

Institution: University of Oxford		
Unit of Assessment: 27 English Language and Literature		
Title of case study: Improving Dutch public awareness of WWII collaboration and the dangers of resurgent anti-Semitism		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: Feb 2013-July 2017		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Prof Bart van Es	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Professor of English Language and Literature (Faculty of English and St Catherine's College)	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 1 October 2004 – present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: Sept 2018-Nov 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) <p>A creative biography of a Jewish child hidden by foster families under Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, Van Es's <i>The Cut Out Girl</i> (2018) assisted Dutch recognition of collaboration and subsequent historical amnesia. At a time of renewed European anti-Semitism, public acknowledgement of state and institutional failings has been improved, with impacts on press coverage of the war, national and local war commemoration, and secondary-school teaching. Holocaust survivors and their descendants, including the biography's subject, Lien de Jong, have benefitted from deeper understanding of long-term psychological trauma and restored personal connections. An exemplary text of documentary novelisation has been created.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) <p><i>The Cut Out Girl</i> is a work of creative non-fiction. It uses the technical resources of literary writing (analysis of metaphor, analepsis, narrative construction and dramatization) to tell an individual life story and recover the national history of anti-Semitism in the Netherlands before, during and after WWII. The biography is anchored by engagement with twentieth-century life-writing, with underpinning research entailing close attention to influential works that meld fiction and biography, such as W. F. Hermans's post-War Dutch novel <i>The Darkroom of Damocles</i> and W. G. Sebald's memoir <i>Austerlitz</i>. <i>The Cut Out Girl</i> is the product of substantial primary historical research, employing Van Es's skills as an archival scholar. Lien de Jong (full name Hesseline de Jong-Spiero) possessed hitherto private and affecting documents that Van Es worked to contextualise. These included a childhood poetry book (her poesie album); family letters and photographs; documentation of her fostering by the Van Es family; and records of counselling sessions in the 1970s-1990s. To that personal archive, Van Es added other material. He is understood to be the first scholar to access the documentation on wartime police operations in the Dutch towns of Dordrecht and Leiden, held at the Nationaal Archief in the Hague. This archive amounts to tens of thousands of files, only accessible after the deaths of the relevant officers. In addition, Van Es consulted archival holdings relating to the Herzogenbusch concentration camp in the town of Vught (southern Netherlands); the Jewish Fostering Agency, Le-Ezrath Ha-Jeled; the Dutch national fostering agency, Oorlogspleegkinderen (OPK); resistance testimonies at the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation and various regional and university libraries in the Netherlands; plus further documentation held at locations including the Jewish Historical Museum and NIOD (National Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies), Amsterdam. Collectively, this material generated a substantially revised account of the Dutch state under occupation and in the aftermath of World War II.</p>		

Building on an approach developed through Van Es's earlier research into theatrical company structures of the Early Modern period, *The Cut Out Girl* pays close attention to personal networks such as those created through individuals' workplace associations, schooling, and membership of political parties or groups. The biography shows how the group structure empowered agents to do more than could have been achieved through individual action alone, with resistance workers building networks via the Dutch Socialist Democratic Workers' Party (banned in 1940), and exploiting the partial protective cover afforded by professions, including medicine and engineering. Equally, the book shows how collective formations enabled collaboration with, and, in the worst cases, active advancement of Nazi policies toward the Jewish population. The concentration of attention on how formal qualities of tone and narrative can give access to a nuanced, layered and sometimes contradictory impression of past events involving multiple agents over many years was at the heart of *The Cut Out Girl's* development of 'documentary novelisation', yielding powerful insights into the long-term psychological trauma suffered not just by direct victims of anti-Semitism but by their families and descendants into the present-day.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. [Authored Book, listed in REF2], Van Es, Bart. *The Cut Out Girl: A Story of War and Family, Lost and Found*. London: Penguin, 2018. Ebook ISBN: 9780241978719; pbk 2019 ISBN: 9780241978726

Translated into 16 languages to date:

- Dutch, *Vergeet-mij-niet*, translated by René van Veen (with close involvement from Van Es). De Bezige Bij, 2018
- Italian, *La ragazza cancellata*, translated by E. Banfi. Guanda, 2018
- German, *Das Mädchen mit dem Poesiealbum*, translated by Silvia Morawetz and Theresia Übelhör. Dumont Buchverlag, 2019
- Also Russian, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Catalan, Basque, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Polish, Chinese, Marathi, and (most recently) Hungarian

Winner of numerous prizes including the Costa Book of the Year Award 2018 (GBP30,000) and the Slightly Foxed Best First Biography Prize 2018. A *Telegraph* book of the year (2019) and Waterstone's Christmas book 2019.

