

The Reception of Oscar Wilde in the Netherlands, 1882-1905



Pieter-Jan Sterenborg
4014626
p.j.c.sterenborg@students.uu.nl
Bachelorscriptie Engelse taal en cultuur
Universiteit Utrecht
dr. Paul Franssen
30-06-2016
8329 woorden

Contents

Introduction	3
Chapter One	6
Chapter Two	15
Chapter Three	20
Conclusion	27
Bibliography	30
Appendix	33

Abbreviations

AH	<i>Algemeen Handelsblad</i>
HC	<i>Haagsche Courant</i>
HNvdD	<i>Het Nieuws van de Dag</i>
HR	<i>De Hollandsche Revue</i>
MC	<i>Middelburgsche Courant</i>
RvA	<i>Recht voor Allen</i>
SH	<i>Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad</i>

Introduction

In an 1891 letter addressed to the French writer Edmond de Goncourt, Oscar Wilde wrote that he was “French by sympathy, [...] Irish by birth, and the English have condemned me to speak the language of Shakespeare” (Holland and Hart-Davis 505). While frequently viewed as a quintessentially English author, Wilde was, as Stefano Evangelista points out, “European by Sympathy” (1). He felt largely misunderstood by the English public, as he was impatient with their narrow moral values, and he was convinced he was only fully appreciated abroad, whether in the United States or on the European continent. As one of the most widely translated Anglophone authors of all time, Wilde’s fame transcended national borders (Evangelista 3).

Therefore, Wilde’s reception cannot solely be studied from a national, i.e. British, perspective. As Elinor Shaffer, director of the research project “Reception of British and Irish Authors in Europe”, comments: “Our knowledge of the writers of the British Isles is simply incomplete and inadequate” (viii) without reception studies exploring the perspectives of other nations. Furthermore, Evangelista claims that Wilde’s early reception in Europe was crucial for the survival of his reputation into the twentieth century, linking his early silencing in Britain and Ireland with his recent rehabilitation (11). The 2010 volume *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe* contains many essays that deal with the reception of Wilde and his works in various European countries, including Germany, France, Hungary, Croatia and Russia. However, one country that is absent in this volume, except for some incomplete data in the volume’s timeline, is the Netherlands. This thesis will attempt to fill this gap and analyse the reception of Oscar Wilde in the Netherlands from 1882 until 1905.

The Dutch reception of Oscar Wilde has been the subject of some earlier publications. For example, Johan Polak describes Wilde’s influence on some Dutch writers, including Lodewijk van Deyssel and Jacob Israël de Haan, in the essays in his 1988 work *Oscar Wilde*

in Nederland (“Oscar Wilde in the Netherlands”). However, Polak does not provide any analysis of the critical reception of Wilde in the Netherlands. R. Breugelmans’s earlier publication from 1961 does focus on how Wilde was reviewed by Dutch critics, but he pays very little attention to the period before 1905. For instance, all his conclusions relating to the reception of Wilde during the 1890s are drawn on the basis of one single review article. More informative with regards to the early Dutch reception are two short works by Nop Maas, which together deal with the period between 1890 and 1910. However, Maas limited himself to studying the articles of only one newspaper, *Het Vaderland*, though he occasionally refers to articles from other sources when he happens to be aware of them. Furthermore, these two works by Maas are little more than a systematic collection of articles ordered chronologically, frequently lacking meaningful discussion.

This thesis aims to provide a well-balanced, in-depth analysis of how Wilde was received in the Netherlands from the earliest mentions roughly to 1905, the year the Dutch translation of *De Profundis* was released. These were the most neglected years by Breugelmans. With the advent of digital search engines like Delpher, this study is able to use evidence from a wide variety of newspapers, including the *Algemeen Handelsblad*, *De Tijd*, *Recht voor Allen*, *De Telegraaf*, *Het Nieuws van de Dag* and *Het Vaderland*. All of these catered to different readerships, though it has been hard to detect clear correspondences in the views of the respective newspapers throughout the researched period, with the exception of religious papers like the Catholic *De Tijd*. Much of the discovered material has been overlooked by older researchers like Maas and Breugelmans. Some attention will also be paid to some Dutch writers and how they perceived Wilde, in particular when they were involved in producing a Dutch translation of one of Wilde’s works.

The first chapter deals with all that was written about Wilde in the Netherlands before the trials of 1895. Starting with the earliest mentions of Wilde in Dutch newspapers, this

section largely focusses on the three main works of Wilde that were translated into Dutch during this period, which were *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Salomé*. The second chapter will specifically deal with the trials and Wilde's imprisonment. The third and final chapter will concentrate on reports on Wilde's death, the Dutch production of *Salomé*, and the release of the Dutch translation of *De Profundis*. In the conclusion, the main findings will be juxtaposed with the wider European reception.

Chapter One

The Dutch Reception Before 1895

According to Nop Maas, Dutch interest in Wilde on a significant scale only started with the performance of the Dutch version of *Lady Windermere's Fan* in 1892 (*Zeepbel* 7). He admits to being aware of the publication of some of Wilde's short stories in Dutch in 1889 and of some announcements in several newspapers that accompanied this publication, but he dismisses these as mere “incidental references” (7). However, as early as 1882, the Dutch newspapers *Het Nieuws van de Dag* and the *Algemeen Handelsblad* were regularly reporting Wilde's activities. Especially in *Het Nieuws van de Dag*, these articles were often of a gossipy nature, reporting many events that occurred during Wilde's trip to America, for example, Wilde's expressed disappointment in the Atlantic Ocean when he arrived in New York (*HNvdD* 07-01-1882).

However, the importance of these early Dutch articles goes beyond characterising Wilde as “the disappointed ocean admirer” (*HNvdD* 13-01-1882). They presented him to Dutch audiences as one of the prophets or leaders of the aesthetic movement in England, a movement about which both *Het Nieuws van de Dag* and the *Algemeen Handelsblad* expressed reservations. The former wrote that the movement's “oversensitive admiring reverted to distaste” (*HNvdD* 07-01-1882) and the latter commented that the movement's view of art as “an exaggeration in all directions” was a “true plague” (*AH* 28-02-1882). Though both newspapers would go on to make more positive assessments of Wilde in the future, many of these arguments resurfaced in subsequent negative reviews of Wilde's works throughout the Dutch press. The image of Wilde as the leader of the aesthetic movement would dominate the early Dutch reception and solidify the importance of Wilde himself when reviewing his work, an ironic twist given how central the primacy of art over life was in Wilde's writings.

Wilde's activities continued to be reported during the 1880s. In 1884, for example, *Het Nieuws van de Dag* claimed that Wilde planned to visit the Netherlands later that year to give various lectures (*HNvD* 08-05-1884), but nothing came of it. In fact, Wilde never visited the Netherlands during his lifetime. The year 1889 marked the first publication of Wilde's work in the Netherlands. Titled *Fantasiën* ("Fantasies"), it was a collection of four of Wilde's short stories translated into Dutch. These were "The Happy Prince", "The Nightingale and the Rose", "The Selfish Giant" and "The Birthday of the Little Princess."¹ The translator was unknown, but six years later the *Middelburgsche Courant* was under the impression that the Dutch text was delivered by a "gifted lady" (*MC* 06-04-1895).² Many newspapers did not discuss the collection at the time, but those that did reviewed it favourably. The *Algemeen Handelsblad* wrote that *Fantasiën* contained fairy tales "full of humour and feeling" which both children and adults could enjoy (*AH* 17-11-1889) and *Het Nieuws van de Dag* compared the tales favourably to the best works of Hans Christian Andersen, none of which were written so gracefully (*HNvD* 25-11-1889). Furthermore, P.H. Ritter even called Wilde a "benefactor to humanity" (*AH* 17-11-1889) in his preface to the collection.

Three of Wilde's main works appeared in the Netherlands during the early 1890s, and with their appearance, the Dutch interest in Wilde grew. A translated version of *Lady Windermere's Fan* was performed in 1892 and both *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Salomé* were published in Dutch translations the following year. Therefore, while Wilde's presence in the Dutch press before 1892 cannot be characterised as merely "incidental" (Maas, *Zeepbel* 7), the performance of *Lady Windermere's Fan* does mark a point where the Dutch interest in Wilde rapidly expanded.

¹ The first three stories had all originally appeared in *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, but the final one had at this time only appeared in *Paris Illustré*. In 1891, it was published in England as part of *A House of Pomegranates*, in which it was retitled as "The Birthday of the Infanta" (Killeen 125).

² Quite possibly, the newspaper mistook the translator for Elisabeth Baud, wife of Louis Couperus. She only translated *The Picture of Dorian Gray* into Dutch, but as will be shown below, there also circulated false rumours that she was behind the original Dutch translation of *Salomé*.

Translated as “De Waaier” by Dutch actor Arnold Ising Jr, *Lady Windermere’s Fan* was performed by “Het Nederlandsch Toneel” and premiered on 10 December 1892 in Amsterdam. It was not a big success and the play’s run ended after a few more performances during the same month. On the whole, Dutch critics applauded the players, but were far less appreciative of the play itself. In its preview, the *Algemeen Handelsblad* remarked that the play’s success in London was largely due to Wilde’s “remarkable position in London society” (AH 10-02-1892). It was “style, not substance” (AH 10-02-1892) that made Wilde able to impress his audience. The next day, the newspaper was not surprised that *Lady Windermere’s Fan* was not as favourably received as in London; in the Netherlands, Wilde was not as famous as in England and, according to the newspaper, “no one here is attracted to his theories on art” (AH 11-12-1892). The *Algemeen Handelsblad* did not appear to be a fan of the countless witty phrases which “could fill a tear-off calendar” (AH 11-12-1892). It shows Wilde’s mind is not “very pure” (AH 15-12-1892), as all the witty remarks do not arise from specific situations in the play, but are instead forcefully inserted by the author.

