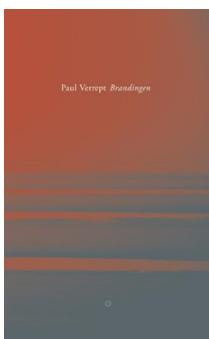


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## Ilse's Reviews > Brandingen

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### Brandingen

by Paul Verrept

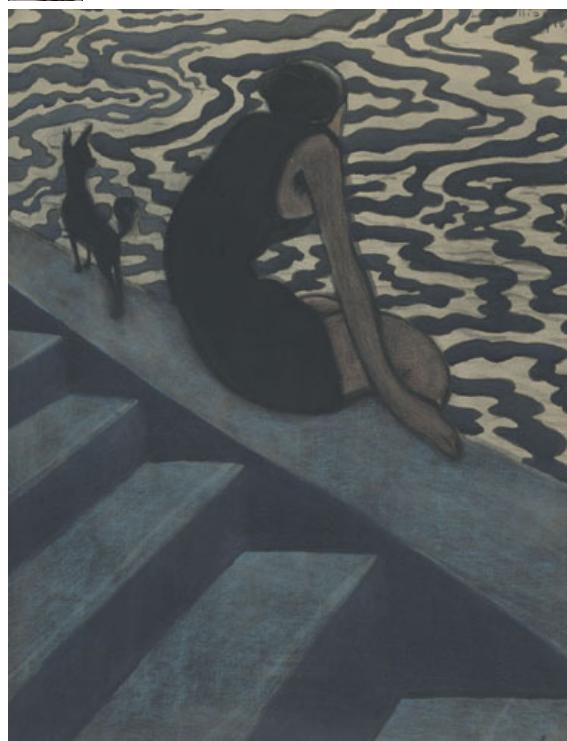


Ilse's review

Jan 11, 2022

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bookshelves: reviewed, 2022, o-dierbaar-belgië



(Léon Spilliaert, Baadster, 1910)

A woman and a man drift apart when reality intrudes on the harmony of their sensual idyll and the woman is unable to look away. In short, poetic sentences, they both tell their story in a double monologue (both texts were commissioned by the theatre company Skagen).

The confrontation with the bodies of refugees who lose their lives during the crossing of the sea and whose bodies wash up on the beach in front of the couple's beautiful house, sharpens the illusions they cherish about each other and themselves. The different ways in which the woman and the man experience this harsh reality bring the subcutaneous frictions between the two to light and culminate in a subdued yet powerful story about distance and proximity, powerlessness and internally contradictory desires, groping for mutual understanding in the widening gap between commitment and narcissism.

Even if the intimacy of one's own cocoon feels so safe and secure, no one is an island, as a wise poet knew.

This barbed gem also appeared in French as Raz de marée suivi de Marée basse.

\* \* \* \* \*

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geschreven in opdracht van het theatergezelschap Skagen).

De confrontatie met de lichamen van vluchtelingen die het leven laten tijdens hun overtocht en aanspoelen op het strand voor het mooie huis van het koppel stelt de illusies die ze over elkaar en zichzelf koesteren op scherp. De uiteenlopende manier waarop de vrouw en de man die harde realiteit beleven brengt de onderhuidse fricties tussen beiden aan het licht en mond uit in een ingetogen en toch krachtig verhaal over afstand en nabijheid, onmacht en innerlijk tegenstrijdige verlangens, tastend naar wederzijds begrip in de zich verdiepende kloof tussen betrokkenheid en narcisme.

Al voelt de intimiteit van de eigen cocon nog zo veilig en geborgen, niemand is een eiland zoals een wijs dichter al wist.

Dit kleinoed met weerhaakjes verscheen ook in het Frans als [Raz de marée suivi de Marée basse](#).

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**message 1:** by [Jaidee \(new\)](#)

Jan 11, 2022 10:41AM

 This sounds like such a powerful little read Ilse. I pretended I could read Dutch and then translated to English lol !

[reply](#) | [flag](#) \*

**message 2:** by [Cheri \(new\)](#) - added it

Jan 11, 2022 12:26PM

 Love the way this sounds (if google translate is to be trusted), and will have to see if it is available in english.

[reply](#) | [flag](#) \*

**message 3:** by [Ilse \(new\)](#) - rated it 4 stars

Jan 11, 2022 01:54PM

 Jaidee wrote: "This sounds like such a powerful little read Ilse. I pretended I could read Dutch and then translated to English lol !"