Key conceptual elements regarding company structures and joint responsibility networks were developed in Van Es, Bart. *Shakespeare in Company*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, ISBN: 9780199569311; pbk, 2015, ISBN: 9780198728085.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The Cut Out Girl's revelations of Dutch collaboration with Nazism **changed public perception of the war, informing media debate in the Netherlands and beyond**. The *Pauw & Witteman* TV talk show interviewed Van Es and Lien on publication day, 6 September 2018, **addressing Van Es's diagnosis of cultural amnesia**. Interviewer questions, podcast uptake (45,000 streams, 7,900 Facebook views, 4,800 Twitter views) (5.1) and audience feedback testified to changed perceptions—e.g. 'I admit I've thought ... *oranje boven* [rallying cry of Dutch nationalism ...] I recommend reading *The Cut Out Girl*' (Twitter response, 5.2.i). With outlets including the Stadsschouwburg theatre and Resistance Museum, Amsterdam, the initial print run sold out in a week. The Costa Prize enhanced visibility and reach: Van Es was interviewed more than 50 times (e.g. 5.2.ii-*Trouw* daily newspaper), often with Lien, and addressed 100+ literary festivals worldwide (selected press coverage at 5.2). Global sales stand at 155,280 (November 2020), including 10,899 in the Netherlands (5.3).

A national self-image of decency and tolerance was challenged by 'unpleasant truths' (*de Volkskrant* newspaper, 5.2.iii). Religious press coverage has special salience, given *The Cut Out*

Girl's exposure of Church failings (*Cut Out Girl* 127-29, 180-1). *Nederlands Dagblad* (historically Reformed-Church) gave two pages to Dutch Protestant and Roman-Catholic church activities under Nazism, **emphasising continued injustices**: e.g. the widow of a resistance worker and concentration-camp survivor denied a resistance pension, 1980, cf. the securely pensioned 'Jew hunter's widow' (5.2.iv, and *Cut Out Girl*, 160-61). *De Volkskrant* newspaper (historically centrist-Catholic) **acknowledged harm** done to those given 'no room' after the war 'to articulate the loss of parents, family, ... Jewish identity' (5.2.iii). *Algemeen Dagblad* (popular tabloid) **recognized church collaboration amid wider failings** ('the cooperation of the Dutch police, railway and citizens ... later often covered up') and noted **parallels with present-day refugee children** hiding from deportation (5.2.vi).

National and local commemorative practices have been improved. In 2018, the Nationaal Comité 4 en 5 mei, dedicated to preserving Dutch war memorials and monuments, funded discussion between Van Es, Lien and broadcaster Ad van Liempt before a 'spellbound' audience of 200 in Wageningen, where the Germans surrendered, **enabling collective reflection on collaboration** (5.2.v, 5.4.i and ii). **Dordrecht revised its celebratory website** account of Lien's rescue, acknowledging her trauma (5.5). Commemorating 75 years from war's end, local historian Kees Heitink and artist Ellen Bouter **created an installation for Bennekom village**: evacuation stories, recorded on mp3 players, were hung from a chestnut tree that survived bombing in 1945. *Cut Out Girl* text, read by a 12-year-old girl, captured 'beautifully' for Heitink the child's experience of repeated deracination (5.6). In 2020, the owners of Lien's childhood home in The Hague agreed to admit visitors as part of 'Open Joodse Huizen', **supporting a nationwide initiative to raise awareness of Dutch-Jewish history** (5.7.i - event postponed due to pandemic; filmed visit planned in lieu) (further local historian uptake 5.7.ii). NIOD **enhanced its archive** through acquisition of *The Cut Out Girl* primary materials, including an Auschwitz memorial record by Lien's aunt.

Readings by Van Es for descendants of Jewish and resistance families, organised by Dutch Embassies in the UK, Australia and New Zealand, **acknowledged state failings**—the **reparative significance** evident in an invitation to Van Es and the UK Ambassador to attend Yom Hashoah at Pinner Synagogue (5.8). *The Cut Out Girl* has **aided individuals' understanding of personal and familial suffering**. A file of over 2,000 emails to the author testifies to psychological impact down the generations. Over 400 acknowledge insights gained ('a totally new vision' – 5.9.i), some correspondents **understanding parents' experience for the first time**: one sees 'how it was ... As the daughter and daughter in law of hidden parents you were never given any information' (5.9.ii); another 'could see through your book my own mother's survival – escape, at the age of twelve, sent away from home [...] her anxiety, abuse, pain, betrayal' (5.9.iii). One Embassy invitee reported that the book **assisted his psychotherapy practice, 'develop[ing] more self-awareness and empathy' in 'business leaders and leadership teams'** (5.9.iv). A shared surname with Lien's mother **led a reader to pursue 'a family tree'**, discovering that all Dutch Spieros descend from 'Elijah ca. 1730-1803' (5.9.v). **Lost personal contacts have been restored**: a woman, watching *Pauw* in Australia, recognised Lien from childhood and made contact (5.9.vi); the children of Jo Kleijne (the boy who carried Lien on his back between resistance hide-outs) connected; also the children of Piet and Anna Schoorl, who helped rescue 166 Bennekom Jews, and the family who sheltered Lien in the village of IJsselmonde (5.9.vi-ix, *The Cut Out Girl* 166, 125-72, 102). **The biography gave Lien a coherent sense of her life ('I have a story, thanks to Bart') and 'reopened the channels of family'** (Costa Prize speech, 5.1.vi), **generating a public role for her in promoting better understanding of Dutch wartime actions**. She benefits from options on a feature film of her life (FilmWave) and BBC-funded documentary (in progress).