Similarly, *Het Vaderland* was not surprised that someone with the personality of the “coquettish paradox-crier Oscar Wilde” was unable to deliver a successful drama (Maas, *Zeepbel* 8). The newspaper commented that a good playwright always has to be “a person of seriousness and character” (8). These comments evoke the sentiments expressed against the English school of aestheticism from the earliest mentions of Wilde cited above. Furthermore, *Het Toneel* expressed its fear that Wilde was wandering through “a literary labyrinth without Ariadne’s thread” (Maas, *Zeepbel* 13) and the shouts and cheers of the London public “encourage him to continue on the wrong track” (13). The general Dutch dislike of Wilde’s aestheticism was perhaps best summed up by *De Amsterdamer*, which stated that “[Wilde] gives the impression to be a farceur, a poseur, and that is something for which he cannot be

forgiven in our age, in which people primarily expect simplicity and sincerity from a poet” (Maas, *Zeepbel* 15).

This dislike of Wilde’s pretensions ties in with the perceived lack of a logical structure in the play. The *Algemeen Handelsblad* bemoaned the fact that the exposition occurs late in the play, causing the audience to discover the reasons for the main characters’ actions only in the final act (AH 11-12-1892). Therefore, the audience is confronted with riddles throughout the play and, according to the newspaper, “nobody goes to the theatre to solve riddles” (AH 15-12-1892). Likewise, the *Haagsche Courant* was willing to bet that many spectators did not understand the characters until the very end of the play (HC 19-12-1892).

One notable exception to this negative criticism regarding *Lady Windermere’s Fan* was *Het Nieuws van de Dag*, which complimented the author for his exquisite talents. The newspaper judged from the audience reactions that, sadly, the play was not going to enjoy a long run, yet it did not blame the play, which had “many good qualities” (HNvdD 13-12-1892), but it blamed the meagre performance of some of the actors and the underwhelming stage decoration (HNvdD 13-12-1892). Nevertheless, all reviewers did encourage people to see the play, even if sometimes only for curiosity’s sake (HC 19-12-1892) and the chance to compare an English play with those of Continental Europe (AH 11-12-1892).

In June 1893, a Dutch translation of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was published. Wilde’s original was translated by Elisabeth Couperus-Baud, wife of the prominent Dutch writer Louis Couperus, whose second novel *Noodlot* (“Footsteps of Fate”) had very much impressed Wilde. In 1891, Couperus received a letter from Wilde, which was “elaborate, amiable [and] sympathetic” (Couperus 209), along with a copy of *Dorian Gray* as a present. When recapitulating this episode in 1911, Couperus wrote that his wife liked the novel better than he did and that “the many paradoxes tired me and made me impatient. I thought the hero was too fantastic: I was in a realistic mood” (209). Twenty years earlier, however, he had

written to Wilde that the novel gave him “exquisite moments” and “interested him from the very beginning” (Winternmans). Couperus also wrote to his editor that Wilde’s novel was “very fascinating and modern” (Bastet 8). Couperus’s wife Elisabeth wrote to Wilde in 1892 requesting permission to translate *Dorian Gray* into Dutch and she stated that she would receive “here and there a little help” (Winternmans) from her husband. Couperus himself confirmed this to his editor, stating that, among other things, he was regularly checking her proofs (Bastet 50). Therefore, at least at the time, both Louis Couperus and his wife Elisabeth were really quite taken with Wilde’s novel.

However, Dutch critics were divided by *Dorian Gray* and often did not know what to make of it. The novel’s literary excellence was undeniable, yet the story’s morality was unsound. *Het Vaderland* called it a “very curious book [...] that one cannot easily put away” (Maas, *Zeepbel* 16). *De Tijdspeigel* admitted that the work was “written with great art”, but could not recommend it, because the story was “so thoroughly unhealthy” (Maas, *Zeepbel* 17). *Nederland* drew more positive conclusions, writing that although the novel contained “horrors too dark to be named”, “all the characteristics of [Wilde’s] beautiful talent” (*Nederland* 1893 481) create a remarkable work of art. Similarly, *De Nederlandsche Spectator* called *Dorian Gray* an “unforgettable book” and declared that the work “has all the wittiness [...] that apparently characterises each century when its end draws near” (Maas, *Zeepbel* 19).

The *Algemeen Handelsblad*, however, remained critical of “the king of the paradox” who in his “Faust up to date [sic; i.e., updated version of Faust] [...] desperately tries to be witty all the time” (AH 04-06-1893). To this end, he sacrifices everything, making the book more about stand-alone paradoxical phrases than an actual dramatic story. Therefore, the newspaper concluded that it could not take the work seriously and instead considered it mere “*spielerei*” (AH 04-06-1893). Despite these divided opinions on the work itself, the translation

was widely praised. For example, *Nederland* wrote that “Mrs Couperus [...] succeeded remarkably well” at a task that “must have been very difficult” (*Nederland* 1893 482).

In October 1893, before Lord Alfred Douglas’s English translation of Wilde’s French original was even released, a Dutch translation of *Salomé* was published. The Dutch translator remained anonymous. There were rumours circulating that it was once again the work of Elisabeth Couperus-Baud, but this was later rectified (Maas, *Zeepbel* 20). As a retelling of the biblical story of Salomé, who demanded and received the head of John the Baptist, the play was highly controversial in Britain. While rehearsals were underway with the famous French actress Sarah Bernhardt in the title role, *Salomé* was banned in Britain in 1892 by the Lord Chamberlain and it has subsequently become the most neglected amongst Wilde’s works in the Anglophone world (Evangelista 7). Dutch newspaper readers were kept thoroughly informed about the events in London relating to the ban of *Salomé*, with most newspapers taking the opportunity to criticize British censorship. As *Het Nieuws van de Dag* wrote, “this is the English state of affairs. The highly modern existing beside institutions from the Middle Ages!” (*HNvdD* 30-06-1892).

When the Dutch translation of *Salomé* was published, Dutch critics generally responded very positively to the play, frequently comparing Wilde’s work favourably to that of the Belgian Symbolist Maurice Maeterlinck. *Salomé* appears to have had a tremendously positive impact on Wilde’s reputation in Netherlands, with some reviewers even expressing their astonishment of the fact that someone like Wilde, whom they previously enjoyed criticizing, had produced a work that they actually thought highly of. For example, *Het Vaderland* had to admit that “this drama of the frivolous, commercial, sceptic Oscar Wilde” was very moving because of its “Eastern splendour of colours [...] and impressive language” (Maas, *Zeepbel* 24). Wilde’s play is written in the style of Maeterlinck, but lacks the “naivety and superstition present in the works of the Ghentish playwright”, thereby creating “a far

deeper work of art” (20). Similarly, *De Nederlandsche Spectator* wrote that “the decadent from across the Channel” had produced “something special: a dramatic prose poem of high poetic value” (Maas, *Zeepbel* 25). Though the “strict Bible-worshipper might be displeased” (26), the literary journal could do nothing but admire Wilde’s language “of rare beauty” (25). *Het Nieuws van de Dag* wrote of *Salomé* that whether one was fond of Wilde’s language or not, the newspaper was of the opinion that everyone who started to read the drama would be captivated by it and would keep on reading until the end (*HNvD* 25-11-1893).

The Dutch translation was deemed superb by most critics. *Het Vaderland* was convinced that it was the work of a translator with an artistic sense and someone who had “reverence and sympathy for the text” (Maas, *Zeepbel* 24). Furthermore, *Nederland* wrote that “the translation is musical and so completely in Wilde’s manner, that it has to be excellent” (*Nederland* 1893 491). Dutch critics also singled out the “tasteful, small format” in which the Dutch edition of the play was delivered. As *Nederland* formulated its announcement, “pretty cover, pretty paper, pretty letters, pretty words – all is in harmony with the small drama in one act” (*Nederland* 1893 491). With regard to whether the play was actually performable, Dutch critics were more divided. *Het Vaderland*, for example, posited that with the right direction it was quite possible, while the prospect of a performance made *De Nederlandsch Spectator* fearful, for “the imagination of the reader is so much stimulated by the poetic language of the author, that even the best staging would be in danger of not reaching the same level of beauty” (Maas, *Zeepbel* 26-28).

However, there were some exceptions to the general Dutch acclaim that befell Wilde’s *Salomé*. The catholic journal *Het dompertje van den ouden Valentijn* claimed that “ignoring the truth that follows from the revelations has led to a bungle that is both foolish and unaesthetic” (Maas, *Zeepbel* 30). The most notable exception to the positive Dutch reception of *Salomé* came from *De Telegraaf*. In its lengthy review, which was written primarily as a

reaction against all the praise of *Salomé* in the Dutch press, the same arguments resurfaced that had previously been used against Wilde. *De Telegraaf* commented that “the entire drama is filled with phrases that are artificial, some of them even in sharp contrast with the play’s situations” (*Telegraaf* 19-02-1894). While most Dutch newspapers lauded *Salomé* as a true work of art, *De Telegraaf* was still unable to take Wilde seriously, stating that “there is something laughable about the worldly Englishman, with an interest in ladies’ fashions, who suddenly becomes a Maeterlinck-convert” (*Telegraaf* 19-02-1894).

