studied and dissected in innumerable ways, *Krinke Kesmes* has only more recently been brought to light among Dutch and a few international scholars. To quote the author of *Krinke Kesmes*, (after Gracian): “Whoever discovers, will be Master” (Fausset 1995, 95).

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Ton Broos studied Dutch Language and Literature at the universities of Amsterdam and Nijmegen. He taught Dutch at Sheffield University (UK) and was until recently Director of Dutch Studies at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, USA. He has published on Jacob Campo Weyerman's *Biographies of Painters* and other 18th century Dutch literary subjects. Other publications include Anne Frank's literary interests, and translations of the medieval plays *Elckerlyc* and *Mariken van Nieumegen*.

Over het beulszwaard in het Rijksmuseum en de poëzie erop en eromheen

**Een kwestie die opkwam bij onderzoek naar de geschiedenis
van Huize Bijdorp en haar bewoners te Voorschoten**

Mary Eggermont-Molenaar

In het Rijksmuseum in zaal 2.5 is een beulszwaard tentoongesteld waarin een versje is gegraveerd gericht aan “De Schuldeuze Helt, rampzalige Oldenbarneveldt”. Volgens de bijbehorende uitleg gaat “de herkomstgeschiedenis van dit moordtuig [...] niet verder terug dan de 18e eeuw”. Onderzoek naar vroegere bewoners van het pand dat rond 1900 uitgroeide tot het enorme kloostercomplex Huize Bijdorp bracht ons op het spoor van dichter/glasgraveur Frans Greenwood, die dit zwaard in de jaren 1743/’45 in zijn bezit had. Hij liet er zijn eigen gedicht op graveren, schreef een gedicht in een album en nodigde zijn dichtersvrienden uit er ook een gedicht in te zetten. Dat gebeurde, maar vervolgens was er sprake van een wonderbaarlijke vermenigvuldiging van dit album. Lambrechtsens *Aantekeningen* uit 1801 in de Zeeuwse Bibliotheek werpen hier licht op. Een brief uit 1743 aan Greenwood van Maximiliaan van Berchem, echtgenoot van Greenwoods nichtje Francina, brengt de herkomstgeschiedenis van dit zwaard mogelijk verder terug in de tijd. Een mededeling in *Kronijk van het Historisch Genootschap te Utrecht* van 1849 linkt Greenwood met de “anonieme particulier” die zwaard en album in 1878 aan het Nederlandsch, nu Rijksmuseum, te Amsterdam schonk.

Key terms: Beulszwaard; Rijksmuseum; Huize Bijdorp; Ridder Jacob Oem van Wijngaarden; Frans Greenwood; Johan van Oldenbarneveldt; N.C. Lambrechtsen.

Inleiding

In juli 2011 kwamen acht voormalige meisjes bij elkaar die in 1963 voor hun eindexamen aan de Middelbare Meisjesschool te Huize Bijdorp in Voorschoten waren geslaagd. De wijn en de gerookte zalm van die middag leidden tot beschouwingen over de levenspaden die wij, en in sommige gevallen onze

ouders, voor ons hadden uitgestippeld, de zijpaden die we hadden bewandeld en plannen voor een reünie in juni 2013 (die inmiddels tot grote tevredenheid van alle deelnemers op 19 juni plaatsvond).¹

De middag in juli 2011 riep later ook vragen voor me op over het schooltype dat we hadden doorlopen en de totstandkoming van het enorme kloostercomplex, Huize Bijdorp, waarin we onze opleiding hadden genoten. Was dat altijd een klooster geweest en zonet, hoe was dat complex begonnen en wie hadden er gewoond?

Onderzoek naar het leven van de voormalige eigenaren van het pand waaruit Huize Bijdorp voortsprong bracht me onder andere ook op het spoor van Oldenbarneveldt, het zwaard waarmee hij op 13 mei 1619 onthoofd zou zijn en bijbehorende poëzie.

Ridder Jacob Oem van Wijngaarden, eigenaar van ca. 1566 tot aan 1604 van ‘huyse Lipsen’ – waarbij de hoeve hoorde die tot Huize Bijdorp zou uitgroeien – had in zijn laatste wil Van Oldenbarneveldt benoemd tot executeur-testamentair. Maximiliaan van Berchem, schoonzoon van François Greenwood, eigenaar van Bijdorp in de jaren 1716 tot 1730, erfde het zwaard van zijn grootvader en had het verkocht aan dichter/graveur Frans Greenwood, neef van François (Smit 1988, 66).

Het betreffende zwaard waarin enige dichtregels zijn gegraveerd is sinds de verbouwing van het Rijksmuseum te vinden in zaal 2.5. Het bijbehorende bordje met uitleg luidt:

Beulszaard waarmee Oldenbarneveldt zou zijn onthoofd
Nederland, 1600-1625

IJzer

Een beulszaard is dit zeker, maar of met dit zwaard Johan van Oldenbarneveldt werd onthoofd, valt zeer te betwijfelen. De herkomstgeschiedenis van dit moordtuig gaat niet verder terug dan de 18e eeuw. Omstreeks 1745 was het in het bezit van de dichter Frans Greenwood. Deze liet er waarschijnlijk zijn eigen dichtregels in graveren, gericht aan “De Schuldeuze Helt, rampzalige Oldenbarneveldt.”

Schenking van een particulier, 1878

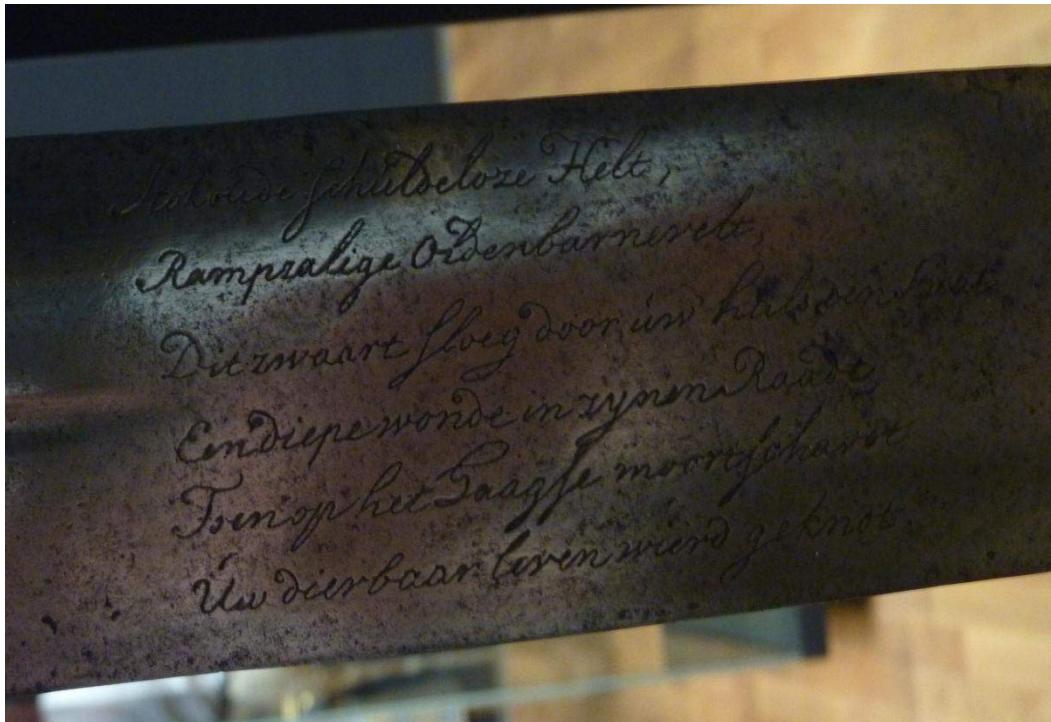
NG-NM-4245

De dichtregels luiden:

Stokoude Schuldeuze Helt
Rampzalige Oldenbarneveldt

¹ Dit artikel is gebaseerd op een voordracht gehouden op 27 mei 2012 tijdens de CAANS conferentie aan de University of Waterloo.

Dit Zwaert sloeg door uw Hals den Staat
 Een diepe Wonde in zijnen Raad
 Toen op het Haagse moortschavot
 Uw dierbaar leven wierd geknot



Beulszaard, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Foto Mary Eggermont-Molenaar.

In dit artikel volgen enige beschouwingen over de herkomstgeschiedenis van dit "beulszaard" en de poëzie erop en eromheen.

In den beginne

Om tot hoeve-eigenaar Jacob Oem van Wijngaarden te geraken moeten we eerst terug naar het begin van Huize Bijdorp, ooit een boerenhoeve die hoorde bij *huyse Lipsen*.

Voordat een *huyse* gebouwd kan worden moet er grond zijn. In 1326 kocht Trude Hoogstraat-van Leyden ongeveer 25 morgen leengrond verdeeld over zeven stukken.² Eén van die stukken grond lag aan de Heerweg (nu Veursegweg) in Voorschoten. In 1373 erfde Dirk Hoogstraat deze lap grond van

² Zie: http://www.janvanhout.nl/pat/pat_fam/pat_1210-94.htm. Een morgen is een stuk grond (8516 m²) dat in een ochtend beploegd kan worden. Leengrond betekende dat men de vruchten van het land kon plukken, maar daar tegenover stonden verplichtingen.

grootmoeder Trude. In 1499 verkocht achterkleinzoon Dirk Hoogstraat van Lipsen deze grond, waarop inmiddels *huyse Lipsen* was verrezen, aan Jacob Oem van Wijngaarden.³ In 1566 woonde kleinzoon Jacob Oem van Wijngaarden er met vrouw en twee kinderen (Kolff 1966, 119 e.v.).

Ridder Jacob Oem van Wijngaarden

Jacob was één van de tweehonderd edelen die het smeekschrift hadden ondertekend waarin Margaretha van Parma (1522-1586) werd gevraagd de inquisitie op te heffen en de zogenoemde plakkaten (verordeningen om de godsdiensthervormingen tegen te gaan) te verzachten. Hij was een geheide geus over wiens activiteiten rechters van de Raad van Beroerten zich in 1567 diep hebben gebogen.⁴ Net als veel van Jacobs medegeuzen werd ook hij voor een tijdje verbannen, maar dan zien we hem weer opduiken in Gouda waar onaangenaamheden plaatsvonden in de zomer van 1575:

Zijn knechten vertrokken zich naa der Goude, daar de Heer van Wyngaarden hen geirne zouw ontfangen hebben. Maar de burghery, die 't anders verstand, stoof op, en dreighd' hem te lyf. Dies werd het hem [Jacob Florisz. Oem van Wijngaarden] daar te bang; en zond de Prins, tot Steêvoogdt in zyn' plaats, Heer Adriaan van Zweeten, die de zelfte stad, oover drie jaar had ingenomen.

(Hooft 1977, 432)

Politiek gezien was Jacob's leven niet rustig en ook thuis, in *huyse Ter Lips*, waar hij tot zijn dood in 1604 woonde, was er geregeld het nodige gaande. Van Leeuwen (1685, 1040) schrijft over de familie dat Jacob eerst getrouwd was met Hessel Mular, daarna met Johanna van Nyvelt en ten slotte met Helena van Swartenburg. Van de drie zoons die hij bij zijn eerste vrouw had stierven er twee op het slagveld en één tijdens een duel in Rome met een neef van een kardinaal.

In 1603 ontbood Jacob een paar advocaten om zijn laatste wil op te tekenen; Johan van Oldenbarneveldt werd hierin tot executeur-testamentair benoemd. Een anonieme auteur verwoordt dit gedeelte uit Jacobs testament als volgt:

³ Zie: <http://www.gemeentearchief.denhaag.nl/websitemhga/haagseelite/hal-h.htm>.

⁴ Zie: <http://members.home.nl/m.tettero/Tetterode/Duivenvoorde.htm>. Kolff (1966, noot 1) verwijst naar inventarisnummer 115 van het archief van de Raad van Beroerten in Brussel, waarin verhoren betreffende de gebeurtenissen in Voorschoten, ofwel het *Sommier recueil* is opgenomen. Op fol. 176 daarvan wordt Van Wijngaarden genoemd en op fol. 178 Van Duivenvoorde. Zie ook: Van der Aa (1867, 33).

Tot “executeurs syner uterste wille” ordonneerde onze erflater “den Ed. Achtb. Mr. Johan van Oldenbarneveldt, Advocaet van ‘t gemeen lant van Hollant; Leonard Casembroot, Raedt ordinaries v.d. Hove v. Hollant, ende Dirck Herweijer, Advocaet voor den voorsch. Hove willende dat alle syne goede nae syn overlyden by hem luyden geaanvaard en verblyven sullen” [...].

(“V.D.N.” 1854, 130)

Dat Oem van Wijngaarden Van Oldenbarneveldt aanwees als executeur-testamentair is niet verbazingwekkend; de heren kenden elkaar van vergaderingen van de Staten van Holland en Westfriesland.

In 1604 stierf Oem van Wijngaarden. Zijn oudste dochter erfde *huyse Lipsen*; de jongste dochter Maria, getrouwde met de Friese militair Joachim Rengers, erfde de daarbij behorende hoeve die vanaf die tijd juridisch gezien een onafhankelijk bestaan ging leiden en later tot kloostercomplex Huize Bijdorp uitgroeide.

Van hoeve tot buitenplaats

In 1634 werd de hoeve, nu bekend als *Rengerswoning*, door zoon Willem Rengers verkocht aan de Leidse advocaat Gerard Meerman (1593-1638). Diens tweede zoon Maarten woonde er en daarna kleinzoon Gerard Fransz. Meerman (1650-1710), zoon van Meermans oudste zoon Johan. Na in 1696 de *Rengerswoning*, nu aangeduid als “hofstede”, eerst verpand te hebben aan de heren Ghijs werd deze op 2 maart 1697 verkocht aan Johan de Bije (1649-1715) en diens tweede echtgenote Anna Oorthoorn.⁵

Johan de Bije en zijn vrouw woonden er maar drie jaar. Anna stierf in het kraambed; het dochtertje dat er werd geboren leefde maar twee jaar. In 1716 werd François Greenwood (Yorkshire 1679-?) de volgende eigenaar.⁶

De Greenwoods

In *Frans Greenwood (1680-1763), Dutch poet & Glass Engraver* weidt Smit (1988) ook een flinke sectie aan de neef van deze dichter/graveur, François Greenwood, eigenaar van de hofstede – die toen nog niet Bijdorp heette – van 1716 tot 1730.

Neef François was eerst directeur van Black Creek, een van de 171 suikerplantages die Suriname rond 1715 telde. Daar in Suriname ontmoette hij zijn Franse echtgenote, Maria Anna Lavaux. In 1717 werden hij en zijn echtgenote verblijd met de geboorte van een dochter, Maria Anna Francina. Zij zou

⁵ Koopoverdracht dd. 2 maart 1697 R 16/35. Regionaal Archief Leiden.

⁶ Koopoverdracht dd. 7 mei 1716 R 17/67. Regionaal Archief Leiden.

trouwen met Maximiliaan van Berchem die rond 1721 raad en vroedschap te Brielle was (Smit 1988, 59-63).