Jaidee, thank you very much for stopping by and making me laugh :). I was quite impressed by this play/novella, Verrept is an acclaimed author of youth fiction and this was his first outcome in adult literature. As man and woman are nameless as is the place it is set - it could be Lampedusa, thinking of the refugees - imho it captured very well the how different views on essential points are challenging in a relationship, which turned the little story into a reflection on the human condition :)

[reply](#) | [flag](#) \*

**message 4:** by [Ilse \(new\)](#) - rated it 4 stars

Jan 11, 2022 02:00PM

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that deserves to get a broader audience with getting published into English too indeed.

[reply](#) | [flag \\*](#)**message 5:** by [Vesna \(new\)](#)

Jan 11, 2022 04:20PM

 Dear Ilse, thank you for your bilingual review as it gives us all an opportunity to learn about this novella. The way in which the author interpolates the ongoing tragedy of refugees with the life of a couple who can be any of us ... though, not myself having read the book, perhaps I am taking too much of a liberty in interpreting why they are nameless. Your comment about the human condition would make me immediately reach out for this book had it been translated. Hope it will find its way to an English-language publisher.

[reply](#) | [flag \\*](#)**message 6:** by [Ilse \(new\)](#) - rated it 4 stars

Jan 12, 2022 05:12AM

 Dear Vesna, in the meantime I watched a trailer of the monologue of the woman on stage (on Youtube, Skagen, vloed, I cannot link it here), I somehow hope that the company will decide to play it once more as I was quite taken by the intensity of the actress's play and her despair when a child's body washes up the shore (strongly recalling the photo of Aylan Kurdi...). You haven't read the book but as always sensed astutely how that choice of Verrept not to name his characters gives a universal appeal to his text - the man and the woman could indeed be any of us as we all are aware that this tragedy is a daily reality, not only happening in some remote places but very close to our home, whether we ignore it or not. Thank you very much for stopping by despite this being not available in English and for enriching the experience of this with your insights - I share your hope on this coming to the attention of a publisher who would have it translated into English.

[reply](#) | [flag \\*](#)**message 7:** by [Fionnuala \(new\)](#)

Jan 12, 2022 09:35AM

 You've given us a glimpse of what happens when life throws something heart-churning into people's harmonious existence. I'd imagine it would make for a story with serious dilemmas indeed.

[reply](#) | [flag \\*](#)**message 8:** by [Paul \(new\)](#)

Jan 12, 2022 12:25PM

 That sounds quite some play, Ilse. Is the theatre group named for the beautiful Danish peninsula?

[reply](#) | [flag \\*](#)**message 9:** by [Ilse \(new\)](#) - rated it 4 stars

Jan 13, 2022 09:16AM

 Fionnuala wrote: "You've given us a glimpse of what happens when life throws something heart-churning into people's harmonious existence. I'd imagine it would make for a story with serious dilemmas indeed."

Fionnuala, I very much appreciated that Verrept picked this quite confrontational and divisive subject as a metaphor to make that point clear. I thought it interesting that he chose to drop this issue in the couple instead of turning to a more classical story of people drifting apart because they respond differently to personal disaster that puts a strain on the relationship like the loss of a child – the individual character of grief and coping not uncommon as an illustration how even the most harmonious relationships can struggle to weather such a storm. It was a good reminder that not only the personal is political, but the political can be personal too – at least I find it hard to imagine that one's views on society and politics do not affect a relationship as well, as one cannot live in society and be free from society – if not explicitly, at least implicitly.

[reply](#) | [flag \\*](#)**message 10:** by [Ilse \(new\)](#) - rated it 4 stars

Jan 14, 2022 03:24AM

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wrote a monologue 'Knaus', based on Knausgard's 'My Struggle' which was also translated in English and that they have been playing in Edinburgh several times (the monologue was off because of Covid) – which opens perhaps some perspectives for this book to be translated into English too...

[reply](#) | [flag \\*](#)message 11: by [Mark \(new\)](#)

Jan 14, 2022 08:05PM

 Oh wonderful review of what looks like a powerful story Ilse, too right most (all?) of us live in bubbles totally oblivious to the plight of these desperate people. I love the idea of both the man and woman telling their stories. I assume one of them was more sympathetic to their cause than the other??

You may have heard about Djokovic being detained in a detention hotel (really more like a prison) while his case to enter Australia is determined. But what it has highlighted to the population here, who are oblivious to the struggles of asylum seekers is - he shared his hotel with refugees who have been detained for up to 9 years!! Australia's treatment of asylum seekers is appalling.

Anyway, this story sounds like an important piece of work Ilse.

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