The Cut Out Girl has **encouraged opposition to present-day anti-Semitism**. In February 2019, after football supporters smeared hate slogans on Amsterdam buildings and vandalised a statue commemorating resistance to Jewish persecution, journalist Michel Krielaars singled out the book from other Jewish histories for insights into Dutch mentality: 'The ADO-vandals should be made to read it by their management, as a punishment' (5.2.ix). Social media respondents agreed: 'timely reminder of why we should not tolerate the pernicious rise of fascism' (5.2.i).

Urgency goes beyond Europe: against a background of anti-immigration sentiment an Australian radio interviewer emphasised, the 'Jew Hunters' were 'Dutch police, ... not German' (5.2.xvii).

The Cut Out Girl has become an **exemplary text of 'documentary novelisation'**, using fiction techniques to access psychology without assuming interior knowledge. An Institute of Historical Research discussion in London recognised a **model 'reshaping how historians write'** (*Times Higher Education* report, 11 May 2019 (5.2.xii); it has also inspired a non-professional reader to research and write a family war-biography (5.10.i) The book is taught on creative writing programmes, including UEA and Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education, where it is an assigned text for Advanced Study in Non-Fiction, assisting student understanding of 'structure and the issue of images and how to use them' and 'facilitat[ing] discussion of ethics and who "owns" a story' ('particularly useful for students exploring their Jewish heritage') (5.10.ii). Creative writing magazines examining Van Es' methods include UEA's *Hinterland* (5.2.xv).

Secondary-school history teachers recognise *The Cut Out Girl's* value as a **teaching tool for children**. *Kleio*, the association of history teachers in the Netherlands, listed it in 2019; a US teaching blog recommended it to deepen children's understanding of the Holocaust—'challeng[ing] the dominance of biology in our thinking of family' and drawing attention to 'sexual abuse during wartime' (5.2.xiv).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Materials relating to *Pauw & Witteman* TV interview.
 - i. Email correspondence between Dutch Impact research assistant and BNNVARA giving streaming figures for *Pauw & Witteman*, 6 September 2018.
 - ii. Interview at https://www.npostart.nl/pauw/06-09-2018/BV_101388645
2. Selection of Press and online coverage of *The Cut Out Girl*.
3. Materials relating to sales of *The Cut Out Girl*.
 - i. Combined sales reports: RightsManager, report 23 November 2020
 - ii. US sales as of January 2020, email from Rogers, Coleridge & White Literary Agency to Bart van Es, 23 November 2020.
4. Materials relating to "Wageningen 45: Nationaal Comité Herdenking Capitluaties Jaarverslag 2018":
 - i. Report (p. 39)
 - ii. Email feedback and tweet from event organiser.
5. *Dordrecht Stolpersteine* original account of Lien's rescue: http://www.stolpersteine-dordrecht.nl/het_voorbije_joodse_dordrecht_zoektocht_naar_lientje_de_jong.html; revised entry acknowledging her negative, traumatic experiences http://www.stolpersteine-dordrecht.nl/HesselineDeJong_BartVanEs.html.
6. Images and details of Ellen Bouter, '2020 – Shelter, project 75 jaar Vrijheid, Bennekom De Smeedplaats'.
7. Evidence of uptake of the book by local historical institutions in the Netherlands.
 - i. Programme of Open Joodse Huize with email confirmation of planning, and the role of *The Cut Out Girl* in bringing the house to the organizers' attention, 25 March 2020.
 - ii. Hague local historians working group resource list, <https://www.denhaag4045.nl/bronnen-boeken/#page-content>.
8. Email exchange between Dutch RA and representative of the Dutch Church London, giving details of a London embassy event for 'older Dutch citizens living in the UK', 8 June 2019.
9. Selected correspondence from readers of COG to Bart Van Es.
10. Impact on practice and teaching of life-writing:
 - i. Email from author with published biography cover image epilogue acknowledgement
 - ii. Email testimonial from Academic Director for Creative Writing at the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education.