With these statements we return to what is the dominant early Dutch response to Wilde. When analysing the reactions to his works in Dutch newspapers during the early 1890s, it becomes apparent that most reviewers did not really take Wilde seriously. Some figures in the Dutch literary establishment obviously did view Wilde as an important writer, since Dutch translations of his works appeared remarkably fast in comparison with the rest of Europe. As Paul Barnaby’s timeline of the European reception of Oscar Wilde shows, Dutch translations of *Salomé* and *Dorian Gray* appeared many years before they were released in the German lands, for example, where they were published in 1900 and 1901 respectively (xxvi). The early French appreciation of Wilde is often viewed as paving the way for the rest of Europe, but even in France, the first translation of *Dorian Gray* only appeared during Wilde’s trials in 1895 (Barnaby xxiv). Clearly, some people in the Netherlands were determined to quickly publish Wilde’s work in Dutch. The fact that the Dutch translation of *Salomé* was published before the English version is a further case in point.

However, most Dutch critics regarded Wilde as someone not worthy of serious attention. Frequently, they thought Wilde’s witty phrases overshadowed the story and characters, making his works more about himself than about the actual drama. For example, when critics discussed the Dutch performance of *Lady Windermere’s Fan*, they rarely commented on the play’s themes, like the position of women in society, and instead treated

the work as mere *spielerei*. The same views were often uttered in Dutch newspapers when London correspondents reviewed Wilde's works that had not yet appeared in the Netherlands. For instance, the *Algemeen Handelsblad* wrote of *A Woman of No Importance* that its success was "less due to the play itself, but more thanks to the name of the author", for it was neither "very dramatic nor a true work of art" (AH 25-04-1893). The same newspaper wrote of *An Ideal Husband* that it was "boring, awkward and tedious", but had one redeeming factor that overshadowed all flaws: it was "written by the fashionable author Oscar Wilde" (AH 09-01-1895).

Wilde was thus perceived as an author of no real substance. Before *Salomé*, the most positive reactions Wilde received were, tellingly, in response to works that were not taken seriously anyway by their nature as fairy tales, as was the case with *Fantasiën*. However, the serious tragedy of *Salomé* did win the hearts of many Dutch critics and this marked the first instance where Wilde was lauded in the Netherlands for both his language and his dramatic storytelling. Nevertheless, the sense of Wilde as a farceur and poseur, an image that had been depicted of him ever since the earliest mentions of him as the quintessential aesthete in 1882, remained deeply rooted in the minds of many.

Chapter Two

Wilde's Trials in the Dutch Press

After 1893, no new Dutch translations of Wilde's works were published for some time, but he retained a regular presence in the Dutch press. For example, Dutch newspapers kept discussing Wilde's ideas, such as the ones he expressed in his essay "The Soul of Man Under Socialism" (AH 04-02-1894), and they even informed readers about a bust of Wilde at a London exposition (AH 05-04-1894). It is safe to say that by 1895 Wilde had achieved great fame in the Netherlands and, though attitudes towards him were far from unanimously positive, he was considered one of the most important authors in the English language (*Vragen van den dag* 1894 170).

As Evangelista rightly comments, "the most significant episodes in Wilde's early reception are certainly his trials and imprisonment" (4). In May 1895, Wilde was sentenced to two years of hard labour after being found guilty of "gross indecency" (4). In Britain, this outcome led to a sensational onslaught against the "degeneracy of aestheticism", and the British press was nearly unanimous in wishing for a return to moral health on the part of writers. In Evangelista's words, Wilde became "a criminal and the object of scorn and ridicule" and "his cosmopolitanism was declared unsuited to British soil" (5).

Like in the rest of Europe (Evangelista 5), the news of the trials was reported extensively in the Dutch press. From the moment of Wilde's original charge of libel against the Marquess of Queensberry, many Dutch newspapers, including *Het Nieuws van de Dag*, *De Telegraaf*, the *Haagsche Courant* and the *Middelburgsche Courant*, frequently published detailed reports of the trials, along with much background information. It is important to note that unlike in Britain, homosexual acts had been decriminalised in the Netherlands since 1811, when the French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte introduced the French *Code Pénal*. This law, which included no provisions against homosexuality, remained in force after the defeat of the

French a few years later (Hekma 68). Wilde was thus punished in Britain for an act that was not a crime in the Netherlands.

Nevertheless, homosexuality was a taboo topic everywhere in late nineteenth-century Europe and the Netherlands were no exception. Though the practice of same-sex relations was not technically forbidden, Dutch newspapers refrained from explicitly mentioning it in their articles. Instead, they spoke of “very dishonourable facts” (*De Tijd* 13-06-1895), “charges of an offence against decency that is not to be mentioned” (*HNvD* 09-04-1895) or of “morally offensive acts” (*Telegraaf* 04-05-1895). It is conceivable that many Dutch readers were confused about the exact nature of Wilde’s crime, though later descriptions of “Wilde’s friends” (Maas, *Zeepbel* 37) and references to Wilde as “the spoiler of youth” (*HNvD* 27-04-1895) clarified the facts of the matter to a certain extent.

Most Dutch reports on Wilde’s trials were of a predominantly factual nature, but after the truth of Queensberry’s allegations became apparent, some newspapers also started to reflect on what all of it meant for the appreciation of Wilde and his works. *Het Nieuws van de Dag* was firm in its condemnation and claimed the trials proved the degenerating effects of Wilde’s aestheticism, echoing the British press in this regard to a large extent. The newspaper declared that Wilde’s “pseudo-aesthetic bubble had burst [...] under very unaesthetic circumstances” and claimed that leaning on “those hollow and sickening doctrines” does not go unpunished and “leads to madness” (*HNvD* 09-04-1895). *De Amsterdamer* reached a very similar conclusion, writing that “it is best not to waste too many words on the gruesome end of his gruesome fame” (Maas, *Zeepbel* 46).

Other reflections in Dutch newspapers were characterised by a greater sense of tragedy, however. In the *Haagsche Courant*, someone named Simons wrote that, though the truth of Queensberry’s allegations had initially filled him with disgust, he now only felt a “sense of the overwhelming tragedy of such a crushing fall” (*HC* 13-04-1895) of a man who,

until very recently, was applauded by many. Furthermore, in an article headed “Oscar Wilde is dead – morally dead”, a private correspondent from London wrote in the *Algemeen Handelsblad* that “it is logical that at the moment the whole world can only speak evil about the man, whose wonderful literary career has ended so suddenly, so tragically, so prematurely. But whatever one may think about the man, with great sadness should one see the artist disappear” (AH 08-04-1895). After expressing the hope that Wilde’s literary works might one day cleanse the name of their creator, the correspondent concluded that “art will mourn him, for he was one of the few that loved and understood her” (AH 08-04-1895).

Most newspapers did not express their sympathies towards Wilde the artist as openly as the *Algemeen Handelsblad*’s private correspondent, but many did hold the view that Wilde’s crimes did not justify his complete eradication from the literary landscape. For example, several Dutch newspapers reported that United States bookstores in Saint-Louis and Newark had removed Wilde’s works from their shops (AH 13-04-1895). To be sure, Wilde had committed “a ghastly, abominable and heinous crime”, the *Haagsche Courant* commented, but “banning his books that were not considered indecent before” seems to be “a ridiculous display of prudishness” (HC 16-04-1895).

Therefore, while the taboo surrounding homosexuality was undeniably very strong in the Netherlands, the Dutch press reacted less severely against Wilde than the British press. Dutch newspapers never called for “the penalty of universal condemnation” (Foldy 53), for example, as the British *Daily Telegraph* did. In fact, most Dutch newspapers went on to harshly criticize the “brutish and inhumane” (AH 05-06-1895) British penal system after Wilde’s imprisonment and subsequent reports of him having to work on a treadmill. Though some, like the *Haagsche Courant*, somewhat scornfully remarked that Wilde would now learn to appreciate the “natural pleasures of life” (HC 31-05-1895), most were steadfast in their

view that a treadmill was a “medieval torture device” (*MC* 05-06-1895) that was too severe for even the biggest criminals, let alone for a man like Wilde.

The Dutch socialist newspaper *Recht voor Allen* wondered whether burning at the stake was not merciful when compared to the horrors of the treadmill (*RvA* 17-07-1895). The fact that this revolutionary newspaper, which had no arts section and had never discussed any of Wilde’s works, published so frequently on Wilde’s trials shows that it was a topic of broad interest in the Netherlands. In the same article, *Recht voor Allen* even questioned whether Wilde’s deeds constituted a crime, since his actions were a “common and accepted practice in ancient Greece” (*RvA* 17-07-1895). Such an open defence of homosexuality was extremely rare and, because of the social taboo, could at this time only come from such a revolutionary paper. However, even *Recht voor Allen* did not express a constantly sympathetic opinion on the nature of Wilde’s acts, because in a later article it accused a rich industrial of “practicing Oscar Wilde’s sport” (*RvA* 30-10-1895), a euphemism in this particular case for paedophilia.³ Furthermore, immediately after Wilde’s conviction, the newspaper claimed that the facts of Wilde’s case showed the degeneracy of England’s aristocratic milieu (*RvA* 31-05-1895), echoing the words of the *Haagsche Courant*, which claimed that Wilde’s trial “exposed everything that is rotten in the higher circles of the honestly acting Albion” (*HC* 13-04-1895).

