

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear AANS members: greetings!

In our last business meeting, we voted to increase membership dues to keep the AANS strong. Beginning Jan. 2009, the new membership rate will be \$50.00 per year or \$100 for 2 years (the latter includes the ICNS publication, a value of \$35.00). Members overseas can pay dues in Euros at the equivalent exchange rate. Student membership costs \$25.00 per year (for students not employed fulltime at academic institutions).

At this time, we are preparing to launch a new AANS website by/before the new year; it will enable members to pay dues on-line. As before, membership dues cover the calendar year (Jan. through Dec., 2009). We encourage everyone to register and pay dues on-line (we will send notice as soon as the website is launched). As before, members who pay dues in Euro's may use the existing Postbankrekening account (nr. 4376210, AANS, Indianapolis, VS), overseen by Dr. Margriet Lacy.

The New AANS Website Anticipated for Launch Jan. 2009

We are completing the reconstruction on the website and hope to launch it in January. The new website features password-protected login, on-line dues payment, easy access to current or archived editions of the newsletter, conference information, announcements, and

scholarship/grant opportunities, as well as links to related organizations and resources. When all is ready, we will notify members by email that the new site has been launched.

The AANS Newsletter goes On-Line

As soon as the new website is launched, the newsletter will be accessible on-line (no longer printed and mailed) and produced twice a year.

Status of the Next ICNS Volume (June 2008, North Carolina)

Readers are currently evaluating the submitted essays. Once decisions are made (Jan. 2009), Dr. Margriet Lacy will prepare the accepted manuscripts for publication.

UCLA Hosts the 2010 ICNS: June 17-19, Thurs-Sat. (Los Angeles)

The next AANS conference ("ICNS") takes place at the University of California, Los Angeles, which maintains one of the preeminent Dutch Studies programs in the United States. UCLA's fabled Royce Hall serves as primary venue for sessions and speakers. The conference theme is to be determined.

The conference is co-sponsored by UCLA's Dutch Studies Program, the Dept. of History (Prof. Margaret Jacob); UCLA's Dept. of Germanic languages (Prof. Robert Kirsner); California Lutheran University's Dept. of Art (Prof. Christine Sellin). The conference is made possible in great part with the support of the *Nederlandse Taalunie*. We are currently exploring supplementary sponsorship. We

appreciate any suggestions or support you can offer.

On behalf of the AANS Executive Council, I thank you for your support and participation.

Sincerely,

Dr. Christine P. Sellin, President.

AANS SCHOLARSHIP

Applicants must submit a proposal of at least two pages, a timetable, a budget, two letters of recommendation, a curriculum vitae, and a set of transcripts. The proposal should establish the scholarly contribution and significance of the project, its relevance to the applicant's professional goals, and progress already made. Applications for the academic year 2009-2010 must reach the AANS by **February 15, 2009**. The selection committee will consist of members of the Executive Council of the AANS. Please send completed (hardcopy only) applications to:

Dr. C.P. Sellin
 Assist. Prof of Art History
 CALIFORNIA LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY, Art
 Department
 60 West Olsen Road, mail code 3800
 Thousand Oaks, CA. 91360 U.S.A.
 office: 805/493-3564, fax: 805/493-3479, email:
csellin@callutheran.edu

COLOPHON

The *AANS Newsletter* is published twice a year (spring and fall) by the American Association for Netherlandic Studies as a service to its membership and is sent to all current, paid members. Any change of address notices should be sent to the secretary of the Association:

Dr. Dan F. Thornton
 c/o Office of Scholarships & Student Aid
 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
 P.O. Box 1080
 Chapel Hill, NC 27514-1080 USA
 Email: thor@email.unc.edu

This issue of the AANS Newsletter was edited by Jeroen Dewulf. Please send reviews, announcements, or any other pertinent information to:

e-mail: AANSNews@hotmail.com

SPECIAL EVENTS

The AANS co-organizes the visit of Dutch-Iranian author Kader Abdolah to the US.

Kader Abdolah is the pen name of Iranian-Dutch writer, Hossein Sadjadi Ghaemmaghami Farahani, who was born in 1954 in the city of Arak, Iran. He came to the Netherlands in 1985 as political refugee. His pseudonym, Kader Abdolah, is an amalgam of the names of two murdered friends.

