NONFICTION

Searching for the legacy of Spinoza in everyday life

The Naked Peartree

RUDI ROTTHIER

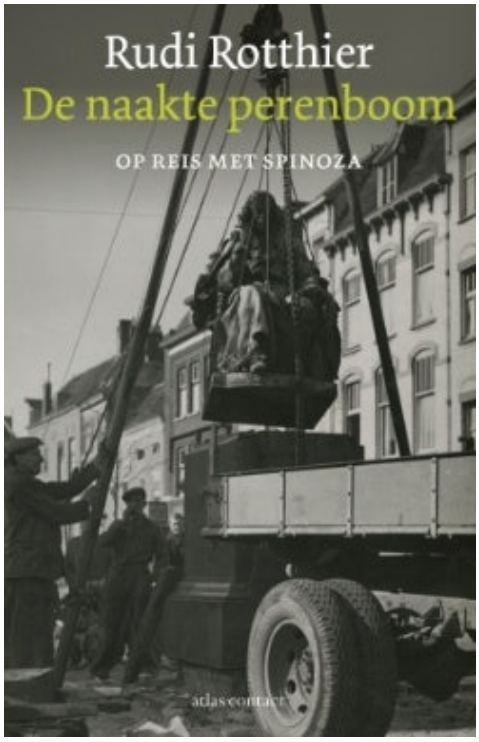
With 'The Naked Peartree', an account of a year-long journey around the Netherlands on the trail of Spinoza, Rudi Rotthier set out to write the most readable book about the Dutch philosopher ever written. On his travels, Rotthier explores Spinoza's pronouncements about the nature of existence and the great questions of life. Spinoza's political ideas are presented as excitingly fresh.

> **This book lifts Rotthier into the upper echelons of our authors**
>
> HUMO

Rotthier visits every place in which Spinoza lived and examines the impact on the present-day Netherlands of his vision of a rational society. The first part of the book is both an account of Spinoza's life and a history of the Dutch Republic in Spinoza's time, interspersed with a wryly witty account of the author's experiences and encounters in the Netherlands. The second part blends impressions of the Netherlands as an engineered society with interviews with individuals whose lives have been deeply affected by Spinoza.

Rotthier ties up these different perspectives in his engagingly honest and well-argued conclusion, in which he himself rejects Spinoza's goal of abiding happiness, but embraces the nuanced views of a philosopher who died while trying to model a democratic society.

FLANDERS LITERATURE



AUTHOR

Rudi Rotthier (b. 1957) studied Music and Philosophy and worked as a journalist for newspaper De Morgen from 1980 until 1989. He has written numerous travel books and received awards, notably for his book 'The Route of Koran', an account of a year travelling through Muslim countries. He wrote 'The Fetish Room' about the naturalist Redmond O'Hanlon, which was very well received by the English-language press. The Naked Peartree has been shortlisted both for the Socrates Beker and the Bob den Uyl Prize.

ORIGINAL TITLE De naakte perenboom. Op reis naar Spinoza (2013, Atlas Contact, 352 pp.)

PRIZES Shortlisted for the Socrates Beker Prize and Bob den Uyl Prize

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