Dutch newspapers kept regularly publishing articles about Wilde throughout the two years of his imprisonment. While most refrained from offering lengthy opinions in these short reports, some newspapers and journals emphatically expressed their sympathies for Wilde. *De Hollandsche Revue* hoped that he would soon be released (*HR* 1896 380) and after some press reports claimed that Wilde had become insane, *De Telegraaf* wrote that the “approaching death of one of the most cultivated, brilliant men of our time, whatever he may have done”, would be “the greatest disgrace to the English humanity” (*Telegraaf* 28-12-1895). Though not

³ As Evangelista points out, Wilde’s name entered into the vocabulary of sexual perversion throughout Europe (16). For example, in Italian, “oscarwilderismo” was used as a euphemism for the “unspeakable” homoerotic desire (16).

wholly uncommon in the rest of Europe (Evangelista 5), these sympathetic voices were virtually absent in Britain.

In short, homosexuality was a highly controversial subject everywhere and Wilde's acts made him infamous. Nevertheless, Dutch newspapers generally responded very differently to Wilde's conviction and imprisonment in comparison to the British press. As many examples above have shown, Dutch newspapers frequently took the opportunity Wilde's trials provided to criticize the British penal system. Moreover, most Dutch newspapers thought it unnecessary to suddenly ban all of Wilde's literary works. Wilde's conviction did harm his reputation in the Netherlands, but as was discussed in chapter one, most Dutch critics were not very much taken with the personality of the English aesthete to begin with. The success Wilde had enjoyed in the Netherlands, especially that of *Salomé*, had never been due to the decadence of his personal character, but in spite of it. Notwithstanding the controversial nature of his deeds, Wilde's literary achievements did not become as heavily stigmatised as they did in England and, therefore, their revival came much sooner.

Chapter Three

Wilde's Revival: *Salomé* and *De Profundis*

Wilde's release from prison in May 1897 was reported by many Dutch newspapers, but most did not speculate on Wilde's future or take the occasion to voice their opinion of Wilde. One noteworthy exception was *De Telegraaf*, which wrote that the man who had caused quite a stir through his "crime against the moral laws of our society" will as an author remain "a man of significance, of whom we have not heard the last" (*Telegraaf* 01-06-1897). "Because of the current prejudice against him, his works will not receive the attention they deserve, but his undeniable talent as a man of letters will overcome that", concluded the newspaper (*Telegraaf* 01-06-1897).

Despite *De Telegraaf*'s promise, however, relatively little was written about Wilde in the Netherlands during the years between his release from prison and his death on 30 November 1900. Evangelista writes that the marked silence regarding Wilde in the Anglophone world following his public disgrace was "a striking anomaly within the larger context of Europe" (3), for "the trials generated an extreme interest in both the author and the man" (6) all across the European continent. This simple dichotomy between Britain and the European mainland is not immediately applicable to the Netherlands, however. Notwithstanding the sympathetic voices uttered in the Dutch press during the trials, the first few years following Wilde's release from prison were characterized by a relative silence when compared to the years immediately before 1895.

In contrast with, for example, countries like France and Germany (Barnaby xxv-xxvi), no new Dutch translations of Wilde appeared during these years. Of course, many of the works that appeared in other European countries, like *Salomé* and *Lady Windermere's Fan*, had already been translated into Dutch, but notably most of Wilde's society plays had not yet been published in the Netherlands, most likely because the negative attitude of Dutch critics

towards these plays had not changed. In one of the few publications that discussed one of Wilde's literary works during the years between 1897 and 1900, *Het Vaderland* wrote of *The Importance of Being Earnest* that it had "little to offer" (Maas, *Vuurwerk* 5). According to the newspaper, "the author continuously turns all conventional sayings topsy-turvy", but "when we hear all his characters act in this manner, it quickly becomes a gimmick" (Maas, *Vuurwerk* 5).

The news of Wilde's death in the fall of 1900 did not make the headlines. While most newspapers listed him in their necrology of 1900, few devoted more than a few sentences to Wilde's passing, a far cry from the attention the Dutch press had devoted to the trials. This was not that unusual when compared to the rest of Europe, however. As Richard Hibbitt points out, in France, "Wilde's death merited far fewer column inches than his trials" (79). Even so, the lack of attention paid to Wilde's death by the Dutch press is noteworthy. The main difference between the Netherlands and Britain in this respect is that Dutch newspapers had no scruples about spelling out Wilde's name. In Britain, his name had become almost unspeakable in polite society at the time his death, prompting journals to refer to him evasively as "the unhappy man who died in Paris the other day" (Bristow 21).

The Dutch newspapers that did devote a short section to Wilde's death largely emphasised the scandalous trials. The *Algemeen Handelsblad* headed its short article "A fallen poet" and spoke of Wilde as someone "whose great talents expressed themselves in the wrong way" (AH 02-12-1900). Similarly, the *Middelburgsche Courant* commented that Wilde was "famous as a poet, infamous as a man" (MC 03-12-1900). More derogatorily, the *Haagsche Courant* labelled him "the infamous, unnatural, English poet" (HC 04-12-1900). The most elaborate article dedicated to Wilde's passing was published by *De Telegraaf*, which also singled out a few of his major, literary works (*Telegraaf* 01-12-1900). It is telling, however, that even this newspaper, like the *Algemeen Handelsblad* and the *Haagsche*

Courant, wrongly stated that Wilde had been sentenced to three years hard labour instead of two (*Telegraaf* 01-12-1900). Clearly, Wilde had been largely off the radar of the Dutch press for some time.

Lengthy commentaries about Wilde's demise did appear a few years later (Maas, *Vuurwerk* 7), at which time Wilde had regained a prominent presence in the Dutch press. The renewed attention to Wilde was mostly due to the immense success of *Salomé*. As discussed above, a Dutch translation of this play had been published in 1893 to much critical acclaim. At the time, however, the play had not yet been staged. The first performance of the original French version of *Salomé* took place in 1896 in Paris, where, according to Emily Eels, it was met with mixed reviews (85). The play's success story started in Germany, where a production by Max Reinhardt that premiered in 1902 became tremendously successful (Kohlmayer and Krämer 189). In Robert Vilain's words, it led to a truly "Wilde-mania" (184). Robbie Ross, Wilde's literary executor, would later reveal that it was largely thanks to the profits of the German performances of *Salomé* that he had been able to pay off Wilde's creditors (Evangelista 7). Richard Strauss, one of the attendees of the premiere of Reinhardt's production, adapted the play into an even more successful opera that was first staged in 1905 and which, according to Evangelista, was "instrumental in guaranteeing Wilde's survival within progressive literary and artistic circles in Europe" (8).

Salomé's success in Germany quickly spread to the Netherlands. In October 1903, a private correspondent of both *Het Vaderland* (Maas, *Vuurwerk* 10-11) and *De Telegraaf* attended a performance of Max Reinhardt's production and wrote of "a masterly performance" (*Telegraaf* 10-10-1903). According to the correspondent, *Salomé* was "Oscar Wilde's most meaningful work, small in size, but big [...] in substance" and the production of Reinhardt functioned as an "extraordinarily pretty, decorative frame" (*Telegraaf* 10-10-1903). The correspondent concluded by stating that "whoever does not just praise the arts with his

lips, but also loves them with his entire soul, must not neglect to see the dance of Salomé” (*Telegraaf* 10-10-1903).

The success of *Salomé* in Germany drove Dutch director Henri Brondgeest to stage a Dutch version of the play, but a mere week before the premier of his version in February 1904, a German version of the play was performed in the Netherlands by the *Salon für alle Kunst*. On the occasion of this performance, the *Algemeen Handelsblad* reminisced about the play’s ban by the British censors for its indecent nature, but the newspaper held the view that the only question that mattered in this regard was whether the play was good or bad art, and in the newspaper’s words, “*Salomé* is very good art” (*AH* 05-02-1904). Other Dutch newspapers that reviewed this performance were also positive. The *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* stated that “the performance has made a deep impression, the special impression that this work ought to make” (Maas, *Vuurwerk* 11) and *Het Nieuws van de Dag* thought that “the performance made the impression which the poet must have imagined while writing the work” (*HNvdD* 8-02-1904).

The performances of Brondgeest’s Dutch production were enthusiastically received by audiences (*HNvdD* 23-02-1904) and the production enjoyed a long tour that even took the theatre company to the Dutch East Indies (*Telegraaf* 21-01-1905). Dutch critics were divided about where this version stood in relation to the German performance. The *Algemeen Handelsblad* claimed it was “way better than the German version” (*AH* 12-02-1904), while *Het Nieuws van de Dag* thought that Brondgeest’s production lacked a certain “atmosphere” (*HNvdD* 04-03-1904) in comparison to the German version. The *Haagsche Courant* even responded remarkably negatively, stating that the performance it had witnessed was “strange” and “unbelievable” (*HC* 15-02-1904). *Het Vaderland*, on the other hand, stated more mildly that after watching the show, it felt “grateful, but not satisfied” (Maas, *Vuurwerk* 17).

The performances of *Salomé* in the Netherlands did cause some controversy. In several cities petitions were held to prevent the play from being performed. In Delft, for example, the city's mayor was asked to ban the performance, for the play was “offensive to the beliefs of thousands of Christians in the city” (Maas, *Vuurwerk* 19). Similarly, in Nijmegen, there were protests claiming that the play was “an insult to the Catholics of Nijmegen, especially during Lent” (*HNvD* 30-03-1904). Both of these protests were ultimately unsuccessful in preventing Wilde’s play from being performed, but such religious protests would resurface from time to time during the following years. For example, the catholic newspaper *De Tijd* would regularly launch vociferous campaigns against “the pornographer Oscar Wilde” (*De Tijd* 19-12-1908), whose works were “poisoning the Dutch spirit” (*De Tijd* 12-10-1907).