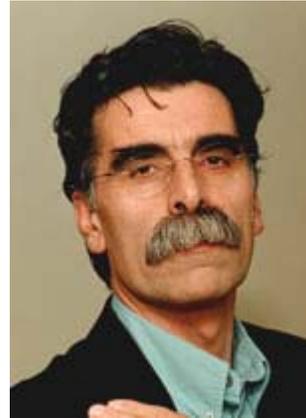


Photo Roy Tee

Kader Abdolah won several literary awards such as the Golden Dog-Ear Award and E. du Perron Prize. His books include: *Spijkerschrift* (My Father's Notebook), *De Adlaars* (The Eagles), *Het Huis van de Moskee* (The House of the Mosque). Abdolah also undertook a translation of the Q'uran into Dutch, considered by some Muslims to be an offensive act- even before taking into account the fact that he deliberately altered some things in his version, to make it more easily accessible (In an interview, Abdolah joked, "I learned this arrogance from the Dutch"). Kader Abdolah also writes columns for the newspaper "De Volkskrant" under the pen name Mirza Mirza.

More information on Kader Abdolah can be found on the UC Berkeley Website on the Dutch Multicultural Society:

http://dutch.berkeley.edu/mcnl/index.php/Kader_Abdolah

In April 2010, Kader Abdolah will be guest at the Dutch Studies Program at UC Berkeley. In cooperation with the NLPVF and the Nederlandse Taalunie, Kader Abdolah is willing to visit other Dutch Studies Programs in the US during the month of March 2010. His program includes both a lecture and a workshop with students. His stay is limited to max. 1 week at each university.

Colleagues who are interested in inviting Mr. Abdolah, should contact Jeroen Dewulf: jdewulf@berkeley.edu

CALL FOR PAPERS

Call for papers, MLA 2009

The MLA discussion group for Netherlandic language and literature invites papers on the topic of collaboration and resistance in Netherlandic literature. Writings on and of Dutch Indonesia and South America, the Spanish Netherlands, Nazi-occupied Holland in WWII and German-occupied Flanders in WWI. Flaminganten, NSBers, clandestine literature, compromised scholarship, reform and resistance movements real and imagined. Please send abstracts by March 15 to Peter J. Schwartz (pjs8@bu.edu).

SUMMER COURSES DUTCH

Summer Courses organized by the Dutch Language Union

[Zomercursussen Nederlandse Taal en Cultuur]

The *Nederlandse Taalunie*, the Dutch Language Union, is a Dutch-Flemish-Surinam organization set up in 1980 by treaty between the Netherlands and Belgium. The Language Union promotes and finances projects relating to the Dutch language, literature, education and culture, both in and outside the Dutch-language area. There has been a longtime association between the Taalunie and the AANS.

Zeist: 20 July – 8 August 2009 [approximately 160 participants] more info: info@taalunie.org
Hasselt-Diepenbeek: 26 July – 15 August 2009 [100] more info: dirk.lapeirre@ond.vlaanderen.be

Ghent: 2 August – 22 August 2009 [60] more info: dirk.lapeirre@ond.vlaanderen.be

These summer courses are intended for non-native speakers of Dutch, who are not residents in the Dutch language area, but who, for educational, professional or other reasons, wish to extend their knowledge of Dutch language and culture. Participants must be at least 18 years old and preferably no older than 35, and they must have a command of Dutch of at least at an elementary level.

Those completing the whole course will receive a certificate of attendance from the Language Union. For more information about the summer courses 2007, see the website of the Nederlandse Taalunie: <http://www.taalunieversum.org>.

Summer Dutch at Indiana University.

Summer Dutch Institute 2009

2 Culture Courses: May 11-15

2 Language Courses: May 18-July 10

West European Studies, Ballantine Hall 542, Bloomington, IN 47405

For more general information: check the website www.iub.edu/~sdi

For information on the classes: email Esther Ham, director of the program: eham@indiana.edu

BOOK REVIEWS

John Oliver Hand and Ron Spronk, eds., *Essays in Context. Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2006 ISBN: 0-300-12140-7 paper; \$40. Contact: www.yalebooks.com

This collection of thirteen essays by foremost scholars accompanied the exhibition catalogue *Prayers and Portraits: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych*; the exhibition was at the National Gallery of Art, Washington and Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp, in 2006-2007. The concept of the exhibition involved 36 pairs of panel paintings, most of them involving a religious subject and a patron. A grant from the Getty Foundation enabled scholars to carry out technical research on over 65 individual paintings, and to investigate them using various interdisciplinary approaches. The thirteen essays in this volume are the result, and

represent an intersection of material culture and devotional practice.