Echtgenote Maria Anna Lavaux stierf in 1728, waarna François hertrouwde met Jacoba Elisabet Ghijs. In 1735 werden hij en zijn tweede echtgenote verblijd met een dochter Adriana Anna Maria. Ter gelegenheid van haar vijftiende verjaardag maakte oudoom dichter en glasgraveur Frans Greenwood een mooi gedicht voor haar, ‘*Birthday of Adriana Anna Maria Greenwood*,’ dat opgenomen is in zijn *Vervolg van F. Greenwoods Gedichten en Boere-Pinxkstervreugt* (Smit 1988, 83).

Smit (1988) over het verleden van het zwaard

Smit (1988) gaat uitgebreid in op de inhoud van Greenwoods dichtbundels *Gedichten* (1719), *Boere-Pinxster-vreugt* (1733) en *Vervolg op Gedichten* (1760). Het zijn herderszangen, bruiloft-, verjaar-, lijk- en mengeldichten. Greenwoods meest publieke gedicht, dat is gegraveerd in het zwaard waarmee – naar men wist rond 1743 – Johan van Oldenbarneveldt werd onthoofd, is in deze dichtbundels niet te vinden. Over hoe dichter/graveur Greenwood aan het zwaard kwam schrijft Smit:

He [Greenwood] also collected such curiosities as the sword which was supposed to have been used to decapitate old Johan van Oldenbarneveldt in 's-Gravenhage on 13 May, 1619. Frans obtained this sword from Maximiliaan van Berchem – husband of Francina Greenwood who was a daughter of cousin Frans [François] – living at Brielle. Greenwood having asked him about the provenance of the sword, van Berchem wrote to him from Brielle on 12 September, 1743: “Concerning your enquiry about the sword in question: it came from Colonel Steenhuizen, my grandfather, who – as a collector of antiquities – once bought from the estate of a burgomaster in 's-Gravenhage whose name my father cannot remember, various items including some weaponry among which was this sword. The inclusion of the sword in the sale must have been a mistake, or was based on carelessness, because a few days after my grandfather had bought the goods, the heirs of the deceased burgomaster requested thereby even offering great sums – the return of the sword in question which according to them, had been used to behead van Oldenbarneveldt. This is all that I learned today from my father general Major van Berchem. Cousin Greenwood, all evidence points to its genuineness.”⁷ (Smit 1988, 66)

⁷ Kononel Steenhuizen, Van Berchems grootvader, was generaal-majoor en kolonel van een regiment infanterie in dienst van de Republiek. Hij woonde in Brielle en was getrouwd met Agnis van Treslong. Maximiliaans vader was Jacob van Berchem, generaal-majoor en kolonel van een regiment infanterie in dienst van de Republiek, ook wonende te Brielle. Zie

Smit (1988) over Greenwoods poëzie op en om het zwaard

Greenwood had het zwaard waarmee Oldenbarneveld onthoofd zou zijn verworven en "wrote a poem on the evil sword in 1743" (Smit 1988, 79).⁸

Daarna nodigde hij zijn dichtersvrienden uit er ook een gedicht in te schrijven. Vanaf 1743 deed het album een ronde die begon in Dordrecht om via Heenvliet, Vlaardingen, Rotterdam, Amsterdam en 's-Gravenhage in 1745 aan hem geretourneerd te worden.

Op twee na betreurden alle contribuanten de dodelijke rol die het zwaard had gespeeld in de handen van duivelse mannen, schrijft Smit. Hij vervolgt dat er na het introducerende gedicht van Greenwood het volgende staat, in hetzelfde handschrift als dat van de lijst van contribuanten:

Mr. Herman Franciscus Ketelanus and Dr Jan Willem van Steenbergen each has clandestinely torn out his own verse. Then follows a poem by P. C. van Steenbergen née de Court (perhaps thee wife of J.W. van Steenbergen) entitled "in reply to the verse of Mr H. F. Ketelanus on preceding p. 2" which alludes to opposite political views.

(Smit 1988, 80)

Smit gaat door over de brief van 17 maart 1745 die het album bij terugkomst in Dordrecht begeleidde. Deze is van Arnold Hoogvliet, één van de contribuanten. Hij meldt onder andere dat de heren Feitama en de Marre geen bijdrage hadden geleverd, hoewel ze wel over de materie hadden gedicht, maar dat was misschien "because one had discovered that all poems had in the meantime been copied by one of the contributors" (Smit 1988, 80).

Hoogvliet zegt dan toe te proberen deze gecopieerde verzen te achterhalen en te zullen zorgen dat de rest van diefstal gevrijwaard blijft.

Smit (1988, 81) noteert dat er inderdaad een handschrift aanwezig is, in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek, met elf gedichten, van Hoogvliet, de Haes, Smits, van der Pot, Huydecoper, de Bosch, Willink, Hartsen, Stamhorst, Pater en de Haen de Jonge – allemaal in hetzelfde handschrift, maar niet in dat van één van de contribuanten. (Volgens Hoogvliet had een van de contribuanten het gecopieerd.)

<http://www.archieven.nl/nl/dbmstart=16&mivast=0&mizig=236&miadt=126&miaet=54&micode=110-1051&milang=nl&misort=last>. Smit geeft niet aan waar hij deze brief vond en in welke taal hij was geschreven. Ik neem aan in het Rijksmuseum en dat deze in het Hollands van die tijd gesteld was en acht het daarom beter om dit stuk onvertaald te laten. Een poging om Smit te bereiken om toestemming te vragen voor dit lange citaat heeft vooralsnog geen succes gehad.

⁸ Eerder schrijft Smit echter dat het te betwijfelen valt of Greenwood ooit op een koperen plaat etste of graveerde (1988: 66). Misschien dat Greenwood zijn eigen vers in het zwaard liet graveren, dit terzijde.

Smit citeert vervolgens de twee introducerende verzen (terwijl hij het eerder over één introducerend vers heeft). Het eerste is getiteld “*Toewijning [sic] aan Nederland*”, en luidt:

Wie anders wyde ik zangen
 dan u, o Nederland? geheng
 Dat ik ze u onder d'oogen breng
 En laat ze het geluk erlangen
 Bestraalt ze te worden met uw gunst,
 Dewyl ze alleen aan u behooren
 Van Dichters in uw' kreits gebooren,
 en echte zoonen van de Kunst.
 De stoffe moet u niet mishagen,
 Het voorwerp hunner poëzy,
 Ze zingen onbeschroomt en vrij
 Hoe welk uw vryheit kwam belagen
 Toen fier Gewelt nam d'overhant,
 en d'allerwenschelykste Vader
 Des Vaderlants als een verrader
 Uit bittren wrok geraakte aan kant.
 Gy zaagt, o Neerlant, voor uwe oogen
 Dat wrede en droevig schou spel aan,
 De zon der vryheit ondergaan
 en met een' dikken mist omtogen,
 Het moortschavot tentoongestelt,
 De onnozelheit by 't hooft gegrepen,
 Het Heilloos zwaart op 't scherpst geslepen
 Voor eedlen Oldenbarneveldt,
 en zijn' gryze en zilvre hairen
 Bepurpert met onschuldig bloet.
 Wat kan de strydt wanneer ze woedt:
~~Zee-rein zee zuiver van gemoet~~
~~rampzaligheen-en~~
~~Wat kan de Nydt al onwil baren!~~
 Een Ilias van rampen baren.
 Men zegt dat op dien droeven dag,
 Toen ge op 't schavot hem zaagt gedragen,
 De zon haar' loop scheen te vertragen
 En deinsde op 't nadren van den slag
 die 't waerig hooft van 't lichaam scheidde
 Het hooft, dat knaging en verdriet
 In zyne Rechters overliet
 toen elk zyn' val te laat beschreide.
 't Onzaglyk doch onschuldig staal,

In mijn bewaring opgesloten,
 Waar 't dierbaar bloet door is vergooten,
 Noch diergeleyk, moet andermaal
 Geen staatsman door 't Gewelt doen sneven.
 Beschermt dat onwaerdeerbaar pant,
 De Vryheit, roemryk Nederlant,
 Op dat ze ons nimmer mag begeven.

Het tweede gedicht luidt:

Op het zwaart dat Johan van Oldenbarneveld den hals doorkervde.

Stokoude Staatsman, vrome Heldt,
 Onschuldige Oldenbarneveld,
 Dit zwaart sloeg door uw' hals den Staat
 een diepe wonde in zynen Raadt,
 Toen op het haagse moortschavot
 Den boom uw's levens wierd geknot.

Als bron voor deze gegevens geeft Smit op:

Anonymous [various authors] – 1743-1745 – Album met gedichten op het zwaard waarmede Johan van Oldenbarnveld onthoofd is te 's-Gravenhage op 13 Mei 1619 – MS 32 sheets [Rijksmuseum Amsterdam].

(Smit 1988, 100)

Desgevraagd hoorde ik dat men in het Rijksmuseum met een dergelijk album niet bekend is.⁹

1745: Handschrift te Den Haag

De elf zonder toestemming gecopieerde gedichten, Handschrift 135 D-2 in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek te Den Haag, beginnen met het korte introducerende gedicht *Op het zwaart dat Johan van Oldenbarneveld den Hals doorkervde*. Alle gedichten van hierboven genoemde dichters staan inderdaad in hetzelfde handschrift.

In Den Haag werd ik vriendelijk gewezen op Handschrift 3343 in de Zeeuwse Bibliotheek te Middelburg en een “aantekening” getiteld “Nopens het zwaard, waarmede de hr. Johan van Oldenbarneld is onthoofd in den hage, 13

⁹ Email 12 juli 2013, van Marja Stijkel, coördinator studiezaal Prentenkabinet/Bibliotheek, Rijksmuseum.

mei". Het is gedateerd 13 januari 1801 en van de hand van N.C. Lambrechtsen van Ritthem (1752-1823).¹⁰

1801: Handschrift te Middelburg

Het "Zeeuwse" handschrift begint met Greenwoods korte introducerende vers, *Stokoude Staatsman*, mist de gedichten van Ketelanus en Van Steenbergen die er volgens Smits clandestien uitgescheurd waren en telt 34 gedichten. De folder met Lambrechtsens aantekeningen (HS 3916) bevat op losse vellen copieën van het gedicht *Toewijding* (zonder de drie doorgestreepte regels, zie p. XX) en de lijst contribuanten die in het originele album aan de gedichten voorafgaat. Onder deze lijst schrijft Lambrechtsen: "Meest alle Gedichten zijn in de zelfde smaak als het eerste van den Heer Frans Greenwood, en zijn geschreven met de eigenheid der Makers."

Lambrechtsen vermeldt ook de brieven van Maximiliaan van Berchem (12 september 1743) en die van Hoogvliet (17 maart 1745) aan Frans Greenwood. En hij schrijft dat hij het gedicht *Stokoude Staatsman, vrome held* gelezen had "op een oud zwaard, eigendom van oud-burgemeester O. Gevaerts te Dordrecht, die had het van zijn grootvader zonder een proeve van echtheid."

De gedichten in het 34-gedichten tellende album dat zich in de Zeeuwse Bibliotheek bevindt, vertonen hetzelfde handschrift als de copieën van het gedicht *Toewijding* en de lijst contribuanten. Het ziet ernaar uit dat Lambrechtsen het originele album (46 gedichten) heeft gecopieerd – en het losse gedicht *Toewijding* – maar er na 34 gedichten genoeg van had, of niet genoeg tijd meer had.¹¹

1849: Zwaard en handschrift te Utrecht

De geschiedenis van het zwaard en de poëzie erop en eromheen loopt door in een tekst van De Muralt (1818-1889) in de *Kronijk van het Historisch Gezelschap van 1849 te Utrecht*. Hierin wordt het zwaard als volgt beschreven:

¹⁰ Met dank aan Ad Leerintveld, Conservator Namiddeleeuwse Handschriften van de Koninklijke Bibliotheek te Den Haag voor verwijzing naar nog een album met gedichten en aantekeningen daarover in de Zeeuwse Bibliotheek te Middelburg. Voor N.C. Lambrechtsen zie Mulder (1918).

¹¹ Met veel dank aan Liesbeth van der Geest, conservator Bijzondere Collecties van de Zeeuwse Bibliotheek te Middelburg voor haar hulp met het zoeken naar de status van het Zeeuwse album. Volgens haar was Lambrechtsen een zeer actief lid van het Zeeuws Genootschap van Wetenschappen, iemand die vaak en veel dingen overschreef en er alles voor over had dat zaken bewaard bleven.

Het geheel zwaard met het gevest is lang 1,104 Ned. el. De breedte van het lemmet bij het gevest is 0,074. Op het lemmet is het volgende vers gegraveerd:

Stokoude schuldelooze Helt,
Rampzalige Oldenbarneveld,
Dit zwaart sloeg door uw hals den staat
een diepe wonde in zijnen Raadt,
Toen op het haagse moortschavot
Uw dierbaar leven wierd beknot.

Bij dit zwaard is een album bevattende een aantal verzen daarop toepasselijk. In dit album staat het vers, hetwelk op het zwaard gevonden wordt, met de volgende veranderingen:

Stokoude Staatsman, vrome Heldt,
Onschuldige Oldenbarneveld.

De volgende drie regels zijn dezelfde als die op het zwaard, doch de laatste luidt:

De boom uws levens wierd geknot.

Het is ondertekend door Frans Greenwood.

Op het lemmet zijn verscheidene bloedvlekken. Het gevest is bekleed met zwart, denkelijk zwart fluweel, door den tijd zeer versleten.

Berusstte het zwaard bij de familie Gevaerts te Dordrecht en werd de grootvader van ‘den heer Gevaerts van Nuland’ er door koop eigenaar van.

Het behoort in het gemeen aan de kinderen en het kinds kind van wijlen den heer Gevaerts van Geervliet. Men is niet ongenegen, dit gedenkstuk met het daarbij behoorende album, waarin een aantal verzen, op het zwaard vervaardigd, worden aangetroffen, te verkoopen, indien daarvoor de som van f 500-- wordt aangeboden. De bij deze opgave gevoegde aftekening van het zwaard wordt gesteld in handen der commissie.

(De Muralt 1849, 440-1)

Tot zover De Muralt. Het zwaard, voor de verbouwing van het Rijksmuseum voor de kist van Hugo de Groot balancerend op haar stompe punt tentoongesteld (zie foto), is daar nu te zien in zaal 2.5, opgehangen in een glazen vitrine. Het lijkt wel of het schuldig is verklaard en zijn straf uithangt. Eigenlijk zou het originele album met de zwaardonvriendelijke gedichten, een soort *album inimicorum*, ook in die vitrine moeten liggen, maar het album is momenteel zoek.

1878: Zwaard en album naar hun laatste rustplaats?

Uit bovengeciteerde brief van 12 september 1743 van Van Berchem aan Greenwood weten we dat Van Berchems grootvader Kolonel Steenhuizen het zwaard kocht uit de nalatenschap van een burgemeester uit Den Haag wiens naam hij zich niet meer kon herinneren. Maximiliaan van Berchem, schoonzoon dus van Bijdorp-eigenaar François Greenwood, zal het van zijn grootvader Van Steenhuizen geërfd hebben. Frans Greenwood verkreeg/kocht het zwaard van Van Berchem, echtgenoot van zijn nicht Francina.