Despite these protestations, the success of the many performances of *Salomé* strongly contributed to Wilde’s works becoming socially acceptable again after the trials. Just as the publication of the Dutch translation of *Salomé* in 1893 had won over many critics for Wilde, the performances of this play during the first years of the twentieth century form the basis of Wilde’s revival in the Netherlands following the silence during the immediate years after his imprisonment. Dutch critics were divided about Brondgeest’s production, but on the whole, they agreed that Wilde’s *Salomé* by itself was a work of great artistic value.

In 1905, the same year of the first English and German editions, a Dutch translation of *De Profundis* was released (Polak 23). It was translated by baroness L.J. van der Borch and included an introduction by the prominent Dutch writer Lodewijk van Deyssel, in which he framed Wilde’s literary accomplishments as “entirely French, without a specific English element” (Wilde 2), quite the contrast of most Dutch critics, which had always perceived Wilde as quintessentially English. However, Van Deyssel’s observation that Wilde was “chiefly the writer of *Dorian Gray* and *Salomé*” (Wilde 1) was entirely in line with how most

critics in the Netherlands judged Wilde's literary heritage. The society plays were notably absent.

Though Van Deyssel praised the translation (Wilde 3), Polak comments that it was terrible and that Van der Borch had most likely translated the work from the German version, because some errors would otherwise be unexplainable (23). Therefore, is not surprising that a new Dutch version of *De Profundis*, translated by Dutch poet P.C. Boutens, appeared merely six years later (Breugelmans 61). Nevertheless, as a result of the 1905 publication, Dutch writer Jacob Israël de Haan gratefully wrote to Van Deyssel that "now we have it in Holland. I pray to you, protect that Wilde. What a strong fellow right? Now he is dead" (Polak 37). Among Dutch writers, De Haan was one of Wilde's most vocal supporters. For example, he dedicated his lyric poem "To Oscar Wilde" to the author's time in Reading Gaol (De Haan 115-117). Besides De Haan, many prominent Dutch writers showed themselves sympathetic to Wilde's fate, albeit not always very explicitly. Louis Couperus mournfully noted that Wilde was "destroyed in a bitter tragedy" (Couperus 213) and Van Deyssel thought it "a shame that he had to end this way" (Wilde 3).

Perhaps as a consequence of the bad translation, the publication of the *De Profundis* received relatively little attention by the Dutch press, even though the advertisement in the *Algemeen Handelsblad* claimed that "never has a work been praised by critics of all nations like this one" (AH 29-11-1905). Articles about Wilde in 1905 continued to be dominated by *Salomé*. What is striking, however, is that most newspapers that did review *De Profundis* in-depth, came to a similar conclusion as the British press, i.e. they believed that Wilde in this work wisely atoned for his sins (Bristow 25). *Het Nieuws van de Dag* concluded that *De Profundis* was written "in words full of grief and penitence" (HNvdD 24-11-1905). Furthermore, in a lengthy review, *De Telegraaf* wrote that Wilde "had lived like a king, but he was a weak king [...] who discarded his genius" (*Telegraaf* 20-03-1905). However, "no man

has suffered like this meek sinner” and “in Reading Gaol [...] a human soul opened like a beautiful flower for a shining, cleansing light” (*Telegraaf* 20-03-1905). Only the reflection by the Swedish writer Oscar Levertin, which was published by *Het Vaderland*, struck a different note. It observed that “in prison, [Wilde] remained the same user of aesthetic paradoxes” and whatever one might think of that, it “showed strength of character” (Maas, *Vuurwerk* 39).

The article in *Het Vaderland* also included the following, extraordinary passage, in which Levertin stated that “there is an enormous discrepancy between what Oscar Wilde did and the punishment he received. For although [...] a healthy human being rejects these acts impulsively, it cannot be denied that the greatest [...] people in history, the ancient Greeks, considered [...] this love more ideal than the one between a man and a woman” (Maas, *Vuurwerk* 35). It is hard to imagine that an “utterly decent newspaper” (*SH* 23-06-1906) like *Het Vaderland* would have published something along these lines a mere ten years earlier, which could point to a change of mentality, however slight, regarding even this aspect of Wilde. More importantly, by 1905, with the exception, of course, of several religious newspapers and organizations, Wilde’s works had become completely acceptable in the Netherlands. As *De Telegraaf* concluded, “humankind once again embraces his poetry, his dramas, and his books and discusses the many things of beauty that this man has created. *De Profundis* [...] paves the way for a silent and deep reconciliation” (*Telegraaf* 20-03-1905)

Conclusion

When analysing the reception of Oscar Wilde in the Netherlands from the earliest mentions of his name in Dutch newspapers until 1905, the following main conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly, from the early 1880s, Wilde was introduced to the Dutch public primarily as the main figure of English aestheticism. The principal ideas of this movement fundamentally clashed with the perception of art of most critics in the Netherlands, who, in their reviews of Wilde's works, expressed the belief that art was a very serious matter. Wilde's view of art for art's sake, which abandoned the idea that works of literature ought to embody moral principles, meant that frequently, Wilde was not taken seriously as a writer. To some extent, this mirrored the early French reception, in which Wilde was a celebrity *avant la lettre*, famous partly for being famous. In France, Wilde was initially treated as a socialite rather than as a writer (Hibbett 65). Even though Wilde was always primarily perceived as a writer in the Netherlands, he was most often considered to be a very frivolous one.

Secondly, like in the rest of Continental Europe, Wilde's main success in the Netherlands was definitely *Salomé*. Unlike the supposedly trivial and superficial *Lady Windermere's Fan*, it was the one play of Wilde that was considered to be of real substance by Dutch critics. *Salomé*'s success, however, did not mean that Wilde's aesthetic principles suddenly found mainstream acceptance. It rather meant that many Dutch critics recognised that despite Wilde's decadent personality, he was still an author of remarkable, literary talent. This points to a distinct difference with the British reception of Wilde, for in Britain, Wilde's success, in particular that of his society plays, was inextricably intertwined with his much celebrated, aesthetic personality.

Finally, Wilde's conviction and imprisonment did not harm the reputation of his literary works as much as in Britain. Since the link between his supposedly degenerate nature and his success had not been as strong, Wilde's works did not become as branded.

Homosexuality was not a crime in the Netherlands, but this was of limited influence with regard to the Dutch reaction to his conviction, since it was still a taboo subject. In fact, the Dutch reviews of *De Profundis*, discussed in Chapter Three, show that most Dutch critics did believe Wilde had committed grave sins, for which he was wise to atone. The majority of the Dutch press by no means approved of Wilde's actions, but the author's personal faults did not brand his works as much as they did in Britain. Only religious newspapers like *De Tijd* kept reinforcing the connection between Wilde's personal degeneracy and his degenerate works, as was common in Britain. Therefore, stimulated by the immense success of *Salomé* in Germany, Wilde was quickly revived in the Netherlands after a short period of relative silence. By 1905, Wilde's works had become completely acceptable to the majority of the Dutch literary establishment.

The Dutch reception provides interesting insights into the wider European reception of Wilde. For example, one of the central arguments from *The Reception of Wilde in Europe* is that the European reception started from France, because it was "the first European country to show widespread awareness of Wilde" (Evangelista 3). This research has demonstrated, however, that this is clearly not the case. Dutch translations of Wilde's works, such as *Dorian Gray*, were published before they appeared in France and several Dutch newspapers had been regularly reporting his activities since the early 1880s. Of course, given the dominance of Francophone culture in much of Europe, this observation does not invalidate Evangelista's claim that the French reception was crucial for the spread of Wilde's works to countries such as Italy and Spain (3). More research is needed to establish whether the early reception of Wilde in France and the Netherlands were two largely separate affairs or if, for instance, the reception in one place stimulated interest in Wilde in the other.

Another area in which the Dutch case provides a unique perspective is that of the slow success of Wilde's society plays in Europe. All across the Continent, it took quite a long time

for these plays to achieve anything like the spectacular success they had enjoyed in Britain. According to Evangelista, this was a direct result of the enormous European success of *Salomé*, which everywhere in Europe preceded the arrival of the society plays (9). As Kohlmayer and Krämer point out, after *Salomé*, audiences “found it hard to switch emotionally” to the completely different society plays (191). However, the Netherlands provide the only case in Europe where a performance of one of the society plays, i.e. *Lady Windermere’s Fan*, actually preceded the arrival of *Salomé*. In the Netherlands, the initial failure of *Lady Windermere’s Fan* was not a result of audiences entering the theatre with a completely different idea of what to expect from Wilde, but of the Dutch being simply less receptive to Wilde’s comedy, which lacked a dramatic and believable story, which most Dutch critics considered to be necessary in a play. Further research might investigate whether a general dislike of Wilde’s aestheticism partly explains the initial failure of Wilde’s society plays in other European countries.

Further research could also focus on the Dutch reception of Oscar Wilde after 1905. Even though Breugelmans covered it in far greater detail than the period discussed in this thesis, modern, digital search methods, which have proved very valuable in this thesis, would certainly generate fresh insights that could be juxtaposed with the wider European reception. Finally, future research could also pay attention to the reception of Wilde in the Dutch East Indies, where local newspapers like the *Soerabaijasch Handelsblad* and the *Bataviaasch Handelsblad* independently published many articles about Wilde from the 1880s onwards.