The form of a diptych involves two hinged panel paintings that could be opened to reveal the main images, or closed to show family arms or other images. Most diptychs are religious, but a few are secular, with a patron paired with an inscription or map. Although it was common for women to own, and presumably commission, a prayer book, it is rare for women to appear in diptychs, and then, women are positioned behind their husbands. These diptychs range in size from the very small, to the nearly life size half-length. In part, the diptych with patron developed from the manuscript Book of Hours tradition. It usually involves specific and personal commissions, and although some formulas are clear, a number of diptychs present unique imagery, and therefore, intriguing puzzles.

My remarks here cannot address all the fascinating issues raised here, but will touch upon some of them. Carol Purtle examines a Jan van Eyck diptych that is painted to imitate sculpture; she proposes that such paintings as imitation sculpture developed from ivory carved diptychs, small and very precious devotional objects. By painting figures as imitation sculpture, artists enhanced the illusionism of figures within a frame. The extraordinary diptych *By Memling of Maarten van Nieuwenhove adoring the Virgin*, dated 1487, is a leitmotif of this book of essays, as it was a stunning focal point of the exhibition. Max Martens discusses the family position in Bruges of the patron, and Reindert Falkenburg discusses the spatial construct, viewer's position, and act of prayer.

The larger patterns that emerge here are intriguing. Religious exigencies balance the sacred and the secular; tenacious imagery gets repeated, but artists in certain circumstances deviate and innovate from established forms.

Specialists in the field of the technical examination of the materials will eagerly devour this book of thirteen essays; others will appreciate the detective work and questioning methodology that carries forward this kind of meticulous research.

Amy Golahny, Lycoming College, Williamsport PA

Paul Verhaeghen *Omega Minor*, Dalkey Archive Press, University of Illinois - Champaign, 2007. Edited in Paul Verhaeghen's own translation ISBN 978-1564784773, contact: <http://www.dalkeyarchive.com>

It starts with an orgasm; the human being as the creator of life, reaching to the stars in fervent exuberance. The Faustian opening of this fascinating story ends, however, in complete destruction, as a Benjamin's *Angelus Novus*-like angel flies away from the ruins of Berlin.

Or perhaps it does not: maybe love will still be able to save the world at the very last moment.

This, in a nutshell, is the story of Flemish author Paul Verhaeghen's 600 page novel *Omega Minor*, recently published in English translation by Dalkey Archive Press, the Illinois-based editor that has also printed the work of Louis Paul Boon, another Fleming with postmodern inclinations and a predilection for eroticism.

The plot of *Omega Minor* is set in Berlin, in the spring of 1995. An elderly Jewish man, Jozef De Heer, ingests an overdose of quinine in an attempt to commit suicide, but survives. When he wakes up, he finds himself next to a young Flemish psychologist with the Elckerlyc-like name Paul Andermans.

Andermans reveals in the course of their conversation that he has been the victim of a Neo-Nazi attack, thereby inciting De Heer to recount his life story. Having survived the horrors of the Second World War, De Heer managed to recover from the trauma that he had experienced at Auschwitz and subsequently became an active player in the East German communist regime. Also figuring prominently in Verhaeghen's novel is a man by the name of Goldfarb, another Jew. Goldfarb was rescued from the Nazis by his vigorous and adventurous mother. The two escaped together to America, where Goldfarb pursued a successful career in science and ultimately became involved in the Los Alamos project and the construction of the first atomic bomb. These two stories are tightly intertwined, and both lead to Germany. They finally intersect in central Berlin under dramatic circumstances.

Certain characters in the novel are based on actual persons such as Werner Heisenberg, who might have sabotaged the construction of the German atomic bomb, and Stella Goldschlag, who is said to have betrayed other Jews in return for money and safety for herself and her family. Treachery plays a crucial role in much of Dutch literature dealing with World War II, and Verhaeghen's novel is no exception. In *Omega Minor*, there is no clear dividing line between good and evil. In fact, in the end, the victim turns out to be the greatest traitor of all. In a similar

way to Arnon Grunberg's protagonist in *The Jewish Messiah*, Jozef De Heer reveals to have been a former Nazi who used the memories of others (Primo Levi, Eli Wiesel, Gerhard Durlacher, Jacob Presser) as a façade to cover up his past. However, contrary to the postmodern tendency to deny the existence of truth, Verhaeghen insists that doubt and fragmentation do not preclude authenticity. His message of truth is the sad conviction that memory alone cannot and will not prevent another Holocaust from occurring in the future.