Daarna “berustte het zwaard bij de familie Gevaerts te Dordrecht” (De Muralt 1849, 441). Die familie zal hoogstwaarschijnlijk familie van Frans Gevaerts zijn geweest. Net als Greenwood was ook Frans Gevaerts lid van het *Schilder Collegie*. Onder *Toerbeurte van het Schilder Collegie* (de vergaderschema’s van 1743/1744 en 1745/1746 van het Sint Lukas Broederschap, Dordrecht) staan de namen Ketelanus, Van Ouryck, Brouwer, Belaerts, Meerervoort, De Bruin, Hallincg, Gevaerts, Greenwood (Smit 1988, 68, 69).

Dit *collegie* was in 1641 opgericht maar na vijftig jaar zo goed als uitgeblust. In 1716 richtte Johan Diederik Pompe van Meerervoort een nieuwe kunstkring op, waarop het *collegie*



herrees als een herenpraatclub die om de veertien dagen op vrijdag van vijf tot half negen bij leden thuis werd gehouden. De conversatie diende te gaan over schilder-, druk- en tekenkunst; wie voor acht uur of na half negen wegging moest drie stuivers betalen en voor zes stuivers mocht men vrienden introduceren (Smit 1988, 68, 69).

De naam Gevaerts komt ook een paar maal voor in *Vervolg van F. Greenwoods Gedichten en Boere-Pinxkstervreugt*:

VII 1749: Wedding of Jakob van der Heim & Maria Gevaerts (C 161);
 3. X 1751: Wedding of Paulus Gevaerts * Suzanna Adriana Beelaerts (C 169)

(Smit 1988, 83)

Het huwelijk van Paulus Gevaerts Vrijheer van Gansenoyen (1732-1770) met Suzanna Beelaerts was zijn vierde huwelijk.¹² Gevaerts trouwde in 1727 eerst met M.A. Stoop, maar zij stierf al na zes jaar.¹³ Daarna huwde hij Alida Vivier in datzelfde jaar 1733. Met haar had hij een zoon, maar zij stierf al in 1735. Daarna trouwde hij nog met Suzanne Catharina Albinus-Weiss Von Weissenlöw (1703-1741) en in 1751 met Suzanna Adriana Beelaerts, maar hier gaan we verder met de zoon die Paulus Gevaerts had met Alida Vivien.¹⁴

Dat was Ocker Gevaerts Simonshaven en Biert, Heer van Geervliet (1735-1807) gehuwd met Hendrika Françoise Braet (1745-1777) en later met Catharina Dekker (1752-1798).¹⁵ De zoon van dit echtpaar, Paulus Gevaerts van Geervliet, heer van Geervliet, Simonshaven en Biert (1763- 1836) trouwde met Wilhelmina Cornelia van Hoorn.¹⁶

Terug naar De Muralt, volgens wie het zwaard “behoort in het gemeen aan de kinderen en het kindskind van wijlen de heer Gevaerts van Geervliet” (De Muralt 1849, 441). Dat was Jonkheer Paulus Ocker Hendrik Gevaerts van Simonshaven, Biert en St.-Maartensrecht (Molenvliet bij Batavia 1827-1912), echtgenoot van Margaretha Catharina Gevers Deynoot (1859-1933): hofmaarschalk van de eerste echtgenote van Koning Willem III, Koningin Sophia (1818-1877), en vanaf 1895 wethouder te Den Haag (Hamer 2011, 188).

Het ziet ernaar uit dat Jonkheer Paulus Ocker Hendrik zwaard met album voor 500 gulden van de hand had willen doen. Misschien dat niemand het

¹² Paulus was een zoon van Ocker Johansz. Gevaerts (1656-1727) en Maria Arnoudina van Briel (1663-1701).

¹³ Over het huwelijk met Stoop, zie Balm en Boezeman (2006: 17).

¹⁴ Zie: <http://www.genealogieonline.nl/en/west-europese-adel/l46097.php>.

¹⁵ Zie: http://www.werelate.org/wiki/Person:Ocker_Gevaerts_%283%29.

¹⁶ Zie: <http://site.d66.nl/9359000/1/j9vvicemqk6gvi0/vg09lluqpqwqb>.

zwaard wilde hebben voor zoveel geld of vanwege het bloed dat geacht werd eraan te kleven.

Janssen schrijft dat Gevaerts van Simonshavens verbondenheid met het huis van Oranje het voor de jonkheer lastig maakte “openlijk te koop te lopen met zijn unieke, maar bedenkelijke bezit” (2006). Hij voegt hieraan toe dat Gevaerts schaamtegevoelens exemplarisch waren voor de krampachtige manier waarop in Nederland met de zaak Oldenbarneveldt is omgegaan. Dat was waarschijnlijk de reden dat Gevaerts van Simonshaven pas na de dood van koningin Sophia afstand van dat het zwaard deed. In 1878 schonk P.O.H. Gevaerts van Simonshaven het, waarschijnlijk met het album, via een acte van overdracht aan het “Nederlandsch Museum (nu het Rijksmuseum)” (Janssen 2006).

En nu hangt het zwaard daar als schenking van een particulier en wordt het onder nummer S-NG-NM-4245-00 beschreven als:

een ijzeren tweehandig slagzwaard met een kling van 7.5 cm breed bij de pareerstang, aan het uiteinde versmallend tot 6 cm om daarna in een stompe punt te eindigen. Achter de greep een dubbele knop.

Volgens de tekst bij het zwaard in de vitrine in zaal 2.5 valt het zeer te betwijfelen of Oldenbarneveldt hiermee werd onthoofd. De brief van Maximiliaan van Berchem aan Greenwood brengt de herkomstgeschiedenis verder terug in de tijd. Er blijven vragen: over de vindplaats van de brieven van Van Berchem en Hoogvliet (Rijksmuseum?) en de identiteit van de burgemeester uit wiens nalatenschap het per abuis werd verkocht. Mocht het album inderdaad kwijt zijn, dan hebben we dankzij de copieerlust van de heer Lambrechtsen in ieder geval nog een goed deel van de gedichten in Middelburg.

Een aantal van de gedichten in de Haagse en Zeeuwse copieën begint met titels als “Op het Zwaard dat Johan van Oldenbarnelt onthoofd of onthalst zou hebben, thans in bewaring van den Heer Frans Greenwood”. Wat maakt dat momenteel wel aan de authenticiteit getwijfeld wordt weet ik niet (omdat er geen proeve van echtheid bij het zwaard werd gegeven?) maar wat de achttiende eeuwse dichters betreft kan het zwaard meer bogen op een rucht dan op een roemrijke voorgeschiedenis.

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Over de auteur

Mary Eggermont-Molenaar (Haarlem, 1945) woont vanaf 1986 met haar familie in Calgary. Gezondheidsrecht doceren en schrijven over wat er in Nederland in politiecellen gebeurde ruilde ze in voor vertalen, schrijven en het organiseren

van CAANS-lezingentournees door Canada. Ze is redactrice van de CAANS-Newsletter en auteur van ongeveer vijftig artikelen in populaire en wetenschappelijke tijdschriften. In 2012 werd ze verkozen tot lid van de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letteren. Ze is auteur/redactrice/vertaler van: *Montana 1911, a Professor and his Wife among the Blackfoot* (met Alice Kehoe, Inge Genee en Klaas van Berkel; Calgary/Lincoln: University of Calgary / University of Nebraska Press, 2005); *Missionaries among Miners, Migrants and Blackfoot: the Van Tighem Brothers Diaries* (met Paul Callens; Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2007); *Gustave Aimard, Feiten, Fictie, Frictie* (Calgary: Special Snowflake, 2009); *Hannah, Anna, Michael & Mary: Mennonite, Hutterite and Sons of Freedom Narratives* (Calgary: Memo Books, 2013).

Maarten 't Hart and music

Michiel Horn

Music is central to the work of novelist and essayist Maarten 't Hart (b. 1944). He plays the piano and organ creditably, and he has written with great insight about two of his favorite composers, J.S. Bach and W.A. Mozart. This article focuses on the role of music in his novel *Het woeden der gehele wereld* (1993), a *Bildungsroman*, murder mystery, and Holocaust tale told from the point of view of Alexander Goudveyl, who escapes from a background in which music has no place to become a pianist and composer.

Key terms: Maarten 't Hart; *Onder de korenmaat*; *Het woeden der gehele wereld*; Bach; Schubert; Mozart; Fauré.

Best known for his best-selling novels, collections of short stories, essays, and volumes of memoirs, Maarten 't Hart (b. 1944) has also written knowledgeably about Johann Sebastian Bach and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart ('t Hart 2000, 2006a).¹ He is a committed musicologist as well as a serious amateur musician who plays organ and piano. When I first visited him in Warmond ten years ago, I was amazed to see a Bösendorfer concert grand in his living room. That is an instrument any professional pianist would be glad to use.

One result of Maarten's musical interests is that music almost invariably plays an important role in his fiction. A recent example is *Het psalmenoproer* (2006b), which uses a musical dispute within the eighteenth-century Reformed Church as a key plot element in the story of a Maassluis shipowner, Roemer Stroombreker. It contains an enjoyable set piece in which Stroombreker encounters the touring young Mozart in The Hague and overhears him as he is practicing (62-4). In the even more recent *Verlovingstijd* (2009), a chance exposure childhood to classical music, in this case a Concerto grosso by Händel, shapes the life of the novel's central character (53-5, 106).

¹ This paper was presented at the annual CAANS-ACAEN Conference in Waterloo, Ontario, on May 27, 2012. All translations are my own; page numbers refer to the original Dutch text.



*Maarten 't Hart playing the organ in the Evangelische Kirchengemeinde in Cologne.
Photographer unknown. March 20, 2011. Courtesy Maarten 't Hart.*

The two novels in which music looms largest are those in which the composer Alexander Goudveyl is the protagonist. The first is *Onder de korenmaat* (1990), which explores the course of a doomed love affair between the 45-year old Alexander and a woman fifteen years younger. The second is *Het woeden der gehele wereld* (1993), a *Bildungsroman* that deals with Alexander's life from age eight into his twenties. A prologue describing a series of incidents in May, 1940, and an epilogue that takes the novel into the early 1990s, help us to understand not only him but also the background to his life.

I want to use *Het woeden der gehele wereld* to show how music helps the plot along and helps us to create an image of Alexander as a would-be composer and a man. He takes his first musical steps as a child who, with the help of a book of instructions, teaches himself to play piano on an old Blüthner he finds in the warehouse of his scrap-dealer father:

As I burrowed deeper into the volume, I knew with growing certainty that another world existed, ... a world peopled by names never heard in my part of town: Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert. The book contained a piece by that Bach, ... with the title *Allegretto quieto* that you could play and play without ever becoming tired of it. You could whistle it in the street, and it really did seem as though it protected you... And the book contained a piece by that other man, Schubert, with the simple title of *Trio*, a piece in A-flat major and devilish hard to play. It didn't protect you at all. On the contrary: it made you defenseless, it stripped your skin off. Every time you whistled it, it filled your eyes with tears. Then it seemed as if the whole world was dissolving into sweet sadness, as if it would always be November and you would have to wander forever along drizzle-gleaming streets at dusk.

('t Hart 1993, 36)

These are the first of a series of epiphanies in which music is central and which are crucially important to the direction that Alexander's life takes.

That Alexander, at age twelve, finds a piano teacher, Alice Keenids,² is serendipitous. That he gains access to a Bösendorfer after his father has sold the Blüthner is not serendipitous, although he does not understand at the time why the pharmacist Simon Minderhout offers him the use of this magnificent instrument. But both Alice and Simon provide the occasion for further insights into music and its meaning. They also unintentionally lead him closer to the answer to a question that has haunted him from December 22, 1956, when he becomes an aural but not an eye-witness to the murder of the policeman Arend Vroombout: who was the murderer? The question is all the more important because Alexander suffers from an obsession: from the age of seven he has feared that God is seeking to kill him, and he has come to believe that the murderer may be the agent of God's plan.

A few years after the murder, Alexander and his friend William, who is Alice's younger son, are spending New Year's Eve in the company of Minderhout. The pharmacist speculates about the reasons why music does what it does, why

² This is a made-up name that I changed to Keating in my as yet unpublished translation of the novel.

it means so much to people, expressing the view that it is because hearing is the first of the senses to work:

A child can already hear in the fourth month of pregnancy. Touch, smell, sight – these don't function yet, can't function yet. But hearing is already at work; the child hears its mother's voice and seems to recognize it very quickly. In the womb there's hearing, nothing else. There's the familiar rhythm of the mother's heartbeat, and her voice, and when she sings ... My theory is that people are musical if they had a mother who sang a lot during pregnancy.

('t Hart 1993, 144)

Alexander and William both protest that their mothers don't sing. Minderhout suggests that each of the boys was subjected to music in other ways, then puts on the turntable "the most beautiful piece of music" he knows: the closing scene from *Le nozze di Figaro*:

A male voice sang 'Contessa, perdono, perdono, perdono,' and a woman sang something in response, and after that the choir resumed. At the time I thought the music was actually not all that special, while now, many years later, I, too, regard those twenty-seven bars as among the most beautiful inspirations ever to enter a human heart.

('t Hart 1993, 145-6)

Even greater than Mozart among Alexander's musical loves is Bach. Just before going to Leiden University to study pharmacology he is visiting his piano teacher. Seeking to end an argument with one of her sons, she puts a record of Bach's Cantata No. 104 on the turntable:

Up to that moment ... I had always been vaguely convinced ... that Bach's cantatas were occasional pieces ... Then those opening bars of *Du Hirte Israel, höre* rang out, and a red mist came over my eyes. ... How strange that someone who has been dead for more than two hundred years can mean more to you than any living person. How puzzling that you are able to look up with such deep veneration to someone who exists for you only by way of sounds made not by him but by instruments or by the voices of other people. And yet I knew, after that cantata, with its immortal opening chorus and that still more immortal bass aria, that all my life I would love Bach above all else, with all my heart and all my soul and all my strength and all my mind. In a certain sense I, too, made my profession of faith that Sunday, I also found my God. Only my God's name was Bach, and the fact that other gods later joined him or were there from the beginning – Mozart, Schubert, Verdi, Wagner – will not make him jealous, for my deepest, greatest, and longest-lasting love is for Johann Sebastian Bach,

and especially the Bach who revealed himself to me that Sunday, the Bach of the cantatas, the Bach who composed the most beautiful melodies in existence, one of the high points of that awe-inspiring body of work being the bass aria from the Cantata No. 104.

('t Hart 1993, 181-2)

A piece of music by Mozart introduces him aurally to the man whom he later comes to think of as the murderer he has been fearing, the violinist and conductor Aaron Oberstein. Alexander has been invited by one of his pharmacology professors, Bram Edersheim, to join him and his wife in a trio while their usual pianist is away on a visiting professorship in the United States. Afterwards, as they are drinking wine, Edersheim plays a record of Mozart's *Maurische Trauermusik*, performed under the baton of Oberstein. Deeply moved, Alexander decides he wants to have this work in this version played at his funeral ('t Hart 1993, 194).