Bibliography

Newspapers and Journals

In this thesis, articles from the following Dutch newspapers and journals have been used. For the specific articles, as well as the relevant parts of the original Dutch text, see the Appendix.

- *Algemeen Handelsblad*
- *De Hollandsche Revue*
- *De Telegraaf*
- *De Tijd*
- *Haagsche Courant*
- *Het Nieuws van de Dag*
- *Middelburgsche Courant*
- *Nederland*
- *Recht voor Allen*
- *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad*
- *Vragen van den dag*

Other Sources:

Barnaby, Paul. "Timeline of the European Reception of Oscar Wilde." *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe*. Ed. Stefano Evangelista. London: Continuum, 2010. xxi-lxxvi. Print.

Bastet, F.L., ed. *Waarde Heer Veen. Brieven van Louis Couperus aan zijn uitgever*. The Hague: Nederlands Letterkundig Museum en Documentatiecentrum, 1977. Print.

Breugelmans, René. "De weerklang van Oscar Wilde in Nederland en Vlaanderen, 1880-1960." *Studia Germanica Gandensia* 3 (1961): 53-144. Print.

- Couperus, Louis. *Van en over mijzelf en anderen*. Utrecht: Veen, 1989. Print.
- Doody, Noreen. "Performance and Place: Oscar Wilde and the Irish National Interest." *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe*. Ed. Stefano Evangelista. London: Continuum, 2010. 51-64. Print.
- Eells, Emily. "Naturalizing Oscar Wilde as an *homme de lettres*: The French Reception of *Dorian Gray* and *Salomé* (1895-1922)." *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe*. Ed. Stefano Evangelista. London: Continuum, 2010. 80-95. Print.
- Evangelista, Stefano. "Introduction: Oscar Wilde: European by Sympathy." *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe*. Ed. Stefano Evangelista. London: Continuum, 2010. 1-19. Print.
- Foldy, Michael S. *The Trials of Oscar Wilde. Deviance, Morality, and Late-Victorian Society*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997. Print.
- Haan, Jacob Israël de. *Liederden*. Amsterdam: P.N. van Kampen & Zoon, 1917. Print.
- Hekma, Gert. "Amsterdam." *Queer Sites. Gay Urban Histories Since 1600*. Ed. David Higgs. New York: Routledge, 1999. 61-88. Print.
- Hibbitt, Richard. "The Artist as Aesthete: The French Creation of Oscar Wilde." *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe*. Ed. Stefano Evangelista. London: Continuum, 2010. 65-79. Print.
- Holland, Merlin, and Rupert Hart-Davis, eds. *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde*. New York: Holt, 2000. Print.
- Killeen, Jarlath. *The Fairy Tales of Oscar Wilde*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Kohlmayer, Rainer, and Lucia Krämer. "Bunbury in Germany: Alive and Kicking." *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe*. Ed. Stefano Evangelista. London: Continuum, 2010. 189-202. Print.
- Maas, Nop. *Een pseudo-esthetische zeepbel. Nederlandse reacties op Oscar Wilde. Deel 1*:

- 1890-1897. Nijmegen: Vriendenlust, 1987. Print.
- . *Nagloeiend vuurwerk. Nederlandse reacties op Oscar Wilde. Deel 2: 1899-1913.* Nijmegen: Vriendenlust, 1987. Print.
- Polak, Johan. *Oscar Wilde in Nederland*. Groningen: Gerard & Schreurs, 1988. Print.
- Shaffer, Elinor. “Series Editor’s Preface: The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe.” *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe*. Ed. Stefano Evangelista. London: Continuum, 2010. vii-xii. Print.
- Vilain, Robert. “Tragedy and the Apostle of Beauty: The Early Literary Reception of Oscar Wilde in Germany and Austria.” *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe*. Ed. Stefano Evangelista. London: Continuum, 2010. 173-188. Print.
- Walton, Chris. “Composing Oscar: Settings of Wilde for the German Stage.” *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe*. Ed. Stefano Evangelista. London: Continuum, 2010. 217-228. Print.
- Wilde, Oscar. *De Profundis. Aanteekeningen en brieven uit de gevangenis te Reading*. Trans. unknown. Amsterdam: Scheltens & Giltay, 1905. Print.
- Wintermans, Caspar, ed. *Dear sir. Brieven van het echtpaar Couperus aan Oscar Wilde*. Woubrugge: Avalon Pers, 2003. Print.

Appendix

Algemeen Handelsblad

28-02-1882, “Groot-Brittannië”

“Weet ge dat tegenwoordig de *aesthetica* in Engeland een ware last en plaag is? [...] Dit was niet de ware, reine, grootsche kunst, maar eene *overdrijving* in alle richtingen, en de beoefenaars er van werden *aesthetic artists* genoemd.”

17-11-1889, “Kunst en Letteren”

“Een smaakvolle uitgave werd door J.L. Beyers te Utrecht bezorgd, nl. *Fantasieën*, naar het Engelsch van Oscar Wilde. ‘t Zijn sprookjes vol humor en gevoel, waarin mensen even veel behagen kunnen scheppen als kinderen. Dr. P.H. Ritters beveelt in een voorrede het boekske zeer warm aan. Hij noemt Oscar Wilde een weldoener der menschheid.”

10-12-1892, “Kunst en Letteren”

“Minder door den inhoud dan door den vorm zijner betoogen wist Wilde indruk te maken. Met schier vrouwelijk coquetterie trachtte hij te behagen en zich belangwekkend te maken. [...] Het succes, dat zijn toneelstuk *Lady Windermere’s Fan* in het jongste voorjaar te Londen had, zal dan ook wel voor een deel moeten worden toegeschreven aan de eigenaardige plaats, die Wilde in de Londensche samenleving inneemt.”

11-12-1892, “De Waaier”

“Oscar Wilde is hier zoogoed als een onbekende en niemand maakt zich ten onzent warm over zijn kunsttheorieën. De voorstelling mist dus veel van datgene, wat haar te Londen aantrekkelijk maakte. [...] Het stuk heeft ons dan ook noch verbaasd door zijn stoutheid, noch verrukt door zijn schoonheid. [...] al jaagt de schrijver wat al te veel op geestigheden.

Trouwens, het geheele stuk wemelt van ‘gevleugelde woorden.’ Men zou er een scheurkalender mee kunnen vullen. [...] Velen zullen het ongetwijfeld op prijs stellen in de gelegenheid te zijn eens een vergelijking te kunnen maken tusschen de Engelsche tonneelletterkunde en die van het Vasteland.”

15-12-1892, “Uit den Schouwburg”

“En om raadsels op te lossen komt niemand in den schouwburg. [...] Die geest is echter niet van het zuiverste water. Oscar Wilde schijnt mij een man te zijn, die er een boekje met ‘gevleugelde woorden’ op na houdt en daaruit van tijd tot tijd een handjevol neemt om ze over zijn stuk te strooien als snippers in een taart. Zijn geestigheden zitten niet in het stuk, ze liggen er op. Hij geeft een overvloed van *mots d'auteur*, slecht zelden *mots de situation*.”

25-04-1893, “Oscar Wilde”

“Dat er zooveel beweging gemaakt wordt in *society* over het jongste dramatische kunstwerk van Oscar Wilde – eigenlijk is het niet bijzonder dramatisch en een kunstwerk is het op de keper beschouwd ook niet – is minder te danken aan het stuk dan aan den naam van den schrijver.”

04-06-1893, “Nieuwe Uitgaven”

“Wie Oscar Wilde voor een wonderling houdt, zal na het lezen van dit boek op die meening niet terugkomen. Want het boek is wonderlijk in de hoogste mate. ’t Is een Faust *up to date* [...] Wij kunnen dit werk niet zeer ernstig opnemen en beschouwen het meer als ‘spielerei.’ [...] Maar al is ’t geen mooi boek, een amusant boek is het wel, al was het alleen om de gesprekken. Oscar Wilde is de koning van den paradox. Hij wil voor alles en altijd geestig zijn. Daaraan wordt alles opgeofferd. Het boek wemelt dan ook van *mots d'auteur*, geestige

zetten en kwinkslagen, die er in zijn gebracht zooals de kok snippers strooit in de taart. De fout van dezen letterkundige kok is echter, dat hij de taart maakt om de snippers.”

04-02-1894, “Kunst en Samenleving”

“Oscar Wilde beweert in zijn bovengenoemd artikel, dat alle minder werk, straatvegen en dergelijke, den mensch onwaardig is en door machines moet worden gedaan, maar is dat niet eenigszins een groot woord, wanneer men *practisch wil zijn?*”

05-04-1894, “Buitenland”

“vooral borstbeelden wekten bewondering. Die van Oscar Wilde is volgens mijne meening een meesterstuk...”

09-01-1895, “Buitenland”

“Het stuk, prachtig gemonteerd, goed gespeeld, en voor een uitgelezen publiek ten vuurdoop gehouden, is vervelend, onhandig en langdradig [...] maar het heeft een voordeel dat alle gebreken overschaduwt, het is geschreven door den mode-auteur Oscar Wilde.”

08-04-1895, “Oscar Wilde is dood – zedelijk dood”

“Het spreekt vanzelf, dat op het oogenblik de geheele wereld enkel kwaad weet te zeggen over den man, wiens schitterende letterkundige loopbaan zoo plotseling, zoo tragisch en ontijdig is afgebroken. Maar hoe men ook moge denken over den mensch, met groot leedwezen moet men den kunstenaar zien verdwijnen, die jaren lang in de Engelsche wereld een enige plaats innam. [...] de kunst zal om hem treuren, omdat hij een der weinigen was, die haar liefhad en begreep.”