Although Verhaeghen has no personal connection to the Shoa, he rightly insists that the Holocaust was a crime, not only against the Jews, but against humanity as a whole. As such, we all are summoned to reflect critically upon what has happened. In one of several philosophical reflections characteristic of *Omega Minor*, the narrator corrects Adorno: *No poetry after Auschwitz? I often think: After Auschwitz poetry is all we have. Each theory, each fiction, each human drama has lost its power on the tiled floors of the gas chambers.*

In his breathtaking novel, Verhaeghen pushes fiction to its limits, alternating kitsch and science-fiction, pornography and science, mystery and drama. His narrative style, characterized by frequent changes of perspective, imposing images, and a feverish narrative tempo, manages to keep the reader captivated until the very end. However, the structure of the work is deliberately chaotic, so that one is compelled to read slowly.

At first glance, it might appear as though Verhaeghen has been overambitious in trying to tackle the horrors of the Holocaust, the construction of the atomic bomb and the Cold War in a single novel. However, precisely this mixture of Breughelian profusion and Icarian recklessness proves fascinating. Sadly enough, the end of *Omega Minor* coincides with the end of Verhaeghen's career as an author. After completing this novel, he made the (irreversible?) decision to give up writing literature and to focus instead on his career as a cognitive psychologist at the the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta.

The novel began to take shape in 1995 while Verhaeghen was conducting research at the University of Potsdam concerning the memory capacity of elderly people. The test persons who chose to participate in his experiments were on average 75 years old and had experienced first-hand the rise of the Nazi regime, the Second World War and the fall of the Berlin Wall. The history of these

people was to become the plot of the novel *Omega Minor*.

When Meulenhoff/Manteau released the novel in 2004, it received little attention. The situation changed in 2005, when *Omega Minor* was shortlisted for the prestigious *Gouden Uil* literary prize. The attention of the media was remarkable, particularly in Verhaeghen's native Flanders, and although he did not win the *Gouden Uil*, he did receive two other important prizes later on: the *F. Bordewijk Award* and the triennial *Flemish Culture Award for Fiction*. It should be noted that in protest against the war in Iraq, the funds associated with the above awards have not been granted to Verhaeghen personally; rather, the awarding institutions have been asked to donate this money to the *American Civil Liberties Union*: a symbolic form of protest which reminds us that Verhaeghen's message remains valid in the troubled world of today.

Jeroen Dewulf, University of California at Berkeley

Tracy Kasaboski and Kristen den Hartog: *The Occupied Garden. Recovering the Story of a Family in the War-Torn Netherlands.* McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 2008.

ISBN: 978-0-7710-2622-5, contact:
<http://www.theoccupiedgarden.com/>

The *Occupied Garden* ends in Ontario, where two Canadian sisters visit a local church and recall how their Dutch grandparents would give Wilhelmina-Peppermints to keep them quiet during the somnolent sermons. They then walk to the cemetery, where they clean the grave of opa and oma, gently scraping until the names again become clear. These last scenes reproduce, in a nutshell, the book's entire narrative, based on the lives of Dutch couple Cor and Gerrit den Hartog and written by their granddaughters, the well-known fiction writer Kristen den Hartog (author of *Water Wings*, 2001, *The Perpetual Ending*, 2003, and *Origin of Haloes*, 2005) and her sister, Tracy Kasaboski. Although the family's emigration from the Netherlands to Canada does play a role in the book, its main focus is the life of this Dutch family in the war-torn Netherlands under Nazi occupation.

Cor and Gerrit were born in the small town of Overschie and although their families were members of different branches within the Dutch Protestant Church (her parents were more traditional 'Gereformeerd', his more pragmatic 'Hervormd'), their love proved to be stronger than any religious