Yet another piece of music leads him to his wife. He is accompanying the conductor's daughter Joanna, a mezzo soprano, as she sings Gabriel Fauré's *Au bord de l'eau*:

The way she sang, effortlessly, virtually without vibrato, and with the most beautiful legato one can imagine, oh, words can't describe it. And then to think that, even in the oeuvre of Fauré, "Au bord de l'eau" is of an incomprehensible and unequaled beauty, and yet of a wondrous simplicity! But perhaps it was also the text that deeply affected me. ...I heard the text word for word, Sully Prudhomme's words that speak of murmuring water at the foot of a willow tree. They took me back to the abandoned nursery with its waving white morning glory in which I had been a visitor for one summer, had fished for one summer, had escaped for one summer from the quarrels of the world. Thanks to Prudhomme and Fauré, I saw that stream before me again, flowing slowly and dotted with swirling circles, and it seemed as if I were being promised that I could once again disregard the quarrels of the world if in my life, too, I could make room for love. I looked up at Joanna from the keyboard and conquered my fear of that God who had sought to kill Moses by the way in the inn, and I got up and said: "You sang that incredibly beautifully." She smiled gratefully, and I put a cautious arm around her.

And so it came to pass that I married Joanna.

('t Hart 1993, 253-4)

Perhaps surprisingly, music does not play a central role in the epilogue, which centers on the first meeting between Alexander and his father-in-law. This meeting fails to answer the questions that have been nagging Alexander for years and instead raises possibilities that he is altogether unwilling to deal with.

The one piece that is mentioned is an arrangement of the Mozart soprano aria *Ruhe sanft, mein holdes Leben*,³ that Alexander has prepared for his friend Hester Edersheim and that has become the object of Oberstein's scorn. It is tempting to interpret this arrangement as a metaphor for Alexander's own existence, since we become aware in the course of the epilogue that he is not the person we, and he, thought he was. But I gladly leave this matter to professional critics of literature. What is clear is that music is central to the novel, and that a knowledge and appreciation of classical music enhances one's appreciation of this and other books by Maarten 't Hart.



*Maarten 't Hart in his back yard. Photo Patricia Nauta. November 16, 2010.
Courtesy Maarten 't Hart.*

³ From Mozart's incomplete and rarely-performed opera *Zaïde* (1780). I have heard it in concert performance; the aria is gorgeous.

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Belgian immigrants and language issues on the Canadian prairies

Cornelius J. Jaenen

Initial Belgian settlement on the Canadian Prairies occurred in a period of fundamental demographic, administrative and institutional evolution. This included the creation of the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905. Belgians had to navigate basic societal changes. Flemings and Walloons first arrived when French was being replaced both officially and in term of actual usage by English. The Flemish arrivals soon opted for English while most Walloons, often recruited by colonizing clergy, settled in and identified with francophone communities. This was reflected in language choices in both schools and parishes. Walloons would retain their French but Flemings within a generation withdrew their support of the Flemish parish in St. Boniface and of Scheppers College in Swan Lake. In general, Belgians lived up to the expectations of immigration officials that they would integrate well into mainstream society.

Key terms: Belgian immigration to Canada; Canadian Prairies; French language; Flemish language; Flemings; Walloons; Oblates; St. Boniface; Scheppers College.

First of all, let us set the stage of the Western Prairies in order to understand the changes in language usage and policy over time, and the context or milieu to which Belgians had to adapt. The first European language to make an impact on the Prairies was French. Originally, the region was part of the jurisdiction of La Mer de l'Ouest with headquarters at Fort Kaministiquia (Thunder Bay) and a scattering of military posts at strategic locations (such as the present sites of Winnipeg, Portage la Prairie, Saskatoon, Edmonton and Calgary), the western extension of New France. All this was ceded to the British Crown in 1763. The Hudson's Bay Company, which traded in the Bay area since 1670, used English to conduct its business, but the few factors in the northern regions who mingled with the Native inhabitants were most likely to speak a Gaelic dialect of the Orkneys. The North-West Company, based in Montreal, used French-Canadian voyageurs and some Iroquois to pursue its fur trade penetration of the West, beginning in the 1780s, in opposition to the HBC monopoly in all lands draining

into Hudson's Bay. Also, Métis, who had originated in the Great Lakes region during the French period, began moving into the Red River area in significant numbers in pursuit of the buffalo hunt. They spoke Michif, a mixture of French and Algonquian, but were able to communicate with the French speakers (Jaenen 2011, 29-60, 202-206).

In 1812, Lord Selkirk established a Scots settlement near the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, across from the Oblate Fathers mission at St. Boniface on the east bank of the Red River. There was now a dual language community – French and English/Gaelic – with a Council of Assiniboia functioning in both languages, although the official records were in English. The Francophones and Métis spread westwards along the Assiniboine river, the shores of Lake Manitoba and eventually the Saskatchewan river. In 1869, Louis Riel led a protest movement of both linguistic groups against a Canadian government takeover from the HBC without consulting the inhabitants – “sold like poor dumb driven cattle”. The negotiations that followed between the provisional local government and the Canadian government led to the Manitoba Act (1870), which created a new province with recognition of English/French bilingualism and dual confessional Catholic and Protestant school systems (Jaenen 1965).

What followed was substantial change which affected the Belgian immigrants who began arriving in the late 1880s. Of course, we must be aware that Belgians were a national group: there was no Belgian language per se, and they did not constitute a uniform ethnic group. Ethnically they were Flemings and Walloons, and linguistically *Vlaams* ('Flemish') or else French with Walloon dialects. The response of each sector of the Belgian community, therefore, could be quite different in a rapidly evolving and changing Western Canadian social and political situation.

The changes that occurred in the West were first of all demographic, then administrative and finally constitutional.

Demographic changes. The composition of the population was altered dramatically by mass immigration and the introduction of ethnic bloc settlements for Icelanders, Mennonites, Ruthenians, and Doukhobors. In 1891 there was a plan for a Belgian bloc settlement but this did not materialize because of government hesitation, insufficient sponsorship and community disinterest. The French Canadians found themselves a minority by 1880, outnumbered by the English immigrants and Ontario-Anglo migrants, and especially the European immigrants.

Administrative changes. Administratively, municipalities replaced the parish system, school districts were organized, and town sites were regularly surveyed as a railway network expanded. This organization brought order but also more centralized control and the dominance of English (Jaenen 1976a).

Constitutional changes. In 1890, Manitoba unilaterally made English the sole official language and soon thereafter dismantled the dual confessional school system, transforming the Protestant schools into the common public schools. For reasons that still seem unclear, the Catholic Church decided to contest the school/religion change rather than the constitutional/language change. French continued to be used in francophone communities but without official sanction or protection. It is in this period that Belgian immigration began in earnest. Flemings and Walloons arriving in St. Boniface, for example, and rural Manitoba, found their Catholic coreligionists engaged in a struggle to obtain remedial legislation from the federal government in what is known as the Manitoba School Question (Jaenen 1978). In 1892, Louis Hacault, an ultra-conservative Catholic journalist, travelling on a free CPR pass with a Belgian fact-finding delegation sponsored by the Société Saint Raphaël pour la Protection des Emigrants, visited troubled Belgian settlements. He unleashed a bitter press campaign against “Godless schools”, “enemies of virtue”, Free Masons, agnostics, etc. The Belgian communities back home, for instance in Brussels, which was 80% Walloon and 20% Flemish at the time, found his arguments well-founded but embarrassingly inopportune. Belgians, although Catholics, were not anxious to be drawn into a language debate. Decades later the unilateral Manitoba constitutional changes were overturned, but significantly not the school legislation (Jaenen 1978).

The North-West Territories, which were officially bilingual with a dual confessional school system like the Quebec model, followed the Manitoba precedent and began altering language and school provisions. In Lethbridge, for example, Father Leonard Van Tighem founded a boarding school in 1889 for various ethno-linguistic students, although opposed by the Anglo-Protestant community leaders, which attracted numerous Protestant pupils, so that, in his words, “the co-called separate school has become more public than the public school” (Eggermont-Molenaar & Callens 2007, 88).

In 1905, a large section of the NWT was reorganized as the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. These governments functioned in English only and established common public schools with provision for Catholic separate schools on the Ontario model. The Department of education in each province imposed a curriculum with a view to assimilating the “immigrant hordes” that was frankly

British imperialist and Anglo-conformist. Nevertheless, in a Walloon community such as Bellegarde the Catholic public school continued to function without interruption, the new legislation notwithstanding. Flemings who came into areas such as Yellow Grass, Davidson, Strathmore, Calgary, or Lethbridge had the choice of sending their children either to an unsubsidized convent or the common public school. Most parents, for financial reasons, chose the public English-language school. Thus we see the assimilation of most Flemings – St. Boniface being an important exception – by the English-speaking milieu.

The settlement pattern of Flemings and Walloons was different. Walloons settled first in francophone St. Boniface and neighbouring rural parishes, and subsequently in parishes created by colonizing priests such as Campeau, Morin, Le Floch, Royer and Gaire in south-western and northern Saskatchewan in particular. The abbé Jean Gaire, for example, created a “chain of parishes” beginning in Grande Clairière in western Manitoba, proceeding to Bellegarde, Cantal, Wauchope and Forget. At the latter village with church and convent there was also a Belgian vice-consulate from 1908 to 1915. In parishes such as Deleau, Willow Bunch, Ferland, and Prud’homme the Walloons were settled with French Canadians, French and Swiss and rapidly became involved in the struggle for the maintenance of French and Catholic instruction, and later in the drive for recognition of French in the media. They employed the Catholic separate school to teach in French – which was not the intent of the legislation. This was a Quebec legacy where many people identified language with religion. The provincial governments of Saskatchewan and Alberta linked language with nationality or citizenship when dealing with immigrants groups. The basic premise was that Canada was a British Dominion, hence the national language was English. French-speaking Canadians were an exception, but this was not always clearly understood or implemented when dealing with New Canadians, including Belgians (Jaumin & Sanfilippo 1996; Mitchell 1915).

This was clearly demonstrated by 1930 in Saskatchewan when J.T.M. Anderson became Premier with the support of the Ku Klux Klan and the Protestant clergy in an anti-immigration and anti-Catholic election campaign. Anderson had been a school principal, school inspector, then Minister of Education before becoming Premier in the Conservative era of drought and depression. He was the author of *The Education of the New Canadian* (1919), a comprehensive program to “civilize and Christianize” the “barbarian hordes” that had populated the West. The comprehensive programme centred on a patriotic British curriculum including civic education, field days, school gardens, community concerts, community work projects, etc. I personally am a product of this all-encompassing anglo-conformist regime... There was a certain contradiction in the attempts to enforce this assimilationist program on Belgians, because

the immigration authorities in implementing the Immigration Act of 1869 deemed Belgians to be among the “preferred” category. This categorization was based on the belief that they were accustomed to monarchical, democratic institutions, and hence were likely to integrate rapidly (Hughey 1983; Jaenen 1976b).

The school was only one institution that contributed to the transformation of the Belgians, especially in the second and third generation, to become “Canadianized”. The Church itself was being transformed from what passed for a “French church” to a very multicultural, polyglot institution. Language of administration, commerce and general communication was a crucial component of everyday life. Flemings became accustomed to buying and selling, participating in school and municipal affairs, community social and recreational activities, and occupational associations such as marketing boards, farmers’ organizations, wheat pools, beef rings, horse breeding associations, threshing gangs, etc. in English. In southern Manitoba communities such as St. Alphonse, Swan Lake, Mariapolis, Somerset, Holland and Deloraine, Flemings were serving as school trustees, municipal councillors, village officials and businessmen within twenty years of arrival – using English as the medium of communication.

The experience of Walloons was different on two counts: first, they were part of a larger francophone community that, while learning English, sought to function as much as possible in French; and second, some belonged to a specific occupational class, such as coalminers in Estevan, Crowsnest, Lethbridge, Drumheller, that involved them in union organization, protests and strikes – along with Italians, Slovaks and Ukrainians, etc., often under Scottish union leaders. At Crowsnest, for example, the management of West Canadian Collieries, a Franco-Belgian company with francophone managers, singled out the Walloons as “reds...with a bad reputation” (Jaenen 2011, 172). What they meant was that the Walloons had a long experience in labour radicalism beginning in Hainaut in the struggle for unionization, the franchise, and free schools. English and French in this case were mediums for syndicalist, even communist expression. Cultural and linguistic concerns were not uppermost issues but English became the common medium when various ethnic groups co-operated either to defend themselves against dangerous working conditions, exploitative company housing and stores, or to obtain better wages and insurance benefits (Jaenen 2011, 194-208).

The Belgian community in St. Boniface was unique in several respects from the point of view of language usage. The majority of Belgians were Flemish speakers but a number also spoke French. They worshipped at the cathedral with francophones; catechism classes and other services were provided by a few Flemish priests in a chapel. In 1911 a few aspired to a distinct Belgian parish but

the majority did not want to assume the financial burden it entailed. By 1917 there were sufficient Flemings successful in local business and dairy farms to resurrect the proposal; as a result, Archbishop Beliveau erected Sacred Heart Belgian parish on “the same territory” as the cathedral parish. It took on a very distinct Flemish character in 1928 when Capuchin monks from Blenheim ON assumed charge and founded a monastery in the “Belgian Town” sector of the city. The Capuchins founded a second monastery in Toutes Aides to serve not only Flemings but also francophones and First Nations in northern Manitoba. The process of integration into the mainstream resulted in catechism in Flemish being abandoned in 1935; sermons in Flemish were abandoned by 1955. As support dwindled, Archbishop Maurice Baudoux, a Belgian desirous of maintaining a Belgian identity, had a consultative assembly chaired by Robert Bockstaal consider the future of the Sacred Heart parish. There was no enthusiasm to continue to support the parish, so it was closed down and soon afterwards the Capuchins left Manitoba. The Belgians had become so integrated into the city’s economy and cultural activities that in the 1950s the archbishop, the mayor, the city engineer, the chairman of the school board and the postmaster were all men of Belgian descent serving a French Canadian city. The sizeable Flemish community of market gardeners and dairy farmers in the Greater Winnipeg area attended St. Maurice in Fort Garry, Holy Cross in Norwood and St. Ignatius in south Winnipeg, multi-ethnic parishes using English (Wilson & Wyndels 1976, 49-68; Jaenen 2011, 194-248).

There were few attempts to perpetuate the use of Flemish. In 1905 Louis de Nobele founded Le Club Belge in a boarding house in Winnipeg, located between the immigration sheds and the bridge leading to St. Boniface, as a social and information centre. In 1906 it relocated near the district commonly known as “Belgian Town” in St. Boniface. Membership grew from 45 charter members to more than two thousand, both Flemings and Walloons. Here newcomers acquired information about employment, available farmland, and contact people throughout the West. Originally formal business was conducted in French but in 1915 it became fully bilingual, reflecting the fact that the majority of its members were Flemings. Its activities expanded to include a mutual aid society, a credit union and a veterans association. When Louis Varlez and Lucien Brunin made their fact-finding tour of Western Canada in 1929 they reported that the library contained “seven-tenths books in Flemish and three-tenths books in French and English” and that members “take very scrupulous care to prevent the language question to arise among them” (Jaenen 2011, 240). In 1939 women were admitted as full members and a scholarship fund was established to promote post-secondary studies. By 1943 all business was conducted in English but at social events all three languages were heard (De Buck 1955).

