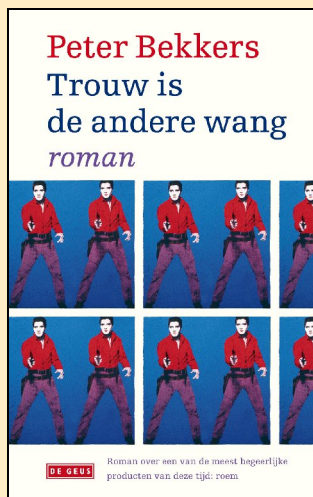




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Peter Bekkers

Loyalty is the Other Cheek

Original title: *Trouw is de andere wang*

NOVEL

**Novel about imitation and originality,
the spotlight of fame and the obscurity of
anonymity**

‘In ‘Loyalty is the Other Cheek’, Peter Bekkers gleefully discharges masterful sentences in a demented but razor-sharp story about fame, power and friendship.’

– *Jessica Durlacher*

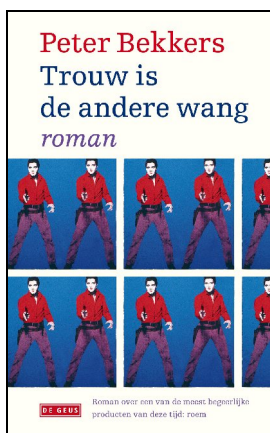
‘Excellent, a wonderfully un-Dutch narrative style.’
– *Geert Mak* on Bekkers’ columns in *de Volkskrant*

About the author

Historian and journalist Peter Bekkers (1958) has written for *de Volkskrant* and *Volkskrant Magazine*, among others. He is editor-in-chief of the *Product Design Daily*, an e-newspaper on design. In 1998 he made his literary debut with the novel 'Eating a Rose' (*Een roos opeten*), followed in 2004 by 'Many fell into the Sea' (*Veel mensen vielen in zee*). 'Loyalty is the other cheek' (*Trouw is de andere wang*) is his third novel.

Peter Bekkers is an exceptionally gifted and refined stylist, whose writing has a strong philosophical bent.

www.peterbekkers.nl



About the book

Artists Conrad Pi and Johnny Lippy meet each other in the street and immediately become bosom friends.

Conrad Pi is a great admirer of Andy Warhol and painstakingly imitates the American Pop artist. He wants to emulate him, just as the young Raphael wished to emulate his master, Perugino. And he wants to become just as famous as his great role model.

Johnny puts his own ambition aside in order to involve himself in Conrad's quest for fame. In the meantime, he becomes romantically involved with Conrad's girlfriend. When Conrad asks Johnny to make an attack on his life with a gun, this strikes all three as a good plan.

'Loyalty is the other cheek' is a novel about imitation and originality. About the spotlight of fame and the murky depths of anonymity. About power. About a man who contrives the downfall of his best friend, and then lovingly comforts and cares for him. Perpetrator and comforter, devil and god in one: one man couldn't be more powerful.

Peter Bekkers, *Trouw is de andere wang*

ISBN 978 90 445 0629 7

Hardcover, 192 p.

Date of publication: 31 March 2009

Bibliography

Een roos opeten ('Eating a Rose') (1998, novel)
Veel mensen vielen in zee ('Many fell into the Sea') (2004, novel)
Trouw is de andere wang ('Loyalty is the Other Cheek') (2009, novel)
On the longlist for the AKO Literature Prize 2009

The press about 'Loyalty is the Other Cheek':

'In *Loyalty is the Other Cheek* Peter Bekkers takes devilish delight in bringing masterful sentences to a demented but razor-sharp story about fame, power and friendship.' – Jessica Durlacher

'An interesting story and also a little philosophical.' – *CJP*

'Bekkers' new novel raises tricky questions of conscience (...). Not only challenging depth, but also a highly ironic character (...). An intriguing book, in several aspects.' – *Financieel Dagblad*, Fleur Speet

About 'Many fell into the Sea':

'Really excellent. (...) The writing talent and subtle narration sparkle throughout the book.' – *Kees 't Hart*

About 'Eating a Rose':

'Not just funny – it's also harrowing.' – *NRC Handelsblad*

'A convincing debut novel.' – *MAN*

'Bekkers has crafted his sentences with descriptions of bizarre situations and dialogues.' – *Dagblad van het Noorden*

About the story 'The Rising One' ('De rijzende'):

'Craftsmanship and bonkers entertainment.' – *de Volkskrant*

'Enjoyable and mysterious.' – *NRC Handelsblad*

'Reminiscent of Bordewijk.' – *Vrij Nederland*

Fragment from the book

The lighting of a cigarette – in the manner of James Dean – was, according to Conrad, the most photogenic way, the most rakish and indifferent gesture there was, and he cursed the insurance lobby that was responsible for the slow disappearance of smoking and the smoker from public life. Conrad saw lobbyists and conspiracies everywhere. The murder of president Kennedy, the attack on Andy Warhol, the death of Marilyn Monroe – conspiracies, every one of them. Both World Wars? Conspiracies. The landing on the moon? A conspiracy. He looked for malign intent behind everything. Lobbies and conspiracies determined his life more than was good for him, and a daily ritual of invocation was necessary in order to allay his paranoia.

Ha! His shaky state of mind. One minute he felt himself a god, the next a worm. What he missed was the feeling of self-esteem.

Perhaps that was why he had such a desire for fame. He saw his striving for fame as a mission that must be accomplished, by violent means, if necessary.

But it was too soon for violence. Firstly, he had to conquer the media, starting with his own country and then elsewhere. When that was accomplished, he would play the international media like a global organ, or something along those lines.

So that was the plan. He had Alexander the Great's blood in his veins. He wasn't going to be *given* world fame – he was going to conquer it. He wanted to be world-famous while young, not old, despite the warnings of Dick Cavett:

No one under thirty should be subjected to fame

He was an unusual individual.

He never called out of interest or to say anything important. He called out of an irresistible urge to call, often in the middle of the night, like Stalin or Glenn Gould. He was constantly exercising power. Seeing how far he could go. He could go to great lengths with me. I never minded when he called and woke me in the middle of the night. I believe I started to realise at that time that great friends might also be great enemies.

Why does life always outlast the friendships in it? Because in the end, there always has to be a winner and a loser. And winners and losers don't mix.

You shouldn't overestimate people's talent for friendship.

But, as I said, I didn't mean to shoot him.

Nor was it an accident.