13-04-1895, “Kunst en Wetenschappen”

“Uit de boekerijen van Saint Louis en Newark in de V.S. zijn de werken van Oscar Wilde verwijderd geworden.”

05-06-1895, “Uit Londen”

“Het is misschien niet algemeen bekend, dat de veroordeeling van Oscar Wilde tot twee jaar dwangarbeid, de zwaarste straf is die het Engelsche wetboek kent – een straf zoo zwaar dat de commissie die dezer dagen rapport uitbracht over het gevangeniswezen, haar als ruw en onmenselijk brandmerkte, zoo zwaar, dat er rechters zijn die weigeren haar op te leggen, omdat waanzin of dood zeer dikwijls de nasleep er van zijn.”

02-12-1895, “Een verongelukt dichter”

“Deze dichter, wiens groote talenten zich een verkeerde uitweg zochten, werd tengevolge van een zijner boeken tot drie jaar dwangarbeid veroordeeld.”

05-02-1904, “Groote Schouwburg te Rotterdam”

“‘Salome’ nu, de merkwaardige dramatische episode van den veel besproken Engelschen kunstenaar Oscar Wilde, werd veroordeeld, omdat men het stuk immoreel en aanstootelijk vond, terwijl men alleen had behooren te vragen, of het een goede of slechte kunstuiting is. En nu treft het toevallig, dat naar veler mening – ook volgens de bescheidene van schrijver deses – ‘Salome’ zeer goede kunst is.”

12-02-1904, “Kunst en Wetenschappen”

“Ook deze vertooning was niet onberispelijk, maar over het geheel genomen – nu afgescheiden beschouwd van de monteering – verreweg beter dan de Duitsche.”

29-11-1905, “Oscar Wilde. De Profundis”

“Nooit is een werk zoo door de critiek van *aller landen* geprezen als juist dit.”

De Hollandsche Revue**1896, page 380**

“Lord Douglas zegt: ‘Het tegenwoordige conservatieve Ministerie heeft de Transvaalsche Vrijbueters wel in bescherming genomen – een dichter en een artiest mag dan ook wel op evenveel bescherming aanspraak maken.’ Wij hopen het van harte voor Wilde.”

De Telegraaf**19-02-1894, “In en Om den Schouwburg”**

“En er is iets lachwekkends in, dat de mondaine Engelschman, met zijn belangstelling voor damesmodes, pltos tot een Maeterlinck-bekeerling ontbot. [...] Dat alles is niet fijngevoeld, niet poëtisch. Maar het geheele drama loopt over van phrasen, die onecht zijn, sommige zelfs in scherp contrast met de tijdsomstandigheden en de vergelijkingen zijn ook dikwijls leelijk.”

26-05-1895, “Gemengde Mededeelingen”

“Oscar Wilde is schuldig aan zedenkwetsende handelingen.”

28-12-1895, “Gemengde Mededeelingen”

“Dan komt de kat met negen staarten, de grootste schande der Engelsche humaniteit; dan het krankzinnigengesticht en, laten wij hopen, spoedig de dood van een der meest ontwikkelde, schitterendste mannen van onzen tijd, wat hij ook moge gedaan hebben. De schande echter, waarin hij zelf dreigde te stikken, valt dan terug op Engeland.”

01-06-1897, “Engelsche Correspondentie”

“Het geval van Oscar Wilde baarde opzien genoeg – van het vergrijp tegen de moreele wetten onzer maatschappij, waarvan hij schuldig werd verklaard, zal altijd het stigma hem aankleven, en op sociaal gebied is hij natuurlijk gedoemd. Doch als literateur is hij een man van beteekenis, van wien wij het laatste woord nog niet gehoord hebben, en, ofschoon voor het oogenblik door het te sterke vooroordeel tegen hem, zijn werken niet die aandacht zullen wekken, die zij verdienen, zoo zal hij, met zijn onbetwist talent als een man van letteren, dat vooroordeel in zijn literairen loopbaan te boven komen.”

01-12-1900, “Kunst- en Letternieuws”

“Men herinnert zich den excentrieken, talentvollen man, die, om zijn zeden, met den markies van Queenberry werd vervolgd en door den rechter tot drie jaar dwangarbeid veroordeeld.”

10-10-1903, “Duitschland”

“Salome is Oscar Wilde’s meest beteekenende werk, klein van omvang, maar groot en diep van inhoud. En die inhoud werd ons, door de buitengewoon mooie decoratieve omlijsting, als ’t ware nog nader gebracht en leidde als tot een nieuwe openbaring. [...] Wie de kunst niet slechts met de lippen huldigt, maar tevens met de geheele ziel liefheeft, die mag niet verzuimen den dans van Salome te gaan zien.”

21-01-1905, “Feuilleton”

“Het is inderdaad haast ongelooflijk, wat de heer Brondgeest in Indië heeft durven doen. Ik heb eene opvoering van Oscar Wilde’s ‘Salome’ gezien.”

20-03-1905, “Aan het Zoeklicht”

“en ging door het leven als een koning. Maar ’n zwakke koning. [...] En in de gevangenis te Reading – dood voor de wereld, die zijn naam niet meer dorst spreken, die zijn boeken niet meer dorst opslaan, zijn drama’s van de planken der Londensche theaters had verdrongen – is daar in de kreuning van doffe grauwe muren, in de oneindige leedknijping van het berouw, in de snikking van dagen – en weken – een menschenziel als een wonderschoone bloem opengegaan voor de schijning van een louterend licht. Zóó week heeft geen mensch geleden als deze zachtmoedige zondaar. Zijn boek is één bekentenis, één klacht – en toch nog werk vol trotschen durf. [...] De menschheid grijpt weer naar z’n gedichten, zijn drama’s, zijn boeken en mijmert weer over het vele schoone, dat deze mensch heeft samengedacht. De profundis – is ’n nieuw en machtig pleidooi dat van achter deze doode tot ons komt en de weg effent tot ’n stille en diepe verzoening.”

De Tijd

13-06-1895, “De tredmolen in Engeland”

“Dezer dagen werd een gevierd Engelsch letterkundige, Oscar Wilde, die zich ten doel had gesteld het toneel te verzedelijken, zooals hij meermalen beweerd had, zelf wegens zeer onteerende feiten tot twee jaren dwangarbeid door de Londensche rechtbank veroordeeld.”

12-10-1907, “Binnenland”

“Hoe jammer, dat in een tijd van dergelijke geestes- en sexueele ontaarding in ons land een Regeering het bewind voert, welke niets doet, zelfs niets van plan schijnt te doen om pornografische uitstallingen en colportage tegen te gaan, welke bezig zijn ‘den Hollandschen geest’ te vergiftigen en meer en meer toegankelijk te maken voor ‘de diepe bedorvenheid’ en ‘de verregaande perversiteit’, door het ministeriële orgaan in de Salome-historie verfoeid.”

19-12-1908, “Binnenland”

“het vereeren van het bedoelde geesteskindje van den pornograaf Oscar Wilde...”

Haagsche Courant**19-12-1892, “Nederlandsch Tooneel”**

“‘De Waaier’ is zeer gebrekig van opzet en bouw, een lappedeken van reminiscenzen aan alle mogelijke Fransche tooneelstukken, en ik wil wedden, dat de beteekenis der hoofdfiguren menig toeschouwer tot den einde niet volkomen klaar geworden zal zijn.”

13-04-1895, “Gemengd Nieuws”

“Toen ik voor het eerst hoorde mompelen, dat er wel waarheid wezen kon in de beschuldiging van Lord Queensberry tegen Oscar Wilde, had ik alleen een impressie van de walgelijkheid van dit geval. Maar nu de neerval gekomen is, zoo hevig en onverwacht een einde makend aan een onreëel rechtsgeging en den beschuldiger van gisteren in aangeklaagde en gevangene verkeerend, heb ik alleen het gevoel voor het overweldigend tragieke van zoo’n verpletterende neerstorting. [...] dat zoo het volle licht deed vallen op wat er rots is aan een deel der hogere kringen in het braafdoend Albion.”

16-04-1895, “Gemengd Nieuws”

“Niemand zal zeker eenige sympathie hebben voor dien persoon, nu hij overtuigd is van de griezelige, weerzinwekkende en afschuwelijk misdaad, waarvoor hij eerlang zal veroordeeld worden. Maar daarom zijne boeken in den ban te doen, nadat men die te-voren niet onzedelijk had geacht, dat lijkt ons toch een belachelijk vertoon van preutschheid. Wie weet, wat men op dien grond wel uit de boekerijen zou moeten verwijderen!”

31-05-1895, “Gemengd Nieuws”

“Oscar Wilde zal dus nu de natuurlijke genoegens des levens wel weer wat leeren waardeeren.”

04-12-1900, “Kunst en Letteren”

“De beruchte onnatuurlijke Engelsche dichter Oscar Wilde is Vrijdag-avond overleden. Nadat hij de drie jaren dwangarbeid had ondergaan, waartoe hij wegens onzedelijke handelingen was veroordeeld, woonde hij onder een anderen naam in het Quartier Latin te Parijs.”

15-02-1904, “Kunst en Letteren”

“Daarom was de verooning van gister-avond zoo raar, omdat ’t mevrouw Brondgeest niet is mogen gelukken aan Wilde’s ‘Salomé’ te laten gelooven.”

