

# Editorial

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With many thanks again to Wijnie de Groot and Dan F. Thornton for guest-editing the special edition of *Dutch Crossing* on 'Imagining the Low Lands' in March 2018, it gives me great pleasure to introduce this 'regular' issues, which consists of no less interesting contributions.

Loek Luiten (Oxford) opens the issue with a reassessment of the European dimension of the English Civil War (1642–1651). Given the close dynastic, economic and religious relations across the Channel, it comes as no surprise that the developing conflict was followed closely in the United Provinces. Analysing a Dutch attempt at mediation in its early stages in 1644, as well as French and Spanish efforts to disrupt the endeavour, Luiten demonstrates the deep-rooted split of opinion in the Dutch political and public opinion and offers a new interpretation of Anglo-Dutch diplomatic history of the early 1640s.

Next, Maurits Ebben (Leiden) looks at changing perceptions of Spain in the Dutch Republic, as expressed in a travel account by Lodewijck Huygens, the son of the famous poet and composer Constantijn. In his *Spanish Journal* (1660–1661), Lodewijck departs from the common portrayal of ordinary Spaniards as enemies of the Dutch but rather depicts them as fellow victims, suffering at the hand of the Spanish tyranny and the Catholic Church. As Ebben argues, this change of perception clearly relates to the evolving self-conception of the United Provinces, providing a justification of the secession from Spain and further confirming Dutch national identity.

The next two contributions stem from a panel on the transnational public of Netherlandic literature, held on the 2016 Convention of the Modern Language Association (MLA) in Austin, Texas.<sup>1</sup> Both deal with the Dutch writer Etty Hillesum (1914–1943), whose Holocaust diaries are less known than those of her contemporary Anne Frank, at least outside of the Netherlands. Jane Fenoulhet (London) takes stock of the available English and French adaptations of Hillesum's diary and compares the mediation processes to various audiences with those of Anne Frank's diary, before exploring two recent dramatisations in more detail to reveal similar strategies for engaging audiences despite contrasting treatments of the diary.

Sarah Ropp (Austin) focuses on the imagined publics and constructions of self in Etty Hillesum's diary. Drawing on James Young's suggested 'poetics' of Holocaust diaries as well as on Bloom's notion of the 'public private diary', she performs a close reading of the evolution of the narrative voice created by Hillesum in order to demonstrate the complex negotiations performed by the diarist to construct a self for an evolving imagined audience – and then enact that self.

Next, Kasper Swerts (Edinburgh) considers the writings of the Flemish-nationalist historian Hendrik Jozef Elias (1902–1973). In his essay, for which the Swerts was awarded the 2016 Essay Prize of the *Association for Low Countries Studies*, the author revisits the debate on Elias’s motives to collaborate with the Nazi occupation of Belgium during World War II. Using the concept of teleology, he argues that Elias’s unique teleological perspective on national history determined his political career, as well as spelling the end of it.

Last but not least, Christopher Richard Joby (Poznań) presents his social history of the Dutch language during the first hundred years of the Dutch presence in Japan *Dutch in Seventeenth-Century Japan*. After a review of previous research on the subject, he considers the various social groups who acquired knowledge of Dutch in 17<sup>th</sup> century Japan and investigates questions of language acquisition, language competition and language contact as well as code switching and early translations from Dutch into Japanese, the initial steps towards the phenomenon that became known as *rangaku* (literally meaning ‘Learning from the Dutch’ or by extension ‘from the Europeans’), which would have a profound impact on Japanese society.

A review section, like in most issues of *Dutch Crossing*, and an erratum note, draw the issue to a close. As always best wishes for good reading!

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<sup>1</sup> *Netherlandic Literature its transnational Publics*, <https://mla.hcommons.org/groups/dutch/forum/topic/mla2016-netherlandic-literature-and-its-transnational-publics/> [accessed 19 April 2018].