

When philosophy becomes a page-turner

The Father and the Philosopher. Saving the Husserl archives

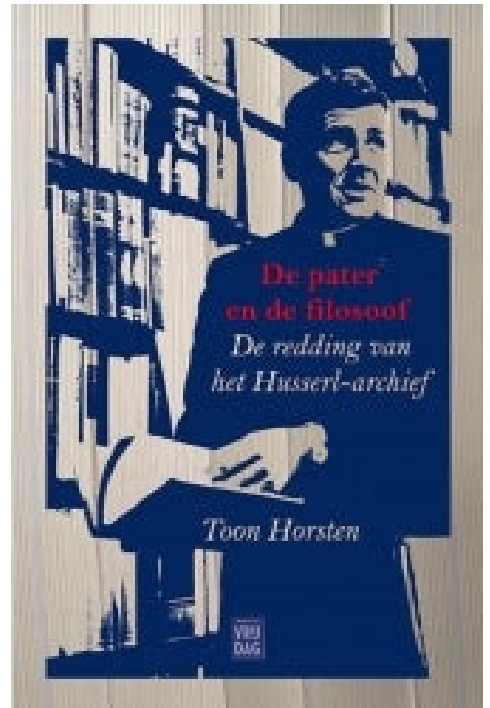
TOON HORSTEN

Edmund Husserl is considered to be the founder of phenomenology. He was also the mentor of Martin Heidegger, the most important German philosopher of his generation. When Heidegger chose to work with Hitler and the Nazis, he turned his back on Husserl and was notably absent from his funeral in 1938. 'The Father and the Philosopher' is the unknown and astonishing story of Father Herman Leo Van Breda: a young Flemish Franciscan monk who did everything in his power to save Husserl's legacy – something Heidegger refrained from doing.

This book deserves an international audience.

STEFAN HERTMANS

At first an exciting story about smuggling manuscripts set against the backdrop of the persecution of Jews before and during the Second World War, this book indirectly develops into a history of European philosophy in the twentieth century. The narrative features almost all the great philosophers of the European continent. It also tells the tale of a modern professor of philosophy who turns into an efficient manager to realise his dream: bringing the Husserl archives to safety.



AUTHOR



Toon Horsten (b. 1969) is a freelance publicist. He stumbled upon the story of Father Van Breda and the rescue of Husserl's archives while delving into his own family history and spent many years meticulously reconstructing the events. This resulted in the publication of *The Father and the Philosopher*. He previously published 'Vagrants' (Landlopers), 'The Happiness of the Reader' (Het geluk van de lezer), 'Tintin's Children' (Kinderen van Kuifje) and 'Flemish Giants' (Vlaamse reuzen - with Jan Smet).

ORIGINAL TITLE *De pater en de filosoof. De redding van het Husserl-archief* (2018, Vrijdag, 292 pp.)

PRIZES Spiritual Book 2018; the book also was shortlisted for the Lang Zullen We Lezen-trophy (organized by national television) for the best history book 2018

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