Ursuline nuns from Thildonck operated a girls' school at Bruxelles that became the public school and they were instrumental in urging the Brothers of Our Lady of Mercy in 1919 to found a Flemish boys' college in Swan Lake. This imposing Scheppers Institute, known as Sacred Heart College, was a residential school with some local day students supposed to teach in French and English on Archbishop Beliveau's instructions. In 1921 the Brothers reorganized the school as an agricultural college and five years later they eliminated agricultural courses and teaching in French to concentrate on the sciences and commerce in Flemish and English with a view to preparing students for provincial standards. The Depression and failing community support resulted in the termination of this venture in 1932 (Obbens n.d., 1-5).

A less well-known fact is that Belgian priests, monks, nuns, and lay workers learned other languages to serve the Canadian community. The more than thirty Belgian Oblates of Mary Immaculate, both Flemings and Walloons, were required to teach First Nations children in residential schools in English only. Both teachers and pupils were required by the Department of Indian Affairs to communicate in English only. Nevertheless, the teachers produced hundreds of books – vocabularies, grammars, service books, devotional readings –in Cree, Dene, Inuktitut, etc. Nor should one forget the dozen or more Redemptorists, mostly Flemish-speakers, who learned Ukrainian and inculcated to the Ruthenian rite to serve these immigrants from their monasteries in Yorkton, Komarno and Ituna. There were also individual priests, such as the abbé Jules Pirot, who served the Hungarians of Kaposvar and Esterhazy, as well as 28 mission stations during the fifty year period from 1904 to 1954, in their mother tongue while writing poetry in his Walloon dialect. Of course, there were numerous parish priests who taught, preached and heard confessions in several languages in order to meet the challenges of multilingualism in the context of large-scale immigration and settlement and of insufficient clergy (De Vocht 2005; Léonard n.d.).

Finally, we may ask: what had Belgians expected when they decided to come to Canada? The Flemish clergy had warned about Protestant anglicising pressures. Therefore, they did not have any expectations of great protection or promotion of the Flemish language. English did seem much easier to learn than French. Walloons recruited by colonizing priests, on the other hand, had expectations of continuing to live in a French milieu. The immigration propaganda, booklets, lectures, exhibits, etc. of the Canadian and Manitoba governments, the railway companies, the steamship companies, the land settlement and colonization companies were all in French and Flemish. But in Canada there were virtually no services in Flemish and not even the Belgian

consuls could speak the language. Therefore, Flemings had to rely on personal contacts and a networking system that favoured chain migration.

My conclusion is that Belgians integrated well, and quite rapidly, into the regional mainstream society. Most Walloons became components of the francophone minorities in the West and provided leaders such as Archbishops Maurice Baudoux and Antoine Hacault in St. Boniface, strong proponents of French language rights and also at the Second Vatican Council of the mass in vernacular languages. Most Flemings became part of the heterogeneous anglophone mainstream, which was composed of many divergent viewpoints but united by a sense of being Canadian, sometimes sharing sentiments of Western alienation, and using English as the medium of communication. Bishop Remi De Roo, born in Manitoba, and appointed to the anglophone diocese of Victoria, which had first been organized by Charles-Jean Seghers of Ghent and Jean-Baptiste Brondel of Bruges, exemplified the progressive views that Flemings generally adopted in the new homeland. In the debate on bilingualism, for example, two Belgians in Swan Lake MB, in the 1970s, argued vociferously outside the local post office, one in favour of official bilingualism, and the other quite opposed, all this in Flemish!

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The Destruction of Dresden in Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* and Harry Mulisch's *Het Stenen Bruidsbed* ('The Stone Bridal Bed'): A Comparative Literary Study

Beert Verstraete

The destruction of Dresden by massive firebombing in February 1945 is the central theme of two widely acclaimed anti-war novels, *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969) by the American novelist Kurt Vonnegut (1922-2007) and *Het Stenen Bruidsbed* ('The Stone Bridal Bed,' 1959) by the Dutch author Harry Mulisch (1927-2010). These two novels, however, are radically different in just about every respect. Mulisch tells the story retrospectively from the view point of one of the perpetrators of the bombing, the American pilot Norman Corinth, a fictional character who is utterly unlike Vonnegut's autobiographically based central character, Billy Pilgrim. Vonnegut's narrative, which is basically spare and minimalist in style, stands out for its satire and its dark comedy and humour, these being the hallmark of much of his fiction, and Billy Pilgrim has elements of the picaresque anti-hero which recurs in western fiction, whereas Mulisch's novel is avant-garde modernist, as seen, for instance, in its use of interior monologue and densely concentrated imagery, and Norman Corinth is a far more complexly drawn individual. However, despite the dissimilarity in the way they internalize the Dresden bombing, in both Pilgrim and Corinth, as has been suggested by Susanne Vees-Gulani, one can discern symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Perhaps even more arresting in Mulisch's high-pitched style and manner is the pastiche of Homeric language and themes, including a particularly grand epic simile from the Iliad. My paper concludes with a brief reflection on the artistic and ethical rightness of what I call Mulisch's bravura-style in relation to his novel's subject matter.

Key terms: Bombing of Dresden; Vonnegut; Mulisch; post-traumatic stress disorder; modernism in literature; the Iliad.

On February 13 and 14, 1945, the German city of Dresden was subjected to a horrendous British and American firebombing which destroyed much of the city, including the entire Old City with its priceless treasures of art and baroque architecture, and killed tens of thousands of men, women, and children, the large majority of them civilians.^{1,2} The saturation bombing of Dresden was perhaps even more destructive than that of Hamburg in July 1943, but whereas the bombing of Hamburg, Germany's largest port, had at least a military-strategic rationale,³ that of Dresden did not: the end of the war was imminent, less than three months away, and Allied forces by now were already standing within German borders; huge numbers of refugees, mostly from the eastern German territories, were crowded in and around the city; and most important of all, the city was not a major centre of war production. The bombing, therefore, deserves to be called a senseless, gratuitous act of retribution, an enormous-scale massacre that has all the markings of a war crime and indeed a crime against humanity, although it must not be inferred from this judgment that it was in any way morally equivalent to the genocidal horror of the Holocaust perpetrated by Nazi Germany.⁴

¹ Earlier versions of this paper were read at the annual meeting of the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Netherlandic Studies (CAANS-ACAEN) at the University of Waterloo in May 2012 and at the annual meeting of the Atlantic Classical Association (ACA) at the University of Prince Edward Island in October of the same year. I profited from the spirited discussion that followed each of these presentations. I am also very grateful for the critiques, corrections, and suggestions put forward by the anonymous reviewers and the Editor of the Journal. All the translations are my own. Mulisch's novel is available in an English translation, *The Stone Bridal Bed*, by Adrienne Dixon (London: Abelard Schuman, 1962).

² The best recent book on the fire-bombing of Dresden is De Bruhl (2006). The estimate of those killed was much too high in the early years after the bombing, with estimates of well over 100,000. Indeed, in *Slaughterhouse-Five* the figure is set at 135,000 (Vonnegut 2009, 240). The actual figure was probably around 40,000.

³ The best recent book on the fire-bombing of Hamburg is Lowe (2007). The number of dead in Hamburg may have been as high as in Dresden, but the figures for those made homeless in the latter are higher. Hamburg, of course—in the Federal German Republic—was rebuilt at a much faster rate.

⁴ The moral-ethical versus the military-strategic issues of the bombing of civilians in World War II are well laid out by A.C. Grayling (2006). Also recommended for such a discussion is Primoratz (2010). Vees-Gulani's important study (2003), which will be brought forward below with reference to the so-called post-traumatic stress disorder, also discusses these issues in depth.



Dresden after the firebombing. February 1945. Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-08778-0001 / Hahn / CC-BY-SA. Reproduced with permission, [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Germany](#)

To most readers in the English-speaking world, the destruction of Dresden is best known from Kurt Vonnegut's (1922-2007) hugely popular anti-war novel, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, published in 1969 at the height of the Vietnam War, its popularity sealed by the well-received – by critics and the general public alike – 1972 movie of the same title.⁵ Vonnegut's novel was directly based on his experience as an American World War II prisoner of war. Captured by the Germans during their Ardennes offensive in December 1944, he was eventually interned in Dresden, where he survived the fire-bombing and, together with other prisoners of war, was put to work in collecting the bodies of the dead and torching them in huge piles.

⁵ The film is basically faithful to the novel, except, most regrettably, for the pseudo-happy ending for Billy Pilgrim and his Hollywood starlet-lover in their Trafalmaorean bubble after she has given birth to their baby; there is nothing of this, of course, in Vonnegut.

Het Stenen Bruidsbed ('The Stone Bridal Bed'), published in 1959, is, unfortunately, little known outside its Dutch-speaking readership, although it was translated into German and English in the early 1960's. It is therefore fortunate that it (together with Vonnegut's novel) receives ample discussion in Susanne Vees-Gulani's 2003 study *War and Guilt: Literature of Wartime Bombing in Germany*. The novel's genesis lies in a never completed novel, *Gratie voor de Doden* ('A Pardon for the Dead') which was to tell the story of a German war criminal. In order to obtain the necessary documentation for this work, from 1956 to 1958 Mulisch travelled extensively in East Germany (the German Democratic Republic) and also visited Dresden. *Het Stenen Bruidsbed* appeared in 1959 and was a huge success in the Netherlands, with dozens of reprintings following.

Although Mulisch did not have direct experience of Dresden's destruction even remotely comparable to Vonnegut's to draw upon, he was, I would argue, well equipped to make this tragedy the thematic and psychological focal point of his novel. Having a Jewish mother but a gentile father of Austrian birth who collaborated with the Nazis during the German occupation of the Netherlands while at the same time also protecting his wife and son, Mulisch was in a unique position to probe the moral and emotional imperatives, but at the same time also the ambiguities and complexities, of responsibility and guilt in times of war, as he also did in his widely acclaimed 1982 novel, *De Aanslag* ('The Assault').

Both *Slaughterhouse-Five* and *Het Stenen Bruidsbed* are novels exemplifying twentieth century modernism in that they depart significantly from the fundamental literary conventions which had come to characterize the realistic novel at the height of its development in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, namely a readily recognized verisimilitude in the ordering of the overall story-line matched with an equally readily recognized individuality in the depiction of character. However, as this study hopes to demonstrate, Vonnegut's and Mulisch's modernisms are very different, and this fact is very consequential for the way the tragedy of the destruction of Dresden is built into their respective novels.⁶

⁶ Vonnegut's novel might be considered postmodernist because with its spare, minimalist narrative style it is very unlike *Het Stenen Bruidsbed*. However, I suggest that in this respect, as well as in the philosophy of existential absurdism it breathes, it has an affinity with Franz Kafka's novels and short stories from the 1910's and 1920's, which are generally considered to be hallmarks of 20th century modernism in literature. In any case, the line of demarcation between modernism and post-modernism in the literature of the past century, whether based on chronological or on purely formalist criteria, is so fluid and indeed tenuous that I prefer not to make too much of the distinction and, for the purpose of literary studies, to regard postmodernism as a subtype of modernism. It goes without saying that the popular novel

The modernist novel of the past century demands a great deal from the reader: the story-line may be jagged, self-interrupting, and even completely lacking in ‘objective’ sequential postings, and the reader may be thrust over and over again into interior monologues that come and go with equal suddenness, conveying a barrage of thoughts, feelings, and sensations that cannot always be easily unraveled, and in their most developed form constituting a veritable stream of consciousness, as supremely represented in English literature by James Joyce’s ultra-modernist *Ulysses*. *Slaughterhouse-Five*, however, modernist though it is, does not really pose such difficulties. In reading a number of recent blogs discussing the novel (see bibliography), I was struck by the fact that no one complained about finding it difficult to read. A few had read it decades ago in their high school or college years and, I suspect, on their own initiative and not because it appeared on some required reading list.

Vonnegut’s narrative mode is spare and minimalist, mixing satire, black comedy, and a bizarre and obviously deliberately amateurish science fiction. All this is boldly set out in the subscript to the novel’s title: “Slaughterhouse-Five or the Children’s Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death. Kurt Vonnegut, who as an American Infantry Scout *Hors de Combat*, as a Prisoner of War, Witnessed the Fire-Bombing of Dresden, Germany, “The Florence of the Elbe,” a Long Time Ago, and Survived to Tell the Tale. This is a Novel Somewhat in the Telegraphic Schizophrenic Manner of the Planet Tralfamadore, Where the Flying Saucers Come from. Peace.”

Thanks to the device of time-travel, taken, in a self-parodying way, from mainstream science fiction, the narrative jumps back and forth in time. The novel starts with a chapter narrated in the first person by an individual, obviously a *persona* or mask for Vonnegut himself, who purports to have authored the main story, which then starts in chapter two as it launches into the life of Billy Pilgrim, and is narrated in the third-person and continues as such until the final chapter ten, where we return in part to the first person narrator. He has already made it clear in the first chapter that he, too, is a World War II veteran and a survivor of the Dresden fire-bombing. In fact, at a few points in the intervening chapters he actually inserts himself fleetingly but emphatically into the third-person narrative, saying in one instance, “I was there. So was my old war buddy, Bernard V. O’Hare,” (Vonnegut 2009, 86), and later on, as Billy Pilgrim, together with the other prisoners of war, arrives in Dresden and someone compares it to the mythical city of Oz, “That was I. That was me. The only city I’ve ever seen was Indianapolis, Indiana” (Vonnegut 2009, 189). For all the jumping back and forth in time, the narrative of chapters two through nine will not faze the average

(murder mysteries, adventure stories, political thrillers etc.) of today still conforms largely to the major conventions of the realistic novel.

reader, thanks to the sparseness of Vonnegut's prose and the unity of tone, flat and deadpan nearly all the way, maintained by the narrator.

Billy is obviously an Everyman type of figure and, prior to his being drawn into the fiery vortex of bombed Dresden, conspicuous only for his inconspicuousness and the wacky story of his being repeatedly kidnapped by the imaginary Tralfamadoreans to their planet in a distant galaxy, where he is put on display for the inhabitants to marvel at, but always made perfectly comfortable and enjoying the company of a similarly kidnapped Hollywood starlet. The weird-looking Tralfamadoreans represent a way and sense of life which might be characterized as an absurdist *carpe diem*, for their lives are lived as absolutely separate and unconnected moments, and these beings have the uncanny attribute of jumping at wish from one desired moment to another, completely outside the human categories of space and time. This magical ability they also impart to Billy.

In the crazy physics and psychology of Billy's Tralfamadorean adventures is crystallized the existential absurdism which informs the entire narrative, including his dreary childhood and youth and his enlistment in the Army, where he proves to be the klutziest of klutzes. Well before he is propelled into the Dresden catastrophe, the reader is already made to know everything about his postwar life: his material success as the eventual owner of a number of optometrists' clinics, which he inherits from his father-in-law, the father of his fat and unloved wife, who dies in a car accident at the very same time when Billy is recovering from the injuries he has sustained in an airline crash. Not long after his return from the war he spends time in a psychiatric hospital, and as he grows into middle age he is condescended to by his daughter, who thinks he is losing his mind with his continual immersing of himself in prodigiously bad science fiction and with the repeated kidnappings and relocations back and forth in space and time which he claims the Tralfamadoreans are inflicting on him.