Het Nieuws van de Dag**07-01-1882, “Gemengd Nieuws”**

“De Engelsche dichter Oscar Wilde, een der profeten van de richting in Engeland die zich bij uitnemendheid aesthetisch noemt, maar die inderdaad door ziekelyk overgevoelig dwepen tot wansmaak vervalt [...] is voor eenige dagen te New-York aangekomen en heeft, naar een telegram bericht, aan zijn vrienden verklaard dat hij zich ‘teleurgesteld gevoelde over den Oceaan.’”

13-01-1882, “Gemengd Nieuws”

“De Engelsche dichter Oscar Wilde, de teleurgestelde oceaانbewonderaar, heeft eene eerste lezing te New-York gehouden, maar ongelukkiglijk was men daar nu weer teleurgesteld omtrent hem.”

08-05-1884, “Gemengd Nieuws”

“In den loop van het aanstaande najaar zal, volgens de Engelschen correspondent van de *Amst. Ct.*, Oscar Wilde, het hoofd der Aesthetische school te Londen, enige lezingen komen houden in ons land, vooral in de Universiteitssteden.”

25-11-1889, “Leestafel”

“Eenige dezer fantasiën doen denken aan de schoonste fantasiën van Andersen, en dat zegt veel. Daarentegen is geen sprookje van Andersen ooit in zulk een sierlijken vorm en met zulke fraai getinte plaatjes [...] uitgegeven als deze vier fantasiën bij de firma Beijers.”

30-06-1892, “Gemengd Nieuws”

“Zoo zijn de Engelsche toestanden. Het hoog moderne naast instellingen uit de Middeneeuwen!”

13-12-1892, “Het Tooneel”

“Ordeelende naar den indruk op het publiek zal *De Waaier* een kort leven hebben. En dat is om de vele goede qualiteiten van het stuk – afgescheiden van het ongemotiveerde in de versleten trucs – en om het mooie spel van sommigen wel jammer. Maar de oorzaak er van ligt in de leiding, aan het niet begrijp van den zin en de beteekenis, en vooral aan het onvoldoende spel en de onvoldoende verzorging van het balfeest.”

25-11-1893, “Leestafel”

“Het zij men iets voor deze voorstelling kan gevoelen of niet, en hetzij met Oscar Wilde’s taal (zich vooral onderscheidend door eene merkwaardige voortdurende herhaling van dezelfde woorden en gedachten) ingenomen is of niet, in elk geval meenen wij, dat ieder, die het drama begint te lezen, door den eigenaardigen vorm zal geboeid worden en niet zla ophouden voordat hij het eveneens vreemdsoortige slot bereikt heeft. Het komt ons voor, dat ook de vertaler den zeer bijzonderen toon goed heeft weten te treffen.”

09-04-1895, “Buitenlandsch Nieuws”

“Snel, gelijk de Britsche Justitie in deze is, werd reeds Zaterdag Wilde voor de politierechtbank in *Bowstreet* gebracht, onder aanklacht van het niet nader aan te duiden vergrijp tegen de zedelijkheid. [...] Deze pseudo-aesthetische zeepbel is nu ten slotte gebarsten, en wel onder zeer on-aesthetische omstandigheden. Niet ongestraft trouwens zoekt men op zulke holle en ziekelijke leerstelling steun als op levensbeginselen. Schipbreuk des geestes, waanzin, in welke vorm dan ook, is het gevolg.”

27-04-1895, “Buitenlandsch Nieuws”

“wiens sentimentele omgang met Wilde dezen zijn bekend initiatief tegen den jeugdbederver deed nemen...”

08-02-1904, “Het Tooneel”

“Alles was dus aanwezig om Oscar Wilde’s *Salome* dien indruk te laten maken, welken de dichter zich bij het schrijven moet hebben voorgesteld. Het werk heeft dan ook indruk gemaakt.”

23-02-1904, “Het Tooneel”

“Het zoo bijzondere tooneelwerk van Oscar Wilde, het drama in één bedrijf ‘Salome’, waarover zooveel gesproken en geschreven is, werd den 11en Februari j.l. voor de eerste maal in het Nederlandsch opgevoerd door het Brondgeest-Ensemble in den Tivoli-Schouwburg te Rotterdam. Het succes was zéér groot.”

04-03-1904, “Het Tooneel”

“Er zou meerder en zuiverder indruk verkregen worden als er meer stemming in het spel ware, meer stijl, en, als het ware, atmosfeer.”

30-03-1904, “Het Tooneel”

“De afd. Nijmegen van den *R. Kath. Onderwijsersbond in het diocees 's-Hertogenbosch* heeft geprotesteerd tegen de tweede voorstelling van *Salome* – het bekende stuk van Oscar Wilde – op Zaterdagavond, nadat voldoende gebleken is uit het verslag der dagbladen te Nijmegen, hoe het Bijbelverhaal daarin wordt vermindert en onteerd, de hoofpersoon in al de perverse zinnelijkheid der Oosterlinge optreedt en de vertooning een beleediging is voor de Katholieken van Nijmegen, vooral in den vastentijd.”

24-11-1905, “Leestafel”

“Zij die bewondering hebben voor den Engelschen schrijver Oscar Wilde, zullen met belangstelling en met weemoed kennis nemen van *De Profundis*, de aanteekeningen en brieven door dezen veelbesproken artiest na zijn diepen val in de gevangenis geschreven in woorden vol rouw en boete.”

Middelburgsche Courant

06-04-1895, "Uit Stad en Provincie"

"Op die tentoonstelling zal o.a. verkocht worden *Fantasiën* van Oscar Wilde. Dit alleraardigst boekje bevat, naar men ons schrijft, enige zinrijke sprookjes en verhaaltjes, die door eene begaafde vrouw uit het Engelsch in mooi Hollandsch zijn overgebracht."

05-06-1895, "De Tredmolen"

"Onzes inziens is zulk een straf, zelfs voor de grootste misdadigers, al ter streng; hoeveel dan te meer voor een man als Oscar Wilde. De tredmolen mag wel een middeneeuws martel werktuig heeten."

03-12-1900, "Letteren en Kunst"

"Oscar Wilde, beroemd als dichter, berucht als mensch, is Vrijdagavond te Parijs overleden, waar hij reeds enige jaren als Menmerth leefde, teneinde de herinnering te smoren aan het zedenschandaal en aan het meineedproces, waaraan zijn naam verbonden was."

Nederland

1893, page 481-482

"Het werk bevat verborgen passionele gruwelen, te duister om genoemd te worden. [...] Aan het sprookje, zooals het is, besteedde Oscar Wilde al de eigenschappen van zijn schitterend talent. [...] De vertaalster, Mevr. Louis Couperus, trachtte de vase harmonie van Oscar Wilde's droomerijen zoowel als het puntige van zijn uitspraken weer te geven , en slaagde uitmuntend; hare taak moet heel moeilijk geweest zijn."

1893, page 491

“Mooie omslag, mooi papier, mooie letter, mooie woorden, - alles in harmonie met het kleine drama in één bedrijf [...] De vertaling is zoo muzikaal en zoo geheel in Wilde’s manier, dat zij wel uitmuntend moet zijn.”

Recht voor Allen

31-05-1895, “Wilde veroordeeld!”

“De bekende Engelsche schrijver Oscar Wilde werd wegens onzedelijke daden veroordeeld tot twee jaar dwangarbied. Zoo’n geval, met al de bizarheden, werpt een eigenaardig licht over de hooge aristokratische wereld in Engeland. Is het elders beter?”

17-07-1895, “De tredmolen”

“De straf doet denken aan de ‘ijzeren juffer’, de ‘spaansche laarzen’, enz. uit de middeneeuwen en mag gerust ondanks alle beschavingspraatjes daarmede op één lijn worden gesteld. [...] Was in vergelijking hiervan de dood op den brandstapel niet een weldaad? [...] Zou nu door dergelijke straffen het misdrijf de wereld uitgaan? Maarn dan moest het er al lang uit zijn. En is de daad van Wilde een misdrijf? Wat hij deed, werd in het oude klassieke Griekenland, welks denkers en kunstenaars nog heden ten dage bestudeerd worden als voorbeelden van ware humaniteit, algemeen gedaan en niet in ’t verborgen, neen, elkeen wist het, niemand schaamde zich ervoor, het was een algemeen erkend en niet afgekeurd gebruik.”

30-10-1895, “Geldersche Penneklassen”

“Arnhem is eer ’n luxe- dan ’n nijverheidsstad, doch de industrie van Oscar Wilde wordt hier met woeker beoefend. [...] Of ’t handleidingen waren bij ’t beoefenen van Oscar Wilde’s sport, die hij den jongen wilde verstrekken, weet ik niet, maar ik weet wel, dat hij de

uitwerking van zulke voorschriften niet scheen te kunnen afwachten en direkt overging tot zulke daadwerkelijkheden, dat de arme, nietsvermoedende jongen het geraden vond om hulp te schreeuwen.”

Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad

23-06-1906, “Letterkundig Overzicht”

“’t *Vaderland*, ’n heel ‘fatsoenlijke’ Haagsche courant, die er niet aan zou denken, ook maar iets te plaatsen dat ‘men’ in de wandeling ‘onfatsoenlijk’ of onzedelijk noemt...”

Vragen van den dag

1894, page 170

“Men vergeet te dikwijls, hoeveel Ierland tot het algemeene leven van de complete Britsche nationaliteit bijdraagt. Neem nu den bekende en belangrijke schrijver Oscar Wilde.”