

Moving thoughts about emotional times

The Mobilization of Arcadia

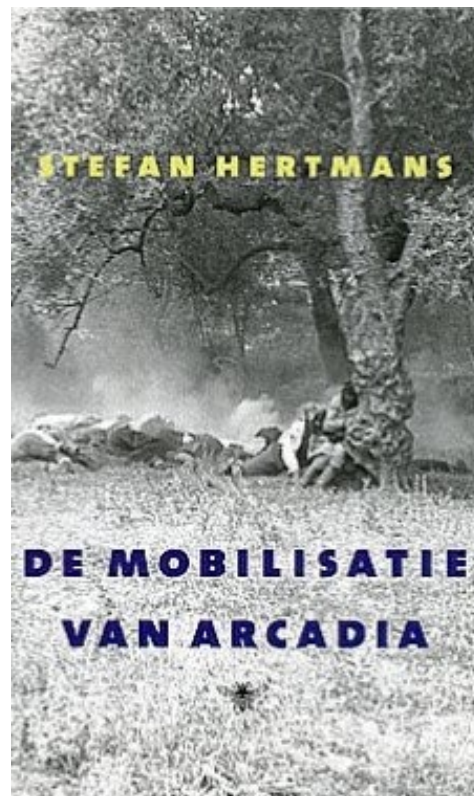
STEFAN HERTMANS

‘There’s no getting away from it: we live in emotional times. Wherever you look, commotion is the norm, intensity the form.’ So begins ‘The unfeeling emotion’, the introductory essay to Stefan Hertmans’ new collection. The theme that unites all the essays in ‘The Mobilization of Arcadia’ is our romantic and Christian longing for Arcadia, an imaginary place that acquired a new meaning with the arrival of modernity. Our pursuit of a fictional personality may be the cause of the intense sense of loss that typifies us. Everything we value – sexuality, identity, art and literature, social engagement – is unremittingly stirred up for the sake of a higher goal.

A thoroughly impressive book

DE GROENE AMSTERDAMMER

With due philosophical profundity, Hertmans brings into focus the contrast between this longing for Arcadia and the chaos characteristic of contemporary life, in essays about Belgium, engagement, community, Houellebecq, Onfray, Kierkegaard, Sebald, Pernath and others.



AUTHOR



Stefan Hertmans' (b. 1951) biography reads like a 'bildungsroman': from teacher to jazz musician to professor and writer's writer to Belgian State Prize Laureate and major international success. He has published novels, short stories, essays on literature and philosophy, plays and poetry. Listen to Stefan Hertmans on 'Kopje Koffie' ('Cup of Coffee'), a podcast produced by The Dutch Embassy in Berlin, the Dutch Foundation for Literature, in cooperation with Flanders Literature and the General Representation of the Government of Flanders. *Photo © Praet*

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