Not surprisingly, the inescapable sense of the absurdity of life reaches its peak in the war episode. Here, as elsewhere in the narrative, this is underlined by the formulaic, "So it goes," by way of commentary on one more tragedy or setback that has just been related. During their journey from the battlefield to Dresden, Billy and his fellow captives are interned for a while in a smallish prisoner of war camp which houses British prisoners of war who have been confined there since the beginning of the war. These men have been very successful in fashioning for themselves a comfortable life in their captivity, thanks to their unwavering physical and mental self-discipline, the huge rations in the beginning erroneously lavished upon them by the Red Cross and then carefully hoarded over the years, and last but not least, the respect and even admiration they enjoy from their captors, who like to think, "They [the British]

made war stylish and reasonable, and fun" (Vonnegut 2009, 120). Their prison life with all its amenities, including elaborately staged entertainments featuring drag, seems to be enveloped in a surreal atmosphere of benevolence and serenity, until one prisoner speaks ruefully of the fact that for years he and his comrades have not seen grass, trees and women. Far worse, next door is a much larger compound where thousands of Russian prisoners of war are kept, starved and worked to death, as is calmly noted by the narrator.

The monstrosity and absurdity of war reaches its climax in the fire-bombing of Dresden. Billy and his fellow Americans have been put to work in the city, and he and others are housed in an unused slaughterhouse, Slaughterhouse No. Five. Together with their German guards, they escape death during the bombing by taking refuge in an underground storage chamber. As they emerge into the open air afterwards, they are met by the sight of a city reduced to rubble, a city with the aspect of the moon's surface: "It was like the moon," said Billy Pilgrim" (Vonnegut 2009, 229).⁷ The moon-analogy is developed with grim absurdity in the following pages, including the comparison of any possible survivors (none of whom are found) to "moon-men" (230). Later on, in the final chapter, the narrator speaks of "hundreds of corpse mines" (273), as the bodies of the dead are dug out of the rubble.

Susanne Vees-Gulani, in her above-mentioned book, views *Slaughterhouse-Five* as a psychological novel which gains its special impact from the fact that the novel was written by a survivor. Much of the literature on the wartime bombing of German cities studied by her was indeed written by survivors, and in her perspective the typical survivor emerges as afflicted in later life with the so-called post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Thus, not surprisingly, her second chapter, 'Trauma and Its Consequences,' where she not only describes and analyzes the psychological profile of PTSD in its clinical context but also introduces it into humanistic and literary studies, provides her with the principal methodological starting point of her study. A consideration of PTSD certainly contributes significantly to our empathy with Billy and how he copes with the trauma of Dresden. The generally flat, minimalist narrative style may be said to speak of the severe emotional repression which is symptomatic of PTSD, and the delusional escapist fantasies that constitute Billy's Tralfamadorean adventures are suggestive of the same disorder. (Vees-Gulani is correct, however, in underlining that, despite the author's use of the word "schizophrenic" in his subscript to the novel's title, Billy – and the first- and third-person narrators, too, I should add – shows no real symptoms of schizophrenia.)

⁷ I suspect that the moon-analogies may have been inspired by the American Race for the Moon in the 1960's, climaxed by the manned orbiting of the moon in December 1968 and the first manned moon landing in July 1969.

However, besides the psychological profile created of Billy and the two narrators, *Slaughterhouse-Five*'s satirical thrust merits equal emphasis, perhaps even more so, for it was the absurdist satire, more than anything else, that made it such a popular novel. As such, it has a strong affinity with works of extended prose fiction already in much earlier Western literature. Hans Jacob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen's (1621-1676) picaresque novel, *Der Abenteuerliche Simplicissimus* ('The Adventurous Simplicissimus') comes to mind here; its central protagonist, who replicates the author's own survivor status, lives through the Thirty-Years War, which devastated Germany and took millions of lives. Here, too, the anti-war satire trumps any psychological profile one may care to devise for Simplicissimus – whose name says it all about how he is portrayed. Voltaire's *Candide* of the following century is best remembered for its fierce attack on metaphysical optimism, and the psychological profile of its hapless, naïve protagonist only feeds into the audacious philosophical satire.

Candide concludes with the proverbial message of the protagonist, a much wiser man now: "Il faut cultiver notre jardin." Does *Slaughterhouse-Five* offer a similar, at least somewhat positive conclusion? I would cautiously suggest that this may indeed be so. We are told by the (third-person) narrator as the end of the final chapter approaches that after Billy and his fellow captives found shelter in a Dresden suburb, springtime did eventually arrive and the war came at last to an end: "Billy and the rest wandered out onto the shady streets. The trees were leafing out. There was nothing going on out there, no traffic of any kind" (Vonnegut 2009, 275); and then, "Birds were talking. One bird said to Billy Pilgrim, 'Poo-tee-weet?'" (275). Here the story ends. The bird is not simply chirping: it directs its tweeting to Billy himself. There is an echo here from chapter one, where the first-person narrator says, "Listen: *Billy Pilgrim has come unstuck in time*. It ends like this: *Poo-tee-weet?*" (Vonnegut 2009, 28). Earlier in the chapter, the same narrator tells the publisher, Seymour Lawrence, about his forthcoming book: "It is so short and jumbled, Sam, because there is nothing intelligent to say about a massacre. Everybody is supposed to be dead, to never say anything or to want anything ever again. Everything is supposed to be very quiet after a massacre, and it always is, except for the birds. And what do the birds say? All there is to say about a massacre, things like '*Poo-tee-weet?*'" (Vonnegut 2009, 24). Once again, the onomatopoeia rendering the bird's chirping comes out as a question, which at the very end of the story will be directly addressed to Billy Pilgrim. Is it a question of whether nature can still assert an almost childlike innocence over and above all the almost inconceivable wartime atrocity that has been told? The answer rests with Billy, the narrators, and the reader.

In contrast with the mostly spare narrative style of *Slaughterhouse-Five*, a bravura expressiveness reigns supreme in Mulisch's novel with its rapid-fire interior monologues, its synaesthesia of imagery fusing the impressions of the different senses, especially the visual, tactile, and the auditory, and last but not least, its audacious intertextuality with Homer's *Iliad*. This high-pitched mannerism of style is far less characteristic of the later novels such as *De Aanslag* and *Siegfried* and even *De Ontdekking van de Hemel* ('The Discovery of Heaven'). It is not surprising, therefore, that the Dutch-language blogs that I have read on *Het Stenen Bruidsbed*, mostly coming from people who had read the novel for the first time many decades ago in their secondary school or university years, remembered it as a challenging read (e.g. Bookgrrls 2005; Leendering 2009).

Whereas the story of *Slaughterhouse-Five* moves climactically to the destruction of Dresden as seen through the eyes of Billy Pilgrim, in Mulisch the catastrophe is relived retrospectively, not only or even principally by its victims, such as by the man-woman couple in the episode "Stille Bossen, Vredige Heuvelen" ('Tranquil Woods, Peaceful Hills'), but by Norman Corinth, the novel's central character, who was the pilot of one of the American planes which bombed Dresden. He is now a dentist in Baltimore, who has accepted, rather daringly in fiercely anti-communist America of the mid-fifties, an invitation to attend a dentists' congress in Dresden. In the episode "Maar Zonder Emotie" ('But Without Emotion'), while he is still in Baltimore preparing to leave for the conference, it is already clear that Corinth is emotionally damaged, the damage physically represented by the prominent scars marring his face – scars which, as we learn towards the novel's end, are the result of the severe burns he sustained when his plane was downed after the bombing of Dresden. At the end of the prelude, we see him reflecting ironically on his loveless marriage with his superficially all-knowing and all-understanding wife:

Zijn vrouw hoefde hij het niet uit te leggen, zij begreep immers alles? Zij begeep immers dit en dat en zo en daarom en waarom? Haar begrip hing in kringen om haar ogen, holde haar wangen uit, stond in flessen en potjes en buisjes naast haar bed.

'He didn't have to explain it to his wife – for didn't she understand everything? She understood this and that and like this and because of this and why this. Her understanding hung in rings around her eyes and hollowed out her cheeks and stood in little bottles and jars and tubes beside her bed.'

(Mulisch 1989, 12)

Of Corinth, too, a psychological profile of the post-traumatic stress disorder is offered by Vees-Gulani, and for him it holds up even better than for Billy Pilgrim, because *Het Stenen Bruidsbed* is an intensely psychological novel, whereas in *Slaughterhouse-Five* any psychological typology or assessment we might care to make of Billy is secondary to the novel's overriding satirical impulse. Corinth's PTSD profile is easily established as we read not only of the soul-cramping emotional repression, the terrifying periodic anxiety attacks, and the roaring and flashing welter of memories reliving the bombing attacks he participated in, but also of his aggressive sexuality towards Hella Viebahn, the conference organizer with whom he has a short-lived affair, of his violent outbursts, especially his vicious beating of the West German Schneiderhahn, and of his identification of himself, whether boastful or ironic (probably both, I would suggest) with a fallen Greek warrior of the Trojan War, who, he says, is still alive.

Once Corinth has arrived in Dresden it becomes even clearer that he carries with him searing memories of his participation in the American wave of the fire-bombing – memories which not only surface over and over again in his mind but are also the driving force behind the quasi-philosophical ruminations on war and history he shares with Hella and, even more, with Schneiderhahn. The fact that much of Dresden is still a far-stretching wasteland of impassible rubble works as an inescapable catalyst on his mental state. The first impression, from the vantage point of the *pension* where he will be staying, Corinth has of Dresden, is of the city peacefully lying “in een mateloze ruimte” ('in an unbounded space') (Mulisch 1989, 16). The almost idyllic description continues in a lengthy paragraph, but then memories rise up: “... op hetzelfde ogenblik hoorde hij het groene gefluister ... Het was verdwenen eer hij het verstaan kon” ('... at the same moment he heard the green whispering ... It had disappeared before he could understand it') (Mulisch 1989, 16). But next harsh sounds and voices intrude: “Het groene gefluister kon ook brullen, een zware mannenstem in hallen: ‘... maat over ...’, ‘... de draaitoren, en wie ...’, opdoemend en verzinkend in een muur van nacht...” ('The green whispering could also roar, a man's heavy voice in passage-ways '... all ready ...', '... the turret, and who ...', looming up and sinking away in a wall of night...') (16). The interior monologue continues with its evocation of voices from wartime and from a city of his past, and ends: “... hij kon het nooit begrijpen. Het betekende nooit iets, wat er uit die stad kwam” ('... he could never understand it. It never meant anything, whatever came out of that city') (17). Then, equally abruptly, Corinth is pulled back to the presence of Hella and Ludwig, the *pension-keeper*, his impression of the former vividly conveyed in a Mulisch-style synesthesia: “Haar benen neurieden achter een waas blonde haartjes” ('Her legs hummed behind a haze of blond down.') (17).

The destruction of Dresden stands in the shadow of the legendary Trojan War which ended with the burning of Troy by the victorious Greeks. This was the paradigmatic war for the Greeks. It did come with victory for their mythical ancestors but at the cost of the anger of powerful gods and of innumerable lives lost, and with subsequent disasters of every sort plunging their ancient Bronze Age civilization into chaos and ruin. The conspicuous intertextuality of *Het Stenen Bruidsbed* with the *Iliad* is already signalled before the start of the narrative proper with a quotation from the *Iliad*, where in 3. 130-135, as a short-lived truce between the Greeks and Trojans has just begun, the messenger-goddess Iris addresses Helen as follows:

Kom mee lieve Helena, dan kun je wonderlijke dingen zien van de trojaanse wagenstrijders en de bronsgepantserde Grieken. Zo pas nog raasde de oorlog – bron van tranen – in de vlakte rond en waren zij op dodelijke strijd berust: nu staan zij stil bijeen – de strijd is opgehouden – op hun schild geleund, de lange lansen naast zich in de grond gestoken.

‘Come with me, dear Helen, for then you can see the wondrous things of the Trojan chariot-fighters and the bronze-armoured Greeks. Just now the war was raging – a source of tears – in the plain round about and they submitted to mortal combat; but now they stand together in silence – the battle has halted – leaning on their shields, their tall spears thrust into the ground next to them.’

(Mulisch 1989, n.p.)

The Trojan War and the destruction of Troy also figured prominently in Roman myth, which traced the founding of the Roman people to the Trojan prince Aeneas, who, with his family and followers, had fled his burning city and, after many wanderings and under the guidance of the gods, had settled in Italy near the site of what eventually was to become the city of Rome; this was to be the subject of Rome’s greatest epic poem, Virgil’s *Aeneid*. The second quotation, which follows the Homeric passage and is from the Roman historian Tacitus, *Annals* 15.39, speaks of the rumour about the emperor Nero that spread throughout Rome after the fire which destroyed much of the city in 64 CE:

Hoe populair dit ook was [the reference is to Nero’s extensive relief efforts], het miste zijn uitwerking, omdat het gerucht ging, dat Nero tijdens het branden van de stad in zijn paleis het toneel bestegen en Troje’s ondergang bezongen had, de huidige ramp vergelijkend met vernietigingstaferelen uit de voortijd.

‘As popular as this might be, it missed its effect because the rumour went that Nero, during the conflagration of the City, had ascended the stage

and had sung of Troy's destruction, comparing the present disaster with scenes of destruction in times long past.'

(Mulisch 1989, n.p.)

An ironic contrast suggests itself between Nero's travesty-epic on the disaster which had befallen Rome and the cleanly straightforward Homeric description of Greek and Trojan warriors.

Travesty also touches the three "Homerische Zangen" ('Homeric Songs') with which the narrative is interleaved. These "Zangen" are the supreme crystallizations of the interior monologues carrying Corinth back to his bombing mission of more than a decade ago, and they are powerfully expressive of the tumultuous surfacing of his recollections. One Dutch commentator, Jona Leendering (2009) finds them "over the top" (the English term is used), but as a classicist I appreciate the fierce irony injected, especially into the first of de "Zangen", by their Iliadic intertextuality. In its simplest and most common form, this irony resides in the deformation of Homeric formulaic language which encapsulates the ideal aspect of the Iliadic warriors and their instruments of war: "de blauwogige Corinth" ('the blue-eyed Corinth'), "het luchtdoorklievende schip" ('the sky-cleaving ship'), "de kaartlistige Harry" ('Harry, clever with maps') (Mulisch 1989, 35-36).

Even more audacious is the travesty of extended Homeric similes, of which the lengthiest comes in the first "Homeric Song":

Maar zoals in de fabriekshallen het staal, opgegraven het erts uit de gescheurde aarde en aangevoerd met treinen en in ovens daaruit gewonnen het rokend vloeiente metaal, wordt geslagen met hamers ontelbare – en ver weg hoort in de kantoren het dofdonderend gerucht de typiste en wordt bang: zo brullen in de nacht de motoren van de Liberators ...