proscription. They married in 1935 and began their life together as simple gardeners, without any sense of the looming military machine that soon would erupt from Germany. During the German occupation, Gerrit became a member of the resistance underground and served as a section commander in South-Holland, which the Nazis considered one of the most rebellious parts of the Netherlands. Before liberation could bring safety to the family, an allied plane missed its target near The Hague and two of the den Hartog children lost limbs. They managed to survive their injuries and, like many Dutch who did not see a future in the postwar Netherlands, the family eventually emigrated to the country of their liberators: Canada. The *Occupied Garden* is a well-written historical narrative that combines the personal experiences of the young den Hartog family with the larger narrative of the war that surrounded them. It does this both through the - sometimes rather stretched - lens of the Dutch Royal family (with Queen Wilhelmina in a star role) and through the administrative infrastructure of German occupation, under Reichskommissar Arthur Seyss-Inquart. The blending of these two stories also illustrates the position of the authors and their outsider's perspective, as Canadians writing about the Netherlands from a Dutch perspective. The story is fashioned from the memories of family members and friends, from the personal memoirs of the grandparents in their diaries, and through research the authors conducted in both Canada and Europe. This research was carried out in a serious and thorough manner, despite the fact that neither sister speaks Dutch, and thus could not consult many of the major works dealing with the German occupation of the Netherlands. The most important insight that they gain is therefore not military or political in nature, but rather constructed from personal memories of the past. With this book, the authors intend to preserve a story that was left unspoken for many years and in jeopardy of being lost forever to time and memory.

At the end of the narrative, a reference is made to the Ottawa Tulip Festival, an annual Spring event which stems directly from Princess Juliana's gift to her nation of sanctuary during the occupation; a fact that probably many young Canadians are no longer aware of. To prevent the historical significance of this event, which represents not only a national, but also a very personal link between Canada and the Netherlands, from becoming forever blurred, Tracy

Kasaboski and Kristen den Hartog wrote *The Occupied Garden*.

Jeroen Dewulf University of California at Berkeley

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Lo van Driel/Theo Janssen (Ed.): *Ontheven aan de tijd. Linguistisch-historische studies voor Jan Noordegraaf bij zijn zestigste verjaardag*, Stichting Neerlandistiek VU Amsterdam, Nodus Publikationen: Munster, 2008.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Flemish Academic Centre for Science and the Arts, or VLAC (Vlaams Academisch Centrum), offers fellowships to scholars to research in Brussels for at semester (or more). VLAC fellows are provided an office in the Throne building of the Royal Academy, across from the Royal Palace and the Park of Brussels. They are housed in studio apartments nearby and receive a 3,000 euro monthly stipend plus round trip travel and health insurance.

Other institutions such as the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin, the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in Uppsala, the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (NIAS) in Wassenaar, and the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS), in Princeton, may be better known, but after a semester at VLAC, I cannot imagine a better place to work (and play). In the center of Brussels, five minutes walk from the Albertine Library, and less, as we all discovered, from concerts, art exhibits, cafes, and restaurants, VLAC offers a congenial and collegial workspace.

Applications are on-line at <http://www.kvab.be/Vlac>. Deadlines are October 1, January 1, and April 1. It is possible to apply as an individual or as part of a cluster.

Janet Polasky
Professor of History, University of New Hampshire
Janet.Polasky@unh.edu

AANS OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

Officers of the AANS Executive Council:

President:

Dr. Christine P. Sellin
 CALIFORNIA LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY, Art
 Department
 60 West Olsen Road, mail code 3800
 Thousand Oaks, CA. 91360 U.S.A.
 office: 805/493-3564, fax: 805/493-3479, email:
csellin@callutheran.edu

Newsletter Editor/Member at Large:

Dr. Jeroen Dewulf
 Department of German
 5319 Dwinelle Hall
 University of California
 Berkeley, CA 94720-3243
 phone: 510-643-2004
jdewulf@berkeley.edu

Secretary:

Dr. Dan F. Thornton
 c/o Office of Scholarships & Student Aid
 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
 P.O. Box 1080
 Chapel Hill, NC 27514-1080 USA
 Email: thor@email.unc.edu

Treasurer/membership:

Dr. Bradley A. Holtman:
bholtman@mansfield.edu
 Mansfield University
 Dept. of English & Modern Languages
 G05B Belknap Hall
 Mansfield, PA 16933 USA

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Dutch Crossing
A Journal of Low Countries Studies

Dutch Crossing is a multidisciplinary scholarly journal devoted to all aspects of Low Countries studies, and it has been the journal of the Association for Low Countries Studies. It also functions as one of the journals of the Association for Language Learning (ALL). It appears in two issues per year.

Editorial address: *Dutch Crossing*, Department of Dutch, University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT, United Kingdom. E-mail: t.hermans@ucl.ac.uk

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 Canadienne des Études Néerlandaises.*

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Editorial address: *CJNS*, Dr. Basil D. Kingstone, French Language & Literature, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada, N9B 3P4
 Fax: (519) 971-3648
 e-mail: bkingst@uwindsor.ca