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Guest editorial

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Guest Editorial

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Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA

For three days in early June of 2012, the sixteenth biennial International Conference for Netherlandic Studies (ICNS) convened on the campus of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA. The International Conference for Netherlandic Studies is the meeting venue for the American Association of Netherlandic Studies. In recent decades, the proceedings from the conference have typically been published in an edited volume. With this publication, however, we are trying something new. As such, we are happy to partner with *Dutch Crossing* which has cooperatively agreed to dedicate two issues to the scholarly fruits of the 2012 ICNS. The articles here have undergone the same peer-review process customary with *Dutch Crossing: Journal of Low Countries Studies*.

At the ICNS, scholars of Netherlandic studies presented their latest research in related fields or they contributed presentations in response to the conference theme, 'Artistic Responses to Watershed Eras'. The topic of artistic watershed was on the mind of the conference organizers as they were preparing the conference in the wake of the death of Harry Mulisch, whose passing in 2010 marked for many the end of the post World War II era of Dutch literature. The articles presented in this current journal issue are themselves from the literary side of the multidisciplinary conference. A forthcoming issue, edited by my colleague and co-organizer of the conference, Henry Luttkhuizen, an art historian at Calvin College, will present articles dealing with art and art historical topics.

The articles of this volume offer a telling glimpse into the range and breadth of literary topics that occupy scholars in the field of Netherlandic studies. In fact, the contribution by Adèle Nel comes from South African Studies, a related field long represented in the camp of International Netherlandic Studies. Nel's article offers a reading of Eben Venter's and S.J. Naudé's narrative texts through the lens of Diane Victor's *Disasters of Peace* etchings. Of the articles presented in this issue, Nel's is the most direct response to the conference theme of artistic watershed. The other three articles take us back in history and present a variety of literary topics. Jeroen Dewulf makes a case for a new understanding and reading of Sojourner Truth's autobiography in the context of Dutch-American contact literature. Paul Sellin unearths the complex and politically-motivated story behind Lieuwe van Aitzema's commissioned translation (in 1655) of John Milton's *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*. Finally, Ineke Huysman and Ad Leerintveld present new insights into the epistolary writings of Constantijn Huygens. Their work on the digitalization of Constantijn's letters at

the Dutch Royal Library — and the heretofore unknown letters or portions of letters — makes a compelling case for rethinking the paradigms in which Huygens's voluminous correspondence can be approached and studied.

Since neither the sixteenth biennial ICNS nor this journal issue could have been made possible without the generous support of various institutions and sponsors, it is fitting to mention them here again (in alphabetical order) in gratitude for their financial support: the American Association for Netherlandic Studies, Calvin College Office of the Provost, Nederlandse Taalunie, The Netherland-American Foundation, Inc., and the University of California, Los Angeles, Department of History.

It has been a pleasure, dear Reader, to assemble and edit these articles for your enjoyment and study.

Notes on guest editor

Herman De Vries is Frederik Meijer Chair in Dutch Language and Culture at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. As professor of Germanic languages, he teaches Dutch language, literature, and culture. His current research focus is on trends and developments in the Dutch language.

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