'But just as in the factory halls – the iron ore extracted from the riven earth and transported in trains and in the blast-ovens won therefrom the fume-enshrouded metal – the steel is pounded with hammers innumerable, and far away in the offices the typist hears the muffled thunderous noise and becomes frightened, so the engines of the Liberators roar in the night ...'

(Mulisch 1989, 37)

This, including the contorted word-order of the Dutch – a word-order which is natural to Greek, a highly inflected language – is an ironic reformulation of the epic simile in book four of the *Iliad* (4.452-456). My prose rendering of the original Greek is slightly adapted from Richmond Lattimore's poetic translation:

As when two rivers in winter's spate running down from the mountains throw together at the meeting of their torrents in the hollow stream-bed the weight of the waters coming from the great springs above, and far away in the mountains the shepherd hears their thunder, so, from the coming of men, was the shock and the shouting.

(Lattimore translation 1951, 125)

This Homeric simile must have been a favourite of Mulisch, for it is cited at the beginning of *De Aanslag* when Peter, Anton Steenwijk's older brother, translates it laboriously under his father's watchful eye (Mulisch 1983, 21-22). In the war scenes of the *Iliad*, the poetic impact comes not so much from the points of comparison the similes make but from the wide vistas they open up into the enduring order of the world of non-human nature, whereas their parodying deformation in the "Homerische Zangen", along with the rest of the pseudo-Homeric language, the scraps of shouted dialogue, and all the roaring and flashing of mechanized, industrialized warfare resonate with the Shakespearean "It is a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing" (*Macbeth*, Act 5, scene 5).

The mock-Homeric intertextuality does not end here. Hella is an obvious stand-in for the Helen who eloped with Paris to his native city of Troy; rubble-covered Dresden is the "stone bridal bed" for her and Corinth, although Corinth is not Paris of the losing Trojan side but, as he puts it to Hella, a fallen warrior on the Greek side, who is still alive. As I have already suggested, this sounds either megalomaniacal or ironic – or, perhaps paradoxically, both simultaneously. Whichever is the case, there is an evasion of guilt here, as is obvious from the fact that Corinth has just lied to Hella by claiming it was the English who bombed Dresden. After reflecting within himself that he cannot afford to speak the truth, he says, "Het is of het nooit gebeurd is. Drieduizend jaar geleden. Ik ben een onder Agamemnon gesneuveld Griek, die nog leeft. Ik denk er nooit aan" ('It's as though it never happened. Three thousand years. I am a Greek fallen [in battle] under Agamemnon who am still alive. I never give it any thought.') (Mulisch 1989, 105).

Corinth's stated indifference, too, is a lie, and most certainly an evasion, especially in view of his repeated philosophizing with Hella and Schneiderhahn about the causes of war and about the phenomenon of Hitler. Here he draws his sharp contrast between canonical ("kanonieke"), that is, rationally explicable, history and its opposite, apocryphal ("apokriefe") history, as is exemplified by the contrast between the war waged *against* Hitler as opposed to the wars waged by Hitler as well as to the horror of the indefensible bombing of Dresden (Mulisch 1989, 150). One might argue, though, that this dichotomizing typology of war amounts to little more than an evasion of personal responsibility, for it

implies that humans, whether collectively or individually, are helpless before the destructively irrational and absurd in human behaviour. With Corinth's periodic severe anxiety attacks we are back to a conspicuous symptom of the post-traumatic stress disorder. Just after his identification of himself to Hella with a fallen Greek warrior, when Corinth is lying in bed with her, he has a full-blown attack of frightening proportions, which is also anxiously noticed by Hella and fills her with panic. It comes with copious perspiration and increasingly fearful imaginings:

Zijn ogen vraten zich vast in de kamer. Nog steeds werd het erger, onzichtbaar: een nachtelijk sidderen in de doodstille dingen, alsof zij zichzelf niet meer waren, een opengaan, dat hem walgelijk bedreigde.

'His eyes crammed themselves [until] stuck fast in the room. It got steadily worse, an invisible something, a shuddering in the night amidst things deathly quiet, as though they were no longer themselves, a yawning open that menaced him nauseatingly.'

(Mulisch 1989, 106)

Later he recovers somewhat and is left only with a bad headache, reminding himself that for some time he has not heard "het groene gefluister" ('the green whispering'). Its absence disturbs him: "... hij had een vaag gevoel, dat dat onrustbarend was" ('...he had a vague feeling that that should alarm him.') (Mulisch 1989, 107). Unfortunately, his tormenting fears and anxieties do not draw him closer to Hella, and it is not long before he breaks off the relationship.

Now a complete callousness appears to have taken hold of Corinth: indeed, in this 'farewell' scene his face carries a persistent grin: "grijnzen ... grijnzend ... grijnzend ... grijnsde ... grijns" ('grin ... grinning ... grinning ... grinned ... grin') (184-185). For all the apparent cruelty of his demeanor, though, he feels extremely confused and uncomfortable, even physically so: the description of Corinth at this point is Mulisch again at his most characteristically vivid:

Hij voelde haar hand. Koude lucht streek langs zijn benen. Zijn lippen waren verlamd en zijn hoofd was zwaar: de helm. Hij zag haar, maar het was of zij er niet was. Grijnzend en met kramp in zijn wangen keek hij haar aan. Achter de wangen brak het donderen van het orkest los.

'He felt her hand. Cold air ran along his legs. His lips were paralyzed and his head was heavy: the helmet. He saw her, but it was as though she was not there. Grinning and with a cramp in his cheeks he looked at her. Behind his cheeks the thundering of the orchestra broke loose.'

(Mulisch 1989, 185)

As the story moves towards its conclusion, Corinth badly beats up Schneiderhahn, whom earlier he had falsely accused of having exercised his profession in the extermination camps as a ghoulish dentist extracting gold from the mouths of gassed Jews. He flees in Ludwig's automobile, making his way through the ruins of Dresden, smashes the car up, passes out, and wakes up bloodied, with a wartime newspaper clipping in his hand announcing the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Heinrich Schliemann, the almost legendary excavator of the long-lost site of Troy. Then after Corinth has stumbled away from the now burning car comes the concluding sentence: "Hij stond weer op en kroop achter een begroeid heuveltje, waar hij het vuur niet meer zag en over de uitgestorven vlakte kon kijken" ("He stood up once more and crept behind an overgrown hillock, where he no longer saw the fire and could look across the desolate plain.") (219). "Een begroeid heuveltje" and "de uitgestorven vlakte" suggest not only the rubble-strewn wastelands of Dresden but even more the Hill of Hisarlik which had concealed the many layers of Troy buried since Greco-Roman antiquity, and the wide plain which had stretched before the city of Homer's *Iliad*. Thus, the novel's finale does not come in the form of a philosophic musing or inspiration in Corinth's mind but as a phantasm of Troy – an ominous closure, to be sure: clearly, his trauma has not been healed and may never heal.

Unlike *Slaughterhouse-Five*, *Het Stenen Bruidsbed* is a psychological novel par excellence, done in the bravura-expressive style Mulisch does so well, although the ultra-modernism will certainly not appeal to everyone. At the CAANS conference where an earlier version of this paper was presented, there was some lively discussion as to whether an author who was not a survivor of a horrendous-scale wartime atrocity should have felt he had the moral authority to make it the subject of a work of fiction, with the strong view being expressed that Mulisch should not have imagined that he deserved this privilege for *Het Stenen Bruidsbed*. This is a very difficult question which I do not presume to settle. As is well known, the same issue has been raised with respect to the fictionalization of the Holocaust. In the Introduction to his book *Imagining the Holocaust*, Daniel M. Schwartz probes the question at great length in all its ethical and artistic ramifications, citing, among others, Theodor Adorno's famous dictum, "After the Holocaust to write a poem is barbaric" (Schwartz 1999, 22). Schwartz comes out in favour of artistic freedom exercised within the ethical parameters of full respect and sensitivity towards the victims, and I join him in this. As I underlined at the beginning, Mulisch was well equipped, already by virtue of his family background, to tackle in his fiction difficult questions of guilt and responsibility in war; and although in his later *De Aanslag* he may have met this challenge in a literary-artistic form much more accessible to the general public, that is, without a superabundance of literary modernism, the

psychological portrait, both complex and vivid, of the perpetrator Norman Corinth which unfolds in our reading of *Het Stenen Bruidsbed* is, in my judgment, one of the outstanding creations of the twentieth century novel.

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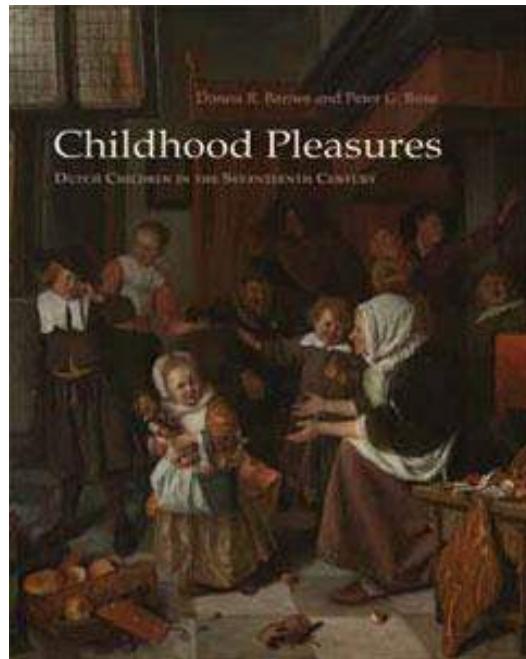
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Reviewed by Elizabeth A. Galway



Childhood Pleasures: Dutch Children in the Seventeenth Century is a beautifully illustrated work that will appeal to those with an interest in both Dutch history and the history of childhood more broadly. With a focus on the province of Holland from the seventeenth century to the early years of the eighteenth century, the work considers various elements of childhood culture including toys, games, music, and food. Through their exploration of the different pleasures and

modes of entertainment available to Dutch children of the period, the authors shed light on Dutch attitudes towards children and childhood during this important era.

The book focuses on two key areas of childhood experience: activities and food. In the book's *Foreword* Arthur K. Wheelock, Jr. outlines how studying childhood culture both informs us of attitudes towards children and simultaneously reveals many of the values that helped shape the Dutch Republic. He notes the significant connections between international trade, children's toys and food, and the teaching of "deeply felt ethical and moral values that were broadly shared in Dutch society" (x). While the book would have been enriched by making this important point a more sustained topic of investigation, Barnes and Rose nevertheless provide an engaging account of some of the key elements of children's daily lives in seventeenth-century Holland. They draw from cookbooks, diaries, and archaeological evidence, but the primary source of their information on the pastimes and cuisine experienced by Dutch children is art, including paintings, drawings, and prints.

The book contains beautiful, high-quality reproductions of these artistic works, and each one is accompanied by commentary from one of the authors. As they note in their *Preface*, Barnes and Rose have organized these images around eight key themes: "infancy; Saint Nicholas, bringer of sweets and toys; celebrations and music; toys and games; animals as pets and companions; inventing fun, games, and mischief; shopping for food treats; and winter activities outdoors" (xiii). Regrettably, it is not clearly articulated why these particular themes are the subject of focus, or why other ones are absent, and there remains a great opportunity for further study of themes like family relations and schooling. Nevertheless, the authors do direct the reader's attention to a number of interesting topics within their study.

Barnes' chapter on child pastimes is written in a relaxed, accessible prose style, designed to evoke in the reader's mind a clear image of the daily pleasures and experiences of Dutch children at this time. She draws connections between elements of childhood experienced by seventeenth-century Dutch children, and those fundamental to childhood in other periods and places, while at the same time noting those features that were unique to this period in history. Barnes is careful to point out that childhood experience was shaped very much by the particular social class to which one belonged, and that there were significant differences between rural and urban childhoods in this period.

One factor that receives less critical attention is the role that expectations of gender played on shaping childhood toys and activities. For instance, Barnes remarks that "boys climbed ... trees and swung on branches (as they have done around the world since time immemorial)" (2), and that boys, "more so

than their sisters enjoyed snowball fights or mud-ball fights" (5). It would be a welcome contribution to the discussion of Dutch childhood if such distinctions between the activities of boys and girls were explored in greater depth in relation to the social conventions and expectations that may have resulted in such differences. Additionally, the discussion would be enriched by a further consideration of what the objects, toys, and art of the time tell us about the way Dutch boys and girls were socialized into particular gender roles during this period.



Job Berckheyde. The Bakery Shop. Oil on canvas. Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio; R.T. Miller, Jr. Fund, 1956. Illustration from book under review, p. 108

Rose's chapter on *Edible Pleasures* provides an excellent overview of the food available in Holland, including both local foodstuffs and more exotic ingredients such as cinnamon and nutmeg that were available as a consequence of Dutch seafaring. Rose draws on some fascinating sources to outline the eating habits of children from all classes, including a menu from an Amsterdam orphanage from 1640. Outlining some of the food connected to specific religious holidays and events such as weddings, Rose demonstrates how food went far beyond simply providing sustenance and played an important role in the social life of the community. A delightful addition to this text is the inclusion of a dozen Dutch recipes that are intended as child-adult cooking activities.

Following these introductory chapters, the book focuses on examples of Dutch art, organized around the eight key themes identified by the authors. The accompanying text offers possible interpretations of the artwork, including both symbolic readings where appropriate, and assessments of what the art reveals about the clothing, pastimes, and toys available to children at the time. Also included are brief biographical statements about each of the twenty-four artists whose work appears in the book.

Childhood Pleasures, though not an exhaustive study of the subject of seventeenth-century Dutch childhood, provides a good introduction to the topic. It is an enjoyable, accessible text that will appeal primarily to a popular audience, but which also has much to interest scholars in the fields of food history, Dutch history, and childhood culture.

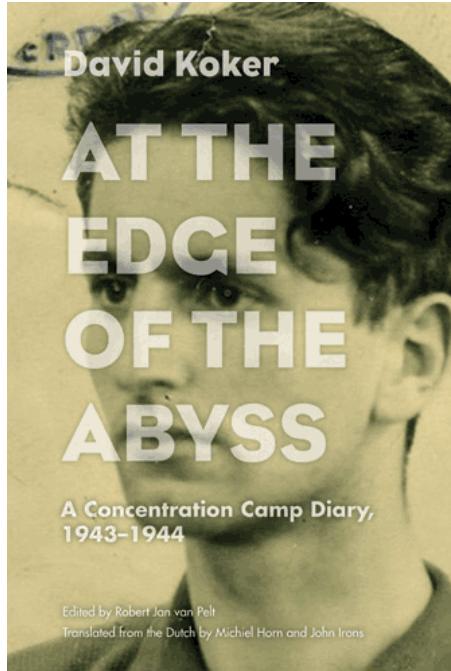
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Review
David Koker:
At the Edge of the Abyss:
A Concentration Camp Diary, 1943-1944

Robert Jan van Pelt (ed.), Michiel Horn and John Irons (trans.)
Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2012. 410 p.
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Reviewed by Hendrika H. Beaulieu



To set oneself the task of bringing back to life the hallucinatory reality of a single human being, in a single camp, borders on sacrilege. The truer the tale, the more fictitious it appears. The secret must remain inviolate. Once revealed, it becomes myth, and can only be tarnished, diminished. In the end, words lose their innocence, their power to cast a spell. The truth will

never be written; like the Talmud, it will be transmitted from mouth to ear, from eye to eye. By its uniqueness, the Holocaust defies literature. We think we are describing an event; we transmit only its reflection.

(White 1998, 172)

As a consequence of an ideology so pernicious one is reluctant to use the term 'ideology' to refer to it, David Koker was rounded-up, forcibly removed from his beloved Amsterdam, incarcerated in Vught, and discarded as trash in the death camps of Germany. Recognizing that writing in the camp could lead to his death, he paradoxically acknowledged that his Being was dependent upon his continuing inscription of the violence, despair, anger, apathy, immobilizing fear and even happiness that surrounded and penetrated him. The resulting texts, consisting of poems, letters, and a diary written mainly to his best friend Karel van het Reve and his girlfriend Nettie, constitute the center of *At the Edge of the Abyss: A Concentration Camp Diary, 1943-1944*. After the War, Dr. Van het Reve turned over these narrative materials to David's younger brother, Max Koker. Mr. Koker, who along with his mother and father was incarcerated in the Vught 'work camp' with David, was later transported, again with the rest of the Koker family, to Germany's death camps. Both he and his mother Judith managed to survive the War, although his mother would never recover from her nightmare. Max Koker was the force behind the very successful release of the diary in the Netherlands, and an integral component of the partnership between Michiel Horn, John Irons, and Robert Jan van Pelt that led to the current, very impressively translated, English edition.

In his preface, van Pelt notes that the historical references and personalities that transit David Koker's diary inspired further research by Michiel Horn and himself into the people and events David discusses. The published work is therefore enhanced with historical notes throughout David's journal and offers an *Appendix* that recounts the lives and fates of the main characters and of David's pre-war friends. Within the published compilation, David Koker's diary is situated as a devastating presence, the 'center' of the published work, an anguished liminal suspension located between the *Introduction* (David's life), and the *Epilogue* (David's death).

The *Introduction* acquaints us with David, a rather precocious boy; a teenager who exhibits a formidable emerging intellect; and the outlines of the man he might have been. Within the historical Amsterdam-Judaic community context, we experience his life in a happy, close family utterly committed to their lives in Amsterdam, as a young man of superior intelligence who nurtured close friendships with schoolmates equally curious about the world, a scholar grown rebellious and trying out new ideas while testing the logical limits of Zionism, a poet published before the war, a philosopher who eyed the human condition

with a somewhat sardonic eye. I read the Introduction with a bittersweet awareness; a feeling of happiness that he had at least experienced this, interpenetrated by a deep, abiding melancholy: the awareness of his life unlivèd.

The *Epilogue* closes the life. While David's diary begins with his abduction and removal from the city he loved, his diary offers no closure: "and feel myself caught badly in the middle" (335), are the last words he left us. The editors pick up the narrative by recounting the available historical details connected to the final months of David's life and the subsequent fate of the rest of the Koker family. Coming after the diary, the *Epilogue* evokes a sense of total helplessness and despair as it moves relentlessly towards its denouement; David's body "ended up with 7,608 other corpses in the mass graves on the Leitenberg" (Van Pelt 2012, 346).

On the one hand I deeply appreciated the historical information footnoted throughout the text of the journal: it not only answers the 'I wonder what happened to him/her/them' questions that arise as we become acquainted with people in the camp, it also connects the diary to both context and people, constantly subverting White's observation that "the truer the tale, the more fictitious it appears" (White 1998, 172). The tendency to read Holocaust texts as occurring in mythological time is therefore countermanded by rooting David's experiences in 'reason', in history. As a reader, however, I noted an auxiliary effect of the aggregate information offered: the footnotes evoked desperation. There were times when I felt compelled to quickly flip through the notes, urgently seeking one that did not end in the words "they were murdered in Sobibor" or "he was murdered in Auschwitz". If I found one – and there were so few – far too few – I felt a moment of exhilaration, of triumph, as if evil had momentarily been defeated by a lone survivor. Those footnotes potentially deepen our objective awareness of the Holocaust through an emotional grasping of that reality; these were people; they had lives. The footnoted dead, like David, were human beings with unique hopes, dreams, fears, and longings. His diary narrative confronts us with their bravery, humanity, memories; we visualize the millions of shadowy dead through his narrative.

Confronted with the task of reviewing a camp diary I felt I was committing analytic sacrilege; commenting in any way on the text appears both unthinkable and impossible; representation fails. Yet this diary is written by a young man with a poet's soul, and in spite of my resistance to critically engaging his text, I feel compelled to elicit motivation from others to read it. It is an oral narrative committed to paper; oral in that it flows freely from David's mind, through his pencil, onto bits of paper. Because materials were scarce he had to make the most of every scrap, thus editing the edges of the Self he chose to represent was clearly difficult. Roughly halfway through his incarceration he tells

us; "The nature of this diary; it describes facts. But in the objective sense. It doesn't suggest I live under these circumstances. The personal is not permitted here" (215). Even though he was writing for Karel and Nettie, David continually assessed his experiences and his narrative telling, analyzing why he chose to tell some stories and not others, probing why he chose to recount certain events within particular frameworks while discarding alternatives, and ruminating about how his stories and thoughts might be received. Referring to the trust that he placed in Karel and Nettie and that it was a necessary pre-requisite for the exposure of Self, he wondered if the recipients of his letters and diary would be able to really hear, to *grasp*, what he had to say (White 1998, 174). The latter was an obvious concern for David and he returns to it throughout the diary, although his understanding of the gap between his transmission of Self and his friends' possible apprehension of his narrative becomes increasingly profound in the final entries. He repeatedly tells his friends – whose images are fading as the days pass – that he needs them to *know*, to *understand* even his most dubious thoughts and deeds. Indeed, the paradigm of 'permissible disclosure' is clearly operative in the diary until we get to page 294, when the narrative alters. David becomes more preoccupied with the personal, less with "objective facts", a change deriving from the morning of his birthday when "Spitz reads an excerpt from a letter from Poland. Three people [his fiancée and her parents] are living with Moves [Dutch-Yiddish expression for 'they are dead']. And Moves is working overtime" (294).

Indeed the textual breaking point coming on the heels of the missive from Poland can be clearly discerned:

We're standing on the edge. In the middle of life. But we can't move a step because before us is an absolute void. And this wouldn't be so important if another feeling hadn't settled in. I feel bigger and stronger with this knowledge. Disdain for one's own fate and for that of others is the necessary basis for every great style of life ... without being indifferent to it, I can make peace with doom. Above all I can reconcile it when I see so much that's small and ugly go to ruin. That doesn't exclude pity. And it certainly doesn't exclude making an effort to hold on to life. (295)

From this point until the diary breaks off, David's self-reflection is almost fey. There were only a few pages left – was it because I knew that the abyss would swallow him that I read fore-knowledge into his narrative?

While David states that his writings only reveal what he is willing to disclose, his passing references to people, events, and his relentless self-examination force the reader into the gaps of his text; we experience the chaotic consequences of the complete disruption of previously taken-for-granted social

transactions. ‘Before-the-war’ discourse no longer holds; Jews are not people and any interaction between a Jewish person and an ‘Aryan’ is conducted on the basis of dissimilar social symbols and understandings. David often inadvertently exposes the profound violations of shared cultural practices that governed pre-war social relations and notes their consequences. His disorientation is profound: “anyway life here is physically, spiritually, unconscious” (90); “there’s nothing here to mark the time. I have a fierce headache. The days are empty and full. Undifferentiated: full” (106); “boredom that would make you weep if you had tears to weep with” (111). The loss of memory, both short and long term, is palpable throughout his prose. He doesn’t remember what day it is. He can’t recall beloved faces. This disjunction between life as it is and how it ought to be both worries him and strengthens his resolve to fight against the attacks on his personal cohesion. His poems and narrative reflection speak his self-despair, suffering, and periodic happiness, while his persistent self-inquisition addresses his urgent awareness that he must retain a sense of agency, he must hold on to himself.

In pursuit of that Agency, he seeks work in the camp and concurrently deconstructs his motives, his ‘I’:

I wish I weren’t such a coward. I wish I were less compliant. That if the Germans order something to be cleaned, I weren’t so prompt in the execution. I wish I didn’t try to do things quite so well. I have no negative attitude towards what they order us to do. I give in and hope to make something of it in accordance with German regulations. I want to have a job here: out of ambition. Everywhere I show up, I want to join in the work. In the vanguard. No matter whether it’s good or bad. I wish I were less of an apple polisher. Less ambitious. (110)

Later David will ruthlessly analyze his moral Self-diminished and struggle to define a revised moral code that grounds the self. Knowing that the Germans have reduced his options to either working with them and surviving, or plotting against them and immediate transport to the Westerbork transit camp, he strives to enunciate a framework that reconciles these pernicious either/or choices. When he is able to save his family from transport due to his camp connections, he does so within the framework of a moral imperative newly conceived. Simultaneously he recognizes how very limited his ethical options have become.

Perhaps somewhat conveniently, since moral imperatives may understandably give way to expediency out of cruel necessity, David long sustained his belief in the ‘myth of Poland’ so judiciously disseminated by the German Reich, according to which people leaving Westerbork were being sent to Poland merely

to work and conditions were relatively good in those camps. In this twisted German discourse, if parents or children had been sent ahead of each other to Westerbork, then they would be assigned to the next transport so that they could be together 'as a family in Poland'. David was therefore able to maintain that he was not sending fellow inmates to their deaths; instead, he was sending them to a better place. Yet at the same time he presents a countervailing discourse in his diary: there were German officials who tried to hold back transports; officials who used various pretenses to try to keep people in Vught. On the one hand: happier days in Poland; on the other: Germans sending signals that transport to Westerbork might not be what German official discourse claimed it to be. In the diary, although he makes earlier attempts, David does not reconcile this conflict in himself until the letter for Spitz arrives from Poland. Then he fully internalizes death; he acknowledges that there is no 'at-least-quite-comfortable' in Poland. Hope, and with it a goodly portion of his revised moral framework, dies, and he revises his understanding of Self and Other once again. Embedded within the Vught structure, the realization that working with the Germans delayed, but did not prevent transport, came slowly to David. The Reich's upper level officials were committed to the 'Jewish solution', and the men running Vught were eminently replaceable.

I experienced a number of ethical dilemmas while reading this text. The first was a certainty that I was violating the diary's author. David Koker – and it is impossible to think of him as anyone other than 'David' after connecting so intimately with him – was an intensely private person. He was writing primarily for two people: the girl he loved and the young man with whom he had an intense, deep, and abiding friendship. His entire text is oriented to those readers, arises from the trust he had in them, and is permeated with his determination that they should truly understand his thoughts, his reactions, his behaviour, warts and all. What would David have thought of me? What would his opinion have been of my reading lines that reveal aspects of his soul?

Secondly, there were times when I simply didn't like David, when I was appalled by his behaviour. An example: his analysis of the fact that the power exerted over him led him to exert gratuitous power over the children he taught. This sometime-dislike of David initially provoked a deep guilt in me. David was incarcerated in a concentration camp. How could I even think of critiquing his behaviour or morality? I realized, however, that guilt in this instance was counter-productive and unnecessary, that I was responding to David as a human being, not as an icon. While I found it admirable that he could engage in a remorseless critique of his behaviour in relation to the schoolchildren and that he could name what he was doing, I also thought: Why keep it up then? In his diary he later dissects the impulses that informed his continuing behaviour and

juxtaposes them to moments of great pity he felt for the children, but I still could not concur with his reasoning, could not consent to it because I do not embody David's experiences. As human beings our realities diverged. He responded to the circumstances of his then being-in-the-world. The absolute reality of the concentration camp's present, in which the past is an illusion, and the future unimaginable, requires a normative realignment from both writer and reader. In order to textually live with and understand him, I had to suspend my moral imperatives and simply accept him as he was – as David.

For scholars able to treat the diary as pure historical text, a number of David's narrative threads deserve further research and analysis. Although Sherbakova (2005, 103-116) has illuminated significant deviations between men's and women's responses to the Gulag, and my Dutch-Indonesian Japanese concentration camp life segments underline Sherbakova's findings (Beaulieu 2009, 185-194), David's observations regarding women's sensuality in the camps, and men's lack thereof, are surely significant. His further discussions of gender divergence, particularly the comparisons he draws between his father and mother, suggest that men, who have lost their public face, space, and above all their personal agency, feel their utter despair differently than women. Moreover, he notes the good relations between women and their guards, recounts women staging rebellions en masse, and more generally reveals significant discrepancies in gender approaches to the perversion of power, civility dissolved by fear, and resistance to apathy.

David also describes moments of "great joy" in the camp, for instance during a period when a new commandant lifted severe restrictions, when food parcels arrived and letters were smuggled in from dear friends, and, significantly, of happiness provoked by humane acts from German overseers: "I like the camp a lot these days" (214). "I can't believe that Reinecke isn't a *mensch* in one way or another" (252). "[I]n the evening a soccer match, in which Reinecke joined, and one of the Jews bodychecked him so hard that he fell over a fence" (214). And the following:

[B]ut for me there was great joy in something I'll describe... [the Unterscharführer said] Gentlemen! I want to impart a small item to you... I'll allow you to visit your womenfolk this afternoon... from two to five... And he: Did you understand: three full hours from two until five?... The man was a bit moved himself... And took so much pleasure in telling us that he almost didn't want to let us go... After dismissal Susskind reached for his hand in a formal way and kept on shaking it for a long time... Let me put it this way: this has somewhat restored my faith in humanity. (135)

Indeed, David never expresses hatred for the Reich's men in uniform, although contempt, derision, and sheer disbelief are certainly evident.

The prisoners' interpretation of the Unterscharführer's announcement as a sign of his benevolence, as generosity, is rooted in disjunction, the complete loss of sense making practices, the result of a structure designed to systematically break down intentionality and agency in each individual (White 1998, 174). This is true perversion; women and men should never have been separated, should never have been in the camps in the first place, since their very presence there was a travesty. For these prisoners the situation has become normalized, the disjunctive is the real and letting spouses see each other, giving children access to their parents, becomes an act of humanity. When people are methodically exposed to techniques calculated to break down their (past) reality, complete psychological disorientation is the result. In Vught – and the reader of the diary will engage David's discourse on German efficiency, including the running of camps – the abnormal has become logical, rational, and in this instance, benevolent.

The diary of David Koker has a great deal to teach us. This young man dissected the world around him and himself with scrupulous care. The fact that I experienced hostility to parts of his narrative renders the work potentially invaluable; it is not a careful presentation of self, but a remorseless evaluation of his being in his disjointed world and of the others who surround him. Attention to detail and careful historical reconciliation characterize the information with which the editors have enhanced the manuscript, and ensures that *At the Edge of the Abyss* will stand both as testimony and as a valuable historical document of an almost inconceivable period in our joint history. The diary will demand your involvement. It is not possible to lightly skim the surface of this text. It will leave you shaken and it may leave you traumatized. All the better. As one of my interviewees said to me when she recalled her life in a Japanese prison camp: "If I could live it, you can hear it" (Beaulieu 2009, 342).

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About the reviewer

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